

Still Buffering 168: How to Enjoy Adulthood

Published May 26, 2019

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[theme music plays]

Taylor: Hello, and welcome to Still Buffering, a sister's guide to teens through the ages. I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: And I'm Sydnee McElroy. And that's it.

Taylor: That's it.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's the— you heard it here first, folks. We kicked Rileigh off the show.

Taylor: Just no teens...

Sydnee: No teens allowed.

Taylor: Just us pontificating about teens. That's not true. She's just out of town.

Sydnee: In the tradition of all of our male lawmakers [laughing] creating legislation about body parts that they do not themselves have, we thought we would have a teen podcast without teens.

Taylor: You know, at least in our situation, we once were teens, so we have the memories of what it was to be teens.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Taylor: As opposed to, like, you know, people that have never had uteruses talkin' all abouts uteruses.

Sydnee: Yup. Yup.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, in case you were fooled by this little trick of ours, we didn't actually kick Riley off the podcast. That would be wild.

Taylor: No, we'd never. That would be a weird way to go about it.

Sydnee: That would be a weird way to go about it. It'd be weird to celebrate it. We probably would lose lots of listeners. No, she abandoned us, I would say. Uh...

Taylor: Where is she?

Sydnee: The beach.

Taylor: Oh, okay. Okay.

Sydnee: With her friends.

Taylor: All right. That's fair.

Sydnee: It was sort of like a, "Whoa! We're going to the beach!" Like, that kind of thing.

Taylor: Like a, "I don't know where, just like, we're going to the beach," trip?

Sydnee: I don't know where, they're going to the beach, uh, teen girls—well, college girls. Whatever.

Taylor: I hope they're okay. That is either a setup for some sort of romcom-like situation, or murder.

Sydnee: I told her that she was walking into a horror movie, and I was very worried about her.

Taylor: It's one or the other. It depends. Has she hit, like, an attractive person with a jet ski yet? Because it could go either way, but... Like, has she like, spilled a drink on an attractive person or perhaps, like, mistook their mother for a Saint Bernard or something? I don't know. Romcoms generally operate these ways.

Sydnee: Or has she played a game of truth or dare in an abandoned uh, like, temple of some sort?

Taylor: Yes. Did she, like, take, like, a talisman from a grotto that looked cool, but some old person said, "Don't do that!"

Sydnee: [laughs] But she did it anyway, because teens.

Taylor: 'Cause really, that could go either way. Maybe that's the start of a romcom too. I'd like to see a mashup.

Sydnee: Are there sharks there?

Taylor: Are they singing?

Sydnee: What?

Taylor: Is it a musical? Is it a—

Sydnee: [laughs] I didn't see that coming.

Taylor: — a horror— a nautical horror romcom musical. I'm fine with this.

Sydnee: I was going for Jaws, but sure.

Taylor: No, I'm thinking of the [singing] "sha-la-la-la-la-la" kind of sharks. You know, that shark.

Sydnee: The "kiss the girl" shark.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Was that a shark?

Taylor: No. The sharks didn't sing in that. I don't think so. I don't think the sharks were a big supporter of the mermaid-prince marriage.

Sydnee: No, no. That shark tries to eat her in the beginning.

Taylor: It's true.

Sydnee: Yeah. I don't think there were sharks— 'cause they were in a grotto, right? There aren't sharks in grottos, are there? Do I have to worry about grottos, too?

Taylor: I don't exactly know what a grotto is.

Sydnee: Ariel's in one at Disneyworld, but I don't know what that means. I just thought it was one of those secret rooms where they hide the princesses.

Taylor: I don't know. This is— there's one lacking bit of my education: grotto awareness.

Sydnee: Mm. I'm gonna say there are no sharks in grottos. [singing] And there are no cats in America. And the streets are paved with cheese.

Taylor: This is what happens when Rileigh's not there. We go deep.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Random.

Sydnee: Well, I'm just glad that you got that. Today, I referenced Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure at work, and one of my residents looked at me, like, "What are you talking about?"

And I was like, "Oh, no. No! How could this have happened?"

So Rileigh abandoned us for her beach trip. 'Cause I guess it's more fun to go to the beach with your friends, no parents.

Taylor: Than record a podcast with your two middle-aged sisters?

Sydnee: [scoffs] Whatever.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: I think there are lots of people who would rather be recording a podcast with us than at the beach. Maybe, like, my husband, I bet.

Taylor: Well, he's not here, is he? I think he had that option.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: And he's not here!

Sydnee: Well, he's not at the beach. He better not be.

Taylor: I don't know, but you know, his name was brought up and we were down a member, and uh, just sayin'.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Just you and me, Syd.

Sydnee: We can handle this. It was just you and me for 14 years, before Rileigh came along, right?

Taylor: Yeah. We had no—

Sydnee: We can handle it.

Taylor: We had no great achievements, to be fair, in those 14 years.

Sydnee: I seem to remember lots of tacos.

Taylor: That's about it. That's about it.

Sydnee: But because we don't have a teen on our teen podcast this week, we promise she'll be back next week, she'll return and we'll get the scoop on what teens do at a week at the beach alone now, maybe. Maybe we'll find out.

Taylor: Maybe we don't wanna know.

Sydnee: I think it's just Instagramming. Just, like, constant Instagramming is my feeling. But I think uh, we should talk about stuff that grown-ups like.

Taylor: Wow. That's where we're at. Yeah, okay.

Sydnee: We do a lot of celebration of teen culture, which is very cool and fun and worthy of celebration, and specifically Taylor and I usually celebrate stuff we liked back in the '90s, when we were teens. But we rarely talk about all of those joys of adulthood.

Taylor: [sarcastically] 'Cause there are soooo many.

Sydnee: There are. There are lots of things that you don't realize you appreciate until you grow up some, and the wisdom and maturity that comes with age. You know? You... Realize you appreciate things more?

Taylor: Eh, all right. Yeah, this'll be interesting. 'Cause despite our very few years of difference, I feel like we're gonna have very different opinions on this topic.

Sydnee: Well, when I was mulling this over in my head, things that I now appreciate as an adult, one of the first things that popped into my head uh, that I know Taylor will not agree with, or at least I strongly suspect, is man, if there's anything better than emptying out the lint trap in the dryer, I don't know what it is.

Taylor: Um...

Sydnee: It comes out in one big sheet of lint.

Taylor: And that... sounds nice, assuming you can afford a household dryer. What's up, younger millennials? [laughs]

Sydnee: Hey, listen, you can clean out the lint trap at the laundromat.

Taylor: No, they don't let you do that. I still want to be one of those people that gets drop-off service. I'm still not there yet, all right? We can talk about that. Those are like, you just take your laundry there and you come back and it's just done.

Sydnee: Really?

Taylor: You don't save your quarters so you can have clean underwear once a month. Once a month— let's be real. It's once a month.

Sydnee: Is that the dry cleaner?

Taylor: Dry cleaner?

Sydnee: That's drop-off? Like, that's what you do?

Taylor: No, that's just—

Sydnee: Like, that's what a dry cleaner is, right? You just drop your clothes off there. I've never used one, but I think that's what they do.

Taylor: It's like, all of laundry.

Sydnee: Oh.

Taylor: Oh, I've never— I will say, hands down, 100 percent, I have never used a dry cleaner. I don't actually understand what they do. I think when clothing— I think I either don't buy the kind of clothes that need to be dry cleaned, or if I accidentally do and they get stained to the point that they have to be dry cleaned, I wash them anyway, ruin them, and then just say goodbye to them. I've never once been to a dry cleaner.

Sydnee: I never have, either. I don't know what secret washing techniques they have that does not destroy clothing, but I know they have secret washings uh, for your non-washable goods. I also, I am with you, I tend to not buy things that are dry clean only. And the few times I have, I've said, "Look, you're going in the washer and dryer. And if you can survive, you are worthy of being my article of clothing. If you can't survive, then you're too high maintenance." I like my clothes low maintenance.

Taylor: It's like when you see a tag that says "hand wash only," and it's just like a funny joke, like, "What?" [laughs]

Sydnee: I have one sweater that I have managed to remember. Like, it's not hand wash, but it is, like, lay it out to dry. I have one of those. And so far, I have not put it in the dryer. I do remember. I like it a lot, it's one sweater that I lay out to dry. That's as far as I'll go. What do you enjoy?

Taylor: See, I feel like it's the opposite side of things for you and me. Like, I think you enjoy some of the more responsible things. I like the complete and absolute insanity that people assuming you're an adult and giving you adult-like respect allows you.

And by that, I mean it's like, I'm gonna sleep when I can and I'm gonna eat whenever, whatever, and it's just like, some days— like, I have my off days. And I only get maybe one or two a week, but if I have one, it's like, "What if I just didn't get out of bed today? What if I stayed in the same clothes for all of my off days?"

Sydnee: I mean, I would enjoy that. I'm not gonna say I wouldn't. I can't at this point, but I would enjoy that.

Taylor: No. I mean, I think it's just different. But I think those are some of the great joys that I have experienced in adulthood, is that there is nobody— it's part of also, the sadness of it, is like, nobody is there to check in on me. But there's also this absolute glee of like, nobody's there to check in on me. If I wanna like, spent the whole day just like, in the same supermarket, I don't even know what I'm doing, and no one's gonna ask,

"What were you doing in there?" I don't know. I just did, and no one could stop me. [laughs]

Sydnee: I will say, that is something I've enjoyed. I mean, I would say I'm a little less restricted now; just with the girls and everything, I'm a little more restricted. But uh, when you first become an adult, and like, the ability to go to the store and buy whatever groceries you want, 'cause like, these are my groceries for me to eat in my house.

Now, I think when you start that as a young adult, I think we all tend to buy really dumb stuff. [laughs] Probably most of us. Like, I don't know, I remember buying giant packs of ramen, and then being like, "I'm a physician. What am I doing? Like... I can't keep eating ramen now. I have to cook things." And then I would find, like, three recipes that I was like, "These are three things I can make. Here are the ingredients for them. I'll just buy those every time I go to the store, in bulk." Um, I'm better at that now.

Taylor: No, but I... I think that that's just not having somebody over your shoulder. It's like, even if you're making really dumb decisions— like, I remember having a day where I was, like, intending to go to a museum way far uptown, but I left late, and by the time I got there, I was on the train for, like, an hour and a half. And I got there and the museum's gonna close. And I was like, "Well, this was dumb." But I really had a good time just riding the train and reading my book.

So I spent the rest of the day just riding the train downtown and uptown, and downtown and uptown for like five hours! And it's like, "From the outside, this would look crazy. Nobody knows. No one's checking up on me. No one's gonna say, 'What'd you do with your day?' 'Oh, I don't know. Rode the train up and down Manhattan for five hours, 'cause I could?'"

Sydnee: The— I would say, like, now, my corollary to that would be like, if Justin's out of town and the girls are asleep, sometimes for dinner— this is gonna sound like a sad thing. It's not. I enjoy this. This is a happiness. I'll make a bag of uh, vegetables, frozen vegetables. They have those steamables, those are so easy.

Taylor: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Sydnee: The lightly sauced ones with the—

Taylor: "Lightly sauced."

Sydnee: [laughs] Lightly sauced with water chestnuts. Any other vegetables are fine, but the water chestnuts are key. One of those, and then like a bag of riced cauliflower, and I'll mix it all together in a bowl with a little soy sauce and some Sriracha, and I sit there and eat a giant bowl of vegetables. [laughs]

Taylor: That just sounds, like, healthy and smart.

Sydnee: I love— Justin's always like, "What is this meal?" 'Cause I— it's a lot. I should clarify: it's a lot of vegetables. It's more than like, a serving, or a human eats in one portion. But they're vegetables, so why do I have to stop? So I eat the entire portion while I watch, like, House Hunters International marathons, and I'm fulfilled as a human.

Taylor: You know, I think there's a certain— I mean, in relation to like, teen culture, there's a certain accountability with how you spend your time. Not even to your parents or the people you live with, but to your peers.

Sydnee: Yeah. And now, the world. Like, everyone that sees your social media. So yes, your peers and everyone else, by extension of social media.

Taylor: And you have to be relevant. You have to be— like, there's a part where it's like— and maybe it's just there's a certain, like— I don't want to say that being an adult is isolating, but it is, to a certain extent. Like, you're just kind of— you can choose to be connected to people, and you can choose not to be, and you can function just as well either way. Is that true, would you say?

Sydnee: Yeah. No, I think that's true. I think that that freedom to, like, sometimes just retreat and do the weird stuff that feels good to you, without thinking about— well, I mean, part of it is like, what we're talking about is losing FOMO.

Taylor: Yes!

Sydnee: Letting go of FOMO.

Taylor: Absol— that is a huge thing.

Sydnee: Which is not— I mean, I'm not gonna say by any stretch that I've conquered that. I am better, but I still— I still struggle. I still have FOMO a lot of the time, but I am much better at being able to let it go, and say, like, a very Zen moment. This is— I am happy in this moment. This is good. That's enough. I don't need to worry about more.

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: But I don't think that's something you can get to, until you get older.

Taylor: I mean, yeah. I have remember having it, definitely. Like, being inside on a night where I had work to do or I knew I had to get up early for work, and feeling like I was just like, shaking on the inside, like, "I have to be out there. I have to be out there." Especially when you're in the middle of New York City. It's like, "I have to be out there."

And now, it's like, I live in the middle of New York City, and for the first time in my life, I maybe have occasional, like, free money or some off nights to do things, and I'm like, [singing] "I'm gonna go to bed at 10:00! Or I'm gonna play video games alone and eat, like, dollar slices of vegan pizza." I'm just gonna— who cares? I don't care. I have all my friends posting pictures of cool parties, and I'm like, hahaha. Not there. Don't want to be, like, but I think you have to go to enough of those parties, and you have to be in enough of those pictures.

And maybe that's just, you know— it's funny, 'cause you're saying you're still experiencing it, I'm like, I never do. But I think that's just because maybe you're married and have kids, and I'm still single in my 30s. Like, maybe I just went into a lot more shitty— oh. Maybe I went to a lot more bad parties than you did. [laughs] Like, I got that more out of my system.

Sydnee: See, this is not that adult, Tey.

Taylor: I know. We'll cut that out. It's fine. But I think that's the only difference, is I got it thoroughly worked out of my system, with just a lot more nights of being like, "I know that picture was cute, but this place sucks, and these people are lame, and why am I here?"

Sydnee: Well, and I think that that— probably the continued freedom, moreso, to do your own thing, probably contributes to that too. Because you still could, like, plan a last-minute trip or decide, like, "You know what? I will go out with my friends to dinner tonight," or something like that. And I'm at a stage in my life where I can't necessarily make last-minute plans and things like that. And so...

Taylor: That's fair.

Sydnee: You know, and this isn't me complaining. Please. I am not trying to get anybody to feel sorry for me. I am very happy with every decision I've made. You know, I think anything that's worthwhile in life requires some sacrifices, and at the end of the day, you go, "That was worth it."

I do look forward to, like, that there will be a time that, as the kids get a little older, where I could say, like, "Hey, Justin. We should go to a movie. Hey. We should go to dinner."

Taylor: Sure!

Sydnee: That kind of thing. But that probably contributes to it. 'Cause I know there are times where, like, people are doing stuff, like, "We're all going out to go to this place after work or whatever. Do you wanna go?"

And I'm like, [clicks tongue] "No. I mean, yes, but no." [laughs]

Taylor: Well, but I think that's also one of those things that I don't miss about being a teenager, is the thought that that one party you don't go to is gonna change your life.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: 'Cause that's a thing. Like, I'm the same way now. It's like, when I have to work the next day, it doesn't matter how cool the party is. It's like, "No. I have to be up at 9:00. Like, I do not want to be up 'til 4:00. Like, I don't care how cool—" Like, that feeling of just knowing that, like, I've done this enough to know that no matter how cool it sounds, at some point, I'll get to go to the cool party that I want to go to. At some point, it'll be on my off night, and that'll be great. I don't need to hurt myself.

[laughs]

Sydnee: That next morning. I think that's something that I now have appreciated as an adult, is the difference between "Ugh, I gotta get up early or I got stuff to do tomorrow, whatever, and I don't want to be tired or hung over or just feel bad or whatever. Um, so I'm gonna skip this thing tonight to choose tomorrow."

The appreciation for that, the understanding of that, that is definitely something I've grown as an adult. 'Cause there used to be a time where I would say the same thing. Like, "Who cares if I'm tired in the morning? You only live once. I gotta go out. I gotta do this. Like, I'll be tired. Whatever. What's— like that's the worst thing in the world?"

And now, I'm like, "No, it's pretty bad. It sucks sometimes. I don't wanna— [laughs] I don't wanna be tired."

Taylor: Well, and I think that kind of lends to, I think, a larger understanding, which I do think comes with being an adult, and that's that I remember feeling very much as a kid that there were gonna be these magical moments that I couldn't plan for that I just had to stumble into that were gonna define my life.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: That, you know, I was gonna meet that person at that party, or at that right, you know, job situation, that right— I don't know, the things that were gonna matter the most in my life were gonna be because I went out and I was in the right place at the right time. And as an adult, I've learned

that it's actually— it's that stuff that I stay in, that I go to bed early and I wake up early, that I do, that stuff that I invest in that's kind of monotonous and laborious and boring, like, that's the stuff that makes my life.

And I feel like that kind of magical thinking of like, the things that— "I'm gonna be that— I'm gonna have that wonderful opportunity if I just am at the right party at the right time." Like, I'm kind of glad— like, as wonderful as that feeling was, and it's exciting, I'm kind of glad that my brain doesn't feel that way anymore.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. It was all those romcoms.

Taylor: You're right! You just— I don't know, you just trip into the right handsome somebody, and then your whole life changes. A piece of toast in your mouth.

Sydnee: Uh, I wanna go into some more details about adult life that bring us joy, but before I do that, we gotta check out the Group Message.

Taylor: I don't know. We're old. Is it a group message, or is it, like, a fax?

Sydnee: Uh, we have to head to the chat room.

Taylor: There we go. The AOL chat.

Sydnee: We're checking out the AOL chat room today.

Taylor: [makes dial up screeching noise]

Sydnee: It's a chat room called "Sponsors of Still Buffering this week."

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Sorry, that was— that was busted. I apologize for that.

Taylor: [laughs] You did your best.

Sydnee: You know what isn't, though? Harper Wilde. That was a good lead-in. And I have to say, I really do love my Harper Wilde bra. They were nice enough to give us the option, if we wanted to, to check out one of their bras, to try one on— well, not just try it on. Like, keep it. Like, I got to keep it. Um, to try it out, and see what I would think. And—

Taylor: [laughing] Was it just a sample bra?

Sydnee: It's not a sample. It was not a loaner bra. It was like a keeper bra. And uh, they tell you it's gonna be super comfortable and perfect fitting. You can try it on in your home, and if you wanna send it back, you can, but I didn't want to, 'cause I have to tell you, it is now my go-to daily bra. It is my—

Taylor: Nice.

Sydnee: Yeah. It has become my most comfortable, wear every day, I'm currently working in the hospitals and those are long days on hospital service and it's just— it's perfect. I forget that I'm wearing it. Which is really nice.

Harper Wilde bras were designed with you in mind. They've got smooth, supportive coverage. They look good under any outfit. I can vouch for that. No matter— like, it's getting hotter, and so I'm wearing more like, kind of loose-fitting tank top gauzy kinda shirts, and they still fit great under those, just like they did under my t-shirts and sweaters.

You just go, click "What's my size?" on Harper Wilde's website. And take their fit quiz and you find out your current bra size. They've partnered with Girls, Inc. to lift up women around the world, and a portion of each sale supports mentorship and educational programming for girls. So it's always nice to have that extra bottom line there, where you know that some of your money's going to something good, in addition to the good bra you're gonna get.

And I really can't say enough good things. I super enjoy this bra. I wear it every day. I had it on today. Not right now; it's late. I'm recording. It's not bra time. But earlier. [laughs]

But Tey, if our listeners want to check out Harper Wilde, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, you can go to HarperWilde.com/StillBuffering, and use promo code "StillBuffering," and you can get 15 percent off your first purchase. That's HarperWilde, W-I-L-D-E, .com/StillBuffering. Use the promo code "StillBuffering" for 15 percent off. So check it out!

Sydnee: Our other sponsor we wanna tell you about this week is LOLA. Now, LOLA is a female-founded company that offers a line of organic cotton tampons, pads, liners, and all-natural cleansing wipes. The founders of the company, Jordana Kier and Alexandra Friedman, started the company with the idea that women shouldn't have to compromise when it comes to feminine care products.

And another thing that LOLA really has you covered on is, one, it can be tough, if you are somebody who has an irregular cycle, to know exactly when you're gonna need these products. Two, sometimes you don't have time to run out to the store right at that moment. Or maybe you don't wanna have to run out to the store right at that moment. And three, you're looking for stuff that's gonna be comfortable and you're not gonna feel— and you're not gonna worry about what you're putting up against or inside your body.

And the nice thing about LOLA is that they are 100 percent natural. There's no mystery fibers. They come in a simple customizable subscription, so you can get— like, the package that I got had various strengths of tampons. And you can customize it to your specific cycle, whatever you would need.

And they have complete transparency about the ingredients that are found in all their products. They're 100 percent organic cotton. They have no added chemical fragrances, no synthetics, no dyes. And your subscription is fully customizable. You can change it around to when you need it, and what kind of absorbency and which kinds of products you can mix and match, and how frequent you need 'em.

So you can really get exactly what you need, when you need them, delivered right to your door in a nice little box, so you don't have to worry about running to the store.

Taylor: Nice!

Sydnee: So what should our listeners do if they wanna check this out?

Taylor: Well, if you visit MyLola.com, that's M-Y-L-O-L-A, .com, and use promo code "StillBuffering40" when you subscribe, you can get 40 percent off all subscriptions. So go to MyLola.com, use "StillBuffering40" when you subscribe, and get 40 percent off.

Sydnee: So check that out.

Taylor: Sweet.

Sydnee: So I kind of alluded to, there are obviously like— our pop culture interests change as we get older. And I mean, some of that is just like, you know, it's not the '90s anymore, so you can't watch *Saved by the Bell* and *Dawson's Creek* forever. I did watch *Dawson's Creek* again last year, though, so actually that's not relevant to me.

Taylor: Oh, I don't... I never watched *Dawson's Creek*, I don't know what to say about that.

Sydnee: Um, I have found that as an adult, I'm a lot more willing to like, give new shows a try. I'm a lot more open-minded about what I might like. And I'm also a lot more willing to watch TV that, like, I'm just learning something. A lot of times, I will turn on something like the History channel— not when they're doing the not-history. I see you, History channel, during the entire month of October. I know what you're doing over there.

Taylor: Okay. Okay. You need to back right off, because spooky history is history, okay?

Sydnee: Some of it is not history so much as mythology, which is still fascinating, and I like to learn about...

Taylor: [strained] Still history!

Sydnee: Eh, if it didn't happen, I don't think it can count as history.
[laughs]

Taylor: Look, if the History channel is listening, I will listen to every documentary you ever will make about the Jersey Devil or the Loch Ness Monster or witches or pumpkin people. I don't care. I will watch them, I will like them. Don't listen to my sister. She doesn't appreciate the important parts of history.

Sydnee: I will watch History channel shows, I will watch— if Planet— man, I tell you, BBC America loves to play Planet Earth, and I love that about BBC America, because if Planet Earth is on again, I'll watch it again. I've seen the whole thing multiple times, and I'll watch it any time it's on. And then it's great, too, because I'll turn it on and I'll go make Charlie watch it. Look at these animals! Learn about this cave! I can never learn enough about caves!

Taylor: Yeah, I—

Sydnee: Except for the one that's full of bat guano. That's a little much sometimes. But still... learning shows.

Taylor: Well, I was gonna follow you there. I don't know about the bat guano, but I do think it's like, once again, it's kind of like that feeling of like, it's isolating, but it's also freeing to not feel like you've got to be part of a social network to kind of survive, like you do when you're younger.

Because you do have that freedom of I— I feel like I watch two kinds of shows. Either utter brain-rotting trash or entirely, like, somber and educational. I'm like, I watched five episodes of Cupcake Wars and then I watched a documentary about assisted suicide in Oregon. This was the same night, it was the same me, I was in the same mood the whole time.

And I'm not trying to have a conversation with anybody about it the next day. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, and I think this kind of thing is— it also helps inform, sort of, the rise of podcasts. Not so much ours; I would not call ours necessarily informational or a learning podcast.

Taylor: We're doing nothing here.

Sydnee: But like, there are a lot of those, right? And people enjoy 'em, and I think that that's part of it, is that as we get older, we have this like— I mean, it helps keep your brain alive, to learn things. Whether you're reading or listening or watching, the learning is important. And as an adult, I've come to appreciate that more and more.

I find myself really— I don't get to read the news a lot. I mean, I try to. I read snippets, I read headlines, I read short stories, I watched quick videos, it's not— I'm not saying I'm not up on current events, but I don't get to sit down and read, like, long-form articles or like, life and culture kind of— the stuff that, like, I'm interested in that and I would really like to check it out.

And I have really learned to appreciate that as an adult. Like, if I have some spare time... Obviously, it's not a paper paper now. I get the—

Taylor: [laughs] Yeah, no paper papers.

Sydnee: I get the Sunday Times in paper, 'cause we like to spread it all out and look at all the sections and share them with Charlie and all that kind of stuff, but when it's on my phone, but still, like, I've come to appreciate that a lot more. Like, reading just an interesting article about a person who did something neat, or about a part of the world that I don't know a lot about.

I wish I had that same— I mean, I always sort of liked learning, but not nearly as much as I do now.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, but I think it's also because maybe there was a sense— I know, I felt this way when I was younger, that everything I was doing had to lead to something. It had to be a part of what I was supposed

to become. Um, and so you couldn't just— you couldn't just learn about things for fun. You couldn't just spend time doing some random thing that caught your interest, because you had to be dedicated on the— the act of becoming something.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. I think that's true, and I think there was also, like, a lot of "schooling is the enforced learning," where like, I always think of books we were made to read, and how there were some books that I truly enjoyed and I loved, and like, I read and thought, "Man, I'm really glad we read this," but sometimes— I don't think that discussing or analyzing literature ruins it. I'm not suggesting that at all. I think it can do quite the opposite. But I think sometimes, the way that you're forced to interact with, like, any kind of art in schooling makes it tedious for you.

And I remember, like, book journaling ruining some books for me. Where it's just like, I associated them with sitting there, trying to come up with like another little paragraph to write. When I just wanted to read more. I just wanted to read the freaking book and be in it and be part of it and explore it and think about it. And instead, I was sitting there, writing my little paragraphs every chapter about, I don't know, what it meant to me or whatever.

Taylor: Well, I don't know. I think that kind of plays to a bigger thought that I think kind of ruled my brain and honestly added to a lot of misery in my young life that I don't have any more as an adult, and that was the idea that it all had to add up to something. Like, it all had to mean something. And I think it's, you know, once again— like I said at the beginning of the show, like, we cover different areas. I mean, I think it's unequivocal.

Syd, you did the things you set out to do. Maybe I didn't quite do what I set out to do. And that's okay. But I think that there's always this thought where there was the idea that you had to do— you had to amount to something, and there was no option if you didn't. Like, every—

Sydnee: I would— I would quibble. I would quibble.

Taylor: [laughs] I— I—

Sydnee: Have you ever gotten paid for art, Tey? Ever? Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah, but you know, I make my money as a bartender. That's how I pay my bills.

Sydnee: Yeah, but have you been paid for your art?

Taylor: Yes. In my—

Sydnee: That makes you a professional artist!

Taylor: Can I— can I—

Sydnee: You've done it!

Taylor: Do I get to make art all the time, the way that I want to? Do I get to make my own art? Do I have the time to?

Sydnee: Well, I don't heal the sick every minute of every day, but I'm still a doctor.

Taylor: I'm not upset about that. I was saying— my point is, that I think there was that thought where I thought, "Everything had to add up to something. Everything had to lead to me becoming what I was supposed to become, or else it was all for nothing."

And there was a very freeing moment when I realized, like, wait. I'm still here. I still haven't done the things I set out to do. I'm still alive. I'm still me. I'm still enjoying my life. And that's kind of when that, just as much as like, you did the things that you set out to do, and I'm very proud of you. I haven't quite consistently done that.

But both of us got to the point where it's like— but then there's a big thing you set out to do, and then there's just the everyday stuff that you're allowed to have, when you realize that you don't— it's not like a video game. You don't get to the ending and go like, "Okay. You know, achievement unlocked. I'm done."

It's like, no. You just keep on going. And like, there's no amount of achievement or not-achievement that will ever make or break you. Like, that's a really freeing thing of, I think, coming into adulthood. Of realizing, like, you know, there's not a cutoff point where somebody, like, counts your coins and goes, like, "Okay! You did it! You had a successful life."

Sydnee: Sure. Well, and it also frees you up to, like, learn and experience things just 'cause. Um, I'd say my first entry into that was actually cooking, where I never thought I would be in a kind of like— I mean, I'm not. I'm not saying, like, "I never thought I'd end up here." I'm not here— I'm not there. I never planned on ending up in some sort of, like, '50s situation where I cook dinner for my family every night, and like, waited for everybody to come home, like, standing by my casserole with my bouffant. But uh...

Taylor: Is that a— is that a bread-based dish or a hairdo? I don't know.

Sydnee: I think it's both.

Taylor: Okay. [laughs]

Sydnee: It's a bread-based hairdo.

Taylor: Okay. Cool.

Sydnee: [laughs] But I found that— and so for me, cooking was not a practical application. I can make enough things to survive. I know how to dump some lettuce in a bowl and add some vegetables. That's a salad.

Taylor: [laughing] Your family's so lucky.

Sydnee: What else do you need?

Taylor: No, your family's actually super lucky, but...

Sydnee: [laughs] But, like, I have learned as I've gotten older, to cook, largely just because I like knowing that stuff. Some of it is 'cause I like

eating. I do like eating. But some of it is also just 'cause like, the more things I know how to do, like, I know how to prepare that piece of meat.

I know how to cut the vegetables that way. Oh, I know how that should be cooked. I know what seasoning would go well with that dish you're trying to create, or like, what flavors tend to go into that kind of meal. I like knowing that stuff. It has no practical application. Like, it's interesting. I think Justin probably enjoys it some. But like, he likes to cook too. So...

Taylor: But—

Sydney: I mean, he does it too. But I don't know. I mean, it's more just for me. It's just, I like to know this stuff. And it's interesting, it's fun. And it was my first foray into, like, appreciating, learning, and mastering things that don't have an application in, like, my work life or something like that.

Taylor: But I think that that's— I don't know. I think it's— I— I am a nerd. I'm gonna put things in these terms. I think a big part of coming into yourself as an adult is realizing that the side quests are just as much, if not more important than the main quests in life. Like, the little things you learn along the way that enrich your daily life. Like, the things you can do for yourself on a daily basis. The skills you can acquire. The things you can enjoy. They actually are more important than the big— the big thing you are meant to or maybe not meant to achieve.

That thought— I remember thinking, when I was like— I was 18, thinking like, "If I don't become the most famous comic book artist in the entire world, my life will be garbage." And now, I'm like, 33, and I'm like, "Wow. I don't care. I have a great life. I love my life."

Like, I do a bunch of things to get by on my daily life. I have a bunch of hobbies that make me happy. Like, I wish I could go back in time and tell 18-year-old Taylor, like, "Dude, calm down! You're not gonna do that thing you wanted to do, but you're gonna have a lot more fun doing all the stuff you are gonna do on a daily basis that's gonna, like, give you a lot of enjoyment."

Sydnee: And like, you know, for me, sometimes that means I have washed every piece of clothing in our house.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: And that— sometimes, when I sit down and I know that the only clothes in the house that aren't clean are the ones that are on my body currently, man, that's a great feeling.

Taylor: Is that just, like, a relief thing? It's, like, clean— 'cause I get that.

Sydnee: It is. It's just like, I feel— there's so much— our life can be kind of chaotic. Again, this is not a complaint, but just with the kids, and we work multiple jobs, and the traveling, things can get kind of chaotic, so I think being a bit of a control freak, because I am inherently kind of a control freak, the things I can control, like, I cleaned [laughing] every piece of clothing in the house. Like, I'm literally, like, picking things up as people drop them and running to the washer. And like, I'll do laundry naked if I have to, just to, like...

Taylor: [laughs] Woah.

Sydnee: I mean, I've been there.

Taylor: Woah.

Sydnee: And I really think it's like a therapeutic thing. It has nothing to do with the need for clean clothes. It's not— Justin has not forced me to do this. This is not like a, you know, "This is women's work." There's nothing stereotypical about this. It's really— I think the laundry has become like a therapy for me, like, "I did all the laundry. I can control this. I can control the laundry. [laughs] Everything else in the world is outside of my control right now, but the laundry is within."

Taylor: "The laundry is within." Wow. Wow.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I feel like I gotta meditate on that statement for a second.

Sydnee: I think— I think that's a big part of it. I've learned to— you know the whole, the serenity prayer? I— “you've got to have the courage to change the things you can...

Taylor: Oh, yeah.

Sydnee: ...and serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the wisdom to know the difference.’ I think, like, the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, I will struggle with to the end of days. I think the courage to change the things I can has manifested itself in, like, controlling minute parts of our life that I have complete control over.

'Cause you learn as you get older that there's so many things you don't— like, there's so much that you have to be able to let go and just do your best, try your hardest, but know at the end of the day, you can't knock yourself around too much and beat yourself up and push yourself so hard, because it's out of your control.

Like, there's just stuff that, you know, the people around you, no matter how hard you love them and how hard you work for them and how much you do for them, you can't control them. Man, that's something I need to put on my wall in cross-stitch.

Taylor: It's funny, 'cause like, that's for as much as I felt as a kid that everything was up to this whim of, like, this magical occurrence, this important encounter I was gonna have that I might miss out on, I think the biggest understanding I've found in my life is, like, the rest of the world, who knows? I can only control myself. But myself, like, I can count on.

Like, myself is that one thing that I can come home to that can take care of me, reset me. Like, I agree with you, but it's like, I don't— I no longer feel like if I miss that one person I don't meet at that one night, if that's the opportunity I have, like that's— no. It's not possible. It all comes back to me. Which is maybe— I don't know. Maybe still the same kind of feeling, but like, from the opposite direction.

Sydnee: Well, it's a different— no, I think you're right. 'Cause I think we're talking about two sides of the same thing. What we're both talking about is having an internal locus of control.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: 'Cause I do think that's really important. When that idea was first introduced to me, I found it a very powerful idea. You wanna have the feeling that you can change, like, your situation. You're not powerless. You are not at the whims of the universe. That's an external locus of control, right? Like, it's outside you, and you just float along and hope things work out. I don't endorse that.

But what I do endorse is that while I can control myself and how I react to things and how I interact with people and how I try to take on challenges and cope with them, I can't control all the people around me. I can't control all the bad things that are gonna happen out there. And like, I can't spend my life trying to, you know, right every wrong and fix every wound and, you know, heal every broken thing.

And I think, like, for a long time, if anything in my sphere that I touched wasn't right, I took it on as like, "Now I fix this. And then I do this. And then I'm going after this. And then this is on me and my fault or because of or I didn't do or whatever," and I think at some point, as an adult, you are able to let go, or hopefully you can try to let go of that, and say, "I can only do what I can do. And I have to do the best that I can, being me, while accepting that other people are doing the best that they can, being them, and let them be them."

Taylor: And there's one good side to being an adult: it's that maybe you can help the younger versions of yourself that don't have people to help them.

Sydnee: Well, I hope that you've enjoyed the version of Still Buff that only has the two of us. Not too much, though, 'cause Raleigh will be back next week.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: Um, yes. But now, you just got the OG Smirl girls for this week. Um, thank you, Teylor.

Teylor: Thank you, Sydnee.

Sydnee: For not leaving and staying here. Being responsible, like an adult, and doing your podcast.

Teylor: That's all I have to do. I'm gonna, like, eat a salad and go to sleep by 10:45.

Sydnee: Yeah. Still, more responsible than our other sister.

Teylor: The beach.

Sydnee: Thank you, listeners. If you wanna tweet at us, you can at @StillBuff. If you want to email us, you can at StillBuffering@MaximumFun.org if you have thoughts or suggestions or questions or comments or topics. If you want to check out MaximumFun.org, there are a lot of other podcasts that we think you would enjoy, and we think you should go there.

And until— oh, and thank you to the Nouvellas for our theme song, Baby You Change Your Mind. And this has been Still Buffering, a sister's guide to teens through the ages. I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Teylor: I'm Teylor Smirl. [pause] Raleigh was a teenager. [laughs]

Both: [clumsily] And we were too.

Teylor: I didn't think that one through, huh?

Sydnee: No, we didn't. We didn't practice that at all.

[theme song plays]

[Maximum Fun chord]

MaximumFun.org.
Comedy and culture.
Artist owned.
Audience supported.

Nnekay: Hey. I'm Nnekay.

James: And I'm James. And together, we are the self-proclaimed wonder twins of podcasting, and host Minority Korner.

Nnekay: We tackle subjects like LGBTQ topics, pop culture...

James: And untold histories of American POCs, like the true story of escaped slave turned pirate turned navy man in the civil war, turned congressman, Robert Smalls.

Nnekay: Plus current events from our perspective.

James: Deep dive movie and TV reviews. You'll also get...

Nnekay: ...awesome book recommendations from the neighborhood friendly librarian.

James: Don't forget my award-winning Jennifer Hudson impressions. [gravelly singing] And I'm telling you...

Nnekay: While never taking ourselves too seriously.

James: Minority Korner. Because together...

Nnekay: We're the majority!

James: Every Friday, here on...

Both: ...Maximum Fun.