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A PODCAST FOR BLENDED FAMILIES

Melissa: Hi, everybody. I'm here today with another fabulous co-host, Mrs. Summer Felix-Mulder, who lives out west and who probably has just as much going on in her life as I do. She's running several businesses and she's got all kinds of things going on and lots of kids, so we have a lot to talk about today. Welcome to the show, Summer.

Summer: Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here with you.

Melissa: Yeah, and you have quite a lot going on, but I'm going to give you a chance to just introduce yourself. So tell us a little bit about you, your family, what's going on over there. But you don't need to get into too much detail.

Summer: So yeah. I have a lot going on, just like you. Definitely juggling businesses. I've got a video marketing company, and then I've got my husband and our four kids, two from him, two from me. It's definitely a busy time. I've got a couple of podcasts myself, I'm writing a book, and even though I'm constantly busy, somehow I like to keep adding more on my plate.

Melissa: That sounds exactly like me. I'm like, "You know what? I have a little bit of time to spare. Let me just tackle another project here."

Summer: Exactly.

Melissa: I don't know what it is. So tell me a little bit about your relationship with your husband. How long have you guys been together?

Summer: So we've actually been together for over 10 years and we're going on our second year of marriage right now. We were together for a long time. Our kids met when they were super young. My daughter was actually maybe just a year old. They've just known each other their whole life, so they just call each other brother and sister, which is great, and my husband's just really ... he's a really great support system for me because he's got a very calm way of looking at things, whereas I will get a little bit more frazzled when there's not peace and harmony going on in the family.

Melissa: Yeah, that's my biggest thing. I'm always asking everybody for peace. I'm like, "That's all I want is just peace." And it's hard to have that when you've got four teenagers, basically, right? So you've got your two, you've got a 13-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl, and then your step-kids are the 16-year-old boy and the 13-year-old girl, so you are pretty much like me, in the thick of it raising teenagers, so how's that going? You've had them for a long, like me, I've had my step-kids forever. It feels like we're living parallel lives because we've been together for a little bit longer than you, 12 years, but we didn't

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get married until two years ago, so it's a similar situation. How are you doing with the puberty and with the teenager stuff?

Summer: Oh goodness. So this is what's really interesting is that the whole blend of these kids has gone, it's like, ups and downs, ups and downs. I think it was really exciting in the beginning, and then as they got older, then it was like, they're fighting, not getting along. Typical sibling stuff. And now that they're teens, I think that individually, on their own, there's definitely challenges. There's emotions, there's mood swings, that type of a thing, but the kind of crazy part is that they're all getting along really well, so we're kind of just enjoying this right now because you never know how long it's going to last. There's still the little ... they try to annoy each other, but teens, it's no joke. There's definitely changes happening, and it's crazy the changes that you see within just one year.

Melissa: Yes. I notice with the girls, and I don't know about your youngest because she's only 11, but I notice that once they actually hit puberty and got their period, it was like a drastic change. As soon as they got their period, in the next three months, it was like just all hell broke loose with them and it was crazy. And I watched it happen with all three of them. So I don't know how it is with your 13-year-old, and the 11's a little bit young. And the boys, I feel like they hit it a little bit older, would you agree?

Summer: It was definitely older for our oldest son. My son, being 13, is just kind of approaching that, and it really is swings. It's like being super, super sweet, and then sometimes just being irritable and grumpy.

Melissa: Yeah.

Summer: And the girls too. It's funny because Mike used to say, that's my husband, "I can't picture it. They're both so good. They're such good girls. They're never going to go through that getting all emotional or feeling sad for no reason." And then, sure enough, it happened. And I feel like it starts to happen at 11. There's definitely some things starting to happen with our youngest where I'm like, "Oh yeah, these are the hormones. It's just puberty."

Melissa: It varies from kid to kid, and some of them hit it later than others. My youngest actually, we're just starting to have issues with her now, and she's already 15, and I've never had any problems at all, and she's not being bad, but I see all of a sudden with the boys, we're boy crazy now, and I've got to watch because she falls hard and she falls fast for boys, and it's like within a week, it's like, I love this person, and I'm like, "Baby, you've got to slow it down. You've got the rest of your life." So we're dealing with that now with her. Fortunately, she's the only one that's boy crazy. The other ones really, I don't

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deal with that. And my son, he's got too much else going on to worry about girls, which is good. So good, I'm glad that the kids are doing really well and they're on their way. Is your son driving yet?

Summer: He's learning right now. And that's what's so funny because today's so different. There's so many kids that are just like, "Can I just have an unlimited Uber account instead of driving?" Which is like, wow, it's so crazy because when we were 16, it was the day of my birthday, get to the DMV and get my license. And now it's like he's taking his time, and I asked him, I was like, "Do you have a lot of friends that are driving?" And there's older friends that are, but most of his friends his age, it's like maybe one or two. I'm like, that's so weird because it was such this amazing thing when I was 16, and now it's kind of important, wants it to happen, but not totally motivated about it, which is so strange.

Melissa: Yeah, well enjoy the peace while he's not really driving because, and I don't know how you are as a mother, I'm neurotic with it, and all the kids are on the road now, but my youngest is just learning. Actually, the two youngest are just on their permit, one drives more than the other, but I find it terrifying, but the older ones were very excited to drive, but as soon as they were able to drive all the time, now they hate driving, so the novelty has worn off.

Summer: Yeah.

Melissa: And it's definitely easier when they're on the road, but at the same time, I don't rest because I'm always panicking. And we've already had a couple of accidents, and everybody knows because I've talked about it on the show, but it's just ... Yeah. It's just one of those things as a parent that's a nightmare, but it does get easier. Once you get really used to it, you start to not be terrified every time they leave the house, but it lasted me a good year for each of them.

Summer: Oh my gosh. And I had accidents, my first, I feel like I had at least two accidents a year in the first few years of driving. It was awful. It was like a streak, and my parents were like, "What is going on?" And they weren't huge ones, but they were little fender benders or little, oh, I backed into that car, and I'm like, "Oh my gosh, if my kids are going to be anything like me, this is going to be trouble. I'm going to worry all the time."

Melissa: Oh goodness. All right, well let's talk about some other things, too. What I'd love to know because you guys have been together for a long time, so I want to know, how has the relationship progressed over time with your exes. Talk about that a little bit. Any kind of challenges, what's good, what's not good with your ex-partners.

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Summer: Definitely in the very beginning of divorce, it is hard because you're really trying to figure out what your relationship is now because you're not married anymore and there's privileges that you don't have with each other anymore in terms of, let me just be there for you whenever you need it or let me rescue you or all those different things. We both had to deal with that right at the beginning of my husband and I in our relationship together, so that was a challenge in the beginning. And then we really started to learn, okay, we need to have some boundaries in place because I think what started to happen with being either so friendly or having so many expectations from our exes or our exes having so many expectations from us that really weren't appropriate anymore, and I mean that on an emotional level, on a money level, beyond what you were responsible to do.

Summer: There were boundaries being crossed, and it affected us, so we really had to think hard about, "Okay, what kind of boundaries do we need to have in place to make sure that we are both feeling respected and that we are both feeling the priority?" And at the end, that you can also help diminish conflict that's happening between your ex. And I'm sure people listening, if you're co-parenting, unless you have that awesome, "We're best friends and we just totally respect each other." And all that, that's great. But a lot of times, I think people don't have that and they struggle with that relationship, so you end up in a high conflict situation. So I learned a lot of things that I implemented probably sooner than my husband did, so we've definitely seen the difference in that and how I will respond to conflict and how he responds to conflict, and he's gotten really good at it because he started to look and go, "Wow, what you're doing is actually working. Maybe I should try that."

Melissa: Can you be a little bit more specific? Because I'm sure people want to know. And by the way, setting boundaries is one of the most important things that every couple needs to be doing, especially with blended family and exes because if you don't, things can get out of control rather quickly, and feelings get hurt, and things get very tense. But you did say that there's a way you handle conflict in a way that your husband wasn't. Can you talk about that a little bit?

Summer: Yeah, definitely. So it can be something just like, "Hey, you're not respecting my time." It can be a rude comment from one co-parent to the other. And I think the natural reaction is to want to just fire back and just say, "Well, you know what?" And whatever your ego wants to fire back with, which is probably going to be something that's not nice as well. And one hardcore boundary or rule that I follow for myself is that if I'm approached with something that is negative, I won't respond to it. If it's something that needs addressing, it's an actual, we're trying to schedule something or there needs to be an answer here or it's actually going to move the needle in terms of the kids and what's

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going on with them and keeping them happy, and healthy, and safe, and all of that, then I will respond to it.

Summer: If it's something that's negative, I'm just going to ignore it because I just feel like if you're going to engage in it, it's just going to keep going and you're going to end up both fighting back and forth, which is definitely what will happen. So at the same time, if I'm feeling fired up and upset about something, I will just talk it out with my husband, just go, "Okay, what really needs to happen here? What do I need to accomplish?" So I always say it's responding creatively instead of just reacting. It's just extremely helpful. So that's one of the things that Mike and I do is we go, "Okay, in terms of communication, are we communicating about money that needs to be squared up? Are we communicating about children's health, schedules, who's doing what on what day?" Great. That's all great. But if it's going to be something that's emotional or trying to make somebody else feel bad or somebody trying to make us feel bad, then there's just absolutely no benefit in engaging in that.

Melissa: Okay, so I want to stop you for a minute because that was really, really good, and I want all of the listeners to stop for a minute and think about, guys, listen to what Summer just said, this is huge. If something is negative, you don't have to respond to it. I know you want to and you feel angry and you want to fire back, but that only aggravates the situation, and the person wants you to do that anyway. So what she is saying to do is so important. You don't have to respond to anything negative, just respond to what you have to.

Melissa: And what I really like about your idea, and I do this too, is because if you don't respond to that several times, let's say over and over again you keep not responding to the negative stuff, but then you do go ahead and respond to the stuff that matters, the other person is going to get the hint that every time they confront about one of these type of matters in the way that they are, they're going to get ignored and it's not going to be handled. So they're going to learn eventually, "There's no point in me addressing this person this way or firing up in this way because I'm not going to get anywhere." So I just wanted to point out that's really, really good advice, and I want everybody to pay attention to that because that's super, super important, so thank you for sharing that.

Summer: Yeah, of course. And I love what you said as well. It's so true.

Melissa: Yeah. I mean, unfortunately, I say this all the time, we can't control anybody else, we can only control ourselves and our reaction to what's going on around us, and no matter what, the world can be chaos around you, but if you can learn how to respond to that and keep yourself calm and peaceful inside, and I know that's really hard to do, and I fall

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short every time too, but if you can try to do that, it just keeps your world a little bit better. Now I know you and your ex, you seem to get along a little bit better, don't you?

Summer: We do. We do get along, and I would say we had definitely hot and cold periods, but honestly, practicing this type of thing where you really ... because I think what happens is when you have too much looseness and you don't have boundaries, then feelings easily get hurt because you start to have these expectations. Well, shouldn't you be there for me, or shouldn't you have done this, or now you're hurting my feelings, and don't you think I should be doing that because I'm their mother or I'm their father or whatever. There's all these things that just ... it gets complicated. And if you can keep it really simple about, "Here's what we communicate about." Your relationship as co-parents gets so much stronger and effective, and the kids feel that.

Summer: So our kids, my ex-husband and I, we are not best friends, but our kids think we're super good friends, and it's just because of the way we conduct ourselves. We can see each other at events and it's very friendly, so while we are not friends hanging out, and it's great if you are friends, I'm just saying in certain situations, it's not appropriate to be friends, but we are very friendly, so there's definitely that, we can share things about the kids. "Oh hey, this one did this." "Great. High five." Or, "This one did that." "Awesome." And we can share grades and that type of thing and get excited about it at an appropriate level.

Summer: So I get along with him and he also has a wonderful wife who is so sweet and so wonderful to my kids, and I think it's all because there is this respect in terms of scheduling, respect in terms of money, "Hey, here's what I'm responsible for. Here's what you're responsible for." And there's no going over that. There's no, "Hey, I think you should give me more this time because of this." Or whatever. We're just basically sticking to, "Here's what's legally obligated of us and here's morally what our obligations are." And we just stick to that, and it just keeps it really clean, and easy, and drama free.

Melissa: Yeah. And again, you bring up another great point because you're just on fire today, Summer. As far as the kids are concerned, really, they don't want to see their parents fighting, it hurts them so much. They don't want to know that you hate each other, they don't want to hear the argument, it makes them uncomfortable, it makes them feel in the middle even if they're not. So yeah, way to go. You can fake it. It's okay.

Summer: Oh, totally.

Melissa: I'm not saying to be a two-faced person, but hey, in front of the kids, you can fake it a little bit. You can be polite, you can be cordial just as you would with a stranger just for the sake of your kids, so that was really good that you brought that up. What I really

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want to know too is, I know your husband is learning some of your tactics and that's great. How do you deal with if he is arguing with his ex? How does that work out for you? Do you get involved? Do you stay out of it? I don't even know actually how you get along with her, so how's that whole relationship?

Summer: I would say another thing where it's friendly. We are not friends, but if I were to see her somewhere, I would say hello, and I think it's out of respect for my husband and something that he prefers, and I think it is easier. It's another thing, like, for our situation keeps things, it's a very good boundary for us to have. I mean, there can definitely be emotions. He might get fired up about something, and he'll approach me first and just go, "Okay, how can I handle this?" Or, "We are disagreeing on this or that." And I think that happens a lot too, where there is such a difference, and it's not necessarily to say one's wrong or right. These are two people that love their children so much, but they will definitely have a very strong difference on how to handle certain situations or what should be done in a situation, what shouldn't be done, that type of thing.

Summer: For us, in terms of being husband and wife, because I'm not the one disagreeing with her, I will just try to be as supportive as possible and remind him, "Try to keep it as neutral, and if that's your opinion, stick to your opinion. Don't ever be rude." That's the big thing is just don't be rude. It's that whole rule of do unto others as you would have them do. So while keeping what you believe in and keeping your standards, and your morals, and your values, and the boundaries that you have in place, keeping firm with those, you can still communicate and just get the business done. So he's started now where he's just like, "Well, responding to this won't actually move the needle, it won't help anybody. It's not going to help the kids, it's not going to help our situation, so it probably doesn't need a response." If it is, if it's something that needs to be answered, then he will, but he's become very protective of what he will engage with and what he won't.

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.

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Melissa: One of the things that I really like that you do with your kids and I think it's another great idea is that you make sure to spend time, alone time, with each of the kids. How is that helping?

Summer: It's awesome. The thing is, there's six of us, and we each have our kids 50/50, so when you think of that, it's like, "Wow, there's only so much time where we're all together." There's some times where it's just two, sometimes it's the other two, sometimes it's just one, so it's hard to get that alone time with each child, and they actually really love it. And I learned this from, oh gosh, it was years ago, I heard a speaker talking about this in Four Families, where he said, "You should have once a quarter, just once a quarter, have at least a whole evening, a half a day, or a full day where you are just having one-on-one time with your child."

Summer: Especially if there's multiple children because it fuels them and it will fuel you too. It really puts a big, strong ounce of quality into your relationship, and so we talked about this, Mike and I, we were like, "Well, we should do this. Not only with our own bio kids, but we should be doing this with all the kids. You should have alone time with Logan, and you should have alone time with Chloe. I should have alone time with Justin or Ashlyn." So we've done that and it's really amazing. I promise, if you try it, it's pretty amazing. I think it just makes them feel so important, and I think, especially in blended families, there's times when they can feel more insignificant than on another day because there's so many things going on.

Summer: And this is just in any family, right, with a bunch of siblings because there's team stuff, or one child is sick, or one child is having a really bad day, or one child got in trouble, or whatever it is and that one child is getting a ton of attention. So if you can give those periods of time where you're just one-on-one, Mike will do a date with his daughter or sometimes he's like, "Hey, I'm going to take out Logan, just the guys, just he and I are going to do this." I took my stepson on a trip, actually. It was awesome. We went away for a few days, and it was just the two of us. So us doing that with each of the kids gets them excited, and then when you're with them, you start talking about the next time you're going to do it. So they always know there is going to be that time. And there is times, I know there's times when you're in the car and it's a quick 30 minutes where it just happens to be the two of you, but I'm talking about super quality, at least four hours of just the two of you.

Melissa: I love it so much, and I like how you said maybe once a quarter because I've talked about this before on the show, and I think when people hear it they think, "Gosh, how am I supposed to have time? I've got four kids here or five kids. How am I supposed to have time to give each one individual attention when I have all this stuff going on?" But here you are, and you're running a million businesses, and you're doing all this stuff, but

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you're finding the time, but you're saying it doesn't have to be a weekly thing, but it's once in a while, and it's making a plan to do it, and then, like you said, making another plan, talking about it, preparing it with the kids so that they can be excited about it and it feels special.

Melissa: And that's not to say that the little excursions don't matter either. Sometimes taking one kid to the food store with you still matters because it is that one-on-one time, and you can still have a conversation, but I do like that you guys make the extra effort, and I also really like that you're not just each doing it with your own bio children, and that is really important because it's almost more essential for bonding to take place with your stepchildren because the bio parent and bio kid, they already have that bond, but you don't have that necessarily with your stepchild, you have to work on that. So I think that that's really good that you do that. Have you been doing that for the duration, for the whole time, or is it something new?

Summer: It's something we started, I want to say it was about three or four years ago.

Melissa: Nice.

Summer: Is when we ... Yeah, is when I heard it, and I was like, "Wow, that's a great idea." And I think maybe on some level, we were doing that just because the kids were actually asking for it. I remember one time talking about this great movie that me and my stepson liked, and he was pretty young at the time, and he was like, "Can we do a movie night?" And we were talking about cookie dough, like, "Oh, wouldn't it just be so great to just eat cookie dough, order pizza, and watch a movie?" And he's like, "I really want to do that, but I don't want to do it with the other kids. Can you and I just do it?" And I was so flattered because I'm stepmom, and I was like, "Wow. Absolutely." If you get asked that as a stepparent, you're like, "Heck yeah."

Melissa: Yeah.

Summer: So we did that, and then we started ... that was what started. We would start to do that. And he's like, "Can we do it again?" And he felt special because there's no other kids around, nobody else is getting the attention. It was just him and I getting to eat junk food and watch movies with no one else around, so it was pretty cool. That kind of started it, and then when I heard, I heard a speaker talking about this, who was actually talking about this specifically for working parents and entrepreneurs that do tend to get so busy, and when he said the once a quarter, I was like, "Wow, that takes the pressure off." You know what I mean? Because it's true, like you said, people hear about these things and then it just becomes so overwhelming that you don't do it at all. If you make it-

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- Melissa: Because it sounds like a chore. Yeah.
- Summer: It sounds like a chore. If you make it something that's actually realistic and achievable, you can do it.
- Melissa: One of the things about you that you've been vocal about is that you try to stay out of the discipline with your step-kids, so I want you to talk about that and I want you to tell us if you think that helps your relationship and how.
- Summer: This was something I struggled with because there were times when, here's what I would say, me and my ex-husband have pretty similar rules when it comes to kids and responsibilities and things that they need to do, and me and my husband now, Mike, he's the same as me, and then there's different rules, this can happen, where there's different rules in different households, so sometimes it makes it hard. And I remember somebody telling me, "You need to discipline them if they're not cleaning their room or if they're not doing the things you asked them, you need to discipline them." And I was like, "Do I?" And it felt so scary to me because I had heard also, "No, don't do that. You're in this period where you need to just have a good relationship with them. You don't want to become evil stepmom." So it was very confusing for me.
- Summer: And what I talked about with Mike and what we came up with was, I told him, I said, "You know, I feel very uncomfortable disciplining your children." And he would always say, "But they're our children and they're our house rules." And I said, "Yeah, but here's what I'd like to be. I'd like to be the one that can help support those rules, mention those rules, but I'd really like you to be the one to enforce it and be the disciplinarian." And he was fine with that and that worked for us because I do feel that it's part of the reason why I have such a good relationship with my stepdaughter and stepson is because I'm not always on them. Now, I will ask them things, and I feel like they will do it, whereas if I were disciplining them, and grounding them, and punishing them because they're not doing something, I don't think they would feel the same. I think I would have gotten that, "You're not my mom." And, "You're not my dad." Type of a thing.
- Summer: So I wanted to avoid that, but I think you've really got to have your spouse, you've got to have that support. My husband's actually more okay with disciplining, and they respond fine with that. So I don't know, it's different, and maybe it's that whole man of the house thing. I'm not sure, but I will say that it's definitely, it's been a plus for us for me not to take that role on.
- Melissa: I'm the same way and I've always been. I have always told Shawn, "I don't want to be the heavy." I always feel that the bio parent should be the heavy for their own bio kids-

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Summer: Yeah.

Melissa: And for your step-kids, I agree with you 100%, it's okay to say things, it's okay to be involved, it's okay to help, sometimes I help Shawn behind closed doors, but when it comes to the heavy stuff, I really think it needs to come from him. I agree with you. The only time I think that for some people listening that they might run into an issue here is when the couple is completely different in their discipline. So you have it good because your husband is a disciplinary, and he's on board with you.

Melissa: I do know that some couples, some people are very frustrated because they feel their partner is not disciplining the way they need to, and the stepparent feels like, "Hey, you're not doing what you need to do here. I'm going to step in and I'm going to handle it because you're not." But again, that backfires. So I think the best thing to do in that situation is you've really got to get your partner on board and you've got to come up with some kind of structure of discipline in the house. But I still stand by what I say. I think the bio parent needs to be the heavy.

Melissa: You sound like you've got a great thing going with your family. You've given us so many wonderful tips today. But I don't want to end without talking a little bit more about you because what you've got on your plate is a lot right now. You've got three businesses, you have two podcasts, one that's brand new, and you are writing a book, so I want to know, how are you doing it? Because I'm doing it too, but I'm really struggling as well, so give us your tips on how you're balancing all this business and your family and the four kids. How are you doing it?

Summer: So I think first is that I can't balance it all. There's this whole idea of being able to balance, and I'm not really sure what it would look like if it were balanced. I feel like I do a pretty good job. I outsource a lot, I get help, and I'm really big on time management. So as much as I can, I schedule things out in advance even if it's like, okay, this is the time of day when I can answer emails. That type of a thing. Because I know there's days when you can just be turning your head and trying to answer every single thing that comes at you, and then at the end of the day, you're like, wait, I feel like I got nothing done.

Summer: So I really try to be mindful of, what are the things that I want to accomplish each week, is really how I go about it. So I schedule out the week and then I schedule out, okay, each day, these are the main things that are happening, and I want to show up for them, and I want to do really well at it because there is a lot, and I don't think, the way my brain is, the way my spirit is, I'm not somebody who's just going to go, "Okay, I'm just going to focus on one thing."

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Summer: I do get excited about new things, so I have to figure out a way to bring it into my life while, I guess, I don't even know if it's keeping balance, but just like having some type of a routine that I do each day, I think that helps. On the mornings, I know that I at least get these things accomplished, and then I know that I do my best to try to be done at this time of day so that I can be with the kids, especially when it's my time, I'll try to schedule things differently. It's just doing the best that I can and sometimes you have to get help. I used to be so, when my husband would say, "Oh, why don't you let me do that? Why don't you let me do that?" And I'd be the martyr, like, "No, I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll do it."

Melissa: Yes. That's me.

Summer: Yes. And I've gotten so much better. There was something even just this morning, he's like, "Do you want me to take care of that?" And I was like, catching myself be I was almost going to say no, and then I was like, "Actually, that would be amazing. If you could do that, that would be great." And I think it makes him feel better to because he's like, "Yeah, I'm actually asking because I want to help you, not so that you can tell me no."

Melissa: Yeah.

Summer: So just really getting better at that. And even my parents, when they're just like, "What can I do to help you?" And I'll be like, "Oh, okay. Please."

Melissa: See, I need to get better with that, and I'm trying because my husband, he asks me all the time, "What can I do?" And I'm like, "Nothing. I'll just do it. I'll just do it." And then at the end of the night, I'm tense, and I'm crying, and I'm like, "I have so much to do." And he's like, "I'm right here." "But for me I know it's a control issue and it's I have perfectionist issues and I have to do everything my way, and I need to let go of that, and I told him today, actually, I made him a list because we have a shared list on my phone, and I made him a honey-do list, and I started it and I was like, "Okay, I'm going to add things to this list that I need help with because if I don't start to do that, I'm literally driving myself into the ground, and I'm going to get sick." And he worries about me too, so I need to get better at outsourcing and I also, I told my kids, I was like, "I think each of you, one day a week, I want each of you to try to help cook a meal."

Melissa: And I recently hired my daughter on into the cleaning business because I'm like, "Okay, I need help here, and I'm not going to hire outside staff, so I'll hire you." And I'm starting to get a little bit better with that because if we don't do that, we aren't able to be the parent that we need to be, and that's what I'm realizing. I can't be the business owner, I can't be the parent, I can't be the woman, I can't be the wife, I can't be anything I need

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to be if I'm running myself ragged. So that is super important. Do you also outsource for your job? Do you hire people for that or do you like to keep all that for just yourself?

Summer: I've got a really great team that I can outsource to, but even then, that's learning too because there's times where I have gotten a lot better at that where I'm like, "Well, they're fully capable. I can have them do these things." But there are some times like you said where I'm just like, "No, I need to do this to be sure it gets done right."

Melissa: Because don't you feel like ... Right. Don't you feel like, well, if I have to teach you how to do it, it's just easier for me to just do it myself.

Summer: Exactly.

Melissa: But at the same time, I'm starting to learn that I can teach. It might take a little bit longer in the beginning, but I can teach people how to do the things that I need, and they can do it right, and I need to just give it up. I'm not perfect and I should stop. So it's progress, it's happening.

Summer: Yeah.

Melissa: So I want to talk about your podcasts. You've got a new podcast out. Tell us about that because it is a family podcast and maybe the listeners want to go check it out.

Summer: I started writing a book actually on blended families, and all the challenges that come along with it, and then, of course, I was like, "Well, I do a business podcast, I would love to start one talking about blended families and juggling it all and all of those things." And I had mentioned it to my husband, he was like, "Well, I think we should do it together." And I was like, "Oh yeah, that would be awesome." So we basically had one conversation about it, and the next thing you know because I do execute pretty ... as soon as I get excited about something, I'm all about it and I put it into motion, so we did, and it literally was like a month later, and it went up. So it just went up recently, it's called The Everything Always Podcast, and it's us talking about our experience and things that have worked for us, things that have not worked for us, and of course interviewing different guests, and I'm hoping you'll be on it as well.

Melissa: Of course.

Summer: And just, I love what you're doing, and I just feel like there's not enough out there, and it's so huge, this whole community of blended families is huge, and yet there's really not a lot of good content out there-

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Melissa: There's not.

Summer: I was so stoked when I found you, I was like, "Oh my gosh, finally." Because the stuff that I was finding was just, "Oh, this is so boring." Or I don't know. I wasn't relating to it, so-

Melissa: Well, you know what's funny is you go on there and there's thousands of podcast on fitness, and thousands on business, and thousands on sex, and every topic you can imagine, and you see that there's really not much for blended families, yet we are growing and growing every day. There's more and more blended families being formed, and we're all struggling, and we all don't know how to do it. So I'm glad, I'm so happy to share this space with you. I am definitely going to come onto your show and I'm going to add your podcast link in the show notes, and when you are done with that book, will you come back on and we can talk about the book and promote it then?

Summer: Absolutely.

Melissa: Do we have an idea of when that's going to be finished?

Summer: The goal is end of first quarter next year.

Melissa: Nice. Nice. Yeah, it's on my agenda too. There's some things that I want to do, like writing a book and making a program, but again, it's hard to find the time. I'm so excited to see your book when it comes out, and for the listeners, Summer is in our private Facebook group that you can find at [BlendedFamilyPodcast.com/group](https://www.facebook.com/BlendedFamilyPodcast.com/group). And again, her name is Summer Felix-Mulder and she wants to be there for you guys. If you listened to her today and you resonate with anything that she said, all these great tips, you need to connect with her and definitely listen to her podcast. Support her because she is working, working, working, trying to make a better life for herself and for her kids. And Summer, it was a pleasure having you on the show today. Thank you so much for being here.

Summer: Thank you so much. It was so much fun.