

00:00:00	Biz	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:03	Biz	Host	Due to the pandemic, we bring you <i>One Bad Mother</i> 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 <u>good job</u> .
00:00:21	Music	Music	"Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:25	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —sometimes a decision isn't a decision at all. We talk to Marlo Mack about her new Audible book based on her podcast <i>How To Ba A Girl</i> . Plus, Biz is old.
00:00:37	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and caller: Woooo!
00:00:40	Caller	Caller	There is nothing like cleaning out the toddler potty full of poop while you're breastfeeding a newborn. Am I right?
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:01:14	Biz	Host	Clearly I am doing... a terrible job. As it is such a genius for me to potty-train a two-year-old while I have a newborn. <i>[Sighs.]</i> You're doing a great job, Biz. I am... not. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Bye! Oh, no. You're doing a great job! This sounds like a classic example of some amazing super brain thinking. You have a newborn in your house. Logically, that means you should start potty-training a two-year-old. I mean, it just goes without saying! It's like one thing <u>obviously</u> leads to the other! And I think change—I am not sure I've ever breastfed while cleaning out a potty. I have breastfed and made a cappuccino. That was pretty exciting. But I think yours is really next-level? Like a next-level—I think that is just proof that you are doing an amazing job parenting as if you were in a parenting circus. You would be center ring, my friend! Center ring! I think you're doing a great job!
			You know who's also doing a great job? You guys! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I just—gotta start the show off reminding you all that you're doing an amazing job. I also want to—again—thank all of our healthcare workers. Be you frontline or be you those that help the frontliners keep frontlining. I am so glad that vaccines have started rolling out for you. This is very, <u>very</u> exciting. Everybody? If you wanna show your thanks for essential workers, I have this really great idea. 'K. Ready? It's very easy. You just... put a mask on. Correctly. When you go out! That is the way to say thank you. I've heard this poor emergency room doctor the other day just say, "Y'know? Everybody just keeps saying how thankful they are for us. And how much they are grateful for the work that we're doing. And then they walk around without their masks on. Well, the reason we are working this hard is because you're not wearing your masks."
			And I was just like, "Woo! Dang!" That's true. So everybody? Put on a mask. I know that you guys are already doing it. You're doing a great job. But it is easy to get the burnout and forget to do it. So keep a few extras in your car. Keep a few extras in the diaper bag. Keep a few extras in the cubby. Keep a few extras... everywhere. Thank you to all of you who are out there every day making life

possible for the rest of us when we do have to venture out of our houses.

00:04:03 Biz Host Guys? Fun story for you today. It was my birthday this week. And I got a gift! From my body! *[Laughs.]* Remember last week when I was telling you guys how grounded I was and how the holidays had just been so amazing and I'd had ramen and it was delicious and it was like joy ramen and I just really—I know that I have turned a corner for good. That infamous corner we talk about on this show. I had turned it for good. And then I got this, like, weird little breakout on my shoulder. The back of my shoulder. And I thought—is this from a new sweatshirt that I just got that I didn't wash? It's gotta—the only thing that's different in my life right now. It must be an allergic reaction. I'm not touching it. I'm not scratching it. Why is it getting worse? It's getting worse as the days go on. Oh my god! It hurts! It hurts... so very bad. It, like... it hurt and then I did the old "take the camera and try and get a picture of it to really see what was going on"? And that was disgusting.

So I sent it to my doctor. The picture. And on my birthday, I had a face-to-face over Zoom doctor's appointment where I was informed I had shingles. The shingles, everyone! Not—not usually found in the very young. *[Laughs.]* But I just turned 47, so I guess I can not be the very young, really, anymore. Shingles? Fascinating. Painful. Horrible. Who knew? I said, "How'd I get shingles?" And they were like, "Did you have chicken pox?" And I said, "Yes. Yes. We all had chicken pox probably at some point in time. So yes." She said that it is usually triggered from stress. And I was like, "But I feel so good right now!" *[Laughs.]*

It's triggered from stress and it hangs out in your nervous system! And so then it just travels up a nerve! One nerve! And it just comes out in one spot! So it doesn't spread, which is good. And shoutout to vaccines! I was not at a big risk of my kids getting chicken pox from it 'cause they could have, but they didn't, because—vaccines! So that was exciting. I am on the mend. And definitely only feel a little old and broken. And am questioning what I now determine as feeling rested and grounded. I may have that really, really wrong. *[Laughs.]* And that's okay.

00:07:02 Biz Host Speaking of okay, I am so excited that we are going to be talking to Marlo Mack about her new Audible book, which is based on her podcast *How to Be A Girl*.

00:07:17 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.

00:07:26 Biz Host If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:07:29 Theresa Host Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice.

00:07:32 Biz Host Biz and Theresa's children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:07:36 Theresa Host Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

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

00:07:42 Biz Host Everyone, I am so excited to welcome Peabody finalist Marlo Mack, who is the author of *How to Be A Girl*, an Audible original which details her journey as a single mom of a young transgender daughter. The project is based on her award-winning podcast of the same name and on the writing in her blog, GenderMom.com. Welcome, Marlooo! Woo, woo!

00:08:09 Marlo Guest *[Laughs.]* Thank you! Thank you for having me.

00:08:12 Biz Host I am very happy to have you, and before I derail on a million things I could derail you on—just right away—just before even asking you questions—I want to ask you, who lives in your house?

00:08:25 Marlo Guest Well I just shut the door on a very sad member of my household, my 14-year-old dog, Pirate.

[Biz laughs.]

Who really wanted to join in but he's loud and he snores. He sleeps a lot and then he snores. So I've got the very old dog, and then just the next-youngest is the 13-year-old daughter. So that's a different kind of challenge. And then a husband who's a little bit older than both of them.

[Both laugh.]

Fairly newly acquired. A couple years ago. He came onboard and we all live together in a little—in the suburbs of Seattle.

00:09:04 Biz Host Yeahhh! Very nice! Ooh, this is—see, I could derail on all of these things. I wanna actually ask about... your name. Marlo Mack. I know it's not your real name. But I do—it is a pseudonym so that you can protect your child's identity since you started the show when they were very young. On the podcast. But I gotta ask—"Marlo." Is it a Marlo Thomas reference? Where did Marlo come from? I love Marlo.

00:09:40 Marlo Guest Mm. Marlo is absolute a Marlo Thomas reference. Yes. My childhood—"Free to be You and Me" was central. And I just thought it was kind of a cool name. But yeah! Just all that gender-bendy, wonderful stuff in that album? That was so—gosh, it holds up now if you listen to it. We still have a lot to learn from "Free to Be You and Me," I think, about *[through laughter]* how we gender our children and ourselves. And then I kinda like the alliterative "Marlo Mack." Mack is kind of sort of similar to my actual last name? A little bit.

00:10:16 Biz Host You have been producing, creating, doing a podcast, for a very long time now, called "How to Be A Girl." And it's now a book. An Audible Original. And before we get to the book, I think we need to start with the podcast. And I'd love for you to start with how it all started!

00:10:43 Marlo Guest Well... my—ah, it's hard to know where to start! I guess from the very beginning, y'know, when my kiddo was born I thought I had a boy. I thought I had a boy from the ultrasound on. And that all kind of was the situation until my child was three years old. When my quote-in-quotes "son" said, "I am a girl, Mom." And she said it over and over and over again and she also said—well, one day this was sort of the pivotal moment for me, she said, "Mama, something went wrong in your tummy—"

00:11:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Oh, baby! Baby girl!

Marlo: "That made me come out—" I know.

00:11:31 Marlo Guest Like, where'd you come up with this, kid? "Something went wrong in your tummy, Mama. And I need you to put me back. Please, please put me back." And y'know—

00:11:40 Biz Host Oh, baby.

00:11:41 Marlo Guest "So I can come out again as a girl. So I can come out as who I am." And that was the moment where I knew that this was not... that this was something big that I really needed to pay attention to. And so it wasn't—I didn't know at the time what transgender was, really? And there was a long process after that of getting to a point of realizing I really—what she was saying was that she really was a girl. And so the podcast started kind of—it grew out, initially, out of my blog. I started blogging first.

00:12:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Marlo:** Podcasts weren't—this was 2012?

00:12:23 Marlo Guest **Biz:** Yeah, no. Podcasts weren't a thing. Yeah. So I don't think I'd even heard a podcast yet. But I started the blog because I went online in, y'know, 2011, 2012, looking for stories like mine. Thinking, well, somebody else out there must be like us. Someone must've experienced this and written about it.

[Biz laughs.]

I mean, everything's on the internet! Right? But we weren't on the internet in 2011, 2012, 2013, when I desperately needed somebody to say, y'know, "Look! We're like you!" So I just—I started a blog. Also anonymous. My name then—this was prior to the Marlo Mack days. This was—I was "GenderMom," which I thought was kind of cool.

[Biz laughs.]

00:13:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** *[Superhero-style singing]* Da-da-daaaa! *[Laughs.]*

00:13:07 Marlo Guest **Marlo:** GenderMom! *[Laughs.]* Exactly! Yes. I should've—I don't have a cape. But so yeah. So I started writing that and it got pretty quickly got quite a bit of response, I think, because it was so different than anything else out there. And I started hearing from quite a few people. A lot of transgender adults. A lot of transgender women saying it really reflected the experiences they recalled as children. And then hearing from lots of parents who were going through what I was going through.

So in—I think—2015? I started the podcast. I'd been kind of an audio nerd for a long time and had been recording her. Recording just my cute little kid 'cause I thought she was adorable and I wanted to save her voice and I didn't actually think I'd do anything with it. But I have all these—I found myself one day with all this really kind of adorable tape of my little girl saying cute things. She loved to sing so she'd make up songs and I'd record her songs and her giggles and one day I realized that maybe I had something that I could tell this other story with this medium. And so that's what I did.

00:14:16 Biz Host So yours is a—I mean, yours is officially a teen. Mine would like to say that they're a teen and they're not. We're like, "Eleven doesn't rhyme with "een," so I'm very sorry. You are not a teen."

00:14:29 Marlo Guest *[Marlo laughs.]*
 00:14:31 Biz Host *[Through laughter]* Aspiring teen.
 00:14:43 Marlo Guest Aspiring teen. But the thing about teens is... they're—they're a lot.
 00:14:45 Biz Host Y'know. Now... now she's 13! She's not 7! So—
 She's 13.
 How did you guys approach sort of the boundaries? Was she in—is she still involved heavily or does she, like, *[sullenly]* “I don't care. I don't care. Whatever. I don't care.” Like— *[Laughs.]*
 00:14:59 Marlo Guest Right. Right. Right! Which— *[Laughs.]*
 00:15:01 Biz Host “I don't care.” *[Scoffing “ugh.”]*
 00:15:03 Marlo Guest Have you met her? Did you just— *[Laughs.]*
 00:15:05 Biz Host Yeah. I was once a teen.
 00:15:08 Marlo Guest Have you been eavesdropping? *[Laughs.]* Oh my gosh.
 00:15:10 Biz Host I was once a teen. My children don't believe it. But... ugh!
 00:15:14 Marlo Guest Well, we had the most recent episode was actually a big kind of drama. Because I produced an episode about something that went down last year in sixth grade.
 00:15:29 Biz Host Mm.
 00:15:31 Marlo Guest And I shouldn't—I shouldn't say any more about it because I'm not at liberty to. But I spent—ugh, I don't even want to think about how many hours recording, y'know, putting together this episode. And then I thought I had told my daughter what was in the episode—
[Biz laughs.]
 —but I guess I hadn't really cleared it. Maybe she *[through laughter]* just wasn't listening. Sometimes that happens. *[Laughs.]*
 00:15:52 Biz Host I think it might be that one. *[Laughs.]*
 00:15:55 Marlo Guest But we were chatting and I mentioned it and she said, “You put what in the podcast?!”
[Biz laughs.]
 And I said, “Oh, boy.” And y'know it—she was worried it would impact some of her friendships at school. And, y'know, that's sacred ground. Those are—I'm not messing with a sixth grade girl's social life or make that harder than it has to be. So I said, “Do you want me to take it down?” Thinking, “Please say no! Please say no! I worked so hard on this!” *[Laughs.]* And she said, “Yes.” And I said, “Okay!” And ten minutes later it was off. It was erased from all the—from everything. And that was quite a lesson. And y'know. That I realized that I had kind of crossed a line? Y'know, I felt like it was a respectful story and it was a lot of stuff that I—territory I really wanted to explore, but I just—it was her story and she didn't want it out there. And so—
 00:16:51 Biz Host Oof.
 00:16:53 Marlo Guest We have a new agreement now, which is she's gonna listen to everything before it goes up. The sweet sort of coda to this story is that a couple days later, she says, “Mama, I feel so bad. You worked so hard on that.”
 00:17:03 Biz Host Aw.
 00:17:04 Marlo Guest “Couldn't we just put it—couldn't you just fix it and take out the parts I don't want you to use and just put it back?” And I was like, “Well, that leaves about thirty seconds.” *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

But there was actually maybe four minutes that was usable so I said, “Why don’t you add something to it in your own voice and tell people what happened and we’ll tell people why—maybe you could explain why it’s so short and tell them what happened a little bit.” And so she did that. It was really—I was really proud of her. It was kind of a turning point. Kind of a—her growing up in the podcast, really. *[Laughs.]* And I—yeah. It was really sweet moment and she kinda took the reins. She picked out the music for it. I still had to do all the work, y’know, all the editing and everything. But anyway. And she did say she would listen to the podcast going forward even though she says she thinks it’s really—

[Biz laughs.]

She said, “Mom, y’know... I live it. So why do I have to listen to it? Again? Y’know, I already lived these things that you’re talking about. Why would I want to listen to them?” And I’m like, “Oh.” Also she finds her own voice kind of—y’know, especially when she was little. Her little kid voice is so, y’know. They’re all so cute but they, y’know, when you’re 13 it’s pretty cringey, as she puts it, to listen to yourself when you’re listen.

00:18:20 Biz Host

When you’re 13 everything is cringey.

[Marlo laughs.]

00:18:26 Marlo Guest
00:18:29 Biz Host

Everything is the worst. *[Laughs.]*

Yeah. This is true! This is true.

Y’know. I mean, there are lots of questions I’d like to ask about being a teen as well as being transgender, trying to navigate that—like, already... y’know. Sort of stressful... ugh. Being a teen sucks. And I would never want to do it again. And even as I watch my eleven-year-old enter the world of middle school, I already have, like, a million personal baggage triggers going off left and right. Like, “Oh god. Eventually somebody’s going to crush her.” *[Laughs.]* Right? Like-or, “Oh, god. Y’know. Are they friends? Are they not friends? Are they—mm! Ha!” Like, just— *[Laughs.]* And I’m gonna stay back. I’m gonna be just like my mother. I’m gonna stand back! I’m gonna stand back. Not gonna get involved.

[Marlo laughs.]

So definitely a new experience as a parent. And I wonder... I’m wondering... as a parent, how are you handling sort of watching the teen years unfold and... are there any sort of special or like surprising things that have come up specifically because she’s... transgender? Is it... or is there nothing? Is it just like, “Nope! Once we made that call, all easy!” *[Laughs.]*

00:19:55 Marlo Guest

[Laughs.] Oh, yeah, yeah. It’s a breeze. Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Y’know, like any parent, everything is easy. Yeah. No. Well... y’know... once we did transition—when she transitioned and I transitioned, going, okay, I’m now the mother of a girl, y’know, she was only four! And so she did what we—what is called “social transition,” which means, y’know, entirely reversible. You get—you go to the pink aisle instead of the icky blue aisle that you always hated and get all your clothes and you grow your hair out. Pick a new name. And new

pronouns! And it's all... it's all reversible, it's all, y'know, contrary to what some people think, nobody's giving surgeries or hormones to little kids. So that's just important to mention 'cause I think there is some misunderstanding about that.

So a lot of—y'know, and she, y'know, just never looked back! It was just all girl. Happy girl. Blended in with all the other girls. And we didn't tell most people when she went to a new school. She was just another girl. And her teacher knew but that was about it. She told a few of her little friends and most of them, y'know, asked them to keep it to themselves, which is tricky when you're, y'know, asking for a seven, eight-year-old to keep information private, but most of them did. And they frankly didn't care. Y'know. Because it just didn't matter. It was like, "Do you like Legos too? Yes! Okay! Let's play! Who cares—" Y'know. I think—I'm not sure it really even registered, what she was telling them. But she had her little spiel she would explain to them. It's pretty adorable. Y'know. "When I was born they thought I was a boy but I'm really a girl. Okay? Got it? Okay! Good. Let's go play." Y'know.

00:21:37 Marlo

Guest

[Biz laughs.]

And so she's really managed it with her friends from the beginning. We've been—y'know, we've been in kind of this honeymoon period, I think, a lot of parents who have children who transition really young, y'know, there's this kind of sweet time where—if the stars align, as they did for us, where we had a support—y'know, we were incredibly lucky to have a supportive community of family. Our friends. Our neighbors. And the school that—y'know, the city and the school district we found ourselves in were very trans-friendly or they were willing to learn? And so we got—we had a good go for a lot of years. And just basically she's just gotten to have a really normal—whatever that means—childhood! And is just one of the girls. But we are now entering—this is a really interesting moment. Because about a year ago, her friends starting looking different. Y'know? It's like, "Ooh. Hadn't seen little Sophie for a while and now she's as tall as I am and she's kinda shaped like me." Y'know? Her little friends coming over. Y'know. And then the moms of—y'know, the other moms start whispering, "Oh, she got her period. Did your daughter get her period?"

This whole new chatter that I'm not part of. And y'know, not—not necessarily feeling left out, but just... it's just... suddenly, "Okay. This is now getting a little more complicated. A little more interesting." Because she's not gonna go through that and so I need to start having these conversations with her about, y'know... well, "You know that your friends are going through this and how do you feel about that? Do they talk about it? Do you feel left out?" Y'know, she kinda rolled her eyes. She's like, "Why would I care about that? I hear it really hurts! I've heard of cramps! They sound horrible! I'm so glad I don't have to have that."

[Biz laughs.]

But... y'know. It's just a point where her—the difference becomes more pronounced. And so we actually just this last—late last year,

			she went through her own rite of passage into her version of puberty and got her first medical intervention.
00:23:54	Biz	Host	Ooh!
00:23:55	Marlo	Guest	To block her natal—or, y'know, her natal puberty. Which would've been a male puberty. And for a girl who has lived as a girl <u>literally</u> as long as she can remember—she does not even remember being called a boy.
00:24:09	Biz	Host	Wow.
00:24:10	Marlo	Guest	Because she was three, four. She's—any memories of that she's kind of dispensed with, she tells me. And so for that child to be asked to then—"Oop! You're off the girl's team now. You're gonna go get a beard and have a low voice and look like Dad." Obviously that's not a workable thing. So we're <u>very</u> lucky. Very, very lucky to have good health insurance and a supportive, trans-friendly medical provider. So she started medications last—a few months ago to get—they're called blockers. And they're safe and reversible. They're not cross-hormones. If she goes off the blocker medications, she would then go through male puberty if she wanted to. If that was what she chose to do.
00:24:55	Biz	Host	Wow. That's a—I am sure that that was definitely a big decision. You know what I mean? Like, as the parent. Right? Like... I know that it would be, like, "Well yes. This is—I know my child. This is absolutely what my child needs and I know it is best and I am obviously—I am <u>obviously</u> gonna do it." <i>[Laughs.]</i> But! Simultaneously, I know that like with every parental decision, there's always that moment of... "Uhhh..." And actually I think that ties into sort of what I wanted to talk about last with you, which <u>was</u> about sort of the control we think we have as parents? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:25:40	Marlo	Guest	Yeah. Can I just say something, though? Could I just say something about the decision? Because honestly... it didn't feel like it was a decision.
00:25:49	Biz	Host	Yeah, okay.
00:25:50	Marlo	Guest	There was no point—it felt—and that's what I think is hard to understand if you haven't actually been through this experience with a transgender kid who transitioned so young. That decision as made ten years ago, as far as I—I have known—in fact, we've been talking about this for almost ten years with her. Because she was terrified at age four of having a beard. And so I had to sit her down and say, "It's okay, honey. When you're older the doctors can give you medication so that won't happen." And that was the only way she was able to bear, y'know, she needed that information in order to be okay. And she would ask me about it periodically. "When do I get the medication? Do I need it now, Mom? Am I about to get a beard?" "No, honey. It's okay. You're only eight. You're good." So having had that conversation a hundred times for a decade, y'know, there's no decision point. IT's sort of—I mean, I think of it—this sounds melodramatic, but I mean I think of it as if someone said, "Oh, your kid has cancer. Are you sure you're gonna give him the chemo?" Y'know?
00:26:49	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: Oh my god, you're so good! I'm so glad you're saying this! Good! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:26:55	Marlo	Guest	Marlo: I mean, was that a tough decision? I mean—It's—Because I honestly do feel that it is a lifesaving medical intervention for my daughter. These kids, they... the ones who don't get it, and most of them, y'know, there's a lot of fear and misinformation about

these medications? A lot of people think they're being handed out like candy to any kid who's kinda like genderbend-y? And the reality is, they're hard to get. Y'know. Most kids who need them are not getting them. So it's just something I really wanna emphasize. There's a lot of barriers to getting them. Starting with, you've gotta have—often people don't have decent health insurance in this country. Right? But these kids... when they feel like my daughter; when they know themselves to be a gender that isn't aligning with what's on their birth certificate and they have to endure a puberty that feels... so wrong. Y'know. They—they hurt themselves. It's really serious shit. And a lot of 'em decide not to be on this planet anymore. So it isn't a decision—I mean, it's—like, when I compare it to chemotherapy, I'm not—I'm really not being that extreme. I feel like it saved my daughter's life to have access to this. Yeah.

00:28:07 Biz Host

And again, I am really glad you stopped me and you said that. Because—

00:28:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Marlo: Oh, and I'm not offended! I mean, how would you know if you hadn't lived through this, you know?

00:28:15 Biz Host

Biz: No! No, no, no! No, no!

Well that—but that's where I wanted to kind of get to. Because... I feel like there are... there's like this— *[sighs]*. Spectrum of information. Like, as a person in the world, information on—that you have access to. Not you. I mean, the universal you, the universal we—have access to when it comes to this. And... you may be in a group or, y'know, a part of the world, the country, where you know zero about what being transgender means or any of it! Right? Like, any of it. What?! There's more options than boy/girl? Like, it's just 1974. *[Laughs.]* Just... and then, there are other people who have gone through the same experiences that you and your family have, and so... are right there. Right there. There's no, "We don't have to do a lot of background talk. We all know. It's all good. Obviously I'm doing this." And then... there are those of us who float in the middle. Whee! *[Laughs.]*

[Marlo laughs.]

Like I was telling Theresa before the show, she—her oldest is transgender and is a girl and has known that they were a girl since they were very young. And I was saying, y'know, I... I do have a better understanding because I've gotten to live vicariously through you. *[Laughs.]* But I just—

00:29:49 Marlo Guest

Right, absolutely. Yeah.

00:29:51 Biz Host

Which is a gift. And both of my kids are very much a part of a community in which the language of genderfluidity is part of it. And so they both—like, trying to understand their identity is very much part of their growing up in a way that it was not for me.

00:30:14 Marlo Guest

Mm. That's great. That's great.

00:30:15 Biz Host

And it's super cool. Yay. However, I as the parent, right? Like, definitely have moments where I'm like, "For real?" Like, and then—and then—is my question of "For real," does that make me a horrible person or am I not—I obviously would do anything for these children. Right? But like... y'know. Because it's a newer thing in this house, there would be moments of, I think... I obviously will make the decision—it would still be a decision. Right? At the beginning. Or I would trap myself with the wording of "decision" as opposed to

taking that word off the table. And I am getting to a point. And my point is—the book—which has come after—this Audible book, which has come after the podcast and the blog—you spend a large portion of the beginning really going through your experiences trying to get your head around this. Right?

00:31:20 Marlo Guest

Yes. Yes.

00:31:21 Biz Host

And—like, to the point where like, it's like, "Huh." Y'know, "I know! I get it!" But I get it because... I'm more involved in that world. Right? So I guess I wanted to ask... is the—when creating this book—when writing this book and putting this together—who is this book... for? Who were you thinking this book would be for and how did that affect... how you came at it?

00:31:54 Marlo Guest

Oh, that's a good question! And it sounds like you got a little frustrated with me.

00:31:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Marlo: *[Through laughter]* Like, "Come on!"

00:31:59 Biz Host

Biz: No! Not with you! I know.

00:32:01 Marlo Guest

It does sound like it a little bit. But I mean like—

00:32:02 Biz Host

I don't blame you! *[Laughs.]*

But that's the camp, right? Like, that's—those are the different parts of the world. It made me—I mean, I know what I... my frustration only comes from, "Ohhh! It was written for..." But I don't know who it was written for! Right? Like... Right? So like, I can—I am happy to sit on my own frustration if it means... that... people who have zero experience—who cannot understand at this point why you as a parent couldn't "control" and make the decision for your children!

00:32:41 Marlo Guest

Yeah. Right. Right.

00:32:42 Biz Host

Right? So—so I wanna ask you! I don't wanna create a narrative in my head that I already have. You're welcome. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:51 Marlo Guest

[Marlo laughs.]

Y'know? That's a really good question. I... I didn't write the book probably for people like you. 'Cause you're kind of already on board! *[Laughs.]*

00:33:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I'm here! Woo woo! I mean, I got a lot to learn. But I'm—I'm open. That's right.

00:33:05 Marlo Guest

Marlo: Um, I mean—yeah! Gold star. Yeah.

I... I really wanted people to know... frankly, I don't know if there's—there's not a single person I wrote it for. I wanted people to walk through this experience with me. Because I think there's a misconception that, "Okay. She's a Seattle liberal. She's got a progressive agenda and her kid is a product of that. She was celebrating from the rooftops because she had this really interesting, weird, edgy kid experience."

[Biz laughs.]

I have yet to meet a parent who fits that description, by the way. And I've met hundreds of mothers and parents like myself and I don't care how liberal and leftwing you are; if you have a beautiful trans child dropped into your life, you're scared. And you're probably going to push back, because you know this kid's gonna have a lot harder time. Y'know. I mean, what parent wants their child to be... almost assured of having a much, much harder life? And that's the reality if you have a transgender kid. They can still

have a fabulous life and be healthy and happy and my daughter is. She's thriving. And with an eyeroll in there, 'cause she's thirteen. But she's a happy—she's just normal. Her problems are like the other thirteen-year-old girls'.

But back to the book. I wanted people to know... and it's also, frankly, it's kind of a historical document at this point. Because, I mean the history—things have changed so much, so quickly on this issue! When I started working on my blog and doing my podcast, no one had heard of Caitlin Jenner! Or Laverne Cox! Let alone Elliott Page! Y'know? We just did not have this conversation. Nobody—y'know, there were no cute little trans kids sitting on the couch with Oprah or Anderson Cooper telling their stories with mom and dad going, "Oh, yes, we love them so much." That did not exist.

[Biz laughs.]

00:35:06 Marlo Guest

And so, y'know, in some ways it's—the narrative's a little dated, because I was up against—literally, there was nothing. There was one book. One book, called *The Transgender Child*. And I think that was the only book out there. *[Laughs.]* And it had just been published. So it was—y'know, it's amazing to think how quickly this has changed and it's wonderful. It's wonderful. I mean, I often—I pinch myself. I think, "If my child had been born just a few years earlier or in a different place."

[Biz laughs.]

What—y'know, anywhere outside of a few cities in this country, I think we would've been up a creek! I mean, I think she would've had a very, very different story. And a really sad one! A really sad one. Y'know, there is so much pushback against... parents... like me. Saying that somehow, y'know, we're crazy. This is our—we did this. We want this. And I just wanted to go through every single fear and I mean in some ways it's my self-defense. Like, look, I really tried to find an alternative. There's a lot of people—there's a big segment of feminists who would say, y'know, "You just don't accept that you have a nonconforming child. Why can't you embrace your les—" Or "Why can't you embrace your gay son?"

And I hear from these people. Y'know, I get these emails. Saying, "I was a tomboy, but I'm not a—you would've made me into a boy!" So there is a lot of pushback from all sides. So in some ways, y'know, I wanted to address each point by point. What—how I got from being basically a parent who was like literally... I didn't even know what transgender was. I'd never met a transgender person that I was aware of. Of course I had, but not that I knew of. And all I had in my head were the worst, most just horrendous, salacious—y'know, Jerry Springer images. And that's all that I had to go on. So I was not, y'know, jumping in with both feet at the beginning, that's for sure. And the book *[through laughter]* talks a lot about that, yeah.

[Biz laughs.]

00:37:12 Biz Host

But I think that that's actually really good. Because... it is... you—you want this book to get to the people who... who are just at that very beginning place. Or who know people. Right? Like, I think... I

think it's not just for people who find themselves with a child who is identifying differently than their biological, y'know, parts. I think it's for the people who are in that community. Right? Like you said. You've been very lucky that you have a, y'know, trans-friendly medical group; a school community; and the only way to create those kinds of spaces is to have these conversations out there. So, y'know. It... it... I appreciate that you've written it and put it out there. And sadly, I have to wrap it up, though we clearly could talk all day.

[Marlo laughs.]

It's been a delight. So I'm just gonna say—thank you. Thank you for choosing to share this experience in the different ways that you have. And you may thank your daughter for hating you for it later. I'm just kidding. *[Laughs.]* You can thank your daughter for also being a part of it, 'cause it's clear that it was always something that they were... present for and aware was happening. So good job. Yeah. She's pretty proud of it, actually. She really likes the idea that we're making a difference.

00:38:51 Marlo Guest

00:38:54 Biz Host

It is! And so we will make sure that we link everybody up to where they can find out more about the Audible original, as well—if they have not already been listening to the podcast *How to Be A Girl*—which is the same name as the book—and GenderMom.com. We'll link everybody up to all of these things. Thank you so much for coming on today and talking with me!

00:39:17 Marlo Guest

Thank you so much. It's been really fun. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:39:22 Biz Host

[Singing] Thank you!

00:39:24 Music Music

"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.

[Music fades out.]

00:39:40 Music Music

Laid-back ukulele with whistling plays in background.

00:39:41 Biz Promo

One Bad Mother is supported in part by Grove. Healthy, plant-based, nontoxic cleaning products work! And the good ones are actually more enjoyable to use! *[Dramatically]* But where do you start and who do you trust, Internet?!

[Theresa laughs.]

00:40:00 Theresa Promo

[Regular voice] That's where Grove Collaborative comes in. It is so nice to have a place to go to get answers. And Grove Collaborative delivers healthy home, beauty, and personal care products directly to you. Join over two million families who have trusted Grove Collaborative to make their homes happier and healthier. Plus, shipping is fast and free on your first order.

00:40:23 Biz Promo

Plus, it's how I made the switch to dryer balls.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:40:29 Theresa Promo

Make your home healthier this new year. For a limited time when listeners go to Grove.C-O/badmother, you will get a free Mrs. Meyer's gift set, plus free shipping with your first order—a \$30 value! But you have to use our special code.

00:40:50 Biz Promo

Go to Grove.C-O/badmother to get this exclusive offer!

00:40:55 Theresa Promo That's Grove.co/badmother.

00:41:03 Theresa Host *[Music fades out.]*
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.

00:41:22 Biz Host Genius fail time, Theresa! I would ask you how you are, but I can just look into your eyes. And it says it all.

00:41:32 Theresa Host It's all there.

00:41:34 Biz Host It's all there. *[Singing]* In your eyes!

[Theresa laughs.]

00:41:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk The light! The heat!
Biz: *[Regular voice]* Genius me! What?

00:41:43 Theresa Host **Theresa:** I'm just sending—

00:41:50 Biz Host No, I'm just sending laser beams of horror to you through Zoom. Yeah. I think we're just gonna be real right off the top. I would like us to work on a new question. Right? Do you remember how, with "mommy brain" we decided to name it "super brain"? 'Cause it needed to be changed.

00:42:08 Theresa Host Yeah! Yeah!

00:42:09 Biz Host Uh, "How are you," in the pandemic, is just a bullshit question.

00:42:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Yeah. It is.

00:42:20 Biz Host **Biz:** And so we all...
I issue this challenge to everyone and to us—a new way to greet each other. That's now "How are you?" Because that just results in the laser eyes or it results in lies or it results in, like... I don't know.

00:42:39 Theresa Host Well, you know. I mean, *[makes goofy noise.]*

00:42:41 Biz Host *[Makes goofy noise.]* Y'know. "Let me show you how bad I have it!" Right? Like—

00:42:45 Theresa Host *[Theresa laughs.]*
It just leads to noises.

[Biz grunts.]

00:42:50 Biz Host Noises. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:51 Theresa Host Yeah! Exactly.

00:42:52 Biz Host "Bleh." *[Laughs.]* "Hnnh." Anyway.

00:42:57 Theresa Host Yeah. We need to figure that out. Yeah. I'll work on it. I'll work on it in my free time. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:02 Biz Host Alright. *[Laughs.]* Genius me!

00:43:05 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.]

00:43:19	Theresa	Host	Okay. This is a teamwork genius between myself and my child, Gracie. My wonderful nine-year-old, who <u>allowed</u> me to help her learn to ride a two-wheeler.
00:43:35	Biz	Host	Ohhh!
00:43:37	Theresa	Host	And it's been a journey, guys. It's been a journey.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:43:41	Biz	Host	A two-wheeled journey. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:43:44	Theresa	Host	And now she's doing it. And it—I'm not gonna lie. Like, it made me feel fine about everything in the world for about 48 hours.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			I was riding high. <i>[Laughs.]</i> But yeah. I'm—I'm really happy for her? And I'm happy for us. Because it took some time and we had to be consistent and we had to be patient with each other and we had to take breaks and we had to come back to it and it was a lot. It was a lot. But we did it. And she's rocking it! She can do it! We can go to the park and she can ride around the park. It's great.
00:44:29	Biz	Host	Oh my god.
00:44:30	Theresa	Host	Yeah.
00:44:32	Biz	Host	That is... amazing.
00:44:33	Theresa	Host	It is. It's amazing.
00:44:34	Biz	Host	You are doing a very good job.
00:44:37	Theresa	Host	Thank you.
00:44:38	Biz	Host	Fairies! So I have—there are a lot of littles. Little children. On my street. And we, like—I guess... early on, like years ago, I bought some shitty overpriced fairy stuff for the yard for the kids to kind of play with. They've all been, like, chewed up by weed whackers at this point in time. But a couple of fairies survive. Maybe two years ago, a family had moved in and we noticed they had a fairy door on their tree that's out by the street. And this was very exciting. So I said, "Hey, wouldn't it be fun to sneak down there and put some of our fairy stuff in their yard?" Right? Trying to—y'know. Generate an activity or kindness. Whatever. And this happened. And then once the pandemic started, and the shut-in started, we started noticing—we noticed a new red fairy door on <u>our</u> tree that was out on the street.
00:45:43	Theresa	Host	So they knew it was you?
00:45:44	Biz	Host	Yeah. They knew it was us. They figured it out. <i>[Laughs.]</i> My children aren't that stealthy. And this was really sweet. It was so nice! So we started putting out a few more fairy things and for them and for us. And then I started noticing, like, every kid who walked by stopped and wanted to do stuff with the fairy house. So I ordered a few little fairy things—like, fairies themselves are incredibly expensive. But mushrooms aren't! Mushrooms and frogs and all these little houses and stuff. And I put a little basket and I made a sign that said, y'know, "Fairies! Start a fairy garden!" And I just said, y'know, "Take what you want and set one up in front of your house or add to others'. Go visit fairies!" <i>[Laughs.]</i> And no age requirements. Right? So it doesn't have to be just for kids. And then this really sweet kid—who's at the very end of our street—young, four-year-old, and mom, they were digging through it yesterday and it was great! I was like, "This is nice. I like this." So—
00:46:58	Theresa	Host	It's so nice! I love it and I'm inspired.
00:47:02	Biz	Host	Good! Thank you! I just... I'm so lonely, everybody! <i>[Laughs.]</i>

[Theresa laughs.]

00:47:07	Theresa	Host	Just—
00:47:13	Biz	Host	Must... connect... with... neighbors! Somehow!
			Please! Somehow! So anyway, it was very fun and the kids were way into it and the double genius is I let <u>my</u> children ransack the basket before we put it out.
00:47:23	Theresa	Host	Great.
00:47:24	Biz	Host	So.
00:47:25	Theresa	Host	Good job.
00:47:26	Biz	Host	Thank you.
00:47:27	Caller	Caller	<i>[Answering machine beeps.]</i>

Hi, *One Bad Mother!* I'm calling in with a genius! I will take whatever I can get these days. It's a virtual school genius. My daughter is— she's doing virtual kindergarten and she is sitting with her laptop and she's just hammering away on the keyboard 'cause it feels fun. I think it's a sensory thing or something. She's just clacking away and then that's messing up whatever windows she's got open and putting all these crazy things in the browser. So I told her not to do that. And then I remembered that in a box in the garage I have an old keyboard that's broken that used to connect with Bluetooth but it doesn't work anymore, and I went and I found it in the garage and I gave it to her and now she's just so happy. She's sitting, pounding away, on this broken old keyboard to her heart's content and I am a genius. So are you. Thank you! Bye.

00:48:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: This is so good.

00:48:31 Biz Host **Theresa:** Such a genius. Yeah.

00:48:34 Theresa Host It's such a genius! And—

00:48:37 Biz Host It does feel good to press those buttons! I love clacking keys! That's right! That's what momma does! Click-clack, clack, big clack, clook! Clicky-click, click-click. Yeah! And it does open every window or thing that you don't want your child to open because they're probably on your computer like they're on my computer. And I'm like, "Oh, my files!" And you know what you could do if you don't have one laying around your garage? This is a great, like, thrift store or like Facebook freebie... y'know, whatever one of those groups are? Yeah! So smart!

00:49:06 Theresa Host So smart.

00:49:09 Biz Host You're doing amazing.

00:49:11 Theresa Host You are amazing.

00:49:13 Biz Host Failures.

00:49:14 Clip Clip *[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]*

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

00:49:20 Biz Host

Fail me, Theresa.

00:49:22 Theresa Host

Okay. This is a partner fail.

[Biz laughs.]

So I—okay. Our dogs go to the bathroom in the front yard. And so I usually try to clean it up pretty much right away? Because it's kind of like—it's right there! So we're going in and out and it's right there and it's gross. But going around to where the trash cans are is like... a whole thing?

[Biz laughs.]

SO—and like, involves me needing my keys and stuff? And so I have a tendency to, like, if like a therapist is coming over or we're doing—we're just getting ready in the morning or whatever, to scoop it up in a bag, tie the bag in a knot, and throw it over the fence to like where the—

[Biz laughs.]

—trash cans are. But it always lands in the driveway so there's just like a bag of poop in the driveway. Which I don't really care about, 'cause I don't look at our driveway? I'm looking at what's in front of my front door, and there's no poop there anymore and so I'm happy. And then next time I'm outside I throw it in the trash. Jesse hates this, and the only reason I know he hates it is 'cause I can just tell. Like, he's never said? I think the most he's ever said is, "There was a bag of poop in our driveway?" Like he's horrified. Like somebody else must have left it there or something? And I was like, "Oh, yeah, I just didn't have time. I was just scooping. I just threw it. Yeah. Sorry." But so I know he hates this and so I kind of like try to not do it when he's around? But like—

[Biz laughs.]

—but like I do anyway, too, at the same time. And so the other day I was—he was not home. And I went to do this thing that I do, and I threw it over the fence and I heard this sound.

[Biz gasps.]

That was not it landing in the driveway. And it was landing on the hood of his car as he was pulling into the driveway. *[Laughs.]*
Two points! Two points!

00:51:23 Biz Host

[Both laugh.]

00:51:29 Theresa Host

Touchdown, Theresa! *[Laughs.]*

00:51:31 Biz Host

It was... truly amazing.

00:51:35 Theresa Host

Oh. That—that is beautiful.

00:51:37 Biz Host

It was beautiful.

Oh! I—did you just run? *[Laughs.]*

[Theresa laughs.]

00:51:40 Theresa Host

I stood there for a second and I was like, "That was not the sound I was expecting." *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

Then he got out of the car and I said, “I... am so sorry.” And he just looked at me. *[Laughs.]*

00:51:56 Biz Host

“Oopsie! Can you put that in the trash?”

[Theresa laughs.]

00:51:59 Theresa Host

“Thank you!”
“Do you mind just—that was for you! Sorry. That was for you. Can you—yeah.”

00:52:04 Biz Host

Passive-aggressive. *[Laughs.]* That is a beautiful fail.

00:52:09 Theresa Host

Yeah. Thank you.

00:52:10 Biz Host

Guess what?

00:52:11 Theresa Host

What?

00:52:12 Biz Host

I have never bought Ellis a plant! Ever!

00:52:17 Theresa Host

Wow!

00:52:19 Biz Host

Ever.

00:52:20 Theresa Host

Huh.

00:52:21 Biz Host

This is—this is not true.

00:52:24 Theresa Host

Okay.

00:52:25 Biz Host

I have brought lots of living things into this house. *[Laughs.]* Plants definitely among them. Ellis has definitely had many plants that die immediately. Because I don’t think about going back there to water them. And—

00:52:41 Theresa Host

Right. Yeah. And he doesn’t think about watering them.

00:52:43 Biz Host

Yeah. They’re always like, “I got it!” And then they don’t.

00:52:45 Theresa Host

Yeah.

00:52:47 Biz Host

Kat has been really increasing their plant intake, so lots of plants in their room. And this is great. But—and—this accusation came out of nowhere for no reason. And soon was followed with another monstrous thing—but it was clearly my fault—Ellis also did not eat any cherries when cherries were around!

[Theresa laughs.]

00:53:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Last spring!
Theresa: He didn’t get any! He didn’t get any cherries in all of cherry season.

00:53:23 Biz Host

Biz: He didn’t get any! And I said—
Yeah. I said, “I don’t think... that’s true. I remember you eating quite a few cherries.” “NO I DIDN’T! I DID NOT EAT THOSE CHERRIES!” “Let me see if I can find a picture of you eating cherries.” Now, I could not find a picture. So what I had to then go tell him—‘cause I was hoping that would just make him forget that they’d even asked? Right? I was like, “Sorry. No picture.” “See? I had no cherries. None.” So I have never bought Ellis a plant. And I clearly ate all the cherries in front of them last year.

00:54:08 Theresa Host

Right.

00:54:10 Biz Host

Without letting them have any.

00:54:13 Theresa Host

Right. Yeah.

00:54:15 Biz Host

Because I am horrible.

00:54:16 Theresa Host

I’m sorry. I just—I’m so, like grasping onto this idea that by a certain age... you must buy your child a plant. Like, buying—as though like buying a plant is like one of the— *[Laughs.]*

00:54:31 Biz Host Yeah! One of the things!

00:54:33 Theresa Host Buying a personal plant! Like a pet! Only it's like—it's a plant for that child. Like, I really like that idea. Like, you haven't bought—

00:54:42 Biz Host You've never—

00:54:43 Theresa Host You haven't bought your child a plant yet?! They haven't gotten a plant?

00:54:48 Biz Host Didn't you read that new parenting book?

00:54:51 Theresa Host Just for them?

00:54:52 Biz Host *When and Why and How Your Child Should Get Their First Plant.*

00:54:57 Theresa Host I mean, as long as they're getting lots of cherries during cherry season I think it'll be okay?

00:55:02 Biz Host But I didn't give them cherries!

00:55:03 Theresa Host Wait! What?!

00:55:06 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
I know! It's... horrible! Anyway.

00:55:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Theresa laughs.]*
Theresa: I'm sorry. it doesn't sound fun.

00:55:13 Biz Host **Biz:** I like failing—
I like failing when I didn't even know that I was failing. When I wasn't, in fact, actually failing.

00:55:20 Theresa Host This is called "getting a bad grade" from your child. This is when your child is giving you a report card for parenting and they're like, "You're really—like, you really need improvement. Need improvement."

00:55:33 Biz Host Oh! And you know what? They're definitely that person who has seen a parent like you before so already has opinions of you. Right?

00:55:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Like, there's—of how you should be.

00:55:46 Theresa Host **Theresa:** Yes! Of how you should be. Yeah. Yeah. This is not—
—up to your potential as a parent.

00:55:48 Biz Host No. This is... moms like that are always not giving cherries and plants! *[Deep sigh.]*

00:55:56 Theresa Host *[Theresa laughs.]*
I'm sorry.

00:55:58 Biz Host Eh, it's alright.

00:55:59 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hi! This is a fail. I have a two-and-a-half-year-old who is very inquisitive, and also I decided that this year I would make homemade vanilla for Christmas. And for anyone who's ever made it, you need to start like three months before to make sure it's ready. So about three months ago, my very inquisitive toddler asked if he could have some of the vodka that he saw me putting vanilla beans into. And I said, "No, you can't, because it's alcohol." And he said, "What's alcohol?" And I actually said, "It's a fermented beverage that only grownups can drink." And we went back and forth a couple of times and really all that he learned is that alcohol is a forbidden beverage. But here's the fail. *[Through laughter]* The result of this conversation is that randomly—three months later, after this conversation—my two-and-a-half-year-old will just sing,

“Alcoholll!” And to add *[through laughter]* a funny layer to that, I am eight months pregnant.

[Biz laughs.]

So when I’m walking around the grocery store and my toddler is in the cart singing, “Alcoholll!” And his mom is standing there eight months pregnant, it sure makes some heads turn for several reasons. Well, anyway, the fail is being honest with your kid? Or being open with your kid? I don’t know. Never answer your kid’s questions.

[Both laugh.]

That’s my conclusion here. Anyway. You guys are doing a great job.

00:57:38 Theresa Host
00:57:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Just, “I don’t know what alcohol is.”

Theresa: “That’s a good question. What do you think? I don’t know!”

00:57:44 Theresa Host
00:57:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: “I have no idea. Yeah. What do you think?”

That’s a good way to— *[Laughs.]*

Biz: “Ask your father.”

00:57:48 Theresa Host

Theresa: I feel like—

I know. It’s so unfair ‘cause like the thing that works the best is, “Oh, it’s spicy! You wouldn’t like it.”

[Biz laughs.]

00:57:59 Biz Host
00:58:01 Theresa Host
00:58:02 Biz Host

Like that’s what works the best and it’s so not true! Like, that’s not...

“Oh, it’s spicy! Hot!”

“Yucky. You wouldn’t like it.”

“Blech! Blech.”

[Theresa laughs.]

“No good. No good.” Well, you’re doing a horrible job. I hope that vanilla tasted good.

00:58:15 Music Music

[Both laugh.]

“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.

00:58:38 Music Music
00:58:39 Theresa Promo
00:58:42 Biz Promo

[Music fades out.]

Inspirational keyboard music plays in background.

One Bad Mother is supported in part by Billie!

Guys, I’ve used a lot of razors. I’m old. And I honestly love the Billie razor so much? It gave me the smoothest shave ever, and during the pandemic, it’s great to know that I didn’t have to shave for days after using Billie. *[Laughs.]* Among other reasons.

00:59:01	Theresa	Promo	You can go to MyBillie.com to get their starter kit for just \$9. It includes their award-winning razor, two refill blades, and a cult-favorite magnetic holder. So go to MyBillie.com/mother .
00:59:18	Biz	Promo	It's just \$9 to get your starter kit, plus free shipping always. Again, go to MyBillie.com/mother .
00:59:28	Theresa	Promo	That's spelled MyB-I-L-L-I-E.com/mother .
00:59:35	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i> <i>[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]</i></p> <p>Radio DJ: Welcome back to <i>Fireside Chat</i> on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.</p> <p><i>[Click.]</i></p> <p>Go ahead, caller.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Morgan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to <i>Heat Rocks</i>. 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.</p> <p>Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.</p> <p>Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?</p> <p>Morgan: <i>Heat Rocks</i>. Deep dives into hot records.</p> <p>Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.</p>
01:00:22	Promo	Clip	<p><i>[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial to</i> Music: Inspiring music throughout.</p> <p><i>[The "testimonials" cut between different VOs. They are not talking to one another.]</i></p> <p>Speaker 1: I started listening to Oh No, Ross and Carrie! shortly after I broke my arm.</p> <p>Speaker 2: I couldn't get my book started!</p> <p><i>[Music swells hopefully to a dramatic crescendo]</i></p> <p>Speaker 3: I was lost. Honestly.</p> <p>Speaker 4: I knew it was time to make a change.</p> <p>Speaker 2: There's something about <i>Oh No, Ross and Carrie!</i> That you just can't get anywhere else.</p>

Speaker 1: They're thought-leaders. Discoverers. Founders.

Speaker 3: I'd call them heroes.

Speaker 5: Ross and Carrie don't just report on fringe science, spirituality, and claims of the paranormal. They take part themselves.

Speaker 3: They show up so you don't have to.

Speaker 6: But you might find that you want to.

Speaker 1: My arm is better.

Speaker 2: I wrote an entire book this weekend! It... it's terrible. But I did it!

Speaker 3: Just go to MaximumFun.org.

Everyone: Thank you, Ross and Carrie!

Carrie Poppy: *[Hurriedly]* Oh No, Ross and Carrie! is just a podcast. It doesn't do anything. It's just sounds you listen to in your ears. All these people are made up. Goodbye.

01:01:12 Biz Host

Well, it's that special time of the show again where I get to have just a few more minutes with Theresa. Over the Zoom. So why don't you join us in listening to a mom have a breakdown?

01:01:29 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

[Tearfully] Hey, Biz and Theresa. I'm calling with a rant. I'm just calling because I'm so lonely with this pandemic and I'm a solo parent. I have a toddler and she's wonderful, but I just have to say that it's so hard only having my husband as the only adult that I see and interact with because we're not experiencing the pandemic in the same way because I'm a virtual teacher so I go to school and I don't get to see or interact with my students outside of the screen. I go to my classroom and I teach alone from my classroom and when I have to talk to coworkers we Zoom or we call. I don't even get to see or talk to them face-to-face. And my side of the family, we don't see, but my husband's side of the family they're all in our bubble.

So to my husband, nothing's really different because he's a first responder so he goes to work and he sees all his coworkers and we see his side of the family, but I don't see my parents or my grandparents or my sister. I don't see my friends. I don't see my coworkers. He's the only adult that I see. And when we're getting along, things are okay; but when we're not getting along, it makes it really, really lonely. And isolating. And I'm trying to hard to just do a good job for my daughter, but she... she misses her friends and she misses time outside and the weather's kind of keeping us in and I don't know. Things have just been really hard.

I guess I thought I would wake up today and it would be the first day of a new year and it would be a chance to get everything right and it's not even the end of the day of the first day of the new year and

01:03:43 Biz

Host

things already feel like they're still as bad as they were before. Thank you for letting me get that out. Everyone is doing such a wonderful job. And thank you, Biz and Theresa, for keeping the show going because it's a lifeline.

First of all, you are not alone? And you are doing a really remarkable job. Oh man. That is... we have spent years on this show talking about isolation as a parent. 'K? Right? Even in the best of times, with the best of support, with the best of everything, it really becomes isolating when a kid wanders into your house. *[Laughs.]* Right? And... most of us don't have the ideal situations. We don't live close to family. We have work. We have... if we're in a partnered relationship, we have different schedules. There are any number of things that you can add to the "kids in my house soup" that equals isolation.

And... now we are in this pandemic... which is no joke. We're about to come up on, like, a year in a couple of months. It's really hard to get your head around sometimes? And the level of isolation and loneliness that it has created is... just something I don't think we can take lightly. At all. And so what you're feeling is so... spot on. And... *[laughs lightly]*. Even—like, even if there wasn't a pandemic, the setup that you've got going on where—and this is again true for so many of us—where one partner is very close to family. Has family, like, totally nearby. And the other does not. Or maybe you live in the town that you grew up in but your partner did not grow up in. Right? Like... the—that balance right there? Can already have an impact? Sometimes when we're not even aware of it, especially around the holidays, guys. If you are leaning heavy towards one family more than another in terms of who you get to see? That can start affecting family traditions and things that you didn't even know were that important to you until you were in them.

And... it's not one of those things on our lists of "I should've remembered to have this conversation with my partner long before we experience it." Right? Like— *[Laughs.]* Like, you're just like, "Something's off and I don't know what it is." Right? So like... now we're in this pandemic and it's just... *[sighs]*. It's just magnified. And I... y'know, I am so sorry that you're feeling this way. And I know that there's probably not all that much we can do about it. You know what I mean? Any of us. We have to stay home. We have to... not go to school or to our jobs or to the social events we'd really like to. We can't see our family. We can't even go to a park. We can't go to a park here! In, like, Pasadena. Y'know? Like, it's... all of these outlets have been shut off to us? And that's really hard.

01:07:30 Theresa

Host

Yeah. There's not really—our desire to fix it, I think, is really hard? Like, there's not... I find myself trying to figure out how to see my family? Like, "There must be a way."

[Biz laughs.]

Like, "There must be—I must just not be thinking this through." And sometimes I do indulge myself a little bit in trying to figure it out and realize, very quickly, I'm right back where I started. This is just what we're living with right now and I think for so many of us the end of 2020 felt like a finish line in some weird psychological way? Like, we just gotta get through this year and it'll be a new year. We can

start fresh and we'll have a new president and we'll do—y'know, all these, we're gonna have the vaccine. And everybody was just waiting for January 1st—

[Biz laughs.]

—and like... y'know, wasn't some big surprise that things didn't change on January 1st exactly. But it did—there was, like, a feeling that it gave me that I sort of heard in your voice in the call. Which was just sort of like, "Okay. Yeah. It is the new year and there is some relief that comes with that. Like knowledge of the passage of time. But... still."

[Biz laughs.]

"I'm not seeing a difference in my day-to-day and because, y'know, there isn't any other clear marker of time until the next new year, I guess—"

[Biz laughs.]

"Y'know, it's almost like a harder place to be when you don't have a clear finish line right in front of you." So we're all living in that weird space right now. And like you said, Biz, it's been almost a year and that's a really— *[Laughs.]* That's far down the road of this.

[Biz laughs.]

01:09:30 Biz Host
01:09:32 Theresa Host
01:09:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Much farther down the road of this than I ever thought we would go. Yeah. Yeah. The road.

And I'm only laughing because I'm sad, by the way.

Biz: Oh I know! I am, too! All laughter! All laughter is sadness now! *[Laughs.]*

01:09:43 Biz Host

Theresa: I'm not laughing 'cause I think it's funny. *[Laughs.]* I'm just trying to cope. Yeah.

This is sadness. Sitting silently is sadness.

[Theresa laughs.]

01:10:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Y'know, watching a show is sadness. It's all—it's all sad. We've all gone crazy. And I just... I just want to tell you, you're doing a good job. Something else, just real quick, and we won't go down this path. Btu I—the pandemic has also forced a lot of us to have conversations with partners that wouldn't maybe even have to happen?

Biz: If there wasn't a pandemic?

01:10:16 Biz Host

Theresa: If it weren't for this. Yeah. Yeah.

They would've just sorted themselves out? And y'know, no one is in a good place to have hard conversations? *[Laughs.]* Right now? I don't recommend taking a bag of dog poop and throwing it—

[Theresa laughs.]

—onto your partner's car, but y'know.

01:10:34 Theresa Host Yeah. It's been tried. And it didn't go well. So.
 01:10:37 Biz Host Yeah. Didn't end well. I do hope that you are able to find some way to connect with your partner. To get this working a little bit better for you.
 01:10:50 Theresa Host Yeah. For sure.
 01:10:51 Biz Host Because you're doing a great job.
 01:10:53 Theresa Host You are.
 01:10:54 Biz Host Theresa, you are doing a good job. And I see you. And your laser eyes.

[Theresa laughs.]

01:11:10 Theresa Host And— *[Laughs.]* And I just... look forward to seeing you every week! You're doing a great job!
 Thanks, Biz. You are also doing a great job. And you had a birthday this week. So.
 01:11:17 Biz Host Oh, I did.
 01:11:19 Theresa Host Happy birthday, and I am happy that you're my friend.
 01:11:23 Biz Host So Theresa, I'm gonna say goodbye to you and that I'm gonna see you next week.
 01:11:29 Theresa Host Okay. *[Laughs.]*
 01:11:30 Biz Host Can we—can we say goodbye... together?
 01:11:34 Theresa Host Yeah. Let's say goodbye together.
 01:11:37 Crosstalk **Biz and Theresa:** Byeeeeeee!
 01:11:41 Biz Host Oh yeah. That was good.
 01:11:42 Theresa Host That was really good.

[Biz laughs.]

01:11:45 Biz Host Guys? What did we learn today? Well... I tell ya what. We learned a couple of things. One from our wonderful discussion with Marlo of *How to Be A Girl*. I really always love it when people push back and want to make sure that we're getting it right. And so I really enjoyed our conversation, especially the part about decisions and what it means to make a decision. And I cannot tell you how much I appreciated and what a great way to get my mind just shifted even by like a millimeter into a different way of thinking and how helpful that is? But when she was talking about, "It wasn't a decision. It was just something we were obviously going to do"?

I love that kind of parenting confidence. I love that kind of confidence. I love that, because it's a reminder that this isn't about anybody else. Guys. As a parent, when there's a kid in your house, it's not about "What will they think? What will the neighbors do? Am I doing it the same way as them? Does the room look like the Pottery Barn catalog?" We really... no one really gives a shit.
[Laughs.] Okay? And when they respond like they do, it's because they are wrestling with their own, y'know, self-doubt and questions and... uncertainty. Alright? It really rarely has anything to do with us. And so we need to be really good at allowing ourselves to know what's right. And to forgive ourselves if we make the wrong choice, and to be flexible enough to change it! *[Laughs.]* Right? Like, that's what this is all about. There's no right way. One way. One and done. We are our own unit.

Reminds me of the other thing I learned today, which is how isolating parenting can be. And part of that reason is because we

start sharing how we're parenting or reaching out and talking to people about what we're going through and it is very easy for people to respond in a way that makes us feel like we're doing the wrong thing? Or makes us feel bad for a good thing? Right? It's the old, "No one's doing it at you." All of those things can lead to feeling like you are the only one and you are all alone. And even when we are literally all alone, in our house— *[Laughs.]* You really aren't? Because there is a community out there—sometimes it just takes a while to find them? But they're there. And they get it. And we get it. And.... We see you? Because you're doing a really remarkable job when you get it right and when ya don't. So everybody? Hang in there. Because it sucks. *[Laughs.]* But we will get through this together and I will talk to you next week. Bye!

01:15:18 Music Music

"Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

*I got the lowdown momma blues
Got 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*

01:15:43 Biz Host

[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]

We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Gabe Mara; 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.

01:16:11 Theresa Host

One Bad Mother is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate.

01:16:34 Music Transition

[Music continues for a while before fading out.]

01:16:35 Speaker 1 Guest

A cheerful ukulele chord.

01:16:37 Speaker 2 Guest

MaximumFun.org.

01:16:38 Speaker 3 Guest

Comedy and culture.

01:16:39 Speaker 4 Guest

Artist owned—

—Audience supported.