

240: Making Time for Yourself Without the Guilt (with Erica Laffer)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jen Riday

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You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 240. We're talking about the mindset of making time for yourself without the guilt. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Hey my friends, welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women. I love today's topic. We're going to be talking about taking time for yourself, the mindset involved in taking time for yourself. I think most of us have had those moments when we have forgotten who we even are.

It's like we've put ourselves on the backburner, stuffed ourselves in the top shelf of a closet and we're just walking, and breathing, and living in automated mode, like an automaton, a mummy, a zombie. All the things where we're trying to take care of everyone else and we just get emptier, and emptier, and emptier. Have you been there?

Now, there are people out there, you might be one of them, who just love taking care of everyone else, love helping, love being a mom, they never burn out. But I just don't know any of those people. So if that's you, yay. And if that's not you, welcome to my club. I remember once I had five kids, we moved to a new house and oh my gosh, oh my gosh. Sometimes there are just these moments as a mom and a person where your soul is stretched to an entirely new shape, an entirely new capacity. And that's a good thing, we want emotional resilience.

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And we learn and grow so much when we're stretched, I get all of that. But it can hurt to stretch, it can be uncomfortable. So there come these moments when you've stretched so much and so far. And you're not even feeling like yourself where somewhere in your psyche there is this little voice that says, "Hey, excuse me, miss, miss, ma'am, did you forget about me?" And that's our true selves, our higher self whispering that, "Hey, you're here for more than just to take care of everyone else."

Each of us is here to connect, to form relationships, to love, to lift, to add light, to use our gifts and talents in certain ways. And if we're not doing anything to engage with other adults or doing anything that lifts our spirits we get dull. And that thing, you know that bronze like fixture look from the 80s? It probably started out a shiny bronze and now it's a full bronze that almost doesn't look like bronze. Yeah, sometimes we need to pull out the polish and shine ourselves up. And remember that somewhere deep inside there's some sparkle, and there's some shine, and some light.

A better analogy is maybe a ring, your old wedding ring, sometimes it can look dull and dingy and you get out your wedding ring polish, you shine it up. Well, we've got to do that for ourselves. And so I love my guest today, Erica Laffer, I met her in person for the first time last year at the Vibrant Happy Women retreat. And Erica is so shiny. She was so excited to be there at the retreat. She left her two little ones back home in British Columbia, Canada. And she flew all the way to Florida where she met some of the most amazing women.

So just coming together and having these moments to remember, to get quiet and to say, "Oh yeah, that's who I am." I actually like to exercise, or I like to play music, I like to sing, I like to dance. Yeah, I'm a human being independent from my kids.

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So right now during Covid-19, during virtual schooling, whatever's happening, maybe you've lost a little bit of that sparkle again. And as you're listening today I want you to think about what could you do, what could you do today, right now, this week to get some of that sparkle back? And not just get that sparkle back but to polish yourself up so you have some shine again, some radiant joy and light. And my friends I'll give you a hint, it almost always involves doing something you love, something that takes you out of the daily routines to have perspective.

How could you get perspective? What do you need this week, this month, in the next several months to pull back and remember who you really are, how you want to live, how you want to show up, how you want to feel, what you're really like? Wouldn't it be cool if your spouse and your kids could know the shiniest, happiest, most light filled version of you? And whose job is it to shine that up? Yours.

I want to give you just a little bit of courage to plant that seed in your heart and think about what can you do in the next few months repeatedly, or maybe it's a big thing to get that sparkle back and to make it shine like never before, your own personal spit shine.

Alright, well, let's go ahead and dive into this interview with Erica, tuck that thought away as you listen to Erica share her story of having the courage to do something for herself. And think about what that might be for you. And I'll talk to you again at the end of this episode.

Jen: Hey everyone, I'm here with my friend Erica Laffer and she's from British Columbia like all the cool people in the Vibrant Happy Women world seem to be, or a lot of you. Okay, not all of you. Erica I am so glad you're

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here to be on the podcast and I want to let you go ahead and introduce yourself.

Erica: Awesome. Thank you so much for having me, Jen, this is such an honor and a little bit surreal. I'm not going to lie. Yeah, I live in West Kelowna. I've been here for about six, seven years now. I'm married to a wonderful man who's an aircraft maintenance engineer. He fixes helicopters. So he does a lot of traveling and a lot of exciting work. Most of their jam is doing forest fires. So that can be anywhere in Canada or it can be even Australia, that's where he goes in the winter for sometimes up to four to six weeks at a time.

And I'm a nurse, I'm a registered nurse. I've been in critical care for over 10 years and now I've just transitioned out of critical care in June. And I'm going to be opening a new electrophysiology lab here in West Kelowna, so it will complete our heart program here. So we're quite excited about that. And I'm a mother to two lovely little girls. I have a four year old, Addison, well, she turns four this Friday. And little Sierra, she just turned two a couple of weeks ago.

Jen: So fun. So your world is busy, yeah?

Erica: Yes.

Jen: Nurse, and a fire fighter, and two little girls, right? Yeah.

Erica: Yes. We are never bored, never bored.

Jen: Yeah. So what do you do when your husband's gone for four to six weeks in Australia for example? Do you just have an awesome support

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system? How do you function with a career and two little girls and everything?

Erica: The first time my husband went to Australia and I was with my newborn I was thankful to be on maternity leave. So I didn't have to worry about that too much. I was really lucky, my mom moved up, she lived three hours away, closer to Vancouver. And she moved up and she's been definitely my rock and my support system. So she is so – she's just a lovely grandma. She just is so excited to see my girls and so she helps pitch in when I can't be there. And then I had a nanny help out a little bit through Covid and through this past summer.

Jen: That's awesome. It's good that you have your mom. So you were an ICU nurse formerly. Tell us about doing that during Covid, what was it like?

Erica: Yeah. It was intense. There was so much unknown, our unit, literally the week before they declared it a pandemic, there were walls going up on our unit, there were teams starting to be made. There was just policy changes left, right and center. And none of us really knew what was going to happen.

We were looking at what was happening in Italy. We were looking at what was happening around the world and what was going to happen here. We knew it was coming. Were we going to be working 16 hour days? Were we going to be able to go home to our families, we didn't know. We just showed up to work and you tried to roll with the punches and roll with the policy changes. We were really fortunate in Kelowna, we did get some Covid but we have been very – we haven't had a lot of cases. So we were very prepared.

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We were sitting there waiting for the big surge and we got some, don't get me wrong, but we didn't have anything like other parts of the world have experienced. But like I said, there was some uncertainty and we were having meetings as a team kind of weekly. And our physician even kind of said, "I don't know if you should be going home to your family." I was going to be part of this Covid airway response team. And so basically the highest risk procedure, which is putting in a breathing tube into a person is the highest risk for healthcare professionals to get sick.

And I was going to be on that team. And so anybody that needed a breathing tube in the hospital, we were called to that and we were going to be there to assist the physician. So ultimately what we decided was we borrowed or rented our neighbor's motorhome and we had that parked in my driveway ready as kind of my escape plan or my safe spot.

If I knew I went to work and I knew that PPE wasn't – maybe there was a problem when I was doffing my gear or we found out there was a positive and we weren't properly in our protective equipment then I would go and basically bug out in the motorhome in our driveway. So we put all of that in place and I never really had to use it. However I have to say I did end up using it between nights, because it was so great to sleep in a quiet spot and not be in my house where my kids are with the nanny. And ended up being this awesome nurse cave as I like to call it, and I was very sad to give it up.

Jen: I hope you're keeping it.

Erica: No. The good thing is with my new job, I don't have to worry about nightshifts anymore, so I'm not bugging my husband to get a motorhome anymore.

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Jen: Yeah, that's good. I want a RV in my driveway now or like a yurt or some kind of a she space, so you've inspired me. Oh lovely. Well, so you've kind of been in the Vibrant Happy world for a while, Erica. Tell everyone how on earth are we here having this interview and why is that surreal for you?

Erica: Yeah. So this probably started for me around three, four years ago. I gave birth to my first daughter and I spiraled into a significant postpartum depression. And I actually didn't even realize that that's what I was going through. I thought that it was normal. And I think, my belief is that postpartum doesn't get diagnosed and women are all chalking it up to be normal and it's just the newness of motherhood. And it took me to have some really scary thoughts to realize that I needed help and that there was more than just the transition to motherhood.

But it took me a long time and it's funny because as a nurse I have read about PPD and I know that. But when you're in it sometimes you just don't see it. So I was in this really awful place. And I was just looking for anything to make myself feel better. And I had heard about podcasts, I didn't even really knew what podcasts was. But I started just putting in motherhood or mothering into the app, the podcast app. And another podcast came up and she was interviewing you, and so...

Jen: Oh. I didn't know that, that's interesting. What was it?

Erica: It was Mom Is In Control with Heather Chauvin.

Jen: Oh cool, I remember, another Canadian, yeah.

Erica: Yes, another Canadian. So I fell in love with her and I fell in love with your interview. And I was like, okay, I need to find – I need to listen to these

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two women. You guys just both spoke to my soul. And so I started listening to your podcast and it kind of became that thing that I listened to all the time. I was going back and finding all of your old episodes but I could be sitting there in the morning or whatever time of day and just listen to these podcasts, and they just spoke to my soul. So I kind of got hooked that way.

And then I kind of went back to work, I came through that postpartum depression with a lot of – I had some therapy. And I was starting to implement some of the things that I was learning through your podcast, and having a lot of mental shifts. And then I got pregnant with my second daughter and I knew that postpartum was probably going to come back for me. And so I tried to be a little bit proactive. I ended up scheduling some appointments with the therapist that I had seen when I was in my worst.

And then I went into motherhood going like, “Okay, I’m not going to make these same mistakes twice.” And three months in I could feel that heaviness and that darkness just starting to seep in a little bit. And that time you were advertising your Heal Your Heart program. And I knew I needed to take an action step. I needed to do something. I didn’t want to just start falling down the rabbit hole again. So I signed up for Heal Your Heart and that was a – I think it was six months of just weekly video calls, and chats, and exercises that we worked through.

And that was when I really started to get in touch with my intuition, and mothering, and I dove into some conscious parenting. And really started, really spurred on my self-development journey, and really started crawling out of the darkness. Now, I still had elements of postpartum and postpartum anxiety. So when that program was finished I ended up joining the Vibrant Happy Women Club. I wanted to stay connected. I wanted to stay taking steps forward. I wanted to stay in that positive vibration that I had found through the program.

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So I joined the Vibrant Happy Women Club and that was awesome. I started connecting to it with some women. We have our weekly Soul Circles and I connected a little bit in there. But I admit my attendance wasn't great and it's still not great now. I'm struggling a little bit with timing with the kids, because it always seems to be around dinnertime. I tend to miss it. But I know that those women are there and I know that they're my tribe and I know that I go there and I can connect with them instantaneously.

And so I really got, again, just keeping up with my podcast, keeping up with the challenges. And then my husband went to Australia again. And I was starting down that resentful route where he was getting to do all these exciting things like traveling, and he was, you know, even in the summer he'd go to these beautiful places. Yes, there was fires around but he'd be staying in the lakes, or they were stunning places in BC. And then he'd go to Australia and again, working really hard. But it was just so exciting.

And we have lived such an exciting life before, we would go out on his motorcycle all the time and we would explore the backcountry. He has this dual sport motorcycle that he lives for. And him and I would go and we'd camp. And I have my ATV and he has a dirt bike and we were always out exploring, and traveling, and traveling before we had kids. And I was just starting to get resentful.

And you started advertising for your retreat and I kind of told myself all the stories that I think all moms tell themselves. I can't, financially I can't do that. I can't leave the kids for that many days. How am I going to get the time off work? Do women like me really do those things, just up and leave and go across the continent for a trip? I just had all the stories that I think women easily can tell themselves. And I basically ended up waiting until the very last day. It was the last day that your retreat was open. And I kind of kept thinking about it, kept thinking about it.

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And finally by about, I think it was there was half an hour to an hour left to sign up for the retreat.

Jen: Wow, totally last minute.

Erica: I left it till the eleventh hour. And then I just had this realization, why am I – I'm getting in my own way. All those details that I'm worried about, yes, they're things that we need to consider. But I'm just making stuff up, those are things – I'm going to get my own way. What is really holding me back? And I looked at my work schedule and of course I had the five days off that I needed to go. And I went, "Okay, I just have to do this." My intuition, my gut is telling me, you just need to do this, you're just going to figure it out.

So I go to plug my Visa card in and it gets declined. And I had forgotten that we had just put our kitchen cabinets on our card because we were doing a much needed kitchen reno. And I'm sitting there and I'm like, I have 20 minutes to figure this out. I know that I'm going now. I'm making this decision, but how am I going to make this happen? So I had to call my mom and ask her for her credit card for the trip.

Jen: That's so funny.

Erica: Talk about humbling, I'm the 30 plus year old woman going, "Mom, I need your credit card." Because I could pay it off but it wasn't going to come through in time that night. So anyways, I ended up booking the trip that night. I think I had 15 minutes left to spare.

Jen: That's funny.

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Erica: It was really funny, and I got off. And then I had that all of a sudden what am I doing? What did I just do? What about the flight? I don't know anybody that's going to be at the retreat. None of the women that were in my current Soul Circle were going to the retreat. And I just kind of sat there with that. And I'm like, "You're just going to figure it out one step at a time." And I ended up being able to book my flight with some Visa points and I ended up getting down to Florida. And I met up with a couple of your Vibrant Happy Women who are also Canadian, and also nurses.

Jen: Really? Who? Who were those?

Erica: It was Michelle P. Yes. It was just magic because when I was kind of really down and out, and I would love to talk to that more, Jen, but it can be a little bit dark and triggering. So I'm not sure how far you want me to go with my PPD part. But when my husband came back from Australia, I had been – we had started a sleep training program with my one daughter. Because I was starting to feel the depression. And I thought if I could just get sleep then it would make everything better.

So we started a sleep training program and I hired a consultant and things did not go well. She ended up being the one person that it didn't work for is kind of what they said. But basically she cried every single night, we would try and put her to sleep and for every nap. And I had no family support. I had no social support. So it spun my postpartum exponentially. And so I was just sitting there alone crying with my baby day in and day out. And I got to the point where my head was full, my head was numb.

And Luke left for Australia and that was part of the reason why we went with a sleep consultant, because I thought if I could just get sleep, because I'm going to be parenting solo for six weeks with a three month old. I just need to get this figured out. And we never did really get it figured out. She

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cried, it just was not working for her. And I knew when the sleep consultant presented the option to us, that I knew that it was wrong. But my head told me that that's what I needed to do.

So I soldiered on and basically he left for these four to six weeks and when he came home I was pretty much a wreck. And I went for a walk in the canyon behind our house just to clear my head and he was going to put her to sleep. And it was springtime, and the bears come out around this time. And I thought about a bear mauling me. And instead of being scared about that, I had complete peace wash over me, peace. I felt like that actually would be so much better than the mental pain I was experiencing. I wanted to be mauled by that bear.

And that's when I realized, wow, okay, this isn't just normal motherhood, this is something worse. And so I ended up calling a therapist and I got into therapy. And then in that period of time was when I started finding the podcasts and finding your program and all of that. But there is a government app that we're going to be launching. And I wrote my experience out for them and they're actually going to be using it as a tool for women to identify their postpartum depression, and it's part of this website.

Jen: Wow, that's amazing.

Erica: Yeah, it was really cool to actually be able to give back. I went through this whole experience and it leveled me. But I feel like it needed to level me. Now in hindsight, sometimes the flowers grow out of the crap, if you will, it was so powerful. And I got to go and we were interviewed all in a big group setting. And then now we're basically – they're developing this app that will be a resource for all new moms. And explaining to them

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different resources that are available, these are experiences. And so maybe women can identify it sooner rather than later.

Jen: That's so cool. You're going to be famous.

Erica: No. Well, the funny part is, is that it's anonymous. And now I'm laughing because that...

Jen: Yeah. Those who are meant to know it was you will hear this podcast.

Erica: Right, yeah. And I'm happy to share, honestly, Jen, I just want to be open and honest, and now when I have new moms, friends that are moms, I connect with them right away. And I often, you know, it's not that I unload my story at them right away. But if they come and they start talking to me about what's going on for them and they don't feel normal, because they don't love every moment of parenting, or they're crying every day. I just want to be that support for them. And then I can be really transparent with them.

And I've had a couple of moms recently that were so grateful that I was able to just be honest with them and be really real. And they, like kind of learning through – I don't want to say my mistakes, but kind of from my story. And I've been able to support them on their journey entering motherhood, and whether it's the postpartum blues or the postpartum depression, they're getting the support that they need. And that's what it's all about, supporting other moms.

Jen: That's awesome. That's awesome. So why do you think it's important to create space like that for self-development? Why can't you just sit at home and read books? Isn't that enough?

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Erica: No, it's not, you have to take those action steps. And it was amazing. So I took that scary step, which like I said, I could have talked myself out of that trip so many times. But the magic – there was a couple of magical things that happened. One, I came home refreshed and I came home with new intentions and stuff that I had learned that I can now be a better friend, be a way better mother, and I'm a way better partner. Because now when he goes on his trips I don't hold that resentment over him.

Jen: Yeah, because you did something, yeah.

Erica: Totally. So he goes on these trips and he also does an annual bike trip with his dad and his brother and a couple of friends. And they go every year for a few days on their motorcycles. That's what they look forward to every year. And honestly, in the past I've resented him for it a little bit. Again, he gets to go and but why am I not going? Why was I not taking those steps? And now last year when I did that trip to Florida I was like, "Okay, honey have a great time." And when I said that I truly meant it and I wanted him to enjoy every second of it. It wasn't like, "Must be nice."

That heaviness and that relationship, and our relationship just totally lifted once I started looking after myself and making time for things that were important for me.

Jen: Yes. So answer that question you asked. Why weren't you doing things for yourself? It's the age old question of moms in particular. Why aren't we having any fun, why?

Erica: Yeah. I've thought about that and it's really funny. I went into motherhood already with the whole idea of life is – I don't want to say over, but life is going to change. You no longer get to go on trips and you're no longer going to get to just do what you want when you want, which are all

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true to a degree. But why can't we make time to do things that still fill our soul? I just went into this whole I need to be – to be a good mom I need to give everything up and everything needs to go kind of to my kids.

Jen: You believed that? Yeah.

Erica: I totally believed that when I went into motherhood. And I had to do everything myself and I couldn't ask for help. And I remember when my daughter was first born, my first one, I was sitting there with a six week old, meal planning. And we had some friends that came down from a long ways to come visit us. And it was so exciting to see them. But I couldn't let them help. I was sitting there meal planning and making pots of corn chowder to make sure that everybody was fed.

Jen: Nice.

Erica: Instead of taking them up on the fact that they would have totally cooked or they would have totally cleaned, or let me go nap. But I needed to be the good hostess. I needed to do all the things. I needed to show that I had all my stuff together. I think there's also this culture in motherhood, the busier you are the more exhausted you are, you think you're doing it right. And that's how you need to be.

If you're not that then you're selfish, or you're a bad mom or there's all those cultural beliefs that are kind of ingrained in us, I feel a little bit. And I think we need to start shifting out of that and realize that when we're happy then we show up for our kids. I am such a better mom when I'm taking that time to go do yoga or when I take that time to journal.

When I make little trips for myself, I love to travel, so now how do I kind of incorporate those things into my life? And I just come home better. Yes, my

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kids miss me but they also learn that I come back, and I come back as a whole woman, not as this – again, kind of resenting your kids because now they're keeping you from doing whatever it is that you wanted to. I can't do that because of my kids. I can't do that because of my kids. Well, you're going to start to resent them and they can feel that.

I feel kids are such energetic, they can sense energy and they know the moment that your energy isn't in a great place. They know, they can feel it.

Jen: Yeah, for sure.

Erica: Yeah, especially the little ones. They're amazing. The first language that they speak is energy, when you really think about it, right?

Jen: Yeah, for sure. I have a friend, Lisa Corduff, she was a guest on this show and she recently posted something on Instagram about over-involved parenting. And it's been churning in my head and now hearing you talk, it's kind of along the same lines. So her husband died about a year ago and she's single parenting three kids. And she said when the kids are on school holidays she likes to sleep in. And she said she's been watching, she'll set out their favorite cereal or whatever, they're not that old. She said but as she stays back they do more, they step up. They gain skills.

So over-involved parenting is kind of like not ever letting them stretch. So do you feel like your husband and your kids get to stretch when you do things for yourself, you're not just handling everything? Do you see any growth there?

Erica: You bet.

Jen: Yeah, tell us about that.

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Erica: Yeah. It was funny this past week, so last week I went to Vancouver Island for part of this training for our new program. And so they had to be on their own for five days. My mom took care of the girls during the day while my husband was at work. But then he had to take them for the evening and afternoon and put them to bed every night. And he does this stuff so well when I've been gone in the past.

But it was interesting getting to watch or come home and hear how that stretched him, where he had to do everything from the dishes, to the meals, to getting the girls to bed. And it stretched him but he is even better for it. And the girls, yes, did they miss me? For sure. But they gave me the best hugs when I got home and they asked me all about Victoria. And they're better for it as well, absence makes the heart grow fonder sometimes, right?

Jen: When we step back I find that people will fill in the gaps. So maybe I'm a little further ahead on this because you have younger kids. So I've done the retreat several years now and I've traveled to other events for my business. And my husband is really starting to own a lot more in the house and in the kitchen. So much so that sometimes he'll remind me to clean up something. And I'm like, yes, we are arriving. And none of that could have happened unless I let go of the control and created spaces where someone else could step in and fill a vacuum. You know what I mean?

Erica: Absolutely. And what the funny part is, is that I've been, you know, since following – not following, since becoming a Vibrant Happy Woman, I've been able to delegate more stuff to my husband and he's had to step in. And he's done meals, or folded laundry, or whatever. And honestly, he's better domestically than I am. Okay, that sounds really funny, but he is such a good cook when he wants to. He can cook everything to perfection.

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And when he folds laundry it looks so much better than mine. I said to him, “Okay, I’ll run it all through, and maybe you can be the folder because you fold it so much better.” He’s Swiss and I feel like they learned how to fold clothes very particularly when they were younger. So he’s like perfection with folding.

Jen: That’s awesome.

Erica: So I’m trying to kind of delegate that off to him as much as I can.

Jen: That’s so great. I think that’s just a movement all women are slowly making, which is letting go of control, letting there be these spaces where someone else can step in and fill it. Men, our partners, they’ll step up, they’ll do more if we don’t feel the need to control how it’s done, or what it looks like. Just to some extent we as women need to treat men as equal domestic partners. And we need to go get our own lives to some extent. We need the yoga. We need the retreats. We need the careers if we want them. That’s just my opinion.

Erica: No, I totally agree. And I had this conversation actually with a friend recently where we can’t be reliant on our partner to fill all of the voids and to make us wholly happy. We have to take that on, we can’t expect our kids or our husband to find our happiness, or to be our entire happiness. Yes, they can be part of it but we need to soul search. And those things that are aching inside of you or those things that you love to do you need to make time for those and you need to own those. And then those relationships just get so much better.

Jen: Plus your girls are watching and they’re going to grow up and be probably about as happy as you are. So you’re showing them the way to be happy.

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Erica: I just want to give my kids a high energetic baseline. I just want them to know what it's like to feel alive. And I know that I went through parts in my life where I did not feel alive. And I want my kids to feel alive. I want them to feel vibrant. I want them to feel happy. And I want to start them on that journey young. I believe that kids really start building the architecture of their brains kind of in that zero to five range, that that's where the foundation goes in. And I think we start hanging everything about life off of those first five years.

And so I'm really trying to really build that really solid foundation in those first five years and really pour that foundation as smooth as I can, if you will, or as solid as I can.

Jen: Yeah. And as they say, you can't pour from an empty cup so you have to keep your cup filled.

Erica: Yes.

Jen: Beautiful. So, Erica, tell us about your morning routine, what fills your cup?

Erica: Yeah. So morning routine with two little small humans, I find consistency is a tough one. But what I do, what I'm doing right now is I wake up early as I can, as in 5:15, 5:30, my husband's alarm goes off at 6:00. And then I will sometimes do a little meditation in my bed, or start reading a book. I have a couple on my side table, so I'll read a little bit. If I try to get out of bed right now with those little young humans they will jump out of bed and they will be awake.

Jen: And so you have to be quiet, yeah.

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Erica: So I don't even try to get out of bed right now. A couple of times in the summer I was able to get up and catch the sunrise without waking them up. But oftentimes they would wake up and then honestly, I would start feeling a little bit frustrated or resentful, that's how I would start my day. And I don't want to do that so I've learned to just kind of adapt. And so I do a little meditation in bed. I will read something or journal something. And then I get up and usually by then my kids are up, my husband's up, and then I typically will get a podcast in at some point in the morning.

So if I'm driving to work that's when I listen to my podcasts. I would like to get some more movement in. So right now it's not happening in the morning as much, but I try and slot in 10 minutes of movement in the day. And my morning routine is kind of sliding now throughout the day. And when I say routine, it's just getting into these little micro habits that I think will, as we evolve as a family it will be able to be more in the morning. But right now it's like when I have 10 minutes in the afternoon when my kids are having their quiet time, that's when I'm going to fit that in.

Jen: Yeah, exactly.

Erica: So it's just making it work. I've gotten these new AirPods just a couple of weeks ago, so sometimes I can pop those in while I'm in the bathroom getting ready. And if my little ones – they like to play in the morning together. So sometimes they'll do that while I'm getting ready and I can listen to maybe my favorite music or maybe start my podcasts then while I'm in the bathroom getting ready. And then I'm fully present with them while we get ready for our day. And then we go either on to work or they're going with grandma or to preschool, and we go from there.

Sometimes we have dance parties in the morning. I love music. Music is always something since I was young that kind of got my soul going. So

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we'll play loud music in the morning while we're making breakfast or eating breakfast. We had a lot of morning dance parties when the pandemic started. My little girls actually have little dancing skirts that grandma made. And we would just rock out to music and we dance and we just start our day off as high as we can feeling good and doing things that we love, yeah.

Jen: Yeah. I like to think of it like energy, you fill the battery, fill it up so it can run. So you do that. Very well done. It's not easy with little ones.

Erica: No. It can be a bit of a challenge but I'm also learning progress, not perfection. And it's just doing what you can with what you have and then not judging yourself. Yes, okay, maybe I would have liked to have been going for a 30 minute walk in the morning. But you know what, I didn't get that in, but I did get to listen to my podcast. And I got 10 minutes of stretching in, in the afternoon. Great, rock on. I prioritized that and I have made it happen. I think we can get judgy with that as well.

And I catch myself often where I'm like – I don't want to say like a failure, but I didn't quite get all the things that I wanted done in my morning routine, or the kids got up early, or my husband got off early. And then that frustration and resentment builds. And I'm having to just be mindful of that, take a breath, moving on.

Jen: Yeah, exactly. So let's end with a piece of advice from you to our listeners, one last piece of advice, not that you haven't given us tons of great advice already.

Erica: Something that's really come – there's a couple of things. One is be still and know. And that for me is just when we are not really sure what we're supposed to do or how we're supposed to go about something is finding that quiet, sinking into yourself, be still. And you will know the

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answer. And I can look back on my life and when I was going through some of my postpartum where there were times where my soul was screaming at me to do something, or to move, or to not do something. And my head got in the way and it didn't take me into the best place.

And over the last three years I've been learning to trust my intuition, and to just be still, and love myself, and listen to that inner intuition, that universe. And once you start doing that and you start following the breadcrumbs, magic will happen. You just have to be open to it.

Jen: Yeah, be still and know, that's great advice. Well, Erica, I love, love, love you. And thank you so much for being on the show and sharing your story.

Erica: Thank you so much Jen.

Jen: Take care.

That was inspirational wasn't it? Erica put her most prized possessions in the hands of her mom and her husband and said, "Hey, I'm going to Florida. I'm going to do something I love." And she's continued to follow this pattern of creating space for herself, to remember she's a human being first, and a mom, and a wife, and an employee second, human being first.

So I asked you at the beginning of this episode to think about what do you need to do to get your sparkle back, to shine yourself up again, so you radiate that fun, that light, that adventure, that true self that's in there? Sometimes she's hidden behind a bunch of boxes, and to do lists, and

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dishes, and laundry, but let's pull her out, shine her up and let everyone get to know the real you.

So what do you need to make that happen? Maybe it's a morning routine, not just a morning routine but a soul fuelling morning ritual, a sacred beginning to your day where you do what you love, the things that light you up. Maybe it's going to see some friends, doing something socially distanced, but not totally physically distanced together, you see each other, talk, laugh. Maybe it's going out in nature.

Maybe you might want to join us at the Vibrant Happy Women retreat in 2021. We still have a few spots left, and yes, it is on. It will be socially distanced. We will do most of our meetings outside. Of course it's Florida, most of the activities will be outside anyway, swimming, hot tubs, beach, paddle boarding, all the good stuff. But if you'd really want to go deep on fuelling your soul and finding you again, that you that you don't even know who she is sometimes, join us at the retreat. You can sign up at jenriday.com/retreat. We'd love to have you join us.

Well, my friends you are amazing and I hope you remember that. Do what it takes to polish yourself up, to let yourself shine, let your real self out. You're so much more than just the person who does laundry, or the employee that takes care of others at work, or the person who puts band-aids on scraped knees, even though that's so important. Remember, you are a human being first and it's your job to make sure you're sparkly, and shiny, and radiantly happy. That's what this podcast is all about.

I appreciate you listening, and I will see you again next week. Until then make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

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