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A PODCAST FOR BLENDED FAMILIES

Summer: We are back with another-

Mike: Everything Always podcast.

Summer: Everything Always podcast episode. Normally, we will have this conversation and plan some of the things that we're going to talk about, but because there's so much going on, I thought it would kind of be cool. I thought of a topic.

Mike: We're just free-ranging it.

Summer: Yeah. I thought it would be cool. I was like, "Let's just actually have this conversation and just see what happens." I mean, I'm sure there's going to be, "Here's what we've learned," but it's not a, "Here's what we think you should do."

Mike: I think what Summer's really trying to say right now is that we're not very organized for this podcast, but that doesn't mean that the content won't be great and that we won't come up with something that's going to be valuable for you. What's the topic?

Summer: Well, here's how the topic ... Let me read a quote, and then you'll know what the topic is.

Mike: Absolutely.

Summer: I saw this on Instagram, and I was scrolling through. I saw this quote, and it said, "I had to forgive a person who wasn't even sorry. That is strength." And I was like, "Ooh. That's actually a really good topic," because we have touched on forgiveness, but there's so much that goes into it. I started to ask myself with certain people in my life. I'm like, "Have I forgiven?" Or, "What are my feelings on this? Should you always be forgiving?" And, "How do you deal with that once you have? What does that feel like once you've forgiven?"

Mike: This is a pretty interesting topic because it can go in a couple different directions. At first, to me, when I think about forgiveness, it doesn't mean that you have to be a pushover or that you have to allow things to happen to you or that you just have to take it and grin and bear it and let it go. I don't think that that's the sentiment or that's the point in terms of what we're talking about.

Summer: Right.

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Mike: I think that forgiveness is a way to free yourself of things that weigh you down, that by allowing yourself to forgive, and we touched on this a little bit when we were doing our Brewing with the Mulders that we do on Friday mornings at 7:00 Pacific Standard Time.

Summer: Nice plug, baby.

Mike: Yeah. That was pretty nice, right? I worked that right in. Anyway, Facebook Live, it's Friday morning, okay? Anyway, but more back to the point of if you're living with anger and hate, and if you're having that negativity inside of you, it's going to weigh you down. It's going to hold you back. It's going to keep you from being the best you that you can be, and the only way to get that out is to let it go, to forgive, to give yourself ... It's the blessing or the luxury or however you want to describe it of letting it go, of saying, "I'm no longer going to let this consume me or eat me alive," because hate and anger will destroy you.

Summer: Well, I can share some experience on my experience with forgiveness, and here's what I will say. And I don't know the exact right way to get there. It's kind of like healing or when you have a broken heart. I do believe that some things just take time because naturally, your psyche goes through a series of emotions when traumatic things happen in your life. So, I've noticed for myself that if there's something that has occurred that I feel angry, hurt, or betrayed, I'm not so quick to be forgiving. I know that I would give the advice to somebody to be forgiving because I know that it does consume. Personally, I know how much energy it consumes, and it's draining when you're not being forgiving or when you're just holding onto something is really what it is. And I know that for me, the people that I have forgiven for things that have really hurt me, it took time to get there, and it took different like having to have different perspective.

Summer: You have to kind of be in a simmer-down moment to start to actually have the mature and logical thoughts of, "Okay. This is actually consuming too much of my energy and my time," but you can't do that in a heated moment. It's too hard to do that.

Mike: You got to find that place where you can actually be smart about it and conceive the fact that it's actually hurting yourself.

Summer: Yeah. Well, what I loved about that quote because it's so true that is strength. I forgave somebody who did not say they were sorry. That's strength.

Mike: Or literally isn't sorry not just say it.

Summer: Because sometimes it's a lot easier to forgive when somebody comes to you, takes responsibility, or who knows? Whatever the situation was, but that you both have an

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understanding of why this person did this, why that person did that, and there's some type of a conversation, it's a lot easier to be forgiving, even when something was really hurtful. But, it's a lot harder to forgive when that person has not said they're sorry or doesn't give a crap about how you feel, and it's just like, "Yeah. That's what I did. Mm-hmm (affirmative), and I'm justified." It's really hard for you to be like, "Okay. I forgive you." It's a lot easier-

Mike: Man, that is almost impossible in my brain in that scenario, but over time-

Summer: But you've done that though.

Mike: But-

Summer: You have done it where stuff has happened, and you have not gotten an apology, and you've still forgiven.

Mike: It's true because I don't want to live my life having that baggage, having that feeling of going like, "I'm so upset," or, "I hate this person, situation, whatever," and having to deal with that. I don't want to carry it around. I want to be positive. I want to be lifted up, and you can't do that when you're in a place of negativity.

Summer: You're more forgiving than I am. I feel like it's easier for you to forgive than I am. You give multiple chances to people, and I am much more apprehensive because I'm like that whole, "Screw me once." That was like-

Mike: George Bush did it the best, right? He said-

Summer: Well, I don't want to sound like George Bush right now. I know him. It's like-

Mike: Come on. This is funny.

Summer: Do it. Do it.

Mike: He said, "Trick me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, I'm still a fool."

Summer: That's all he said?

Mike: Or something like that.

Summer: It was something silly, but-

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Mike: Oh, yeah.

Summer: But-

Mike: And the accent wasn't very good right there.

Summer: Yeah. But the whole thing is if you're going to keep getting abused by the same person that ... and you're going to keep about it, well, then, that's on you. I think, though, that when I say, by the way, I'm not saying that Mike's a pushover that he's so forgiving. You give chances, but you'll then have boundaries in place. You know what I mean? It's like, "Okay, well, forgive you and all that," but you've now set a new boundary in terms of this relationship.

Mike: You don't have to forget. You don't have to allow things to happen again, but I mean what was the example that we gave, right? It was the parents whose daughter had been murdered.

Summer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mike: Right? And they wrote a letter to the killer who was in jail saying, "We forgive you." They don't have to like the guy. They don't have to be friends with him, but they don't have to carry that anger and that pain and hate with them.

Summer: Okay. So, they wrote the letter, but what the deeper thing for me is what is the feeling involved? Because you can write a letter. Here's what I want to know, okay? And this actually something that I think would be cool to talk about on the Live because I'd like to get feedback is have you ever experienced days where you're like, "You know what? I forgive this person." But then, that person might do something, and then all of a sudden, those feelings are triggered again. And that's just a human thing. Is forgiveness an actual process where you come in and out of it, where you're just like, "I am forgiving"? But then, you might sometimes go, "Maybe I haven't totally let go or forgiven."

Mike: Well, no. That's where boundaries come into play because what you have to do is you have to set boundaries, set new rules, create the things that are not going to allow it to happen again.

Summer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mike: Don't be an idiot. Don't just be like, "Okay. I'm going to forgive you," and then go ahead and do this again because, no, that's not the way it works.

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Summer: Don't you think it's time, too? I really do believe in the power of time. That whole, "This, too, shall pass." Because there are things that you and I-

Mike: Well, that's the whole saying of like, "Time heals all wounds."

Summer: Right.

Mike: Right?

Summer: Well-

Mike: Then, maybe that is true.

Summer: When I see certain families that are just starting to blend, right? And I see the things that frustrate different parents like, "Oh, my kid's stepmom actually let her go to school without her hair combed," or, "I can't believe their bio dad let them wear dirty clothes to," whatever it is. Things like that that they get so-

Mike: Or whatever the thing might be.

Summer: They get so upset about, and then years later, even some of the people that we've interviewed, look back and go, "That was such a silly waste of time to get so upset about that." And I think it's because things happen and-

Mike: Or, and what's the real motivating factor of why you're getting upset about that?

Summer: Right. But don't you think that time-

Mike: It's more about the ego piece about how you're hurt, and you're looking for something to be upset about or bitch about or whatever. In a normal situation, or if you were giving advice to someone else, you might do the opposite of what you're actually doing.

Summer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mike: Emotions and being in a triggered state will make you act in ways that you normally wouldn't act, and I can tell you this. I've been my worst. I have been pushed to places in my life in certain situations where I act in a way that I can't imagine that I would act, where you're just trying to be terrible. You can't say mean or nasty enough things. There are words like created that could express some of the feelings, and it's ... You know

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what? Looking back on it now, I wish that I had never allowed myself to get to a place like that.

Summer: But don't you think enough time has gone by? You hated the way you felt about yourself in those moments, and that's what caused you to change. Nobody's born perfect and always acts perfect. You start to refine the way that you behave in certain situations because of the way that you feel in those situations. You start to realize, "I don't feel good when I'm angry or being mean to somebody else because I'm angry. I don't feel good when I'm jealous or insecure or this." Or that whatever those things are, you don't feel good, and you start to realize, "There's a better way to handle this."

Summer: And that's something that I will ask the kids, too, like when I see siblings get upset or say something mean. I'll pull them to the side and go, "Do you feel good right now about yourself for saying to your sister?" or whoever. "Do you feel good about that?" "No," and there's usually tears. Tears come out because I'll be like, "I know you're a good person. I know you have a good heart. I know this isn't what you want to feel, what your intentions are, and what you mean, but this is what you're doing. This is how you're acting. Does it feel good?" And honestly, when you have that self-awareness, which is Gary Vaynerchuk always says this, right? "Self-awareness is the most powerful thing." That's what causes you to change. If you're going to be ignorant about it and just always entitled to every single behavior that the way that you act or every emotion that you have and just, "Wow," trying to justify every single thing, then you're not likely to grow and change.

Summer: Hey, guys, I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for taking a chance on us and 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. 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 ex?" Or, "How do I get along with his ex?" Or, "How do I set some boundaries in place?" Or, "Why doesn't my stepson like me?" Please, please email us with your questions. 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: Anyways, all that to say I do believe that my opinion is I would look at forgiveness, for me at least, has been a process. I don't know that I could just write a letter one time. I might feel it in that moment, and then, especially if it came to my children-

Mike: That's about the extremest extreme you could imagine, right? Having-

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- Summer: That is super extreme.
- Mike: Losing a child, but then making the conscious decision that you are not going to let that person's actions have control over you.
- Summer: Yeah. It's a choice, but I guess-
- Mike: It is. It is a release, and it doesn't mean that you ... I guess you have to, in your mind, you have to say, "Okay. I don't want to feel this way anymore. I don't want this pain, anger, hatred," whatever those things are inside of you, which are going to push you to go ... They're just going to push you to not be your best self.
- Summer: Right.
- Mike: And you have to decide, and it's really fricking hard to do. But you have to make the decision of, "I don't want them to have this power over me."
- Summer: Yeah.
- Mike: And I'm going to let it go, and it is hard to do.
- Summer: When you-
- Mike: So, it's easy to say, right?
- Summer: It's so, so, so hard to recognize that you might be letting something else control you. It's really hard to do that. It's really hard to do something that really doesn't feel right in that moment because you're like, "No. I should be angry. I should have all these-
- Mike: You're so justified.
- Summer: Yeah.
- Mike: And you feel like you're so right, and those negative feelings are something that you should be allowed to have and that you hold them super tight.
- Summer: But when you actually allow yourself to soften, become vulnerable, instead of when I think of anger and being justified and all that, I think of like when your shoulders are all up and mighty, and you're ready to fight. It's that whole like ... and you're basically a wall. Nothing can penetrate you. Whereas, when you start to ... The feeling of

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forgiveness and even just being open to it and being vulnerable and having self-awareness and all of those things, actually makes you more approachable. It makes you feel better about yourself, and the really cool thing is that you then are in control of your feelings and the way that things can play out. And I think that people think the opposite and feel more in control when they're angry, but really, all of those bad feelings are coming from the feeling of being out of control.

Mike: Right.

Summer: Again, I'm still going to say it now for the fifth time, I do believe it's a process because I don't think that you overnight ... I think you make a decision. You make a choice, but you know that you have to keep doing things to honor that choice. It's the same with when we talk about how are we going to handle a situation with kids, or how are we going to handle boundaries and things like that. Well, things are going to pop up, and it's an ongoing process of practicing it and doing it.

Mike: That's right because it's like one of the things. You aren't going to say one day like, "I'm going to do this," and then, boom, it happens. You're going to fail. You're going to go back into having those feelings. But if you can actually conceive that you want to change and that you want to do this, and it's on forefront of your mind, then you will start to make that become a pattern, right? You'll make it be something that actually becomes real just by knowing that it's happening and making sure that you're focused on making that change and being that person and implementing that strategy, if you want to call it that or whatever, of what you want to do.

Summer: Yeah. Have you ever noticed when you've talked to somebody who is so angry at someone and has definitely not forgiven that other person that it's hard to get through to them or talk to them? Even if you start to explain why forgiving and saying, "Hey, okay. I know you're super. Your ex totally did this to you, betrayed you, or you feel horrible about how they're raising the kids on your side," or all of these different things, right? But it's almost hard to talk to them because they're so firm. They're so firm in that anger and in that, "I will not forgive."

Mike: Oh, yeah. And so justified.

Summer: Yeah. And that's-

Mike: And really, the sad part is they're only hurting themselves.

Summer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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- Mike: I feel like this message is something that you should consider.
- Summer: I think it is, too.
- Mike: Think about it.
- Summer: I think another thing, too, just to think about and one of the big reasons I thought this was important to talk about is that forgiveness, like you said, doesn't mean you forget. It doesn't mean you condoned. It does not at all mean you condone what they've done, what's been done that you disagree with. It doesn't mean that you've now suddenly changed what your values are. It doesn't mean that you're going to besties with that person. It just means that you are letting go, that you're forgiving, that that person had to ... Whatever they were going through is what they were going through. They did this behavior. You're not going to hold on to it every single day and try to punish them for it. It's just about it's been done. I want to let it go.
- Summer: And we were just asked: Have we forgiven? And we were asked about some various people in our life, and I thought to myself, "Yeah. I hadn't even thought about it," and maybe it's because time has gone by because so much time has gone by. But I'm like, "I feel indifferent." When I think of hurtful things from the past, I mean, I can go back many, many years ago. I just feel indifferent towards it, and I remember my wish at times of pain was, "I just want to feel indifferent." Like, "I don't want to have this feeling of anger and being triggered," and all of those things. I just want to feel like, "Hey, you do you. I'll do me. All good."
- Mike: Yeah, totally.
- Summer: That's our short but sweet podcast for today.
- Mike: I think this is good. The message is strong.
- Summer: Yeah.
- Mike: Forgive. Allow yourself to release the negativity inside.
- Summer: And know that it's not a compromise against your character. You're still you.
- Mike: It doesn't make you weak.
- Summer: It doesn't make you weak.

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Mike: It actually makes you stronger.

Summer: Yeah. It doesn't take away from who you are or your-

Mike: It means you are bigger.

Summer: Yes. It doesn't mean you're condoning anything. Always be kind.

Mike: That's true. Kindness.

Summer: Throw that in there.

Mike: Hey, so, here's the deal. If you don't currently subscribe to the podcast, we would super appreciate it if you would go in-

Summer: Yes. Even if you might be listening to this right now, but if you could just go back to your app, whichever platform you're listening to this on and just hit Subscribe. And then, if you're feeling extra generous and extra kind today, on a Thursday that you're listening to this or whatever day you're listening to this-

Mike: Well, and here. There's another way that-

Summer: Please-

Mike: ... you could look at this podcast-

Summer: Please share your-

Mike: ... today.

Summer: Well, yeah, and please share your feedback on it. We'd love to hear it.

Mike: Yeah. We'd love to hear it, for sure. So, here's the thing. Maybe there is a chance that you are the person who has a whole bunch of people disliking. Maybe you've done things that have been terrible to someone else. Maybe you should send them this podcast so that they can forgive you. Just think of it like that.

Summer: That's really cool.

Mike: I would say, "Do it."

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Summer: We do say that. Be bold enough to share it with someone you love and be bold enough to share it with (singing). I just want to give credit to ... He says it very differently.

Mike: Is Summer singing again?

Summer: I'm always-

Mike: Every episode.

Summer: I'm always going to sing, and I don't think it's a good episode unless I put in some tunes.

Mike: I like it.

Summer: Some of my favorite quotes and motivational inspiration comes from the Peloton bike, which we're actually looking at right now. But one of the instructors on there says something like about share it with someone you don't like, or something like that. And that's where I was like, "Ooh, I love that." So, we say it a little bit differently, but it has the same sentiment. I so love that. Be brave enough to like even the person that you don't super like, be brave enough to share something good with them.

Mike: I like that. It's big.

Summer: Big.

Mike: All right. Thanks for tuning in.

Summer: Thank you, guys.

Mike: And we will catch you on another episode of Everything Always.

Summer: Bam.