

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	This is Biz. I'm a part-time working mom with two full-blown kids.
00:00:05	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa. I have a family business, two young kids, and a toddler.
00:00:09	Biz	Host	This is a show about life after giving life. Don't listen with your kids, 'cause there will be swears. This... is <i>One Bad Mother</i> .
00:00:17	Music	Music	"Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i>			
00:00:20	Biz	Host	This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —maybe I can't solve it like I used to! Plus, Biz misses consistency; Theresa is still ruining birthdays; and we talk to author Patrice Karst and Dr. Dana Wyss about helping children process grief.
00:00:36	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and Theresa: <i>[Cheering]</i> Wooooo!
<i>[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective weeks.]</i>			
00:00:39	Biz	Host	<i>[Singing]</i> It's another one of those intros that feels weird to "woo" after!
00:00:44	Theresa	Host	Yeah. You shouldn't "woo" after the word "grief." It was—
<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>			
— <u>literally</u> the word grief that led into our "wooo."			
00:00:50	Biz	Host	To the "wooo." So—
00:00:52	Theresa	Host	We can't <u>not</u> woo!
00:00:53	Biz	Host	Well, if we're—if the woo represents all that is parenting.
00:00:58	Theresa	Host	<i>[Unconvinced tone]</i> Oh. Mm. Yeah.
00:00:59	Biz	Host	Is that what it represents?
00:01:00	Theresa	Host	Yeah!
00:01:01	Biz	Host	Then "wooo!"
00:01:03	Theresa	Host	Yeah, I guess so!
00:01:04	Biz	Host	I guess so.
00:01:04	Theresa	Host	Mm-hm.
00:01:05	Biz	Host	Theresa?
00:01:05	Theresa	Host	Yes.
00:01:05	Biz	Host	Speaking of "I guess so," how are ya? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:08	Theresa	Host	I'm pretty good. We had a pretty good weekend. Getting really good at this.
00:01:11	Biz	Host	Oh yes, you are!
00:01:13	Theresa	Host	So my baby—Curtis—
00:01:15	Biz	Host	Yeah, your baby! Your—I think—Curtis is what, like, eight months old? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:18	Theresa	Host	Yeah. He is my eight-month-old baby that's about to turn three.
00:01:22	Biz	Host	<i>[Makes strangled noise, then speaks in singsong-high voice]</i> You think you're eight months old but you're really three!
<i>[Both laugh.]</i>			
00:01:25	Theresa	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Yeah. And we actually took down the crib over the weekend, which was like... kinda like the last...
00:01:35	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Theresa: —thing!
Biz. Yeah. That's it!			
00:01:37	Theresa	Host	That was kind of it. Like, the last—y'know, like—I feel fine about it. I guess it's gonna hit me later. Um, and he's doing great. But—so his birthday's next week, and... I'm sure—it's, like, on a weekday so I'm

sure they'll, like, will do something at school like a little thing at school. But this is a no parties year. For the Thorn children. Okay? So I—I think I talked about this?

00:01:59 Biz Host Yeah, we've talked about no party years.
00:02:01 Theresa Host I—last year was a party year. Everyone had a party. Technically his party was just a family party 'cause he was turning two, and... he wasn't in school yet. But it was still a—we still, like, had a party! This year is a no-party year again. But he doesn't really remem—like, he doesn't really understand or get that and so the most recent birthday that anyone in our family had was Oscar's birthday, which was at the end of October—

00:02:27 Biz Host God.
00:02:28 Theresa Host

—and he had a birthday party at a park. So apparently... Curtis has been expecting—when we've been talking about his birthday coming up—he's been expecting he's gonna have his birthday at a park. And... I—not knowing this—have been all—like, thinking what are we gonna do for his birthday to make it special and he's been—my kids are really into Legos. He's been really into Legos recently. Legoland is not that far away. We haven't been since he was a baby. It's like a pretty chill family theme park day.

I'm like, perfect. He can do a lot of the things now; it'll be really fun. So I'm thinking I'm doing this great, ama—like, I'm thinking this is gonna like blow everyone's minds! 'Cause that's, like, a pretty special thing to do! So I—I brought it up to him yesterday, like, "So for your birthday, we're gonna go to Legoland!" And he's like—"No!!!"

[Biz laughs.]

Like, he's horrified. And he's like, my birthday's gonna be at a park! I'm having my birthday at the park! Like Oscar! And... I'm sitting here, just staring at him.

[Biz laughs.]

Literally staring at him. Because I'm thinking to myself—you don't understand how—like—first of all, I can't just be like, but it's not gonna be a part—like, he thinks—he doesn't think of it as a party versus anything else. It's just your birthday. This is your birthday. And so I can't—I was just like, oh my god. And it just like—the idea of like explaining this? And trying to like talk my kid into a trip to Legoland? Which is, like, a big drive. It's like a really big effort for all of us? So then I'm thinking—are we—and now my other kids are super excited!

00:04:11 Biz Host 'Cause they're excited!
00:04:12 Theresa Host 'Cause they really wanna go!
00:04:13 Biz Host They overheard you say this!
00:04:14 Theresa Host They overheard me say it.

[Biz laughs.]

So they're all excited. Oscar's trying to convince Curtis. He's going—he's, like, trying to tell him things you can do there and Curtis is kind of looking at him like, maybe. And so now—I don't know. That's the end of this for now? Like, to be continued? But I'm

basically just like—you guys? I don't—I don't wanna deal with this. Like, I don't wanna do it at a park. I don't wanna have a party after I came up with this scheme where it's a non-party year. I don't wanna take him to a park and not have a party because that will be sad. And he will not understand that. And I don't want to, like, force a theme park day—which is gonna be really expensive!— *[Laughs.]* Yeah! This is—this is a slippery slope moment!

00:04:55 Biz Host
 00:05:00 Theresa Host
 00:05:01 Biz Host

It is!
 This is—'cause part—'cause the other thing you—I interrupted you from saying was—I also don't wanna go back on the—y'know, if you say, okay, fine—well, fine! We'll do it! At the park. Right? Like, that's a slippery slope because—

00:05:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk
Biz: —then the other children—yeah!

Theresa: That's a slippery slope! 'Cause my kids then feel they can also switch this around.

00:05:19 Theresa Host
 00:05:27 Biz Host
 00:05:28 Theresa Host

And what I didn't say—what is maybe obvious? Is that—it's his third birthday and I want him to be happy!
 Of course!
 Like—do you know what I'm saying? It's not just about that, like, I must deliver a good birthday?

[Biz laughs.]

It's not even just that—that, like, weird mom guilt thing? It's like... it's like—it's exciting! I want him to have a special day! Like, I really do want him to be happy! Do you know what I mean?

00:05:44 Biz Host
 00:06:01 Theresa Host
 00:06:01 Biz Host

Yeah! This is one of those things that, like, again—pre-kids, or even like... very beginning of kids in your house. Is the scenario that I would never imagine? Like, the layers to it.
 Right.
 Like—but now, you got, like halfway into that story and when you said "I told him and he said no and then I couldn't say anything"—you're like, I couldn't—I was like, that's like the life flashing before your eyes moment! Right? Where you're like—I—everything slows down and your brain's going through all the things you just talked about and everybody around you—and, like, the other kids are like, we're on. And the—what, you gonna—like—oh. *[Sighs.]* Yeah.
 Yeah.

00:06:32 Theresa Host
 00:06:32 Biz Host
 00:06:33 Theresa Host
 00:06:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Yes!
 I'm tired. I'm sorry.
 Yeah! It's okay.
Biz: Yeah! That's a big—that's a—yeah! Classic parenting!

Theresa: I thought I knew the answer to that question and I didn't know the answer. So now— *[Laughs.]*

00:06:44 Biz Host
 00:06:45 Theresa Host
 00:06:46 Biz Host
 00:06:48 Theresa Host
 00:06:49 Biz Host

Classic.
 How are you, Biz?
 I am tired.
 Okay.
 I'm tired. Whatever. Getting older. *[Laughs.]*

[Theresa laughs.]

Getting older. Body's doing its own thing. Children are still in my house. So is Stefan. That's a good thing. Consistency: I miss it. I

miss being able to, like... say I'd like to do a thing and I'd like it to happen every day. And just—it's—it can't.

00:07:13 Theresa Host Yeah!

00:07:14 Biz Host It's like it can't.

00:07:16 Theresa Host I know!

00:07:16 Biz Host And I don't know how to explain to people—it just—

00:07:20 Theresa Host Sometimes it can't!

00:07:21 Biz Host It—it just—it can't happen. And that's frustrating. I think we even said on the show once, we are consistently being inconsistent? Like, if there's one thing—is that you're never gonna get consistent? And then I'm like—why can't I? And then I'm like—what does it have to be to become a consistent thing? Right?

Like—can you be consistent once a month? Is that a real—
[Laughs.] And then, is it really a question of consistency at that point in time? The answer's no to all those things. I miss consistency! It's like a theory. Like a universal theory that I no longer am able to comprehend. It doesn't exist for me. Yay!

00:08:04 Theresa Host That—can I say something about that, though? Like, I feel like that is—for my personality, anyway? That has truly been one of the hardest things about parenting, because I have this tendency to think, I know what I'm gonna do! I'll solve this problem by just doing it like this every single day from now on! And it makes me feel better because that used to work!

[Biz laughs.]

That used to work. And what—and the problem is, we think—we sometimes still think—I can just do this with sheer willpower. And energy 'cause we're imaging the energy we have when we were 26. If we're honest. But also we're just imaging, like, I can make this happen because I'm really good at executing. Like, I'm really good at making stuff happen. But now, we don't actually have that control anymore.

00:08:51 Biz Host Correct!

00:08:52 Theresa Host So we can't willpower ourselves through stuff that we used to be able to willpower ourselves through. And we're still expending that same energy trying to do it; we're just getting shut down.

00:09:05 Biz Host Shut down! Surprise, Theresa! I think this should actually be our topic for today!

00:09:11 Theresa Host Wow!

00:09:12 Biz Host Let's— *[Laughs.]* Let's not be consistent.

[Both laugh.]

And just change everything we were gonna talk about.

00:09:19 Theresa Host Okay!

00:09:19 Dr. Wyss Guest Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue.

00:09:20 Theresa Host Please—take a moment to remember: If you're friends of the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, you should assume that when we talk about other moms, we're talking about you.

00:09:27 Biz Host If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:09:31 Theresa Host Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice.

00:09:34 Biz Host Biz and Theresa's children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:09:38 Theresa Host Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss the weekly topic.]

00:09:43 Biz Host Theresa. "That was something that used to work."

00:09:46 Theresa Host Yeah!

00:09:47 Biz Host I think is a great— *[Laughs.]* A great umbrella for why not being able to be consistent is frustrating. I—like—this was not gonna be our topic for the day, but now I think it's a great topic to explore. 'Cause we clearly have things to say about it. Because I am like—we are not the same people. We've discovered that many times on the show.

00:10:11 Theresa Host Yeah.

00:10:12 Biz Host But I, too, think—when things aren't consistent, my brain immediately goes for—I will make these changes. And then that will help me become more consistent.

[Theresa laughs.]

The whole line of thinking is, I'd like to be doing such-and-such on a regular basis. That could be something with my children. Right? 'Cause it's not just consistency with self-care! It's consistency with house rules. It's consistency with—is this a birthday year or not? It's consistency with our partners, or our friends, or our work. There are lots of places consistency is supposed to be happening in our lives and it is hard to do! So again, going back, I say—I need more consistency for, let's say it's self-care. I can do this by changing x, y, and z in my day. And—yeah! I could do that! That—that's not a problem. Right?

00:11:18 Theresa Host Yeah.

00:11:18 Biz Host I've done it! I used to do it! All the time! Just a little willpower. Just a little—a little of the old commitment. And I—that's not it! Why?! Why?! What happened? Is it really just that we're tired or that there are more people, like, involved in our consistency? *[Laughs.]* That like—can we not be consistent because of the constant interruption? Or the noise? Or... y'know, should we feel bad that like I—why can't I just commit to this one simple act? Is it me? Or is it everybody else?

00:12:01 Theresa Host Can I try to answer that question?

00:12:04 Biz Host Oh, sure!

00:12:04 Theresa Host 'Cause I think it's like a lot of—I think it's a lot of things! I think—for one thing, this whole premise disregards all the consistency we are bringing to every single day? And there's a fatigue there? Like, how much structure can I be responsible for keeping together on our lives? Like—'cause we do!

00:12:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** We set up—a lot of stuff.

00:12:33 Theresa Host **Biz:** Yeah, no, it's true. There are some things. There is a—it's, like, president of everything type stuff. Like, we set up so many things. Y'know? From like the way our houses are set up, from our—to like our—

00:12:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** —weekly schedule, meals, kids' sleep. Yeah. All this stuff. Any activities or therapies or things—y'know—

00:12:52 Theresa Host **Biz:** Mealtimes. Right. Children's schedules. Sleep. Yeah. That's true. Brushing teeth. Right! Yeah!
Or stuff that we need to do for work, like—it's just—it's a lot? And it's so much more than it was before. So like I feel like—on the one—on—like—this—there is a big part of this that is—back when it was just me—or just me and Jesse—there were a—just a lot less things to be in charge of! To the point where if there was something new that I wanted to be in charge of—like an exercise goal or a cooking goal or like a social—y'know, like if there was something like that, there was space in my life and in my brain—

[Biz laughs.]

—to take those things on. And do them. And then, because there was space and energy for me to take that on, I was able to be effective at it because there wasn't a lot of interference! Like, the main interference was myself.

00:13:46 Biz Host Correct.
00:13:47 Theresa Host And so I could overcome myself 'cause I had the energy most of the time. And do it! And then once you do it, you feel good! 'Cause you're doing it! So then you see that you can do it and then you can keep doing it because you see yourself as someone who can do this.

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:04 Biz Host Do you know what I'm saying?
00:14:05 Theresa Host No, I do!
So like—I feel like now—even the idea that there is something I can be doing differently or better or more of? Is kind of flawed.

[Biz laughs.]

Like—like— *[Laughs.]* That—like—just the concept—unless it's something that really saves me time right away. Or really makes things better right away. Anything that's like—I'd let—I would—I can be a room parent!

00:14:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Right. That's a good one. Okay.

00:14:37 Theresa Host **Theresa:** I can take a parenting class!
I can—

[Biz laughs.]

—go to the gym more! I—like, all of those things are—I can add on this activity for one of my kids! I can do better at—it's like the New Year's Resolutions thing. It's an idea that is based in nothing. It's—

[Biz laughs.]

—not an achievable goal! It's not— *[Laughs.]* Do you know what I mean? Like—or—or if I'm gonna do it, something else is sacrificed. Because I'm maxed. I'm totally maxed. The next part to that is that—so then if I do delude myself enough into thinking I should do one of these things, then—the—the first failure is the reminder I can't—this was too much. I can't actually take this on. And then

that's it. It's over. It's not like a, well it didn't work this time; let's keep trying. You know, I know I can do this. Anymore. 'Cause I've—

[Biz laughs.]

As soon as the first failure, then I see, like, oh, yeah. Remember? I can't do stuff.

00:15:35 Biz Host 'K, I'll just say this. The first word that came to my mind—depressing!

00:15:42 Theresa Host Yeah!

00:15:42 Biz Host This is depressing! *[Laughs.]*

00:15:43 Theresa Host Yeah. Well—

00:15:45 Biz Host I'll move on past that.

00:15:46 Theresa Host I have something also about it that isn't depressing—

00:15:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** —but you go first. You can say why it's depressing. Yeah.

Biz: Okay. I mean—but the initial—

00:15:52 Biz Host The initial response is depressing. Because it goes back to that whole “I am a self” theory as well. The, like, if the things that we wanna take on or if the one failure indicates we shouldn't have even had that thought in the first place—that sort of, like, *[grumpy voice]* I can't have anything nice. Right? Like—I'm a blehhhh! Right? Whatever that is.

00:16:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Which then makes us not—I shouldn't try.

Theresa: I shouldn't try. Yeah.

00:16:23 Biz Host I don't deserve nice things. And that is something—whether we want to or not, we are trying to—to work. We are consistently trying not to be that person! So that's one thing. The other thing that you talked about was—you said the word “fatigue.”

00:16:46 Theresa Host Mm. Yeah.

00:16:48 Biz Host And I think this is interesting when it comes to consistency because when you were telling that story at the beginning about Curtis and the birthday and none of that being what you thought—

[Theresa laughs.]

—that was gonna be, I thought fatigue does not help with consistency for, like, house rule consistency. Or self-consistency. 'Cause fatigue's the one that's, like—yep! I saved this time to do this thing. For myself. I tired.

00:17:22 Theresa Host Yeah.

00:17:23 Biz Host Goodnight! *[Laughs.]* Not gonna do it. Sleeping was not the thing I was going to do, but I think that's what it's going to be. Right? Like—consistency is so tied together with the slippery slope of either slipping into house rules going down the shitter every once in a while. Slippery sloping into not doing anything for yourself. Like, all of our self-care going to the side. Slippery sloping into taking on too much! As well!

It can go the other way as well! Like, the consistency thing—what has brought this up for me? Is my therapist—as we are trying—after we've done a year of deep diving and, y'know, trauma integration. We are now trying to really help me reconnect with my creativity. I don't do anything creative anymore. I don't sew anything. I don't like... y'know—

00:18:18 Theresa Host You don't make a podcast every week— *[Laughs.]*
00:18:19 Biz Host I—okay, yes, I make a podcast!
00:18:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Sorry. *[Laughs.]* I'm sorry, it's just—don't say I don't do anything creative. Come on.

00:18:26 Theresa Host **Biz:** But guys—I know. But—every—okay. I—alright.
00:18:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk Come on.
Biz: Not to the degree that was bringing me joy—

00:18:31 Biz Host **Theresa:** That you—yes. Great.
00:18:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk —even early with children.
Theresa: Okay. Gotcha.

00:18:34 Biz Host **Biz:** I am not—
00:18:36 Theresa Host —making things with my hands.
00:18:37 Biz Host Got it.
Make plenty with my mouth, guys.

[Both laugh.]

And so—and consistency is one of the reasons that this is blocked for me. 'K? No question. So she has suggested this project from that book *The Artist's Way*, where you get up and, like, in the morning.

00:18:55 Theresa Host Morning pages!
00:18:56 Biz Host Morning pages! You know!
00:18:58 Theresa Host Of course!
00:18:58 Biz Host I didn't! So the morning pages, you're just supposed to like five minutes, ten minutes, whatever you can commit every day. Wake up—

00:19:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** —when you have a quiet moment and you just write.

00:19:08 Biz Host **Theresa:** No matter what. Yeah. Yeah.
You don't edit it. Gobbledygook. If I wrote “blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah” for like five minutes—that is fine. *[Long pause.]* I—when is the quiet moment that's consis—'cause she said the key to this is consistency! It can't be at, like, eight in the morning one day, ten at night the next day. You've got to do it the same time every day.

00:19:29 Theresa Host Yeah.
00:19:31 Biz Host I feel like I'm gonna go back to her, like, in a week and be like—no. That's not—what else? What else you got? *[Laughs.]*

00:19:37 Theresa Host No.
00:19:37 Biz Host What else you got? So that got me thinking about the consistency thing. Like, that should be a very simple act. But it's not. It's incredibly complicated to find that time to do that.

00:19:49 Theresa Host Well—that reminds me of Liz Gilbert, when we had her on the show. And she was just like—that's—like, she was basically like—the—and—this is how I'm kinda trying to bring this back around to how it's not depressing, this whole idea? Because—her point was like, are you craze—like, are you crazy? Don't try to do morning pages every day! You have children! Like, you're—this is not conducive to your life and this is bringing you, like more of a sense of “I can't do it.” Y'know what I mean? Like, this is not a good feeling to like be trying to do this. Like, that's not the right fit.

So what I'm trying to figure out is because that—that is the other side of this. Which is basically like... it's the—it's the acceptance. The letting go thing. Y'know? It's like—the thing that is not depressing about, like, what we're saying is—to me—is that our whole basis for like setting these—these goals or trying to do better? Is this like very— *[though laughter]* very cultural idea that it's up to me to change my life and make my life the way I want it to be. Yes!

00:20:58 Biz Host
00:20:59 Theresa Host

That is very cultural. That is not the same for everyone on planet earth. That is like—

00:21:03 Biz Host
00:21:05 Theresa Host

What?! *[Laughs.]*

Very—that is a cultural value? That is specific to how we were raised. And in the context of our lives right now? It may not actually apply. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

As much as we would like to think. Like, it's in our bones? 'Cause that's part of—again, part of our culture. How we were raised. How we—how our brains have developed. But like—there's only so much you can do. Do you know what I mean? Like, we're still in this system that is set up the way that it is set up, and our lives are what they are. And the idea that we can like change our lives by just saying, "I'm going to do blah, blah, blah—"

[Biz laughs.]

"—on top of everything else I'm doing." Like, it's just—sometimes it's just not realistic. And so then I think... the part that is helpful to me about this conversation? It's acceptance that like, I'm not broken.

00:22:01 Biz Host
00:22:02 Theresa Host

Mm.

I'm doing great. Like, I'm doing—I'm making the most of the situation that I'm in right now? And I'm finding a way to make things work. The best way that they can for me. But like, that's—the answer to that is not always going to be "I will do better." I'll do everything I'm doing right now, only a little better.

[Biz laughs.]

But obviously that's not taking into account, like, the genuine desire to do this stuff! And to have that creative outlet. So it's—I don't know the answer to that part of it? I just do know that it doesn't work to just give *[though laughter]* ourselves more to do.

[Biz laughs.]

00:22:46 Biz Host

Do you know what I'm saying? Like, there has to be another way. Do you mean just accepting that we consistently will never be consistent again?

00:22:52 Theresa Host

I don't know!

00:22:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: *[Makes unconvinced noise]* I don't know if I like that. Yeah! That's—I don't—I don't either. I mean, what was once—

Theresa: That's hard for me. I don't do very well with that. Some people do. *[Laughs.]*

00:23:00 Biz Host What was once kind of funny and true about the bar being so low— as my kids get older and as we enter this other place of like everybody’s in school—like, the scenario has changed some. So... with my time being different now than it was when I had, like, an infant or toddler with me all the time or whatever—like, I have some room to change what I’m consistent about.

But if I’m out of practice being consistent because I have been... so consistent with the needs of others, sort of? Y’know? Like—how do i—how do I shift? How—if I’ve suddenly got—there may be a day where we all have an extra—y’know, chunk of time! Not even like 15 minutes. ‘Cause that’s bullshit.

00:23:54 Theresa Host
00:23:54 Biz Host

Right.
But like, a chunk of time or a day or whatever. I would hate to see the acceptance of the low bar or the—however you wanna phrase it. ‘Cause I agree. I think, yeah! We do a shit-ton! That we are consistently doing. But when we don’t have to do that... how do we bring back the consistency?

00:24:18 Theresa Host
00:24:19 Biz Host

I hear that.
So I think, like, that—that—this may be a conversation about just being in sort of different places right now with ages of kids and what’s happening in our houses, where it’s like—okay. I—y’know, I do have some more wiggle room! I—I—I should be able to—say, for example—write every day for 10 minutes.

00:24:39 Theresa Host
00:24:40 Biz Host
00:24:43 Theresa Host
00:24:44 Biz Host

Mm-hm.
But... I also still don’t.
Mm-hm.
Because... while I want consistency, everybody else has their idea of what consistency is that’s living in my house. They—the consistency of me answering their questions. The consistency of me watching *Wild Kratts* in the morning with them. Their consistency of... breakfast. Or—do you know what I mean? Like, I think we’re also not being fair to ourselves if we are living with other people in our house that... they also have what is consistent to them.

00:25:16 Theresa Host
00:25:17 Biz Host
00:25:19 Theresa Host

I know.
That involves us.
That—I—that makes total sense. Like, I think it’s a—it’s a priority thing? Where like—when our kids were babies, we were prioritizing certain things about them to keep them alive. For survival. Which is—which makes sense. Now that they are older and they’re surviving and they’re doing okay—

[Biz laughs.]

We’re still often prioritizing their consistency and still sacrificing some things that might actually serve us and maybe even our families better. Right? So I think that makes total sense. Like, reassessing that a little bit? Like—can—can something wait because it’s a priority for me to do this thing that I wanna do? Like, yeah! That’s—

00:26:06 Biz Host
00:26:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk

But then there’s all the work of, like, but now I have to explain that—
Biz: —and get their understanding.

Theresa: Explain that over and over until—yeah. Yeah!

00:26:14	Biz	Host	Because you're asking them to change what is a known consistent for <u>them</u> !
00:26:18	Theresa	Host	Yeah.
00:26:19	Biz	Host	Well. We—probably shoulda stuck with that first topic we were talking about: scissors. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
00:26:28	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:26:46	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Music: Laid-back acoustic guitar plays in the background.
			<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Blinkist. Blinkist takes the best key takeaways, the need-to-know info from thousands of nonfiction books, and condenses them down into just 15 minutes. That you can read or listen to on your phone, tablet, or computer. Do you remember when you used to like to learn things? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:27:03	Biz	Promo	<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
			I do! 12 million people use Blinkist right now and it has a huge, ever-growing library from self-help, business, and health, to history books!
00:27:19	Theresa	Promo	<i>[Through laughter]</i> With Blinkist, you get unlimited access to read or listen to a <u>massive</u> library of condensed non-fiction books. All the books you want and all for one low price. Right now, for a limited time, Blinkist has a special offer just for our audience. Go to Blinkist.com/badmother to try it free for seven days, <u>and</u> save 25% off your new subscription. That's Blinkist—spelled "B-L-I-N-K-I-S-T"— Blinkist.com/badmother to start your free seven-day trial.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:27:55	Theresa	Host	Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel <u>better</u> about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.
00:28:15	Biz	Host	Genius fail time, Theresa. Genius me!
00:28:19	Clip	Clip	<i>[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]</i>
			Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my <u>God</u> ! I <u>saw</u> what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying <u>attention</u> ! <u>Wow</u> ! You, mom, are a <u>genius</u> . Oh my <u>God</u> , that's <u>fucking genius</u> !
			<i>[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their genius moments of the week.]</i>
00:28:33	Theresa	Host	Okay. So... <i>[sighs.]</i> Normally, take all parenting books with a grain of salt. Right? But I will say—I have found one that has actually helped me. Made things better at my house. It's called <i>Calmer, Easier, Happier Parenting</i> , which was a title that totally turned me off. Probably appeals to other people. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>

But I was like, oh, god, no. This won't—this won't. But based on who recommended it to me? I thought, okay. They wouldn't—they know. And they wouldn't recommend this to me knowing my kids, y'know, if it didn't—if it wasn't helpful. And I will say—it—obviously, it's not gonna change our lives or change who lives in my house. But the thing that has really shifted is it is, like, all about—basically, like, positive reinforcement and descriptive praise? Which I kind of thought I knew what that was? And I kind of thought that I hated it? Mm.

00:29:34 Biz Host
00:29:34 Theresa Host

Even though I kind of did it sometimes? But just basically... I got—I feel like I got a handle on a technique for it? That has actually changed—for the better—like, my relationship with my kids. And has, like, really made certain things a lot easier? It took a few weeks to, like, really start to see it working? But it actually—
[Laughs.] Has! So I—I guess I consider this a genius moment! Because, like, certain things that used to feel really hard? Are feeling really good.

00:30:13 Biz Host
00:30:14 Theresa Host
00:30:15 Biz Host
00:30:18 Theresa Host
00:30:18 Biz Host
00:30:23 Theresa Host
00:30:24 Biz Host

Good job!
Yeah.
This is—that is—that's some excellent work!
Thank you.
Good job! My genius carries an equal weight. *[Laughs.]*
Okay. *[Laughs.]*
Of emotional growth. Katy Belle, Stefan and I all enjoy watching *Star Trek: Next Generation* together.

[Both laugh.]

I grew up watching—well, I didn't grow up. I was a little older. But anyway, *Next Gen*—I really love. Watched with my parents. We also watched the original *Star Trek*. I am a *Star Trek* fan. Stefan never watched them, so when Netflix put them back out all re-digitalized, it was something he could watch at night where I didn't have to be—like, it wasn't one of those “You're watching a show without me!” It'd be, like, enjoy! Which was its own genius.

But then Katy Belle started wanting to hang out and watch it and she's way into it and loves it and it is really nice! We just... after Ellis goes down, we just sit. And watch 45 minutes of Captain Picard just getting fucked with in space. *[Laughs.]*

00:31:14 Theresa Host
00:31:15 Biz Host
00:31:17 Theresa Host
00:31:17 Biz Host
00:31:18 Theresa Host
00:31:18 Biz Host
00:31:19 Caller Caller

That's awesome.
It is really just nice.
Good.
Yup.
Good job.
Thanks.
[Answering machine beeps.]

Hey, Biz and Theresa! This is a genius! And also I just have to say there are times I call the hotline and don't leave a message? Just because it's nice to be able to hear someone telling me, personally, one-on-one, “You're doing a great job!”

[Biz laughs.]

So thanks for that! Um, this is like a really minor genius in the grand scheme of things? But it's big to me? So we—our third baby is—like, we're all done. 'Cause I have hyperemesis when I'm pregnant and we're not having any more kids. And I'm really sad because he's gonna be two next month so I'm starting to pack up all the baby stuff and—you can probably hear him and Blippie in the background. But I'm really sad because he's outgrowing all of his little baby hooded towels! But my hair is so long it's literally down to my ass right now and I have discovered that the headwrap on a baby hooded towel? More or less fits around my head?

[Biz laughs.]

And then the rest of the towel is long enough to wrap my hair up because typical, like, hair twisty towels are just, like, too short for my hair anymore. And so I am able to... salvage his baby hooded towels and keep them around a little longer and enjoy the memories of him being all bundled up in a cute little hooded towel because now I can use them on my long-ass hair.

[Biz laughs.]

So any other moms out there with long-ass hair? Like, hair literally long enough that it's touching your ass? Grab a hooded towel and wrap that hair up and stop dripping everywhere on your clean clothes. Because it's a game-changer. So—minor genius, but big deal to me. Thanks. I'm finally doing a great job. I'm gonna take the win where I can get it. You guys are awesome. Bye.

00:33:00 Biz Host

I am pretty sure that this is not your definitive “best job” moment.

[Laughs.]

00:33:05 Theresa Host

No. I'm pretty sure you've had other great jobs.

00:33:09 Biz Host

But—good job! I love this genius.

00:33:12 Theresa Host

Yeah, sure!

00:33:13 Biz Host

I love this genius!

00:33:14 Theresa Host

Yeah.

00:33:14 Biz Host

That is—you are doing a great job.

00:33:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I also like—

Theresa: Way to repurpose something!

00:33:18 Biz Host

Yes! Yessss! And embrace your last baby's—

[Theresa laughs.]

—childhood.

Failures!

00:33:27 Clip Clip

[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]

Theresa: *[In a voice akin to the Wicked Witch of the West]* Fail. Fail. Fail. FAIL!

[Timpani with foot pedal engaged for humorous effect.]

Biz: *[Calmly]* You suck!

00:33:34 Biz Host

Fail me, Theresa!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their weekly failures.]

00:33:35 Theresa Host Okay. This is an actual fail. Over the holidays, Grace asked for a sip of my wine. Which had never happened. And I let her have a sip of my wine, thinking this will be the end of this! But she actually liked it. She said it tasted bad but it *[slightly mocking voice]* “felt so good.”

00:33:58 Biz Host Oh, god.

00:33:59 Theresa Host In her throat or something.

[Biz laughs.]

I don't know. I really regretted doing that. But I—I—I mean, I don't know. It is what it is! Y'know? But so—then she was talking about alcohol and, like— *[Laughs.]* Talking about it in a very positive way for the next few days after that. And it was—Jesse and I were just looking at each other like, oh my god. This—I don't even know. Like, I don't even know. So Curtis overheard everything.

[Biz laughs.]

He listens to everything and he heard her say a lot of different things. And when we were at soccer the other night, I was offering him his water 'cause it was a water break, and he was like, no, no, no to everything that night. Like, I don't wanna do this. I don't like soccer. I don't like the coach. I don't like my shoes. I don't like this. I don't like—I don't want that. I wanna go home. Blah, blah, blah. And I handed him his water and he said, “I don't want water! I want alcohol!”

[Both laugh.]

00:35:02 Biz Host Wow.

00:35:02 Theresa Host Yeah.

00:35:02 Biz Host There ya go.

00:35:04 Theresa Host Yeah.

00:35:04 Biz Host That—there's multiple things happening in that.

00:35:07 Theresa Host I know.

00:35:08 Biz Host Yeah. It's the old, sure, try it—

00:35:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** —you're gonna hate it. We've done it!

00:35:12 Biz Host **Theresa:** Yeah. You're gonna hate it.

00:35:16 Theresa Host We've let Katy Belle try—y'know, oh god. I'm sorry.

00:35:18 Biz Host Yep. Yep. Yep.

00:35:59 Theresa Host Okay. Katy Belle had a friend who had a yard sale? This weekend? And so Katy Belle was going to hang out at the yard sale. And Ellis wanted to go to the yard sale. And I knew these people had Legos. And Ellis is very into Legos. And while I am always impressed that six-year-old Ellis can go through a random box of mini Lego figures that have been de-assembled and re-assembled in the wrong ways and identify all the Star Wars ones—I was just like, what the fuck is happening? He's like—I mean, like, obscure. 'K? The plus side of this is—we—we took home some really fun Legos.

00:36:00 Biz Host Cool.

00:36:08 Crosstalk Host The fail is, we went back to pick up Katy Belle? And I'm just gonna say we now have... a whole lot of Legos.

00:36:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Oh. Yeah. 'Cause that's what you need.

00:36:12 Biz Host Biz: We just went ahead and helped—
'Cause that's definitely not what we need?

[Theresa laughs.]

00:36:18 Theresa Host I mean—like... it's—they're in the garage.
Wow.
00:36:20 Biz Host But it was—it was a good deal?
00:36:21 Theresa Host Okay.
00:36:22 Biz Host Eh, it wasn't. There's so many fucking Legos in my fucking house.
[Laughs.]

[Theresa laughs.]
00:36:27 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hey, *One Bad Mother!* This is a fail! I'm pretty entertained by it, though, so it's like... it could be worse. But I... have dinner plans with my in-laws tonight? My husband is at work. And I was thinking, you know? We're just gonna get ahead of the bathtime and after you eat lunch, uh, we'll just give you a bath!

Which—that was a great genius! 'Cause he was covered in peanut butter and jelly! What I didn't expect—or I guess the fail part, which is coming up—is that bath time happened. Went great. And we always kinda let him run around naked for a little bit. He's 15 months old, so. He takes a piss on the floor and I'm like, okay.

[Biz laughs.]

Like... I let you run around without a diaper on so this is to be expected. Whatever. The real, like, crux of this fail is when I go, alright. So I'll just clean up some pee. Kinda finished the thing I'm doing and then turn around to see—oh! He's stomping in the pee like it's a puddle—

00:37:30 Biz Host *[Nonchalantly]* Sure.
00:37:30 Caller Caller —and then running around the house. So... it's not just—oh, I have to clean up some pee. It's, oh, I have to like mop the floor and wash his feet again 'cause he's running around in his own urine!

[Biz laughs.]

00:37:46 Biz Host Thanks for the show! You're *[though laughter]* doing a good job.
00:37:48 Theresa Host Oh, yeah. Yep!
00:37:48 Biz Host Yeah.
Yep! Yep! You are a horrible, uh, parent! You let that child dance in pee. You're a horrible parent. Not at all.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:38:08 Music Music But, y'know. For the sake of the show—wow! Don't share that with anybody in line at Target!
"Mom Song" by Adira Amram. Mellow piano music with lyrics.

*You are the greatest mom I've ever known
I love you, I love you
When I have a problem, I call you on the phone*

I love you, I love you

[Music fades out.]

00:38:33 Biz Promo

Music: Jazzy piano music plays in background.

One Bad Mother is supported in part by Beta Brand. Do you have a to-do list that never seems to end? Yes. Running from a flight straight into a meeting? Sometimes.

[Theresa laughs.]

Still have to cook dinner for yourself—and everyone else? *[Laughs.]* Beta Brand's dress pant yoga pants are perfect for the office, home, and anywhere your day takes you.

00:38:55 Theresa Promo

With Beta Brand, you never have to sacrifice comfort or function for style! Beta Brand's dress pant yoga pants are super comfy, perfectly stretchy, and stay wrinkle-free. Whatever your style, Beta Brand has the pants to match. Choose from dozens of colors, patterns, cuts, and styles—like bootcut, straight leg, skinny, cropped, and more. They even have a pair with eight—yes, eight!—pockets.

00:39:21 Biz Promo

Right now, our listeners can get 20% off their first order when you go to BetaBrand.com/badmother. That's 20% off your first order at BetaBrand.com/badmother! Millions of women agree—these are the most comfortable pants you'll ever wear to work. Go to BetaBrand.com/badmother for 20% off.

[Music ends.]

00:39:45 Biz Host

Hey, Theresa! Let's call someone today!

[Cheerful, upbeat choral music.]

Theresa? This week we are talking to two people! We have Patrice Karst, who is the bestselling author of *The Invisible String*, *The Invisible Leash*, and *The Invisible Web*; *You Are Never Alone* and *Invisible String Lullaby*. She has also written *The Smile that Went Around the World*. We also have with us Dr. Dana Wyss, who holds a doctorate from Leslie University in expressive therapy and is a board-certified art therapist and licensed marriage and family therapist. Her studies focus on art-based research. Together, they co-authored *The Invisible String Workbook*. Welcome, Patrice and Dr. Wyss!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other and their guests.]

00:40:39 Patrice Karst Guest

Thanks! Nice to be here! Thanks for having us!

00:40:43 Biz Host

Before we get started, we always like to ask our guests—who lives in your house? So, Patrice—let's start with you! Who lives in your house?

00:40:52 Patrice Guest

It's myself— *[Laughs.]* And I have a, um, ten-month-old, heavily-shedding wiener dog named Luna.

00:41:00 Biz Host

Ha. The wiener dog!

[Biz and Theresa laugh.]

I love it!

00:41:06	Patrice	Guest	The wiener dog!
00:41:06	Biz	Host	The wiener—
00:41:07	Patrice	Guest	There's nothing like them.
00:41:09	Biz	Host	No! Nope! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Patrice laughs.]</i>
			No, there is not. There were two in my neighborhood growing up and they <u>taunted</u> and tormented me my entire—
00:41:17	Patrice	Guest	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Oh no!
00:41:19	Biz	Host	Nah, they were alright. They were alright. But like—anyway. I'm not gonna derail us on the wiener dog story.
			<i>[Patrice laughs.]</i>
			Of my childhood. Uh, we will save that for another time. <i>[Through laughter]</i> Dr. Wyss, who lives in your house?
00:41:31	Dr. Dana Wyss	Guest	Um, I live there with my husband and we have a year-and-a-half, um, beagle.
00:41:38	Biz	Host	Oh, now—
00:41:39	Dr. Wyss	Guest	So, they have not met yet.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			Our two dogs have not met yet, but they probably should. And ours is named Lays Wick—
			<i>[Patrice laughs.]</i>
00:41:46	Biz	Host	What?
00:41:46	Dr. Wyss	Guest	After the movie <i>John Wick</i> —
00:41:48	Biz	Host	Oh.
00:41:48	Dr. Wyss	Guest	Which was probably not a smart name 'cause he is a man of—a dog of focus?
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			And he will hunt anything he can find down.
00:41:56	Biz	Host	He will kill you in a matter of minutes!
			<i>[All laugh.]</i>
			I love it! Alright. Well, let's get into the books and the workbook. First of all, Patrice—your books basically are designed to spread the message that no one is ever truly alone because we are connected to everyone we love through invisible strings. Um, this book, I know, is used a <u>lot</u> in helping children with grief and loss. Can you tell us about the string metaphor and how you came up with that?
00:42:32	Patrice	Guest	Yeah. It's one of my favorite stories to tell! Um, so... 20 years ago—22, maybe, now? I don't know, exactly. But my son was, um, small little guy. Like, he was four or five. And I was a single working mom and he had really bad separation anxiety. And, um, when I would bring him to preschool and leave to go to work he would cry. And then I would cry and we would both just be a hot mess and it was just—y'know. It wasn't good!

It was—it was a sad thing and nothing I said to him seemed to comfort him until one day, I told him what was obvious to me, but I guess I just spelled it out and said—y’know, we’re connected by an invisible string! And when you miss me, just pull on the string—tug on the string, and I’ll feel it in my heart and I’ll tug back and then you’ll feel me, but I’m with you all day long and never forget we’re connected by this invisible string. And that was it! That was the magic bullet. It was a voila, y’know, his—his tears dried. That was the last of the separation anxiety. From then on, when I would leave in the morning he’d say, mom, I’m gonna be tugging the string!

[Biz laughs.]

And I’d say, I’m gonna tug it right back! And then all his little friends wanted to hear the story—was there really an invisible string that they had to their moms and dads or grandparents or animals or what have you? And—um, so I knew that I had something very special. I knew that—that somehow this concept of an invisible string was a, y’know, a tangible concept that a child could understand of a very abstract thing, which is love! Y’know.

How do you really explain what love is? Well, love is an invisible string! It’s something that connects us. And long story short, I went to a—I wrote it as a story. I thought this would be a really important children’s book and I went to a publisher that I knew—very small publisher who’s, like, sort of a metaphysical New Age—never done a kid’s book before. And I approached him and sent him the manuscript and he said, let’s publish it! So it came out in 2000 and, uh... the rest is history!

00:44:42 Biz Host

Did you—I mean, as you said—it started from this place of helping children, y’know, understand that, y’know, we are connected through love and—did you at the time realize that it was also going to be such a—a wonderful— *[sighs.]* Way to help children deal with—with grief?

00:45:09 Patrice Guest

No. Uh—well, I’ll tell you. That’s—that’s interesting, too, because—um, the publisher and I—I had written one—one word on one page in the book. The word “heaven.” Um, because I did think that it was very important—though it was certainly not the focus of the book—it was one word on one page. Uh, I thought it was very important that if we’re gonna explain this concept of the string that transcends time and space that—that we, y’know, let the world know that, um, the children know that they’re connected forever to those that they love that have passed from this earthly plane.

And the publisher at the time was very reticent. He didn’t want it to, y’know, just to bring up the idea of death! Y’know? In a—in a kid’s book! And—and all of that. But I fought! Y’know. I fought for that word! And it’s pretty ironic because that one word on that one page is what has really just propelled *The Invisible String* on to, y’know, a much bigger stage. Even though it is—the number one book for children for death and dying, it’s also used for multitudes of other reasons. Celebrations and—y’know. But—I don’t think it would’ve gotten the exposure and the popularity it did if... we had left out that one subject.

And that's the one that I probably get the most letters about. People profoundly thanking me for helping their children—helping to be able to bring up the conversation about death, which is so important. *[Laughs.]* I can't emphasize that enough, y'know. It's an important subject that we cannot shy away from and kids are going to face death! Be it a hamster or the dead bird they see when they're taking a walk or what they hear on the news or a beloved grandparent. So the sooner we can, um, bring up the—y'know, the conceptualization of death, the better. I think. With kids.

00:46:56 Biz Host Well, that actually leads me to you, Dr. Wyss. Your—your work is in marriage and—and family therapy and you have used... *The Invisible String* in your therapy sessions, right? This is how—this was a tool for you. Correct?

00:47:13 Dr. Wyss Guest Correct. And that's how we ended up meeting originally. So I work in a locked placement where the children have been removed from their homes because of abuse and neglect and loss and we have about six tiers that we work with? And I do the training for the whole entire building. So not only was I using it for individual therapy and the work I did with the clients, but I've also used the book, um, as a resource and a guide to discuss grief and loss and to discuss trauma and to discuss just connection in general. In almost all of my trainings I do. So I've probably read the book single-handedly to—

[Biz laughs.]

—probably about 20,000 people myself.

[All laugh.]

00:47:55 Biz Host I know, I was gonna say! With your experience in your field and as a licensed therapist, can you talk a little bit more about... why you—how you have found this book helpful with children dealing with grief? Y'know, despite the fact that we know this is a wonderful book about any separation anxiety you might have, but... but ding ding! This really has become tied with helping us talk to our children about this. So can you talk a little bit about why it—it is such a helpful tool?

00:48:28 Dr. Wyss Guest It's just that—such a concrete representation of something that's a felt sense. It's really hard to pinpoint this understanding of connection and how you feel it and how it happens and in—in most of the books I read, which—there's some great ones out there! There's not such this beautiful, concrete, easy-to-understand—it was like what Patrice was saying before, just metaphor! That just makes sense. And as we started using this book with our youth, we started seeing them say things to us like... I know they're not here anymore but I still feel it. I'm feeling the tugs so I know—I know they're somewhere. And it's okay.

So it became this really beautiful metaphor and way for them to tangibly feel people that they were no longer with. And... it's also how—with adults' understanding, that haven't experienced grief and are working with children who are having these profound incidents of grief and loss. If you haven't had that experience, it's really hard to communicate and understand it. So I think the book also bridges that gap? For people who are helping, but don't really fully have that sense or have never felt it.

00:49:43 Biz Host So... you—because you’ve been using it in your practice—talk to us about how the collaboration began. And... the workbook that came out of that collaboration a little.

00:49:55 Dr. Wyss Guest Well, one of the clients we were doing the work with, and that we were using because of the grief and loss issue—actually, two of the youth we were working with—one wrote a poem and another one did a card for Patrice. And between them and a group that I was training at the time, I—I shared the poem with the group I was training with and everyone’s like, you should tell Patrice and share it! And I was like—

[Biz laughs.]

She’s not gonna respond back to us. Just stop.

[All laugh.]

00:50:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk And so... I—for probably, like, a month—
Patrice: But she has no life, so she did! *[Laughs.]*

Dr. Wyss: —I was like, everyone—I was—

[All laugh.]

00:50:27 Dr. Wyss Guest Everyone was begging me. They’re like, you found her email in the book! Just reach out to her and tell her what we’ve done with it! And I was like, okay. Fine. So I reached out through email after a lot of—of encouragement.

[Biz laughs.]

From some people I’ve trained and from the youth who were, like, so excited to share it with her. And, um, within—probably about a week after that? We had plans to meet and discuss and just talk about how we’ve used the book and the activities we’ve done and we met at one of my favorite restaurants in Venice Beach and it’s now even more of my favorite restaurant—

[Biz laughs.]

—because it became a place that created one of my dreams in life, which was to publish with Patrice! So.

00:51:12 Biz Host It is amazing. That the—the workbook—how—I guess I wanna talk about... hear from both of you a little bit about how you think the workbook is best put to use, and—and who it’s for. I was looking at it, and I was thinking—some of this, I—I—would be hard for—if it was just, like, me and my one child. *[Laughs.]* Like, to be like—

[Someone laughs.]

“Now we’re gonna—now we’re gonna, y’know, draw this or you can—you can, y’know, do this!” Like, my kid would probably look at me and be like, nope! *[Laughs.]* I’m gonna go! I’ve gotta do—I’m gonna process a different way. But I could also see it working really well in a group scenario and—that’s my kids. That’s not other kids. Y’know?

So... and I could also see it being something that would help me process it, even though my child might not be wanting to do the workbook exactly as—anyhoo. All that said, Patrice, I—I'd like to ask you first, what—when you guys started working on this workbook and—and got through with it, how did you sort of envision it being used? Who was it for?

00:52:24 Patrice Guest

Well—y'know, originally when Dana, um, when we met for lunch she started telling me about all the different, wonderful activities they had created. She had created for use with the workbook. With the—with *The Invisible String*. And—'cause *The Invisible String* just lends itself to so many different kinds of projects and activities. And so I envision that it would be used by, y'know, camps and schools and therapists and, y'know, things like that. But the more we sort of dug into it in the different activities started, um, being created, it really occurred to me that—yes.

Not only, y'know, could it be used and should it be and it will be used by, um, so many different groups, but really everyone that loves *The Invisible String*, I think, could use the workbook with their kid. And even if the child isn't maybe into all the activities, there's bound to be a couple that are, y'know, that speak to that child because some of them are art activities. Some of them are writing. Some of them are games. Some of them are sort of journal-y stuff. Some of them are—y'know, they're—they're all different. But I think anyone that wants to take the message of *The Invisible String* to a deeper level is a candidate for getting the workbook.

00:53:38 Biz Host

Dr. Wyss? Uh, how about you? How—did—is this similar or have you found that there are uses you weren't prepared for after you guys created it? What was—what was your thoughts about the workbook?

00:53:51 Dr. Wyss Guest

I agree that I think it can be for anyone. And the interesting thing about writing this workbook is I work with adolescents. And we have a children's publisher. So the balance of me working with adolescents, who—some of them love the book, and some of them think it's the most babyish thing they've ever seen in their life—

[Biz laughs.]

—and want nothing to do with it. Really, like, guiding the book, thinking in that perspective, um, was interesting then being picked up by the children's publisher and then really focusing it on a younger age. So I really think that there was an amazing collaboration between Patrice and myself and the publisher to really create this book that could be used for any age. And surprisingly, um, I've done an art show and I had some book signings and I've had more adults come to me saying they're so excited to use the books for themselves? Probably than people coming to me and saying they're excited to use it with their children.

So it's gonna be really interesting to see. Um, we've done a couple groups with the book at our center, and we've had kids that loved it and then we had kids that have really poor connection with people in life? And they don't really feel attached to people? And they've really struggled with it. And then we found shifting it from people to animals? Made all the difference. And they did all the activities. We took out the name *The Invisible String*. We just said, the animal

you're connected to! And it was amazing, the shift that—that can happen.

And I think you're right; sometimes a parent with a child who maybe is struggling to do it or not getting into it would be harder than a therapist or a teacher or someone who's a little more savvy at making kids who aren't wanting to do anything they're asking kind of shift a little bit. Um, but the intention is really that a parent could do some really fun activities with their kids. Patrice and I talked a lot about, um, just giving somebody something that wasn't on the phone. Or that if it was, like, a parent who was far away, that how could you do these creative activities and then take pictures and share them with each other? And things like that. So really the idea was—any kind of activity we could throw in there to create these senses of connection and attachment. In a time when we're really very disconnected.

00:56:04 Biz Host

Yeah. No. I'm just sitting here thinking about this idea—not only of connection, but of connection after loss and... y'know, there's so much to talk about when it comes to grief and loss as—both in helping guide our children through it? As well as... allowing ourselves to process it? I think, y'know—I mean, that's completely separate discussion about— *[Laughs.]* How we—as people with kids in our houses—take care of ourselves while trying to take care of our—of our children. I'd like to kinda just wrap up from both of you, sort of—

[Dog yaps sharply in background.]

00:56:50 Patrice Guest
00:56:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk

—I guess—oh!
Oh, speaking of—speaking of our animals!
Patrice: Sorry about that! *[Laughs.]*

Biz: Puppies! Puppies! The string is too tight! Um— *[Laughs.]*

00:56:57 Biz Host

[All laugh.]
I'll start with, uh, you, Patrice. Throughout all, uh, of your writings and everything—what—what—is there anything that sort of surprised you or maybe when it came to how you were looking at—at things or—or just... what have you gotten out of this entire experience of writing, uh, these books and the workbook?

00:57:18 Patrice Guest

Well, the workbook is—y'know—it literally only just came out in December. So it's very, very, very newly out there. So more will be revealed about the stories we hear—

[Biz laughs.]

—and I'm sure we will hear all kinds of stories from, um, caregivers, uh—and—y'know, those that love children. Those that ever were a child. About how the workbook is being used and how it has, y'know, created some miracles. So I have no doubt. But for me—this whole process, when I wrote the book so many years ago and I got this small little publishing deal and quite frankly I put it out there and didn't think too much more about it! I was not really attached to the results, whether the book was gonna sell zillions of copies or not.

[Biz laughs.]

I just knew that I had fulfilled my mission, which was to tell this story. And um... that it would be available. I just could never in a million years have believed that it would become the worldwide phenomena that it's become, y'know. We're gonna—getting close to probably 600,000 copies now, and y'know, it's in so many different languages.

For me it's just been a miracle and I'm grateful and humbled and honored and... y'know. Every other adjective you can imagine. Blown away, really. Y'know. The kind of letters I get are pretty powerful letters, y'know? Lots of times it is a parent that's lost a child or a—other loved one. Husband and the book helps the kids. And y'know, so it's not always a light subject and yet, um... the message is so— *[Laughs.]* Y'know, it's like—love is obviously alive and well—

[Biz laughs.]

—as evidenced by the sales of the book. So, um... yeah! Just been a thrill.

00:59:01 Biz Host

Dr. Wyss, how about you? After—I mean—I—again, you were using the book, then you got to... work with Patrice and the workbook came out of it. Was there anything that, y'know, changed from when you went into this process to when you came out of it, or—anything that has surprised you or that you've—you've discovered?

00:59:24 Dr. Wyss Guest

Well, I don't know that I've actually been able to enjoy it yet, so. Um—

00:59:30 Biz Host

Right! *[Laughs.]*

00:59:32 Dr. Wyss Guest

I was completing—well, I was completing my doctorate when we met.

[Biz laughs.]

And so I finished my doctorate, walked, and then our book was published right after that. So... it's been a whirlwind the last couple years! And I think now it's time to just settle in and I'm just grateful and humbled every day that I was—that she responded back to me. That Patrice brought me along on this ride, and, y'know, she's been so gracious and, y'know, she—she knew this is one of my dreams in life, is to publish.

And, y'know, I'm just so grateful to have such an amazing mentor and person in this work. That, y'know, has allowed me to be a—just a small part of this, even. So. I just feel grateful and I'm excited to see what happens from it and I'm hoping it helps tons of people who really need that support.

01:00:19 Patrice Guest

Yeah. And I just wanna say—I—I'm also so thrilled because Dana—this could never have happened with you 'cause I couldn't have come up with all these different activities. Y'know? You had that therapist mind that was able to just, uh... y'know? See the zillions of different ways—

[Biz laughs.]

01:00:39	Biz	Host	<p>—the book could be used. So thank you!</p> <p>Well, thank you both for your collaboration, as well as... what started this all, which was <i>The Invisible String</i> and a hard time separating from your <i>[though laughter]</i> your son! Your son having a hard time. I mean, as soon as you told that story I was like, oh! What? That's totally unrelatable!</p> <p><i>[Theresa laughs.]</i></p>
01:00:58	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p>What?! Do you mean—</p> <p>Biz: It's really hard and—that we—I know! <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p>Patrice: <i>[Through laughter]</i> Yup!</p> <p>Theresa: You mean, the thing we both talked about on this show for like two years straight, basically?</p>
01:01:05	Biz	Host	<p>Do you mean maybe my six-year-old still has some attachment issues? Um, and by issues I mean—loves me very much.</p> <p><i>[All laugh.]</i></p> <p>So again—not <u>just</u> in helping deal with grief, uh, the book really also can help <u>so</u> many ways of helping your children, uh, sort of navigate all the things that we—that we have to navigate. That a lot of times we have to do stuff by ourselves! It's nice to have a way to explain to them that they aren't actually alone. So thank you <u>both</u> for coming on. Again, we will connect <u>everyone</u> with where they can find out more about <i>The Invisible String</i> series, as well as this new workbook, and how to get it. And... use it for themselves! Thank you so much for joining us!</p>
01:01:56	Patrice	Guest	Thank you guys for having us. It was our pleasure.
01:01:59	Dr. Wyss	Guest	Thank you!
01:02:00	Biz	Host	Both of you have a wonderful day.
01:02:02	Dr. Wyss	Guest	Thanks, you too! Bye!
01:02:04	Biz	Host	Bye!
01:02:05	Music	Music	<p>"Telephone," by "Awesome." Down-tempo guitar and falsetto singing.</p> <p><i>Brainwaves send a message: Pick up the phone (When you, I call) Arm is moving now, no longer stone (When you, I call) Hand reaches out with a will of its own (When you, I call)</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
01:02:30	Promo	Clip	<p>Music: Gentle, upbeat piano music.</p> <p>Helen Hong: Hey, J. Keith.</p> <p>J. Keith van Straaten: Hey, Helen! I hear you have a true/false quiz you want me to finish!</p> <p>Helen: I do! Here we begin: We host a trivia gameshow podcast on the MaxFun network called... <i>Go Fact Yourself!</i></p>

J. Keith: True!

Helen: Correct! The show is all about celebrity guests answering trivia questions about things J. Keith enjoys.

J. Keith: False. We sometimes don't talk about baseball or cats.

Helen: Thank god. It's questions about things they enjoy! Next, we bring on surprise experts every episode.

J. Keith: True!

Helen: Correct! Final question: It's just the two of us sitting alone with these guests.

J. Keith: False.

Helen: Correct! We have a live audience at the Angel City Brewery!

[Audience cheers and claps.]

Helen: See?

[A bell dings.]

Helen: You can hear *Go Fact Yourself* every first and third Friday of the month, and if you don't listen, you can go fact yourself!

J. Keith: True!

[Music finishes.]

[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]

Radio DJ: Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

[Click.]

Go ahead, caller.

Caller: Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Morgan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?

01:03:17 Promo Clip

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

01:04:04 Biz Host *[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]*
That was greaaaaat! Again, the new workbook is *The Invisible String Workbook: Creative Activities to Comfort, Calm, and Connect*. It just came out. And the whole series by Patrice—including the—the newest book, which is about, uh, the invisible string that connects us to our—our pets. Uh, it's so—it's so wonderful.

Guys, it's another hard thing that we have to talk about. *[Laughs.]* With our children. That... we still have to do. *[Laughs.]* If only... we can stay consistent. With doing all those hard things that we have to do. Eh, apparently it's gonna help our children grow and function. As adults. *[Deep breath.]* But when we can't function as adults, we call the *One Bad Mother* hotline. *[Laughs.]* Let's listen to a mom have a breakdown.

01:05:01 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, Biz and Theresa! This is a rant. *[Tearful voice]* I am eight months pregnant. And I had a—a three-year-old. And my wife has been away for business this week and she told me that she could come home from work early to watch, um, our son for my midwife's appointment, and she can't. And so I am scrambling, trying to find childcare for, uh, my toddler.

And I—I did it. I did all the hard things. I found somebody to watch him. Um, this afternoon. And I found, uh, like, I've been doing bedtime, um, much better without her around distracting him because he's three and he won't go to bed. Um, and—and I was doing okay. And then I... puked up all my breakfast this morning. Again. I thought the morning sick was so gone. Eight months pregnant! Why am I still puking?

And that's not enough body fluids because he just tripped over his potty and spilled an entire little potty's worth of pee all over his bedroom carpet. And I just needed somebody to tell that to while I'm blotting up all this pee around my enormous belly. Um, and I just—I needed to hear you tell me that I'm doing a good job, Biz. So thank you. Thank you so much for the hotline.

01:06:44 Biz Host You are doing a good job.
01:06:46 Theresa Host Yeah, you are.
01:06:47 Biz Host That's a lot!
01:06:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** I mean, that— It's—

Theresa: That's way too much. It's so hard.
01:06:50 Biz Host It's so hard! Eight months pregnant—you are definitely... not always feeling like a magical vessel at that point in time. Your—your body is—I mean, it's a vessel. *[Laughs.]*

[Theresa laughs.]

But like, you can't—sitting, bending, dressing, just being in the world.

01:07:11 Theresa Host Doing a lot of things that a three-year-old needs.

01:07:14 Biz Host Yeah! Is already really physically challenging. You have a three-year-old in the house. That's—that's a—that's a thing!

01:07:23 Theresa Host Yeah.

01:07:24 Biz Host We've talked constantly about being very unique.

[Theresa laughs.]

It is... it's a lot. Vomiting?

01:07:33 Theresa Host Mm-hm.

01:07:33 Biz Host Not fun.

01:07:34 Theresa Host No.

01:07:35 Biz Host Especially—yeah! Eight? *[Sighs.]*

[Theresa sighs.]

Ahhh! It's like the cruel joke of vomiting while very, very pregnant? Is like—how is that supposed to be a thing that feels good at all? That's... no!

01:07:49 Theresa Host Like, why is that a thing?

01:07:50 Biz Host Why should that—'cause that's hard. To—to—positioning and all of it. We all know. And then... the pee. 'Cause like—you're mastering all the, like—I mean, I remember—when—the first couple times Stefan would be gone for big trips? And then you're like—okay! I'm doing—the stuff that I usually have a partner to help me with? I'm now having to do by myself.

And it's really, really hard. And it's not easy. Why isn't everybody just going to sleep? Just go to sleep! *[Laughs.]* Like, I did all the stuff and like—all the—ugh! The bedtime routines just became exhausting! 'Cause it was something we split up and then suddenly... all of it. And it's really hard! It's a lot! It's emo—

01:08:35 Theresa Host And it's at the end of the day.

01:08:36 Biz Host And it's the end of the day! It is emotionally draining? And physically tiring. Especially when you are eight months pregnant. And you have been throwing up. And then... to have to clean—it's always just that little thing.

01:08:51 Theresa Host Yeah.

01:08:52 Biz Host And then—and then one more thing happens! And... you have to do it! I think it's that, like, realization—there's no one else here to do this. But me.

01:09:02 Theresa Host Yep.

01:09:02 Biz Host And I am making a choice. *[Laughs.]* Am I gonna do something about it?

01:09:08 Theresa Host Mm-hm.

01:09:09 Biz Host Or not?

01:09:09 Theresa Host Yeah.

01:09:10 Biz Host And we usually do something about it. 'Cause we're trying to be people. And so—it's hard. It's so much! It's too much! You're doing a fucking amazing job!

01:09:23 Theresa Host Yeah, you are.

01:09:23 Biz Host You're doing an amazing job!

01:09:24 Theresa Host You are amazing.

01:09:24 Biz Host You are amazing! You are doing a good job. It's a lot. And we see you? Like, we see you.

01:09:33 Theresa Host Yeah.

01:09:34 Biz Host You have been... seen. And are amazing.

Theresa? What did we learn today? That I—I do miss consistency that... is focused on my needs. Maybe that's a better way to say it. You're right! We—I—we are being really good at being consistent about a lot of stuff.

01:10:00 Theresa Host Yeah!

01:10:01 Biz Host From work to family to just... taking a shower. Like, we're—we are doing it. Um... I think where the, like... the struggle for me is just that the consistency I'm missing is... things that have to do with, like... self-care.

01:10:25 Theresa Host Yeah! Yeah!

01:10:25 Biz Host The next level of self-care that I would like to have in my life.

01:10:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Yes! Personal care and personal goals. Yeah!

Biz: Personal—yeah! Yeah!

01:10:33 Biz Host And it could very easily also shift to, uh, something that my kids need. Right? Like I wish I could be more consistent with x, y, or z. Like— *[Laughs.]* Certain house rules or whatever. But the fatigue. And... all the other consistency I'm doing such a great job at—

[Theresa laughs.]

—makes it really easy to let a lot of stuff go. So I don't know. *[Makes indecisive noises.]* Eh, you're right! It's like the—New Year's resolutions! You know. Eh. Maybe we should just never want anything!

[Both laugh.]

01:11:07 Theresa Host I think—I think we should keep trying.

01:11:09 Biz Host Okay.

01:11:09 Theresa Host I just think... we have to recognize that it's—that it's—that some things are not in our control! Like, I think that it—y'know—like, I think—I think trying is so good! Like, we have to—in—in a sense, part of this is not giving up! You know? Because if we give up then we go to that other place of "I can't have anything."

01:11:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I—I want stuff!

Theresa: Nothing will ever be better.

01:11:32 Theresa Host It's like that constant exercise of, like... of like... just because, like, something failed doesn't mean like there isn't another way at a future point. Or a different way to achieve this same thing that I'm going for.

01:11:47 Biz Host Let us consistently look towards the future.

[Both laugh.]

01:11:51 Theresa Host Great. *[Laughs.]*

01:11:53 Biz Host Uh—

01:11:53 Theresa Host Let this be the year of it being a better year. *[Laughs.]*

01:11:57 Biz Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Yes! The year of being a better year. Everybody? You're doing a really good job.

01:12:04 Theresa Host Yeah, you are, guys.

01:12:06 Biz Host It—I mean—I'm—tired.

01:12:08	Theresa	Host	Mm-hm.
01:12:09	Biz	Host	So I have to assume you're all very tired, too.
01:12:11	Theresa	Host	Yep!
01:12:14	Biz	Host	<i>[Biz laughs.]</i> And—ugh! There's so much. There's so much to consistently be aware of. And you're doing it. You really are. You are doing a good job! You are doing... a <u>good job</u> ! You are seen. You are <u>doing</u> it. It's being done! 'K? Try to—try to remember that. If you can. If not... put on your favorite song.
<i>[Both laugh.]</i>			
01:12:49	Theresa	Host	Theresa?
01:12:49	Biz	Host	Yes.
01:12:50	Theresa	Host	You are doing a good job!
01:12:53	Biz	Host	Thank you, Biz. So... are you!
01:12:56	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Thank you. And we will talk to you guys next week!
01:12:58	Music	Music	Biz and Theresa: Bye!!! "Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.
<i>I got the lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>Got the the lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>Gots the lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>The lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>Gots the lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>Got the lowdown momma blues</i>			
<i>You know that's right</i>			
01:13:24	Biz	Host	<i>[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]</i> We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Hannah Smith; our husbands, Stefan Lawrence and Jesse Thorn; our perfect children, who provide us with inspiration to say all these horrible things; and of course, you, our listeners. To find out more about the songs you heard on today's podcast and more about the show, please go to MaximumFun.org/onebadmother . For information about live shows, our book and press, please check out OneBadMotherPodcast.com . <i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate .
01:13:52	Theresa	Host	
01:14:15	Speaker 1	Guest	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i> MaximumFun.org .
01:14:18	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:14:19	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:14:20	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.