

00:00:00 Biz Ellis Host Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:02 Theresa Host And I'm Theresa.
00:00:03 Biz Thorn Host
00:00:03 Biz Host Due to the pandemic, we bring you *One Bad Mother* straight from our homes—including such interruptions as: children! Animal noises! And more! So let's all get a little closer while we have to be so far apart. And remember—we are doing a good job.
00:00:20 Music Music "Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:25 Biz Host *[Continues through dialogue.]*
00:00:25 Biz Host This week on *One Bad Mother*—this isn't actually normal, so stop pretending it is! Plus, Biz revisits cake parenting; Theresa doesn't wanna wait, and we talk to Scotty Iseri of the podcast *The Imagine Neighborhood*.
00:00:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz and Theresa:** Wooooo! *[Both decrease the pitch of the cheer; after Theresa finishes, Biz brings it back up.]*
00:00:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** One of these days we are gonna nail the timing of that. It's gonna be some—
00:00:54 Theresa Host **Biz:** We will nail it! We will— *[Laughs.]*
00:00:57 Biz Host —serious... well-timed remote wooing.
00:00:57 Biz Host Yes! Ah. Remote wooing. That should be the name of the show going forward. *Remote Wooing*.
[Both laugh.]
Before I ask you how you are, we will continue our new format of saying—thank you! To everybody out there who is... still working. Who are essential workers. Everybody in the medical fields—from the doctors to the nurses to the chaplains to the people who are doing all of the—I'm gonna say "Excel work." But you know what I mean. All the data filing work. That's important. That is what's keeping everything going. All the people who are working at grocery stores right now or working in the food industry. Delivery—I mean, everybody. If you have to walk out that door for work? I appreciate the shit out of you *[laughs]*.
00:01:52 Theresa Host Yeah. I do too. All of us do.
00:01:55 Biz Host Yeah. Yeah! We really do.
00:01:59 Theresa Host And if you are holding it down by yourself with kids while your partner is out there essential worker-ing—we also see you.
00:02:13 Biz Host Yes.
00:02:14 Theresa Host And thank you.
00:02:15 Biz Host Yes! And if you are staying at home and washing your hands—
[Laughs.] And wearing masks when you go out—we appreciate you for doing that too! Every job is important *[laughs]*.
00:02:29 Theresa Host Mm-hm.
00:02:31 Biz Host And you're doing a really good job. Theresa—how are you?
[Laughs.]

[Theresa laughs.]

Sorry. I laugh every time because it—*[adopts strong Southern accent]* back in the studio days—back in the time before the virus—

[regular voice] I keep doing this voice to Stefan all the time, that I'm like—*[switches back to Southern accent]* oh, I remember! Back during the virus—

[Theresa laughs.]

—we used to do—y'know—we would sit—he got some rye flour from the eBay! I'm not sure it was safe, but you know it was the time of the COVID. *[Regular voice.]* Anyway. Back—

[Theresa laughs.]

—I would ask Theresa how she was doing and she always had a face. And the face, I always knew what that face meant right away. And now, the “how are you doing” question has taken on such new, like... just, like, almost surreal weight. It is like—it's like entering a Dada play experience. Right? Like—just—how are you? *[Surrealist singing]* Doop doop doop doop! *[Regular voice]* So, with that said—how are you?

00:03:36 Theresa Host

Oh, man. Yeah. It's uh—

[Biz laughs.]

—it's—I—it almost just feels like a joke. Although I will say, like, in—in like text message exchanges with friends or like FaceTimes and stuff? Everybody's kind of doing the same thing of like... *[slowly and unconvincingly]* yeah! I mean... it's—we're good! Y'know!

[Biz laughs.]

We're just—we're hanging in there! We're just kinda... doing the—this or the that. We did a this today. And—

[Biz laughs.]

But y'know it's kinda like—it's kinda the same as always in a weird way? But also there is this underlying, like... holy fucking shit. Like... this is crazy, right? Like—aren't we—but like people aren't say that that much. I mean, they kind of are, but like not really? And... I am also just in survival mode but also can't talk about things being terrible all the time. 'Cause we have to cope somehow. So I'm also pretending to be fine a lot of the time. And I think—one thing I've been thinking about right now is just our... mental health—for everyone. For everyone! In isolation. As well as for... people dealing with traumatic experiences related to COVID-19. Traumatic situations out trying to get groceries and whatever else. Which can be just really stressful? And then just... the... situation at home. With young kids! Or kids with special needs. It's—it's so much right now, and I just keep thinking how odd it is. It's necessary, I guess. But just how simultaneously odd it is that we... we're being expected to just, like, we all know this mental health crisis is coming? But we're just like, saying, well, yeah, we'll deal with that after this *[laughs]*. Like—

[Biz laughs.]

—it's so strange! Like, it makes sense, but... I guess to put it in a really strange way, I just think it's kind of a bummer *[laughs]*. That—

[Biz laughs.]

—we're supposed to like sit here and just go like, yeah, we're all losing our minds and we'll deal with that later.

[Biz laughs.]

00:06:08 Theresa Host

So I just want to also give a shout-out to... mental health professionals right now? I know that... sometimes it's not possible to get therapy over the computer. Sometimes people don't have access to computers or sometimes it's impossible to get, like, time or space alone in your home? To access that service? But when it can happen, it can make a really big difference. I have been continuing to try to meet with my therapist every week. And that has been... important, I guess. So... yeah! I just—my heart is just with everyone right now. And... I hope that we can all find some ways to care for ourselves right now. It might look different from what it would be if we weren't in this crisis right now? But maybe there is something that we can each and all do to care for ourselves right now.

00:07:11 Biz Host

Yes!

[Theresa laughs.]

00:07:21 Theresa Host

Yes—yes to that! And... wow. That's gonna tie in nicely to what we're talking about today. So thank you for saying that!

00:07:24 Biz Host

You're welcome! How are you, Biz?

I... yeah, I'm a—I'm a mess. I won't even say the "I'm okay." I—y'know, it's like really hard and it's really stressful and... we didn't do like that much for Easter? But two days before Easter, I got into my mind that I wanted to make this classic Southern dessert—a caramel cake. And they're—they're so crazy delicious. I've never made one. I've never tried to caramelize anything, either. And so I pull out the Jackson, Mississippi—some league of women somewhere—*[Laughs.]* cookbook from like the seventies. Sixties or seventies. That my mom had—Eudora Welty signed it to her. It's very exciting. Anyway *[laughs]!* And I find the caramel cake recipe and it even has this note that says: this is the recipe of So-and-so So-and-so. And it is—this is the first time it's ever been printed. And I think, I am making this cake. And here's the thing. I... made the cake. And... I did not do, like, super great at the icing 'cause it's raining and cold and apparently you cannot do any sort of caramelizing or candy work when it is cold and rainy. But... I made it. The point of this is... I kind of pushed myself through this? Because it felt like something normal? And like something I was supposed to be... doing. I'm gonna do this thing! I am entitled to make something and have time to make it. And oh, I didn't know it took like three-and-a-half hours to make caramel *[laughs]!* Icing. Jesus Christ! Y'know? And when it didn't work out, I couldn't leave it. I couldn't step away from it. And...

[Theresa laughs.]

I wasn't necessarily getting joy from it. But I—I needed to be doing it. It was like this incredibly weird place to be? In... my cake parenting world? Which then of course led me down another path of—what if by “cake parenting” we just meant “parenting while listening to the band Cake?” Which we could also all try right now if we would like to? But... the— *[sighs.]* The making the cake thing... five months ago, it would have been no big deal. And I would've enjoyed it or I would've changed... y'know... roads if things weren't working out and made something else. It wouldn't have felt like a weird time luxury that I was giving myself to make this fucking cake. It wouldn't like—it just wouldn't have all this... all this baggage with it. And... it's supposed to feel normal? But it didn't feel normal. And I think that is just one of so many examples? Of... of where we are right now? And what you said and my horrible cake parenting— *[Laughs.]* Y'know. Process. Ties in nicely to what we're gonna talk about today, which is—this isn't actually normal? So stop acting like it is.

00:10:43 Music Music
00:10:42 Theresa Host

Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue. 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.

00:10:50 Biz Host

If you are married to the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:10:54 Theresa Host
00:10:57 Biz Host

Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice.

Biz and Theresa's children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:11:01 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.]

00:11:07 Biz Host

Theresa. This actually... isn't normal. We need to stop acting like it is. That's the end of our discussion *[laughs]*.

00:11:18 Theresa Host

'K! Byeeee *[laughs]!*

00:11:21 Biz Host

Byeeee!

00:11:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Theresa: This is probably all the time I have anyway. So... That was fun.

00:11:27 Biz Host

Biz: Before— *[Laughs.]* Or it's the— *[Laughs.]*

00:11:31 Theresa Host

It's the new normal! New normal.

00:11:33 Biz Host

Mm-hm.

I'm calling bullshit on. Because this is not a new normal. This is... not normal. And I—I just wanna start by saying that like... I was thinking about this the other day. Listening to different people—like you said—when people are like, it's okay, I'm just here. Everything's fine. And I was even thinking about a text exchange you and I had and you had had a particularly... rough series of events. A rough day.

[Theresa laughs.]

And then you like ended it with—but I guess that’s normal. And I was like... that’s not normal. I mean, yes. Elements of it are normal. Because you’re a parent [laughs]. ‘K? But... what is so unusual about this situation is how every day there is new information. Every day, we are... changing... from what we had accepted and processed to something new that we have to accept and process. And we are human beings, and we have an innate ability—I think—to... adapt. ‘K? We—look at us. We’re adapting. And we’re gonna—we actually have a need that it should feel normal. We need this to be normal to get through it. And... saying it’s the new normal is a survival technique, I think? But that said, just ‘cause part of our brain is doing that, the rest of us have not caught up. The rest of the brain is still over here saying—why is that supposed to be normal? Right? Like... like what we said last week about the two magnets. Right? Everything looks normal! I have this horrible underlying fear that is permeating my soul. These two ends of the magnet don’t go together. We’re like living in that space between the two magnets.

00:13:27 Theresa Host

00:13:27 Biz Host

00:13:38 Theresa Host

Yes.
I don’t know! I—I—I just feel like... I need to get to a place where I’m comfortable saying... no, no, no, no, no. I don’t need to normalize this.

Mm-hm. No, I really like that. I mean, I think—so—this is really interesting ‘cause it incorporates a lot of things. My first thought is like... well... as far as our brain chemistry—like, there’s only so long that we can be in fight-or-flight. Like, our brains can’t just stay in fight-or-flight. Like, it just won’t—they just break. Y’know what I mean?

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk

So... no, it’s true! Like—
Theresa: So—and it’s—yeah!

00:14:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: Yeah! No, I’m laughing because I’ve broken before!
Biz: So I know! Yeah! You’re just—yeah! Yep! We break! Yeah.

00:14:18 Theresa Host

Theresa: Yeah! So we’re broken! So we’re broken right now. Yeah! So it’s making me think about that. That like... sure. I think we should talk about how we can deal with this not being normal and, like, face it more? And how that can help us in this situation? Like, I think we should totally go there? But I also just wanna acknowledge that, like, the... thing that we’re doing sometimes or a lot of the time, where we are just acting normal and kind of pretending like things are normal is natural and human. And is a survival tactic. ‘Cause we just wouldn’t—we just can’t be running around panicking. We talked about at some point on this show a long time ago—there was this thing that we had noticed among new parents. Where... no matter what stage they were at in new parenthood, they—they seemed to say, “We’ve just finally started to get the hang of things.”

[Biz laughs.]

Like... no matter what. Like, everybody always, for some reason, thinks that now this is the real time when I'm getting a hang of this? And then yet, a few months later, we'll look back on this time and say, like, "That was crazy! Like, we didn't have anything under control!"

[Biz laughs.]

Like, "It's much better now." Or—y'know! Or, "Wait 'til we saw what was coming after that!" Or—y'know, just something like—like it's just funny... it's funny what our perception of what is going on right now? Like, how that relates to, like, the choices we make. And our well-being every day. And... I think that the biggest way that the idea that this is normal holds us back in, like, practical terms? Is stuff like logistical stuff during the day that we could totally rethink and redo... but we're not? Because... we are just behaving the same way we normally would under normal circumstances? Like, it's my job to do this and it's your job to do that. And like, the division of labor. And like the daily schedule. And... what—what the expectations are for each family member. I've found myself going like, "Why are we doing it this way? This doesn't—"

[Biz laughs.]

"—this used to make sense, but that was a totally different life! That was someone else's life. I don't live in that world anymore."

[Biz laughs.]

00:16:56 Theresa Host

"I need to come up with something else." But like, the hard thing about that...

[Biz laughs.]

00:17:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk

—is that there isn't—there isn't, like, time? Like, this is like—
Biz: *[Shouting]* No, that's it! There's no time!

00:17:07 Theresa Host

Theresa: —what I'm dealing with all the time. There's no time to like reflect or plan or say, like—okay. This is what—like, it's just we are just in it. We're just in it. And so anything that we do... is not really—like, any changes that we make—and making changes right now also feels scary! Because it feels like an acknowledgment that things are not normal? And it feels like another thing to try to get a handle on that's different, that doesn't meet, like, what we're used to?

00:17:40 Biz Host

I wanna jump in on this point—this particular part of it. With an example. Well, two examples. One, I just like walked past Stefan a couple days ago and I said, "We are going to have to have a conversation at some point? And I don't know what the words are yet for that conversation. But it's not okay right now? How... it's working. Out."

00:18:07 Theresa Host

Mm-hm.

00:18:08 Biz Host

This was shortly after I had a minor breakdown while the children were watching TV, thinking—it is incredibly unfair— *[through laughter]* that I am with these children all day long *[laughs]*.

00:18:20	Theresa	Host	Mm-hm!
00:18:22	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: Like, this is—
00:18:24	Theresa	Host	Theresa: Okay. Pause! Pause.
00:18:26	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Say that again. Say it again. Theresa: It is <u>incredibly</u> unfair.
00:18:31	Biz	Host	Biz: This is <u>incredibly unfair</u> .
00:18:35	Theresa	Host	That I am with these children <u>all</u> day long.
00:18:36	Biz	Host	Yes.
00:18:43	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	And that—that sounds kind of like a jerky... fucked-up thing to say— Biz: But you know what we say on this show—
00:18:45	Biz	Host	Theresa: I know! I can have children and I can be in a healthy relationship and <u>still not like</u> this situation. But like... we sacrificed—sometimes, when they were infants, right? Like, we <u>knew</u> things were different and like when there was an infant in the house, right? That is also a survival mode sort of environment. Okay? Then, once children—at whatever age—started going to, like, a daycare or a relative's house or... school. Time got allotted. Right? I mean, you had some time to work. Or take—I mean, like, right now I'm thinking—yeah. I knew part of <u>my</u> job was making dinner every night because Stefan was at work and he would come home. But that task feels <u>totally</u> not normal anymore, given how much I am with the children all day with <u>all</u> this facilitating. By the time dinner comes, it no longer feels like... like a thing that I'm <u>capable</u> of doing. That said! The weird flip on that is... one of the things I find myself doing that's quote-unquote "normal" is... cleaning. Like, I've <u>always</u> cleaned to feel in control; I know that that's part of it? I can put this thing here. There you are. Right? But... I'm like, I'm so tired. I don't need to clean this. We're all home. This is a total waste. But like, if I'm not moving? If I'm not in shark mode? I <u>feel</u> ... the cliff's edge right under my toes. Which—again—that's not... normal. Even though I'm taking these steps to feel normal. And—actually—I'm gonna add one more thing to this. To bring us back further to what you were saying. And that is, I was at the store the other day. And... I remember coming home and saying—y'know, it's not the fear of... y'know, contracting COVID-19 or the fear of <u>giving</u> someone COVID-19 that is the <u>most</u> unsettling for me in this moment. It's everybody in the store in masks. And...
00:21:16	Theresa	Host	Yeah! Yeah!
00:21:18	Biz	Host	And I thought to myself, there—like, the one voice says, "That's... the new normal." And the <u>other</u> voice is, "You're not acknowledging how <u>scary</u> that is. That's <u>scary</u> , Biz! Everybody's walking around in masks! That's something you <u>never</u> thought you'd see." And it's a luxury and a privilege that I never thought I would see that. And I acknowledge it. But it's scary as shit, and I'm thinking... <u>more</u> about, "This is the new normal!" than the <u>feeling</u> experience that I'm not acknowledging about how scary <u>that</u> is. And—
00:21:58	Theresa	Host	Yep.
00:21:58	Biz	Host	The idea that that... experience—that feeling experience—isn't gonna—isn't just brewing. It's not going anywhere! It's <u>brewing</u> .

00:22:19 Theresa Host Right? It's brewing... and simmering. And adding to the soup of, like... not normal!
Right! I'm thinking about that too. The—the way that staying home... has been hard. But also that we are simultaneously... getting worse at doing stuff out in the world every day that goes by? Like, I... I'm really grateful to Jesse because he's been doing all of our errands for us. Like, when we need something—when we need a grocery store run, we've had to do it about once a week. I mean, we run out of food! Y'know? I wish we could go longer but we haven't so far been able to do it. But... like, for me, I'm somebody who—and I think about like if he wasn't up to it, like, if he was sick or if he wasn't here, I'm somebody who has a hard time going to the grocery store under normal circumstances.

[Biz affirms this.]

Just because of how taxing it is on my energy level in a variety of ways. So in this scenario, it's just... exponentially... worse. I mean, I think that thinking about that stuff? Is actually really worthwhile.

[Biz agrees.]

Like, I think that it's okay to like, look at—like, 'cause there have been moments where I'm like, well, is it fair that, y'know, Jesse's doing this every week and I'm not? But I'm really trying to look at... and it's not—we don't have it down, but what I'm trying to do with him is... I'm trying to look at what we're both contributing to the household? In like a different way, as far as like—what are we able to do? Like, it's not gonna be even. The childcare stuff is not gonna be even. He does way more cooking than I do. The cleaning stuff is not gonna be even. The homeschooling stuff is not gonna be even. The who's working on MaxFun stuff is not gonna be even. Like, there's so much shit *[through laughter]* to stay on top of right now? And...

00:24:22 Biz Host I know.

00:24:22 Theresa Host We're—like, the best—I think the best that we can do? Is not to resort to... like... “This should be fair?” But to like look at—

[Biz snickers.]

00:24:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk —no, really! I—I didn't actually—
Theresa: Did not mean that directed at you!

00:24:40 Theresa Host **Biz:** No, I know! I'm laughing! *[Cracking up.]*
I honestly did not mean that—I wasn't even—I honestly was not thinking about that. I was not thinking about what—like, I was not thinking about how we started this conversation.

00:24:52 Biz Host Right!

00:24:53 Theresa Host But it is obviously relevant. But like—fairness is almost irrelevant. Like, fairness is almost impossible because it's like—we each have... our own... types of energy and types of ability. And our own like perception of time and what we can do? And we have to—unfortunately—between the two of us, we have to figure out how—like, who—who's best able to contribute what. And it's not the same

as it would be under normal circumstances! 'Cause this is not normal.

00:25:27 Biz Host It's not normal! I just—I—I wanna go back to—to the “it's not normal” and one of the things you said, like, how do we... how do we have this conversation? And... like, what do we get out of it? Right? It can't just be like, “Ehh, I give up.” I think the thing that helps me the most is acknowledging the not-normal aspect of this. I think that grants me forgiveness? Of myself and others? But like, I think about... y'know, all the casual comments that are out there. And guys, we all have to breathe through them as well as we can. But like, y'know, “Now we're all homeschooling.” No we're not! No we're not.

[Theresa agrees.]

It's not normal. You are not homeschooling. You are trying to get through in a brand-new schooling during a crisis. Teachers are trying to do the exact same thing. They're not teaching like they would in class! Right? Like, it's not normal!

00:26:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** And, like—or—

00:26:35 Biz Host **Theresa:** Yeah! No, it's not normal. Yeah. When your kids are having like massive meltdowns and your fuse is short? And you yell? No! You don't have to be like, beat yourself up about that. Because life is not normal right now? And again, not acknowledging that makes it easier to feel like shit when we fuck up. Right? Like, I think—

00:26:57 Theresa Host Yeah. That's true.

00:26:59 Biz Host I'm not saying let's all go out and be horrible to each other and to our children. I'm just saying—oh, did you blow a fuse? Did you... y'know, yell at your kids? Yeah. Okay. Sure. Things that I would never like—I am—I feel like all that comes out of my mouth with the kids right now is—volume. Volume. Volume.

[Theresa laughs.]

Now, like—several months ago I would've been like, I'm gonna scar them for life by saying—they're gonna be in therapy one day. Like, talking about, *[in a funny voice]* “Mother didn't like my voice!” or whatever.

[Theresa laughs.]

But the reality is—is being with them all day long? The volume hurts me. It hurts me. And so, like... that's not normal! That's not normal. So... I just—I think there's a benefit and a freedom in taking the pressure off—you're not working from home! That's not normal, what you're doing right now by working from home! It's not normal! Right? It's not like a lifestyle choice if suddenly you're working from home. Right? Like, it's not normal to go to work knowing that you are one of the only people out there going to work. Right? And I think about medical professionals or EMTs or people at the grocery store. Oh, you're going to work! How normal! It's not normal. That's not normal! So—

[Theresa laughs.]

I'm just gonna run around with a high-pitched voice screaming—"That's not normal! That's not normal!"

[Theresa laughs.]

Does that help? Do you feel helped? *[Laughs.]*

00:28:41 Theresa Host

[Theresa laughs.]

I—I actually totally do.

[Biz laughs.]

I totally do. I feel helped. I mean... yeah! It's—because I think it's also—okay. It's not normal, but I also think a lot of the things that we have learned, side-by-side, on this show, over the last several years, really do still apply right now.

[Biz interjects words of agreement throughout.]

Like, I think about how... for the longest time your mantra was like, if you try something and it doesn't work, you can change that! It's okay! And like, I feel like that's really applicable here. Like... we don't—it isn't normal. We don't have to do stuff the way we've been doing it before. We also don't have to figure out the best way to do it now. We also don't know what's coming! So like, it's okay to try something today or try something tomorrow and see how it goes. It's okay to say like, we're gonna do it this way for a while. And then to say, like, "Yeah. I didn't really like how that worked. I'm gonna do something different."

[Biz laughs.]

I— *[Laughs.]* I was laughing because I... was simultaneous—I was checking my email the other day. And I got an email from... like, a newsletter for differently—like, parenting differently-wired kids with an article to, like, trauma-informed education that was basically saying like—kids—what kids really need right now is like... comfort and love. And like if that means that they're Zooming from their pajamas in bed with hot cocoa and, like, their dog on their lap, that's okay. And like, we don't need to be on the same schedule as we always are because that's not what's happening right now. And like in the same email-checking experience—

[Biz laughs.]

—I was looking at an email from one of my kid's schools. And I love the school and I love their approach but they were saying the exact opposite. Like, for these classes, like, kids need to be in a designated work area. Kids need to be dressed. Kids shouldn't be in bed when they first log in.

[Biz chuckles and interjects affirmations.]

Kids should have gotten up and had breakfast and showered and be dressed. Kids should not—y’know, and—and it’s—and it was literally like two great resources for suggestions on what to do. Totally conflicting. Could not have possibly been more conflicting. Both dealing with the same, essentially, same population of kids. And it’s just—and I was just laugh—it didn’t bother me. I just laughed. I was like, yes! Because nobody knows. ‘Cause nobody knows.

[Both laugh.]

00:31:24 Biz Host Nobody knows what to do.
And that, in fact, is normal.

[Both laugh.]

00:31:30 Music Music “Ones and Zeroes” by Awesome. Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.

[Music fades out.]

00:31:47 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 better about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That’s 206-350-9485.

00:32:06 Biz Host Genius/Fail time, Theresa. Genius me!
00:32:09 Clip Clip *[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]*

Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my God! I saw what you did! Oh my God! I’m paying attention! Wow! You, Mom, are a genius. Oh my God, that’s fucking genius!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective genius moments of the week.]

00:32:24 Theresa Host Okay. So this is not really pandemic-specific? But I did have a very exciting achievement over the weekend with Curtis, who is three and is very into dress-up. And we luckily don’t have to get a lot of costumes for him because we have accumulated so many from his older siblings. But he really wanted to dress up as Iron Man. And I was like—great. And I—and I even like—

[Biz laughs.]

—as an aside, said to him, like, well—‘cause he’s like, “Can you get me an Iron Man costume?” I was like, eh, I was like, “We’ll make one. Like, we’ll make you”—and I’m thinking, like, construction paper. Like, we really go low-rent on these things ‘cause they’re so fleeting? Like, they don’t really last long? And then when it came—when I came down to like actually make it, I realized, like, wow. I really can’t make an Iron Man helmet or mask. Like, that’s realistically not something I’m capable of? Like... just putting together on the spot. And so then I just decided—wait a minute. Basically, Iron Man can be put together with *[laughs]* Curtis’s

Rescue Bots costume from last Halloween, plus his Owlette mask from PJ Masks.

[Biz laughs.]

Plus some gloves of Gracie's that are like bright red, satiny, long gloves. Like, it was amazing how I was able to just like get all the components? And just put 'em together? And it was, like—I mean, it wasn't exact but it was so good that I was like—like, he totally went for it right away and I was like, well yeah. Of course you're going for it.

[Biz laughs.]

This is amazing! Like, you totally look like Iron Man now. You're welcome.

00:34:11 Biz Host
00:34:13 Theresa Host
00:34:14 Biz Host

Ah! Good job!

Thank you.

Okay. You already know about this and it should not be a Genius? 'Cause again—if things were normal, I would frown upon this *[laughs]*. But last week, it was towards the end of the day. And Ellis is—is really getting loud and we're always in the same room together. And he was doing a FaceTime with a friend. He has like one friend and they can actually fill each other's time on FaceTime playing simultaneously and it's amazing. But every time Ellis wants to say something, he says it so loud. And I went and got earplugs. And I put them in my ears.

[Theresa laughs.]

And I sat at the table right next to where he was doing his thing, and, y'know, did my stuff that I needed to do there. And I could still hear him. But it cut the volume down by like... 90%? To the point where I think I told you I almost feel like I'm not even here? Even though I'm here?

[Theresa laughs.]

00:35:29 Theresa Host
00:35:30 Biz Host

Like, it's almost like a weird... vacation paradise? Like, oasis?

Mm-hm.

Which again—because I'm accepting that things are not normal? I think it was a really good idea *[laughs]*.

00:35:37 Theresa Host
00:35:43 Biz Host
00:35:45 Caller Caller

It's such a good idea! It was such a good job! Yes! Good job!

Thank you. Thank you!

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, *One Bad Mother!* This is a Genius. Um, specifically a pandemic Genius. So, with toilet paper in very short supply, I realized that I would be starting my period in the middle of this pandemic, as I'm sure many of you will experience at some point during all of this. So I saved some old newspapers and used that to wrap up pads and tampons. Normally I use toilet paper to wrap them up and put them in the trash can, uh, but used newspaper this time and saved probably half a roll of toilet paper in the process, which my husband

and potty-training three-year-old were very, very grateful for. Just something small that we can all do to help our resources last a little longer! You're doing a great job. Thanks. Bye.

00:36:38 Biz Host *[Both laugh.]*
I love you. I now want, like—like, a—whatever. History Channel to start like a “Preppers for Ladies Only.” Right? Like, they're all your lady-only special tips. You're doing... an amazing job. And I'm just gonna say that I'll be thinking of your genius very soon.

[Both laugh.]

“Honey, are you sure this shouldn't be in the recycling?” “Don't!”
Anyway.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:37:11 Clip Clip You're doing an amazing job. Failures.
[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!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective failures of the week.]

00:37:17 Biz Host Fail me, Theresa!
00:37:19 Theresa Host Ugh. Alright. So... Curtis was playing ABC Mouse on Gracie's iPad. And then I heard him say, “Hey! Siwi! Can you tell me what's a giant zombie?” So I was like, “Oh my god. That's so funny. He's talking to Siri now. Look at these times. Look what these times have done to us.”

[Biz laughs.]

“Uh, even the three-year-old is so, like, iPad proficient that he's—”

[Biz laughs.]

“—talking to Siri. And to top that off, he's asking about giant zombies because he has weird older siblings. Hahahahahahahahaha!” So I texted my, like, mom and my sister to be like, “Guess what Curtis just said?” And I was like typing that to them and being all... cute about that.

[Biz laughs.]

And then all of a sudden, he goes, “This is scary!” And I look over, and he had gone to YouTube! With Siri! I thought he was just—I thought he was just saying stuff? I didn't think Siri was gonna listen to him?

[Biz laughs.]

And I looked over and it was a video of somebody getting, like, um... like, one of those super-fast videos of somebody getting made up to look like a zombie? And it was terrifying! Like, truly terrifying. Like, an adult makeup artist video? Like, not remotely for kids. And... it was scaring him so I'm glad he said something instead of just like sitting there quietly and absorbing that.

[Biz laughs.]

But I was like, wow. I'm... yeah! Coulda been paying more attention. I could—didn't need to happen. At all.

00:39:02 Biz Host
00:39:04 Theresa Host
00:39:06 Biz Host
00:39:08 Theresa Host
00:39:09 Biz Host

Cute—cute story *[laughs]*.

Yeah.

Oh god. Well, you're doing a horrible job.

I know.

I know... that according to every time somebody on television talks about what we're all doing while sheltering in place is wearing sweatpants for everything. And if you are wearing sweatpants for everything, that is good. I am not a sweatpant person. My comfort is in jeans and a comfortable sweatshirt. But after four weeks, I thought—I'm—I'm gonna wear my really—not—like, they're like—these are nice sweatpants, guys? The kind you put on in California with a T-shirt and some jewelry and you're like, "I'm going out to dinner!" *[Laughs.]*

00:39:51 Theresa Host
00:39:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Yeah.

Biz: Gonna put on my "going-out-to-dinner" sweatpants.

Theresa: L.A. sweatpants.

00:39:54 Biz Host

Yeah. L.A. sweatpants. I'm gonna put these on. And it's gonna—and they're so soft. They're like, dumb soft. Right? Like, they make me so happy when I put them on. And I thought—I'm gonna give this a try. It was... the saddest day I've had yet at home. I was so sad. I was like so down. Like... I mean, like where you're just kinda staring at like a corner in the house like, "What does it all mean?" And I—

[Theresa laughs.]

—the end of the night—again—I say to Stefan, like, I pass Stefan now with just random self-awareness facts. But this one was—I don't think I do well in daytime sweatpants *[laughs]*.

00:40:41 Theresa Host
00:40:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Mm.

Biz: And so... going forward! I've been in my jeans.

Theresa: Learning. Yep.

00:40:47 Biz Host

Y'know. And my comfy sweatshirt. But like— *[Laughs.]* That was not—a lot of self-realization happening for old Biz. During the stay-at-home.

00:40:59 Theresa Host
00:41:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Also kind of a real bummer!

Theresa: That—it's—you're not a daytime sweatpants person!

00:41:06 Theresa Host **Biz:** Oh, it is kind of a bummer! I—
'Cause this would be the time to really enjoy that. That would be some silver lining.

[Both laugh.]

00:41:12 Biz Host You suck at relaxing.
00:41:16 Caller Caller Thank you. Duh *[laughs]!* Duh.
[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi! I am calling with a Fail. It's *[through laughter]* really quite a long-term but silly Fail. I am realizing that... my two-year-old thinks his name is Baby. Because I go like this: "Hey, baby, come over here!" "Aw, what's wrong, baby?" "Are you okay, baby?" "Do you need a hug, baby?" And I never... ever call him Oliver, which is his name. Oh god. So now he's starting to talk about himself? Which is great developmentally, but it sounds like this: "Baby turn! Baby hold! Baby hug!" And I think... where have I gone wrong? That I have not even taught my child that his name is a real name. Oh lord. Alright. Well... we're all doing a good job except for meee! I'm failing at the most basic point of parenting.

[Biz laughs.]

00:42:13 Biz Host Oh, thanks for the hotline. Bye.
Oh. Yeah. But in the new—in the new world— *[Laughs, then adopts thick Southern accent used previously.]* in the new world after the virus, we all called each other baby. We all thought that was our name, after the COVID virus!

[Theresa laughs.]

Yeah. Yeah. You're failing? By giving your child too much love and affection? Uh... you're a monster. And... I know that Theresa could totally relate to the *[through laughter]* issues with children and names.

00:42:44 Theresa Host Yup. We were reminding ourselves in my family that for the longest time we called Curtis "Mr. Baby" and it—

[Biz laughs.]

—and we had forgotten all about it. But really. Like, it was up through... two. Some part of two that we finally had to say, like, okay, we can't call him this anymore. Like, he has... names
[laughs]!

00:43:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Multiple names. Oh, yeah.

Biz: Yeah! Many names. Well, you're doing a horrible—

[Biz laughs.]

00:43:09 Biz Host —horrible job *[laughs]*.
00:43:11 Theresa Host You are. Yeah.
00:43:13 Music Music "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.]

00:43:39	Biz	Host	Hey, Theresa! Let's call someone today!
00:43:43	Music	Music	Upbeat guitar with choral voices.
00:43:49	Biz	Host	Theresa, this week we are talking to Scotty Iseri, who is an award-winning producer and sound designer, having worked in audio storytelling at Smart City Radio; the HIV Talk Radio project; and Chicago Public Radio. Scotty is the creator and host of <i>The Imagine Neighborhood</i> , a podcast designed to help children and their grown-ups grow their social-emotional skills. Welcome, Scotty!
00:44:18	Scotty Iseri	Guest	Hello! Thanks so much for having me. This is exciting!
00:44:22	Biz	Host	Before we get into this, I would like to ask you what we ask <u>all</u> our guests, which is: w ho lives in your house?
00:44:28	Scotty	Guest	In <u>my</u> house, uh, they have me, uh, my dog Ozzy, and my son.
00:44:33	Biz	Host	So tell me—we like to derail into dogs. So first tell me about the dog.
00:44:40	Scotty	Guest	<i>[Scotty laughs.]</i> Uh, the—
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			—the dog is named Ozzy. He's about twelve years old. Uh, he's a pound mutt so I have no idea what he is. But um—
00:44:47	Biz	Host	He's perfect!
00:44:48	Scotty	Guest	Well, yeah. Aside from being perfect, of course.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			When people at the park ask, I used to just make up breeds? Like, oh yeah, he's a Northumberland Regal Idiot. But now I just...
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			Yeah <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:44:59	Biz	Host	He's a pound mutt. He's a mutt.
00:45:01	Scotty	Guest	I'm in Seattle! People talk very doggy here. They like to get into it.
00:45:05	Biz	Host	Oh! It is erudite! We've decided going forward that we're going to ask all out guests who have pets to send us pictures of the pets and we will be <i>[through laughter]</i> posting those on our Instagram, if you're up for it. Because—
00:45:15	Scotty	Guest	Oh, I got a great one!
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:45:17	Biz	Host	Good! Yay! I guess now I'll ask about your son <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:45:20	Scotty	Guest	Sure!
00:45:22	Biz	Host	How old is your son?
00:45:23	Scotty	Guest	He's a first-grader.
00:45:25	Biz	Host	Okay! So that was why, uh, before we started, I heard him come in.

[Scotty laughs.]

And discuss a few things with you. And you were able to actually, y'know, have one of those, like—I'm gonna call it a conversation but we all know that, y'know, seven—six/seven-year-olds—eh, hit or miss.

[Scotty laughs.]

00:45:48 Scotty Guest
00:45:50 Biz Host

In how much they're gonna retain it. But that he was able to then go back out. Y'know. Like—
Sure *[laughs]*.
He—so—we're gonna—everybody set your timers.

[Scotty laughs.]

00:46:06 Scotty Guest

To see how long it takes before he comes back in. How are you doing? I mean, you're—uh—it's—quarantining, sheltering in place. How are you guys doing?
Thanks for asking. Y'know, overall, pretty well. Today honestly was rough. I had a really rough day today in terms of... homework and meetings and trying to get some work done and... I end up, y'know, when I need quiet time for the podcast if I'm doing editing or writing or something, I just end up staying up later? So that throws the rest of the day off and like... y'know, I'll really—I really have a desire to be present for my kid and like... y'know, *[laughs]* do the best I can. But—

[Biz laughs.]

00:46:46 Biz Host
00:46:48 Scotty Guest

Y'know, one of the things I really appreciate about your guys' show is that, like—the affirmations that you're giving people because y'know, there's no awards for parenting. Right? There's no, like...
No *[laughs]*. Nope!
And there's also very little, like, metric. Right? There's no, like, checklist of things to know that you're doing. It's also a job that no one's ever, like, nailed it. Right? Like, no one's ever just got it perfect. So *[laughs]* like... to answer your question, kind of a rough day but fine overall *[laughs]*.

00:47:02 Biz Host

Yeah. Yeah. It's, y'know, we—we just spent the whole first part of this show talking about, y'know, it's okay. This is not normal. Let's all just stop pretending it's normal? Because... y'know—and we always are like, "I'm okay. Everything's fine." But I appreciate you saying you're not doing well, because I have many days where I'm not doing well. 'Cause it's a really weird place we're all in right now. So... I'll just tell you. You're doing a very good job.

00:47:32 Scotty Guest

Could be helpful to hear, like, someone else say—it's really hard right now. Like, it's— *[Laughs.]*

00:47:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Scotty: I'm having—

00:47:38 Scotty Guest

Biz: It's really hard right now. Yeah.

And it's okay that it's hard! Like, it's gonna be hard, I'm sure.

00:47:40 Biz Host It is. This ties in, I think, so well to your podcast. About— *[laughs]* I mean, did you—you have this podcast. And it is... *The Imagine Neighborhood*. And it's all about social-emotional skills *[laughs]*.

00:47:56 Scotty Guest Mm-hm.

00:47:58 Biz Host Did you know we were headed into something—

[Scotty laughs.]

—in which we needed such help with emotional-social skills? Because... man. It's appropriate. Tell us about the podcast. And how you developed it.

00:48:14 Scotty Guest Sure. Um, well I mean if I'd—if I'd had that kind of pre-information I probably would've done something better with it. *[Through laughter]* But um—

[Biz laughs.]

It—it just happened to be timing. So um, the—I work for an organization called Committee for Children, which does a lot of in-school curriculum or in like—half the elementary schools in the U.S. And my team is sort of experimental. We're trying a bunch of new stuff out. We're seeing what works and we see that there's a lot of need for this kind of stuff in the home. And so as an—just as an experiment, let's try this out. This is Scotty's dumb little project. Here's this podcast we'll try! And we had just planned on our launch date being in March and it happened to be the first day that schools closed in Washington. So this small little project was suddenly filling a need really immediately and... like, we've been... scrambling is not the right word. Hair on fire? Laying tracks as we—

[Biz laughs.]

—as the train is running down the—? To be responsive to it! To try to get more stuff out there for parents. In a couple weeks we're launching sort of daily activities that go along with all the episodes. So there's just something that you can do with your kids. It's not heavy lift. It's not like please sit down and write a treatise with your children. It's just like, some idea that parents can do at home.

00:49:24 Biz Host Right. It's the sweetest show I've ever heard. And it puts me in this relaxed state from the very beginning? With like the music and the emotion coming from your voice. And... y'know, just reading the titles alone, it—sometimes it's like, okay. This one's definitely for kids. I'm gonna listen anyway. And— *[laughs]* and—

[Scotty laughs.]

Here are some that are geared more at parents. And it's very funny and it's very kind and... it's just... so... needed? And, y'know, you... you recently had a great episode about frustration and disappointment. And... recognizing the difference between the two emotions right now, which I—that is... yes. There are so many emotions happening right now that we need to, like, really see?

00:50:17 Scotty Guest Sure.

00:50:19 Biz Host Accept, and understand? But those two—those two especially with kids... I wasn't thinking about. And I—I don't know... why? I wasn't putting those words on those emotions? But... talk to us a little bit about... about that.

00:50:40 Scotty Guest Sure. So that episode, y'know, was one that we started producing after the schools started shutting down and after the shelter-in-place orders were coming in. On the idea that... a lot of kids and a lot of parents are gonna be stuck inside for a while! So in *The Imagine Neighborhood*, we have a pixie pandemic. It's little, y'know—

[Biz laughs.]

—critters that like they fly into your hair and in your pockets and then they get in your house and they wreck all your stuff. And we have a character named Macho Supreme who is trying to sneak out to go to a GlamourFlex competition and he's trying to, uh, y'know, trick his grandma, his Nana Supreme that he lives with in order to get out of the house. And we end up just talking through, like, why he's trying to... y'know, endanger everybody. And he's, y'know, he says to me, "Oh my gosh! I can't believe it! If a pixie snuck in in my pocket, you're so scrawny, Scotty! He would eat you alive!" And yeah. That's true.

[Biz laughs.]

The reality is—it's a very silly situation. It's a ridiculous situation. But the emotions that this character is feeling are very real. He feels very disappointed. He worked very hard to try to get to this GlamourFlex competition and now he can't go. And that's kinda true—y'know, I think when—when you're a kid, the world isn't really built for you. Y'know. Everything's bigger than you are and there's schedules that are kept that you don't necessarily have a lot of say in and... now we're kind of all in this position, right? There's this bigger thing. This thing that's bigger than everybody that we're all trying to do our best to keep ourselves safe. But that... the emotions that you feel, regardless of how... regardless of what you were excited about? What you were disappointed by, what you were frustrated by—those emotions are still really valid. Right? If you're four and you're frustrated 'cause you can't reach the bubble bath to, y'know, *[laughs]* to pour it all down the drain or you can't reach—

[Biz laughs.]

00:52:31 Biz Host —uh, your dad's computer to throw on the ground or whatever it is. Like, that frustration's still real. Um— *[Laughs.]*

00:52:32 Scotty Guest Yeah!
But, y'know—what we're trying to do with that particular episode is just kinda show that... one of the most helpful things that can—that you can do is just to hear that. And to recognize that in your kids and to... which is hard to do. Right? I mean, especially... I've had experiences where my kid has, like, been really mad that the dog is touching him. Right? *[Laughs.]* And like—And—

00:52:54 Biz Host Yeah! Oh yeah! Yeah *[laughs]*.
00:52:55 Scotty Guest And—
00:52:56 Biz Host Familiar with that *[laughs]*!
00:52:58 Scotty Guest Yeah! And later when I'm talking to my friends, I'm like, *[conspiratorial tone]* "Can you believe this? He's freaking out 'cause the dog's touching him!" *[Regular voice]* But at the same time—

[Biz laughs.]

—his feelings are really real! He's really mad that the dog is touching him! And like... so that—yeah.

[Biz laughs.]

00:53:18 Biz Host That was the goal with that episode. Is just try to give some idea or some—at least to, like... make it very valid. That the feelings that you're having are real.
Well it's so... helpful as a parent because—like you said—we're all also having those feelings on our own. Y'know, weddings are being postponed. Y'know, work-related activities or trips or vacations, y'know. I finally am gonna have this self-care time to do x, y, or z! And... now you don't. Hearing you talk about the frustrations and disappointment of children is a nice reminder, because I can even fall prey to the—y'know—"Oh, you're mad about that? You're mad about— *[Laughs.]* You're disappointed?"

[Scotty laughs.]

"For this dumb thing. Y'know. The world is crazy and, y'know, you don't understand the value of food or fruit!" Right? Like—

[Both laugh.]

Like—like—we're—of course you don't! of course you don't understand it. Right? You are, y'know, ten and... y'know... six. However old my children are now. And—

[Scotty laughs.]

00:54:35 Scotty Guest Time passes in a weird way during the virus. But it's such a nice reminder that... the feelings are valid? Even if the things that we're having the feelings over have, like, such different weight. Depending on who is feeling it. Uh—
00:54:35 Biz Host Totally.
00:54:36 Scotty Guest Very nice. Very nice.
Thank you. Thank you. And I think—y'know, one of the things—in every episode we usually like prompt the listeners, go ask your grown-up how their body feels when they're sad. Or how they feel when they're scared. Or what was the last—y'know. When was the last time—we've got one coming up soon that's about getting into fights with siblings. Right? And so like, talk to your grownup about a time that they felt like they just were gonna fight, y'know?

[Biz laughs.]

But the goal with that is also to get the kids and the adults talking, really. Is to like get that communication happening. Because... one of the things we say is like, y'know, when you're learning to ride a bike no one hands a three-year-old a ten-speed BMX whatever and says, "Okay, ride a bike." Right? You don't—

[Biz laughs.]

—give a kid algebra and say, "Okay, math." Often that does happen when it comes to things like managing your emotions, right? And sometimes we as grownups didn't get those skills growing up, either. Right? We didn't get—no one told us that like when you're sad you can say you're sad. Or some people have been punished for saying they're sad! You know what I mean? So, like, trying to set an example for both the grownups and the kids that hey, these are feelings and they're important and you can talk about 'em. Y'know? My mom used to always say, "Values are caught, not taught." Right? They're the things that your kids see you doing are the things that they're gonna realize are valuable to you. And if you can, y'know—it's hard. I get it. I don't—I'm not perfect with it either. But like, even just taking the moment to check in and say, "Hey, I know you're sad that screen time's over. Let's talk about that." Or, "How did you—how does it feel when you're sad when screen time's over?" And just giving that air to those feelings can go a long way. Oh my gosh. Caught, not taught. Man. I want that on a T-shirt. Becky Iseri.

00:56:07 Biz Host
00:56:11 Biz Host

[Biz laughs.]

00:56:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** *[Through laughter]* That's a good one!

Scotty: She's all her— *[Laughs.]*

00:56:15 Biz Host

That—that is good. What have you taken away from doing this show? I mean... you get to talk about emotions all day *[laughs]*. I do *[laughs]*.

00:56:22 Scotty Guest

00:56:24 Biz Host

Y'know? Like, what do you—what do you—how has the show been affecting you since you've been doing it?

00:56:30 Scotty Guest

I mean, on one hand I feel really lucky to be working. And I feel lucky to be working on something that... I'm hearing is helpful. Right? I'm hearing from people—and I'm not—I'm not a healthcare worker. I'm not, um, delivering food. I'm not—y'know, I'm not part of the sort of essential work that's happening directly. But when I hear from teachers that they're able to, like, send it to their parents so they can continue lessons over Zoom; or the fact that we're doing discussion questions along with each episode that is actually like making their lives a little bit easier? That's... that's... turning into a little bit of self-care for me. Right? Like, I'm getting to dive into that a little bit. The other thing that's kind of happening as well, in parallel, is that because I've got my son with me, I'm trying to think of ways to, like—whenever we're on the other side of where we're at now, it's probably gonna look very different. But at the same time... I don't wanna look back on, y'know, March/April of 2020 and think—we were, y'know—and think of it as a horrifying time when we were cowered and in the darkness and just waiting for the next shoe to

drop. Like, I'm trying to find the stuff that is... delightful about it. Right? Like—when else am I gonna have this sort of inner look at like... 24-hours-a-day with my boy? Um... so what we're—

[Biz laughs.]

Y'know, we're doing stuff like we're building cardboard forts and we're trying out new stuff and trying to kinda just... make... make the most fun that we can have so that when we're on the other side of this it's not just a scary memory. It's a—*[optimistic “on the other hand” type of noise]* but we also, y'know, we—that's when we built the pine cone feeder and the squirrel came. Like— *[Laughs.]* Other stuff that we can make happen.

00:58:14 Biz Host

Y'know, it—again, it ties back to what we were talking about at the beginning of this show with, y'know, things aren't normal but... what can we learn from that. Right? Like... well, yeah! This is a scary time. Things are very weird. But what can we... can we take away anything from this? Right? Like, how can we use this... y'know. Somehow, even if it's just to forgive ourselves when things aren't... going well? *[Laughs.]* Right? But I think... I, too, think about—okay. How are my kids gonna remember this time? What can I do that's special or something and... to be honest? The thing I'm gonna cross my fingers they remember is special was playing videogames with Mama.

00:58:58 Scotty Guest

Yeah!

00:58:58 Biz Host

Right? Like—

[Biz laughs.]

I mean, it's not—we're not building birdfeeders right now, because I don't have the energy to do it. But, I—I have—what do I have the energy for? And how can I make that positive? I think it ties right in. I think it's—it is something... to consider... when we have the space to consider it.

00:59:20 Scotty Guest

Sure. One of the things that this is helping with me—and I'm hoping other people—is... we did create this crazy little world. Right? This *Imagine Neighborhood* where there's a street made of lava. And there's pirates. And there's... y'know, intergalactic wrestling champions and all this stuff that... y'know, it's a world that I get to go and play in as the host and the producer of it? So... I think that's been a help for me in this difficult time *[laughs]*. So—uh, I think my favorite episodes—we have a character named Macho Supreme, as I said, and he's probably one of my most favorites to produce? 'Cause he makes fun of me all the time. *[Through laughter]* Basically. Um—

[Biz laughs.]

01:00:00 Biz Host

There's probably something very therapeutic about that? *[Laughs.]*

01:00:04 Scotty Guest

Yeah. Yeah. Well and the other side of it is—I think a lot of times men... and dads... don't get socialized to be very emotionally expressive. So there's something—at least to me—that feels very powerful about me as a cishet male talking to another male character—just about feelings! And sort of trying to like... show that this is okay and Macho sometimes asks, like, “Is it macho to cry? Is

01:00:36 Biz Host it macho to feel sad?" And I'm like, "Yeah! It is! Why shouldn't it be?" Y'know?
01:00:36 Scotty Guest Yeah.
So, y'know, as much as I love the other characters, I do sort of have a special spot for those moments in the show where—

[Biz laughs.]

—where it's two guys talking about their feelings. And it's totally okay to talk about those feelings.

01:00:48 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
Yesssss *[laughs]!* Just—yessss!

[Scotty laughs.]

01:01:21 Scotty Guest I think that's great! Uh, Scotty—thank you so much for joining us. And thank you for making this podcast, *The Imagine Neighborhood*? We are gonna make sure that we link everybody up to where they can download it, as well as to information about the Committee for Children. And... yeah! I—thank you so much for doing this and... I hope you and yours stay safe and well!

01:01:34 Biz Host Thank you. You as well. And if you or your listeners have topics that they're looking for us to cover, just—they can reach out to me and let me know. We're looking for other ways that we can be helpful to families right now.

01:01:38 Scotty Guest Oh, that's wonderful. We'll make sure that we link people up to that email. How they can get in touch with you.
01:01:40 Biz Host Great.
01:01:40 Scotty Guest Thank you so much!
01:01:42 Music Music Thank you!
"Telephone," by Awesome. Down-tempo guitar and falsetto singing.

*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)*

01:02:05 Promo Clip *[Music fades out.]*
[Dramatic Star Wars-esque music playing in the background.]

Speaker 1: *[In dramatic movie narrator voice]* You wept as we crafted the tragic tale of *Jar-Jar: A Star Wars Story*.

Speaker 2: Do you mean, like, he forgives Darth Vader—

Speaker 3: *[Laughs.]*

Speaker 2: "Mesa still love you, Ani!"

Speakers 3 & 4: *[Laughs boisterously.]*

Speaker 1: You gasped out loud at the shocking twists of *Face/Off 2: Faces Wild*.

Speaker 5: *[Dramatically]* He takes his kid's face.

Speaker 6: ... What? *[Laughs.]*

Speaker 1: Now, we're writing an entire screenplay week by week on *Story Break Season 2: Heaven Heist*.

[Music climaxes, then ceases, replaced by funky synth jazz.]

Freddie Wong: Hey, folks. Freddie Wong here with some exciting news about *Story Break*, the writers' room podcast where three Hollywood professionals have one hour to spin cinematic gold! We're shaking up our format by turning *Heaven Heist*—one of our favorite ideas we've ever come up with on the show—into a full screenplay.

Speaker: *Heaven Heist* is an action-comedy about a crew of misfit gangsters robbing the Celestial Bank of Heaven. Think of *Coco* means *Point Break*.

Freddie: Join us as we write this crazy movie scene-by-scene and get an inside look at the screenwriting process on our podcast, *Story Break*, every Thursday on MaximumFun.org.

[Music ceases.]

01:02:55 Promo Clip

Music: Bouncy electronic music.

Dave Shumka: Hi, I'm Dave.

Graham Clark: Hi, I'm Graham.

Dave: And we're two house DJs who have been trapped inside our drum machine.

Graham: We love it here, and we'd love it if you stopped by and visited us every week—

Both: —on *Stop Podcasting Yourself*—

Dave: —here on [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org). We're just a couple of doofuses from—

Graham: —Canada?

Dave: —and listen to our show, or perish.

[Graham chuckles.]

Stop Podcasting Yourself.

Graham: *[Laughing lightly]* On [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org).

01:03:31 Biz Host *[Music plays for another few moments, then ends.]*
 Oh! I liked talking with Scotty. He is... so nice. I can—guys—I—the podcast episodes are anywhere from 12 to 15 minutes long. If the feeling of calm and security was, like, something tangible, that would be created by this podcast. Like, it's so nice. And it's really nice for—and it's—I think Ellis, who is six, and Katy Belle, who's ten, would get something out of listening to this podcast. And I think kids a little younger might also? It's just... it's just really sweet. *The Imagine Neighborhood* is the podcast and you can find it where you find podcasts! Do you know what you can also find, Theresa? You can find... a mom having a breakdown! Right here *[laughs]*.

01:04:33 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi, this is a rant. About minis and mask wearing. Okay, lady. Lady standing behind the partition. Y'know, good job for being safe and for being kind and saying hi and being gracious as you can be in these times. But I don't need you picking on my mini—not picking. Parenting my mini from behind your glass plate to ask her to not touch her mask. What the hell do you think I've been saying for the past 30 minutes we've been in the grocery store? I've been asking her to not touch her mask. I've got the parenting thing under control. But if I'm bringing her into the store and she's wearing a mask, you need to be thankful and just stay thankful. Just say thank you. Or just—how about say—not saying anything at all? Or, “Have a nice day”? Trying to keep it together. I'm a teacher trying to keep it together. And if wearing a mask in public with my mini is what I control, I'm gonna do it! But I don't need you trying to help me out. *[Sighs.]* It's a beautiful sunny day here in Maine, but y'know? I just—I just needed to bitch. So I'm hiding in my bathroom. Long-time listener, first-time caller. Biz and Theresa, thank you so much for being my people in the midst of all this craziness. You're doing a great job. Have a good day. Bye.

01:05:44 Biz Host Alright. First off, you're doing a good job. And because we're only a couple of weeks into this? We haven't even had a chance to touch on the new form of, like, unwanted advice. Unwanted help that you're not asking for that people—out of kindness; out of fear; out of stress; out of whatever—are pointing your way. I mean, I kept thinking—when this first started and the first thing everybody was saying is, “Don't touch your face,” and Ellis has his hands, like, has his fingers up his nose all day. He is always touching his face. It is what little kids do.

01:06:42 Theresa Host Yes.

01:06:42 Biz Host They do it—if you're lucky—they stop around nine *[laughs]*.

[Theresa laughs.]

Okay? If you're lucky! Right? It's a long game. You're asking them to—all day! Before this?

01:06:55 Theresa Host And by the way—asking them not to do it? Doesn't work at all.

01:07:00 Biz Host No!

01:07:00 Theresa Host So there's lots of—we don't need to get into the things you—there's tactics and theories and ways of getting kids to stop certain habits? Telling them to stop when they're doing it?

[Biz laughs.]

Is not one of the things that has been proven in any way, shape, or form to get a kid to stop doing that.

01:07:21 Biz Host

I—I love the idea—

01:07:23 Theresa Host

[Mock yelling] Grocery store woman! *[Regular voice]* No, I'm just kidding.

01:07:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Theresa: I'm getting really riled up *[laughs]!*

01:07:27 Biz Host

Biz: *[Laughs.]* No, no.

I know. I love the idea that I have had in my head—oh, if I just put my kid in a mask— *[laughs]* they'll stop picking their nose! Nope. That'll just become a collecting spot for what they're picking.

01:07:38 Theresa Host

Mmm.

01:07:40 Biz Host

I... masks on children is a really hard request. I mean, I get—I get the importance and I get the, like... I think I can say it is a really hard request while also understanding the greater good that it provides. Right? I—like—one doesn't cancel out the other. Trying to put a small child—I—it—like, we went out for a walk and in L.A., you have to have a mask on if you're out. 'K? Not in your front yard, but if you're out walking, even, you're supposed to wear one. And man oh man do I not wanna wear one. Because they're uncomfortable! And I get it! I've—obviously, I put it on *[laughs]*. I wore it for the whole walk. That doesn't negate how hard it is to wear a mask! Especially—yeah! So like—and I am a grown-ass woman! Now—

01:08:40 Theresa Host

Right! It's hard for us! Yeah!

01:08:43 Biz Host

Yeah! And the idea that it's not hard for our kids is cuckoo and I—first of all... I know that this rant is not about being mad at—necessarily—grocery store workers.

01:08:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I heard you when you said—

01:09:01 Biz Host

Theresa: Right *[laughs]*.

—thank you for being nice. *[Through laughter]* Thank you for trying to do all this stuff. But because life is not normal? Right? Like... you're like— *[Laughs.]* The part that I related to the most was where you were like, "I'm just so—of course I am parenting. I am parenting just fine right now! I am so—" Like, you could hear it! This is what I mean by—it's not normal. We are carrying... all this. Going to the store isn't the same as it was. We are gonna have a different experience. Especially when we have to take our children with us into an environment that we no longer feel the same about. And... it makes us even more, like, sensitive... to when people look at you? *[Laughs.]* Over their masks. Or, y'know, say something to you. It is... that's hard. It's—

01:10:06 Theresa Host

It's also—I know this is a small thing? But it's also hard when you can't see someone smile. Like, you can kind of see a smile in the eyes sometimes if you're up close enough? But I think a lot of our social communications depend upon, like, really looking at the look in somebody's face. And sometimes it can be really hard to interpret what, like, something friendly? When we're feeling so stressed. Like, my assumption if I don't see the smile and I'm feeling really stressed, I'm much more likely to take it in a negative way. And so I

think we're also trying to figure—like, navigate those interactions in a new way without like some really important social cues that we're used to having available.

01:10:53 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
Yeah. Yeah! I, y'know, when I was—like you, Theresa, and Jesse—Stefan was the one who suddenly started doing all the grocery shopping. And so this was really the first time when I went the other day in over a month. And... not only did you not see—you couldn't tell what people were looking like, I am so used to talking to people? I will talk to anybody. I will chit-chat all day! And I suddenly was like... am I allowed to say, "Excuse me?" Like, am I allowed to speak behind this mask? Right? So like... what you experienced is so valid. That—that feeling... under the most truly normal of circumstances, it's hard. "Why don't you have socks on your baby? Your baby's feet are gonna get cold!"

[Theresa laughs.]

01:11:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk Don't—right—like— *[Laughs, then imitates frustrated scream.]*
Right? And now it's just—I'm gonna say it—turned up to 11! It is tuuurned up!

Theresa: It is! We cranked it up!

01:12:00 Biz Host **Biz:** And you are doing—
Cranked it up.

01:12:03 Biz Host *[Both laugh.]*
And you—you are doing such a good job. I—I—I see you going out to the store. I see you acknowledging others. And I see you... acknowledging yourself? And... how you are helping your child get through this experience of being out in the store. And... yeah. You're doing a very good job.

01:12:33 Theresa Host Yes, you are.

01:12:35 Biz Host Theresa, what did we learn today? I gotta tell ya—between our topic and... talking with Scotty, I think I—for me, the takeaway is... identifying, acknowledging, and like, accepting all the different things that are our feelings. Or how we see the world. How the world is behaving. That—like—by acknowledging it and not just ignoring it and trying to treat it as normal... is... is better. Is more helpful.

It—I will totally admit that when I think about—out loud—how not normal it is? That can make me sad. Like, it—it's not like, "I acknowledged it and now I feel great *[laughs]*." I feel... not great. But! Every day that I... think about it a little and I let in as much as I can handle that day? Helps me forgive myself? 'Cause I'm not gonna be okay with how long this is gonna go and what's coming next. I'm not expecting myself to be. But, every time I can say that out loud to myself and that it's not normal? I can be more forgiving of myself, like you were saying, about like... how do I... how do I help my kids get through this? Is it sitting with a puppy in their lap? Y'know. Is it— *[laughs]* while they're homeschooling or learning online? Or is it a schedule—like, whatever it is? I'm gonna be more

forgiving of—of how I'm feeling with that? Than like... what's happening a year from now. Right? Like... to me, that... kind of helps. Because it—it's fucking weird. It's not normal.

[Theresa laughs.]

01:14:48 Theresa Host
01:14:50 Biz Host

No.
The more we talk about it with ourselves, and the more we talk about it with others? And have conversations? That go beyond... "Hey, how you doing?" "I'm alright."

[Both laugh.]

When we all start talking about it? I feel like... it makes us feel... it makes us feel normalized for not feeling like things are normal? And it—it actually helps. I don't need anybody to solve it? I just need somebody to say, "Me, too." *[Laughs]*. Right?

01:15:21 Theresa Host
01:15:22 Biz Host

Yes!
And—like, listening to Scotty, that reminds me that there are people out there? Who are helping. In—in ways that I—I need help. And... there are lots of helpers out there right now. And... we have permission to go looking for them, whether they be regarding mental health, like you were talking about at the beginning, or help for your kids? Or just how to—I mean— *[through laughter]* so much is going on! Like, there's not like anything stopped when it came to like how our kids are developing. And what they want to know and what they need and blah, la, la, la, la, like, during this. We still get to go ask for help! We still do. Like you said, Theresa—things haven't just stopped altogether. Right? And I know we have that feeling that we should wait? Maybe we should not wait. For everything.

01:16:17 Theresa Host
01:16:18 Biz Host

Mm-hm!
Everybody? You are doing... an incredibly good job. Maybe you wanna cry a lot *[laughs]*! Maybe you want to be really productive? Maybe you are really, really good at this? And maybe... you aren't really good at this.

[Both laugh.]

All of those categories—and more!—are okay. And you are doing? A very... good... job. Theresa? It almost—like, the tears well up as I want to tell you— *[laughs]* this. You are doing... a very good job.

01:17:04 Theresa Host
01:17:07 Biz Host
01:17:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk
01:17:17 Music Music

Thank you, Biz. So are you.
Thank you. And we will talk to you guys... next week.
Biz and Theresa: Byeeeeeee!
"Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

*I got the lowdown momma blues
Got the the lowdown momma blues
Gots the lowdown momma blues
The lowdown momma blues.
Gots the lowdown momma blues
Got the lowdown momma blues
You know that's right.*

01:17:38	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 .
01:18:06	Theresa	Host	
01:18:30	Speaker 1	Guest	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i> MaximumFun.org .
01:18:32	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:18:33	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:18:35	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.