



Episode Transcript – 020 – Letting Go of Aspects of Parenting

Introduction

Welcome to Remembering to Be Me, a podcast that helps you find your own way to a place of authenticity and service of others in a world that is ever changing. I am your host, Jenn Shallvey and I invite you to join me on a journey of reflection, insight, and wisdom, as well as be challenged into growth and change. The choice is always yours. I simply hold the space, and offer an invitation and support you in the process. As you find your own way to balance the ups and downs, be rewarded with freedom, contentment, happiness, acceptance, peace of mind, and clarity. Trust yourself, discover more of the real you and share your wonderful, amazing whole self with the rest of the world. This is not always easy. So, start with this simple message to yourself, "Be me, and when I forget, remember to be me."

Main podcast

Hi, it's Jenn Shallvey, and I am back with another episode of Remembering to Be Me. In this episode, I wanted to share a reflection that I have gone through recently. For me, it is important to share with you personal experiences, just as much as I share ideas, inspiration, some helpful hints and so forth. This one is a bit of a combination of that. And what I'm talking about is also involved in the letting go series. I have been working on this topic for a while now, and it keeps bringing up lots of information that is relevant and useful I think in our journeys.

Why this topic? Well, I have gone through the, I guess the change of being a mother of children to the mother of adults. And that's a huge, huge thing. I never realised how big it was until of course it happened to me and you can't appreciate that until you go through it. I've seen it through friends and others. I've also, of course been the daughter who has the one who changed from child to adult. So I know what that was like. I didn't realise the impact of that for my own mother until she passed away and I could see some notes she left in regards to that.

The reason why I'm sharing this is because there's a choice in how we respond to changes like this. I absolutely 100% get that there is an emotional component to things that we go through and I am no different. I would say that tears have been shed. I have days where I really miss the role being mother. I know I identify a lot with that and I've really worked a long time in being the best I can be. Of course my kids will say differently. They'll probably go to therapy when they're older and blame me for everything, but that's okay because, hey, it's their life and it's their choice how they choose to process their growing up. But one thing I will say is my heart has been in it the whole time so far, and it still is. Yet the role and relationship I have is different now. And I admit that it is challenging for me to adjust.

I remember when my son moved out, and he's in his early twenties now, that was one of the hardest times for me. It was the first one of the two. And it really left a hole in me because I felt like this relationship that I had taken for granted or this way that I existed as a mother was completely cut off. And it wasn't so much the doing things for your child. It was the conversations, the engagement, the casual nature of that, that I lost right away when that change happened.

And I remember reflecting in the January of the year after that, what was the biggest and most significant change in my year prior? And that's what came up. It was the first point of transition of



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me from mother of a child to mother of an adult. Now, of course he had been living with us as an adult yet you don't just change the behaviour overnight, just because of an age and a birthday. It takes time, it takes adjustment and it takes both sides working with each other to shift that role.

For me, it was an adjustment because my heart has always been there and always will be there for my children. I am one of those kinds of people in the world who knew from the very young age I wanted to be a mother and I really blessed and lucky that I am one. I truly genuinely value and appreciate and love the opportunity I've had to guide, raise, support, nurture two people in this world. And I know that that role that I've taken for my life is an important one. And again, I've really genuinely appreciate and am thankful that I've had this opportunity so far.

In the transition though it is it's coming up again because this time it's my second child, my daughter who moved away to university, and that's not as common in Australia as it is overseas in America, for example, or other places. So for me, I was just expecting, I'd have her around all the time for another few years. And so the change in her decision to go away to university was a bit of an adjustment. I am absolutely 100% all for it. Absolutely. I was so happy for her decision and I'm also so happy for my son and his life and his independence.

But I noticed that with this next change in our life, that it is more in my face. Why I don't know, but some of the things that I've identified are things like the relationship, I guess, between a mother and a daughter is something different. And we have had a really special one that I have spent more time supporting her in her life over the last few years. Then that means I also had a lot more time with her. So there's a lot of time together, which meant just like I experienced with my son when you have that familiarity and that casual hanging out time, you build a different relationship. So I have had to let go of that, I guess, quantity of time and move more back into a quality of time and say, check, no, it would be nice to see her.

So for me, this is just normal part of life expected, and I'm going through the change. It didn't hit me right away when I was helping her pack and helping her sort things out and so forth until we got in the car. And we started to drive down to the place to get her. I would say her first trip because I've been down there now two more times to help with delivery of things. But it was, there was something about the reality of it hitting me. And when I came back that night, I just walking into her bedroom and really feeling the emptiness of that and the loss of the personality, the presence, the energy of her in that room. And it was palpable.

So how did I cope with it while I cried a bit, I have to admit that I needed to release something from the emotional side. That was one thing. And then I had another more structural response, which was with her permission, to clean the room and just bring it back to a place which was usable by, um, the cats I can call it that. But I made it a, I just kind of cleaned it and refreshed it and made it feel good.

What I noticed as well, though, is that there were all these habits coming up. There were all these feelings coming up that 'oh I should call and check in to see what's going on with her, or I should do this or I should do that. They were habits and behaviours that existed when she lived with us. And I used to always say that I, don't want to know everything about what you're doing and where you're going because I recognise you're an adult now. Only from a safety point of view when I say, can you just check in, tell me what and I would expect you home. That was all she would say. I was probably much more controlling and wanting to know everything, but I, I felt I straddled it a bit more. Either



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way, the absence of her and this isn't the first time she's been away, but the absence of her and knowing it's away for a year and who knows how long is very different. And the idea that yes, she's coming back on weekends or coming back for other things, but it wouldn't be for us. She would be coming back because it's her life and that would be part of the convenience of it.

So I processed all this in an emotional way and then I did some work energetically and meditated on it. And I cleared a lot of that grief, that letting go grief I call it that. There was definitely a part of me that was grieving. And it wasn't grieving the loss of her. It was grieving the beginning of the loss or the change of a part of me that wasn't going to be there anymore. The mother role being me as that mother is no longer ever going to be the same. It isn't, I'm not needed in that way anymore.

So I had to look really deep within me and say, what is it that I'm really upset about? And what came up was that I was upset that I was no longer needed, like I used to be needed. And I realised that probably for a lot of people who are in close relationships like that, you give with lots of love and there is a bit of, I think, exchange in the sense that you like to know that that person not just needs you, but really does value and benefit from your help.

Well, here I am now saying that isn't the case anymore. So I sat down and I thought of what are some of the old things that I used to do and what can I make them and do them differently?

So the first one that came up with was I would do things for my kids without asking. And I would just assume the parent role and step in and make an assumption and walk all over their world. Works when you're a parent of a child, doesn't work when you're the parent of an adult. So I've resolved and I've made a commitment within myself, they don't know this, to ask first and check if my offer of help is something that they want. That's big because you can't assume anything as a parent anymore because they are very much individuals on their own doing their own thing now.

The next thing I used to do is I would make assumptions based on past behaviours and choices. I'd look at them both through an accumulation of years of observing their behaviour and saying, well, based on the past is what you did and not realise that as they're maturing, they are learning and when they're farther away from me and not near me, I don't see the growth. I don't see the internal changes as much because those conversations of sharing that aren't as prevalent. Now, I resolve to see them both in their current behaviour and really make an effort to observe them in their actions now and see how they behave now, not as they behaved as children.

Another aspect of my role that I'm letting go of that I've had to look at is the guardian / caregiver / parent. There is a real connotation associated with all of that and legal responsibility and real responsibility. As soon as the clock ticks and the age takes over past a certain age, it's not my responsibility anymore. And in fact, it's not even my business anymore. So my insight around that is that going forward, it's really important that I shift more into a support person and a sounding board and less the guardian protecting. That is a big change. And again, it's adult to adult relationship now.

The next one I noticed is that I tend, or I tended to initiate or drive or guide the relationships. I would be the one making the effort to initiate things we would do together or drive how we would go out and do our day and so forth. If I want to really support them in their own agency as adults, I need to step back from that. I need to step back from being in charge of their lives or being a reminder or a check-in. Of course, every once in a while, I'm going to do that because, Hey, that's partly my way of showing some love. But I need to shift more into letting them come to me when



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they need me and less me going to them. And then just as I would, any other person in my life who is an adult, if I sense something and I'm intuitively picking up on something, I ask the right questions that let them choose whether they wish to share with me open up or come to me in their need.

My other behaviour, which I'm very aware of, and it's really been noticeable since this change is that I check in all the time and expect updates. And I'm sure a lot of you out there who are parents are probably thinking, yeah, that's me too. Well, I have, I think it's also the ease of communication, the fact that we all have mobile phones, it's so easy to go. Where are you? What are you doing? I realised that I need to step away from that behaviour pattern and move into a new one, which is not as much parent and more as adult to adult. And that is trust, trust that they are in control of their life and that they know what they're doing. And that is huge. I have been shifting that way for a while, but it's still one that I'm having to consciously be aware of so that I actually embed that going forward.

The other thing that I know as a mother that I've been through for a while, I don't know if it's all the time, but I've know a lot of parents do this. Because we love our children so much. We try to spare them the pain or suffering by fixing or saving or rescuing. And this is a behaviour pattern that I know from my training in coaching counselling and so forth that you don't do. You don't rescue people yet. For some reason, my role as a mother, I sidestepped that because I do feel a different relationship of caregiver in that way. But as they've grown up and gotten older, it's important for me to step away from that. And again, move into this adult adult relationship. And I need to know that them making mistakes is part of their learning and growing. I do think that over the years I've shifted more and more towards that, but I definitely think that the parent role meant that I would say, what about this? What about that? I need to step back from that and let them chart their own path. And then if it's not necessarily the path I want to go on, then it's not my business, unless they want to talk about it. If I see a harmful behaviour or I see a egregious behaviour, anything that I think is not appropriate in that sense, then I would step in just like I would step in with anybody else. If it was self-harm or other harm, whether emotional, mental, physical, or anything, I would say that's different. But in a general day to day sense, I feel like there's a need to allow others to make their own mistakes, figure it out for themselves. And I've got to step back and let that happen more.

And the last one that I figured or saw in myself is that I, and it kind of ties into the last point, but I saw them as needing protection and they needed it, they needed me to be their protector. Like I'm going to defend them, protect them, stand up for them, all that stuff. And as they become their own individuals, even more as adult I'm realising that that isn't my role. And I need to let go of that aspect of me and really shift into seeing them as wise and knowing in their own way. Now I have encouraged that for many years to ask them to really tune into their own wisdom. But I have to say that it's a pattern of behaviour as a parent that I have felt well, I know better sometimes. And I don't actually know better. I know my perspective, but I don't know their perspective and sometimes they're very different, probably a lot of times. But the reason why I'm sharing this is because when I work with adults and I see all the people out there as adults who aren't my children, I always am encouraging seeing them in their own, wise self. And that is the ultimate gift I can give to anybody so why am I not giving that to my own children?

So that's a little bit of an insight into a reflection that I've done. The one thing that will never change in this. And I hope for you as well, is that I always have inside of me 100% unconditional love, no



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matter what they do. I will always love my two children and see them as amazing, brilliant, beautiful human beings. And I will always be thankful, grateful that they are blessings and gifts in my life, and that of my husband gotta remember he's in there too. I'm giving you just my reflection. But they are in this world. They are going to make a difference in this world. And I have had the privilege and still do have the privilege of being their mom. And so I am beyond happy for their lives and their direction and wherever they're heading. And that's the truth. And I really do mean this because I've reflected on this. I've meditated on this. I've thought about this.

And this is just my point of view. I'm sure that if you interviewed my two kids, you probably get two totally different perspectives and yes, there would be some crazy comments. And I do think they'd actually appreciate me as well for some things that I do. Maybe not till they're older, though. Thanks for listening to that sharing. I hope that it has been helpful to you. I did share it specifically because I wanted to give you a real example of a struggle, but a good struggle in my life that isn't dissimilar to many other people in the world. And I'm just choosing this one because it's prevalent, timely and current in my life. But it also is one that mirrors many other aspects of our lives.

And so what is happening in your life where you can sit and see a part of you is changing an aspect of you is changing. You're going from one to the other. And that alongside that there are a series of behaviours, habits, ways that you have done things that don't fit anymore, that you need to consciously let go of and choose to change your own ways in a new direction.

The last thing I want to have is me to become irrelevant because I won't change and to become stubborn. So this is me doing my part, and I believe that by shifting my own energy and shifting the way I do things that it will only do positive and correct the course that we're on, so that it's actually better. So I wish you well in your life doing the same and happy reflecting.

Closing

Thank you for listening to another episode of remembering to be me. Any information in show notes from this episode will be on my website www.jennshallvey.com That's J E N N S H A L L V E Y . c o m . I would love to connect with you. You can find me on Instagram at Jenn Shallvey or contact me via my website. And after listening to this episode, if you think of someone else who might benefit, please share, the more the merrier. Until next time remember to say to yourself "Be me, and when I forget, remember to be me.