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A PODCAST FOR BLENDED FAMILIES

Summer: Hello. Everything Always family.

Mike: What's up? What's up?

Summer: Hello to you from one of the very last days in our home. We're in the middle of our move to-

Mike: Holy moly. We are neck deep in moving right now. Summer, all day today was packing boxes like a champion. Oh, my gosh.

Summer: I could be a professional packer. We're in the middle of our move, we're sitting here with boxes around us, some bags, some wrapped items, decorations all wrapped up. If you've been there, you know what this is like.

Summer: We still said to ourselves, "We've got a podcast to put out."

Mike: That's right.

Summer: I can't even talk. I'm so tired.

Mike: You did such a great job today, lady, for sure.

Mike: We want to do a podcast, it's a nice little break. We get to sit back, kind of chill, think about the fact that we're living in freaking chaos right now, like crazy.

Summer: It's total chaos. I said-

Mike: And it's not that we're just moving, we're doing a full gut remodel in the place that we're moving into. And as of right now, there are zero functioning bathrooms, and we're moving in, in four days.

Summer: Four kids coming along with us. Right now, they're with their other parents while we're doing the move, but they're going to come in and be like, "Hey-

Mike: "Uh, lady in the restroom-

Summer: "Mom, dad, where do I pee?" It's going to be great.

Mike: No, don't worry. By Friday, I'll have the bathroom working, and both offices, and the master bedroom. So we're basically going to be camping out.

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Summer: When your husband does this for a living, it makes a little bit easier, I will say that. People are like, "How are you going to do it that fast? How is stuff getting done so fast?" "Well, it's kind of his business."

Mike: Well, listen, we got high class problems.

Summer: We do. These are-

Mike: There's a fully functioning guest house.

Summer: Yes.

Mike: So let's not make it sound-

Summer: Yeah. We definitely do have high class problems. But it's going to be fun, it's going to be an adventure. We're tired nonetheless. But-

Mike: True. Okay. Back to the show.

Summer: Back to the show. So in some recent lives that we have done, one topic came up-

Mike: And for you that don't know, we do something super fun-

Summer: Oh, yes. That's right.

Mike: On Friday mornings-

Summer: I keep forgetting that-

Mike: Called Brewing with Mulders. Basically what we do is, we kick ourselves out of bed, we pour some coffee, and we go Facebook, Instagram live, and just talk about whatever.

Summer: It's 7:00 AM Pacific every Friday morning, and it's been really fun. You have no idea what kind of mood we're going to be in, if we're going to be smart, if we're going to be still tired.

Mike: If we're going to show up.

Summer: If we're going to show up. Well, if he's in another country, if I'm on a plane, but for the most part, we're there. We're there every Friday morning.

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Summer: So on a recent live, maybe this was a couple of weeks ago, a topic came up. The conversation actually continued after the live, and then into Facebook Messenger, and direct message on Instagram, which I thought was really interesting. Some people watched it later and have something to say about it. And I told Mike, I was like, "I think this will be a great topic for us to discuss."

Summer: We have this long list of topics. We still have you talking to your guy friends about dating with kids. There's so many things that we keep wanting to do and the when something gets a lot of attention, we're like, "Let's just do a podcast right now."

Mike: It gets fast tracked to the front.

Summer: Yes. So that's what we're doing. Because I think almost everyone we know who has been in a co-parenting relationship, successful or rocky, has experienced today's topic. Which is, having different values than the person your co-parenting with.

Summer: So two different values in the different households and how do you deal with that? There's so many different things that come into play. We have done a podcast about different house rules and things like that, but values is a little bit of a different thing.

Mike: A little different twist on it, right. Values could be literally like the philosophy of how you should either parent, or what you believe is right or wrong, those kind of things. How do you try to be productive in terms of parenting when you don't share the same values?

Summer: Yeah.

Mike: And that can be very complicated.

Summer: I think what happens also is, there's definitely some ego involved. What I loved about having a conversation with, it was Ashley ... Actually, there were a few step-moms that we've had on the podcast. A lot of the things that I hear from them that I really, really love is, not making such a big deal of something that's really not so big.

Summer: So things like, "I really wish you were using organic toothpaste at this household instead of this one." Or, "I really wish that they weren't eating so much sugar and things like that." And granted, these are valid concerns that you might have.

Mike: Oh, come on.

Summer: But sometimes people just get so heated up about it, and it's really in the big picture of life. It's something that's unnecessary. Because more than likely, we say this all the time,

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"You got divorced or you separated from that person because you had a difference in values, and many differences. You just couldn't come to terms."

Summer: So some of the things that become issues that you might argue about or disagree on are things like, discipline, homework, school. Are you going to help them or not help them, make them figure it out their own? Screen time is a big one. "Well, we have no devices at our house. Well, we have as much as you wanted, or we have no social media. Well, we do have social media." And it changes as the different ages-

Mike: Different things, all the way up to the levels of, potentially it's like ... It could be, what are your values in terms of dating, in terms of becoming physical with someone else? What age are you ... Are you throwing high fives to your kid, going like, "Yeah, dude, get it." Or I'd say, "Hey, you know what-

Summer: Or you're like, "I can't believe she's bringing another man into their life. We've only been divorced for two weeks." Things like that.

Mike: You're like, "She's only 15, why are you letting someone spend the night, or some ... "

Summer: Right. Exactly. "Why at this house is there no open door policy? Why does she get to have boys in her room with the door closed?" There's so many things we've ... I mean, we've heard almost ... not all of it, but-

Mike: Lots of different scenarios.

Summer: We've heard a lot of different scenarios.

Mike: So it's not necessarily like, he doesn't make little kid brush their teeth, whatever ... I can't even talk, I'm like, "Blah."

Summer: I know. We're tired. We're tired, but we're pushing through. We got this.

Summer: So I think that something that we have learned, what I really appreciate too with some of these other parents that we've interviewed, is that in the beginning, because you probably do have that ... there's ego involved. I don't care what you say, there's ego involved. And you probably do absolutely believe that your values are right, and they are, for you, and for your household. Our values that we have are right for us, but who is to say which parent has the absolute ideal values, and which your children should emulate? It's not fair.

Summer: So this goes into one of the big things that we believe in is, not knocking down the other

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parent. Just because in your household, you might feel that 8:00 or 9:00 is the right bedtime for your 11 year old, maybe at another household it's okay, it's, "You know what? 10:00 is when we do lights out." Or maybe you don't even have a bedtime. What we talk about is that, kids will start to emulate what they value.

Summer: And the main thing that we have learned is that, if you are saying that you value something, whether that's respect, or there's certain consequences for being mean to somebody, or there's certain consequences for lying, or if I say, "You're not allowed to have this at this house. You can't have it." Things like that. You have to stick with it, and you have to emulate those same values, otherwise it's very confusing to a child. And I think that at the end of the day, that's really the most important thing, is that you stand by what you believe in, and that's what they will respect.

Summer: Because if you're wishy, washy about it, and you're just like, "Well, you can ... I said, that there's no devices after 7:00 every single night." Right? But then, you're only practicing it on Monday.

Mike: Well, that's just bad parenting in general.

Summer: It's very confusing. And I'm not sure that that's the best example, but you might say, "We like to practice no devices at this time, because we believe that we just want to talk to each other as a family." Whatever the reason is.

Mike: You have to be consistent.

Summer: Be consistent, yeah.

Mike: You have to be consistent. There's one thing that kind of comes to mind when we're talking about this topic for me. And I think you do have to respect the other person's rules, and the values that they have, and the things that they're ... In a healthy co-parenting situation, you would talk about those things. You would try to get into alignment as much as possible, and you would try to have consistency in both households, so that you're actually creating an environment for your child that is going to be the most productive possible.

Summer: Yes.

Mike: But I would say this. If you go out at it from the standpoint of always putting your kids first ... It's so funny, because I actually have people ... Or we have people that we know that, man, they do not do the discipline thing. They feel guilty because they're like, "You know what? I had to put them through this whole divorce thing, and I want them to like

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me." So they aren't giving the discipline that's necessary. They aren't giving the structure that kids actually really want.

Summer: Well, because they feel bad. And that happens a lot with fathers too, or whichever parent might not get a majority of the time. If they have them every other weekend or something like that, they have this guilt of, "I don't want my time to be spent on disciplining them or making them feel bad." Which is a very understandable feeling. However, I think there's a really great way to go about it.

Summer: But I feel like that's kind of a different ...

Mike: Topic.

Summer: Topic.

Mike: I guess we're back to it.

Mike: In terms of dealing with values that you're not in alignment with, put your kids first.

Summer: Yes. Because they feel the stress.

Mike: Put your ego aside.

Summer: So let's give an example. So if your child comes home and says, "Well, dad lets me wear whatever I want when I go to the mall. Dad lets me wear the crop top and the short shorts." Right? Mom might say ... I hope you know, that's a conversation she can have with dad on the side. But mom could say, why she feels, why she makes it a rule in her house, that, "No, you can't wear that when you go to the mall and here is why." And she can say it without saying, "Your dad obviously doesn't care, doesn't see why this is so bad."

Mike: Well, that gets back into that whole thing.

Summer: And that's what becomes very damaging to the kids. So instead-

Mike: Rule number one, no brain damage to your kids.

Summer: Right. And instead, you just explain to them why you believe that this is best, because these are the values that you believe are best for her.

Summer: Hey, guys. I just wanted to say, thank you. Thank you for taking a chance on us and

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listening to our podcast. Our goal is for you to not only learn from us, but to learn with us. We've taken a leap on being pretty open about our blended family, and how we do life and everything.

Summer: We want to make sure we bring you all the things you want to hear, always. So please, if you have specific questions like, "How do I get along with my experience?" Or, "How do I get along with his ex?" Or, "How do I set some boundaries in place?" Or, "Why doesn't my step-son like me?" Please, please email us with your questions.

Summer: Email them to info@summerfelix.com, because we want to answer those questions. And we aim to bring you the best guests and conversations to address your most burning issues about everything, always.

Summer: And then, another really cool thing is, especially when you got older kids, especially teenagers, because teenagers ... I mean, actually age, they're forming their own opinion, but especially as teenagers. We've noticed that, they really start to ask more question on, "Well, why is it that you let me do this?" Or, "Why is it that my other parent doesn't let me do that, but you will?"

Summer: So I think it's really important to ask what their beliefs are on that, because they are going to start to question the different opinions of the parents. Because it's going to start be very-

Mike: As they get older, for sure.

Summer: Yeah. Oh, yeah. And they start ... Because they start to even think about, one day if their parents, what are they going to do? So it's really important to ask what their beliefs are, like "What do you see? What do you think you'll do as a parent." We've asked that with our kids sometimes.

Mike: Don't be one of those parents that's like, "Because I said so." Right? You know exactly ...

Summer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mike: Man, it's like if you go at it from the perspective that you're going to share with them the reasons why, they may not like what you're doing, but they will respect the fact that you're doing it, and appreciate the fact that you care enough about them to do it.

Mike: And really what kids want to feel, is they want to feel safe, they want to feel cared for, and they want to know that ... Even if it's not what they currently want, that short term thing, they want to know that there's some structure. They want the guidelines. They

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want the boundaries.

Summer: Yeah.

Mike: It's really what makes them feel loved.

Summer: And one thing too that I think is really helpful is, sometimes co-parents, when you have those different values, you're very quick to judge the other parent's values. Just challenge yourself to think, "Well, just because they're letting our teenager go to this party that I really don't think they should go to, and I said no, but they said it was okay, doesn't mean that they don't have values." So that's another thing that can happen is, you might strongly disagree on, "Well, I wouldn't let my daughter go on this school bus, or on this camping trip." Or whatever it is, but maybe the other parent will. Or maybe it's vice versa.

Summer: It doesn't mean you don't have to jump the gun and say, "That means that they don't care as much." Or, "This is what I'm dealing with." I hear that a lot. "This is what I'm dealing with. He just doesn't have the same values. She just doesn't have the same values." Well, of course you don't. No, you don't.

Summer: But again, who's to say that yours is the absolute ideal ...

Mike: To get from another twist. What if the other parent actually has values to such an extreme that are different, that are making so that it's not good for your child? Think of it to the extreme, right? Like, "Hey, I'm going to let you drink and you're only 16, then I'll let you go drive your car." In terms of the communication piece, what's the procedure? What's the protocol for being able to deal when it really is something that actually is out of line?

Summer: This goes back to something ... And I think you even said this on our live, and you've said this many times, which is so true. Is that, there are things we cannot control. You can tell your child, "Hey, here's the reason. Let me explain to you the reasons why I don't want you to do this activity." Or whatever it is. And explain to them what your fears are, just give the reasons why.

Summer: The things is that, when they're in the custody of another parent, you don't get to make all the decisions. If you've got joint custody, you don't get to make the decisions during that time of what they're doing, or whose friend's house they're going to. You just don't. The only thing that you can hope for is that, your child makes the right decisions.

Summer: I want to read something, because I feel like for some of our listeners, this might mean

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something. I want to read, that I did get permission, one of the messages that we got after we had this conversation on our live. I think the point of it is, and the reason I want to share it with you is that, I have often said, kids will emulate what speaks to them in terms of values. They might practice something that is against what you've taught them, but then they will learn and later on appreciate that happens.

Summer: Again, this is their journey, and unfortunately, they are not in a household where there's all the same values. And some children still grow up in a household with two parents that are together and don't have the same values. So it can happen either way.

Summer: So this was a message that we got going off that question about difference in values. "My oldest brother had a son with a gal that he was only with for a couple of months, and they definitely had a difference in values. She was more of an impulse person, where he has become more of a long term investing parent, and it's been apparent in the last 16 years. She has other boys, and she works, and she has a smaller house, and my brother has done very well for himself, and he invested smartly, and him and his wife are living comfortably. My teenage nephew has just chose to live with his dad, my brother and his wife, and three kids. This house has more structure, support, rules, and higher expectations."

Summer: "I love that a 16 year old who is failing in school, missed over eight days of school in two months, was staying up until 2:00 AM playing video games, chose structure over the other lifestyle at his moms. He is now doing great in school and baseball, church youth group, and just started drivers training. He's a great kid who just needed what every kid needs, structure, support, rules, and love. It's been so fun to see."

Summer: So I guess again, the point of sharing that was, so many people do worry, "Well, I'm not the fun house." Or, "I have too many rules." And most often, when people tell us that there's a difference in values, they're usually coming from a place of saying, "Well, I have more rules, I'm more disciplined, and the person that I'm co-parenting with doesn't have those things." And so they translate that into that person not having value, because they're a lot more lenient.

Summer: I can understand that. And the reason that I wanted to share that, was that sometimes you feel that you're the less fun parent because you have structure, because you have rules. And sometimes parents get attacked for that too. "Well, you discipline too much. You have too much healthy food at your house. Kids don't like it. You make them clean their room. You make them make their bed." Things like that happen, and you're almost being framed as the bad parent for trying to teach them responsibility.

Summer: But here's what I will say to that. Because some of you, I fell like you're going, "Yeah,

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yeah, yeah. That's me. That's me." But I want to tell you something else. It doesn't necessarily mean that the other parent doesn't have values. They might be teaching them different kinds of values. Maybe they're teaching them how to be polite, or they're teaching them how to be giving to others. There's other things that they are teaching, love. And it just isn't in alignment with ... It's not the exact same things that you are teaching.

Summer: I would challenge you again, to just have a different way of looking at it, and appreciate the good things that they're learning from the other parent. And if there are things that you think could be damaging, then maybe look that as a opportunity to ask your child what they think? "Hey, I noticed you asked me, why we have this rule here, but you don't over at your mom's or your dad's. What do you think? What would you do if you were a parent? Or what do you think the rules should be? I'm just curious what your beliefs are?" And let them express their opinion on it.

Mike: All right. Well, I think this was a pretty interesting topic.

Summer: I think so. And I hope we answered a little bit more, and if there's something we haven't answered, please keep writing in. We love it. We love hearing from you. Whichever is your easiest way, you can email us, you can comment on the actual podcast post, everythingalwaysshow.com is where you will find transcripts, the show notes, all the good stuff to this episode and all past episodes.

Summer: You can write us, you can Facebook message us, you can Instagram SummerFelixMulder, or SummerFelixMulder on Facebook. That's the handle. Send me a line. I'll make sure this guy gets it too.

Mike: Heck, yeah.

Summer: I think we're going to start ... We're going to make a Everything Always show Facebook page, or Instagram page, make it even easier for people.

Mike: Make it so easy.

Summer: Make it so easy.

Mike: So darn easy.

Summer: We can't give you so many steps. It's like, "It's too much." All right. Well, thank you guys.

Mike: Don't forget to like and share.

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Summer: Don't forget to like and share.

Mike: It means the world to us.

Summer: Please write a review. It does mean the world to us. We love hearing from you guys.

Summer: Join us, ask us more questions. Brewing with the Mulders, 7:00 AM Pacific, Facebook, Instagram.

Mike: Friday morning.

Summer: Friday morning.

Mike: This Friday. Could be the last Friday in this house.

Summer: Could be. You know what, I'm going to take a picture of us right now, because we're just sitting here in the bedroom with stuff all around us. We got to get packing.

Summer: All right, guys. Thanks for listening.

Mike: Bye.