

Anniversary episode with Steve

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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Welcome to Just Breathe, parenting your LGBTQ teen. My name is Heather Hester and I am excited to be with you to transform the conversation around loving and raising an LGBTQ child. Wherever you are on this journey, right now, in this moment in time, you are not alone.



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So today,



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I am celebrating my one year anniversary of launching a just breathe as a podcast. And I thought it would be really fun and really interesting for everyone to have Steve on as my guest. Steve and I have talked about this for quite some time, him being able to share our story, from his point of view, just knowing that it would be so helpful to so many dads who are out there listening and just, you know, everyone out there listening, hearing it from, you know, another point of view and just the way he was affected the way that he saw things. So I'm really, really happy that we have finally been able to sit down together and put this together and be able to share this with all of you. So thank you, darling for being here today. We're squished into my office together, which is highly entertaining to begin with. So he's and I've told him he can't play with his pen or squeak his chair. So he he's already laughing at me. So you have to you have to bear with us here. Thank you for being here.



02:05

Thank you for having me. I can't believe it took a year for me to be able to get at least a couple of seconds of time on the podcast. But I won't take that personally. But seriously, I do. I have thought for a while that it would be nice. I've listened to most of your episodes. And I think it would be nice for dads to have a perspective. I don't know how many dads are listening right off the bat. But if there's their spouses want to point this one out specifically, at least there might be some sort of connection for the dads out there.



02:45

Well, thank you. I appreciate it. And I think I know everybody else will appreciate it too. And I'm just I'm so glad we finally been able to make this happen. And just so you all know since he's already started out by being funny. He Steve is definitely the the funny one out of the two of us. He also likes being in the spotlight. So the fact that I have had the mic for a full year, and he has not been on it is very, very big deal. But anyway, he this will be exciting. I'm so excited to have him share, because obviously we've been through all of this together. But his perspective is just quite beautiful and extraordinary. And I know you'll enjoy it. So we will go ahead and get started here and start with how did you feel? And what was your initial reaction when Connor first came out to us?



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Well, first as a disclaimer, at some point during this q&a, there's a decent chance I'm going to get pregnant pause choked up.



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My way of



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handling all of this is usually through comedy sarcasm, dry humor. But when I am specifically speaking of these topics and reliving these topics, I do get choked up. And that would be why you're hearing these odd pot these odd pauses in the audio so far, because that is what



04:34

that's just the way I am.



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So I do apologize in advance because Heather's not going to be able to edit all of those out. So there you go. So how did I feel initial reaction? Well, I think as Heather has said, I was completely surprised. Complete disbelief because we never had any clue that Connor was, was gay. There were no signs that that we should have caught or there were no, you know, hints that he made or anything like that. So. But although we were completely blindsided by the by the news, it didn't we didn't lose stride over the fact of Oh my god, what do we do now? It was okay. This is a curveball, but we love you dearly. And we want to know how we can help you. And just where do we go from here type of thing. And as, as I've kidded with Heather in the past, initially, I was, I said, This isn't possible because for multiple multitude of reasons, but most important, he has zero fashion sense. And



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he would be so horrified to hear you



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at the time. I mean, he's really developed his own fashion. But at the time, it was, it was a little joke between us. So there you go.



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It is actually very true that that very night, when I was on the phone with, with my mom, and you were standing there trying to discern what was going on, and I'm giving you snippets of it. And, and that was literally one of the first things you said, like this, it can't be possible. We do. Try to laugh as much as we cry. Laughter has been, I think, a huge one of the biggest things that has helped us get through a lot of this, and and all of us all, not just Steve, or me, but all six of us. So I've talked a lot in my different episodes about Hi, and how I initially felt about feeling overwhelmed and alone. When it came to finding support and information. How did you feel those first initial nuts about that,



07:10

um, I was very frustrated with the lack of any helpful resources, especially for parents of teens. There, there were many books, but not necessarily focused on the parents and how to help them help their child. I do know, there is p flag. And we did go to one of those meetings and didn't really feel the connection or the, the I'm sure it's a great resource, but it just didn't strike the chord with me. So quite honestly, something like your podcast, your website would have been perfect for me. Especially because I wasn't in a place where I wanted to open up to people



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and



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ask for their help. So having something like just breathe, I wouldn't have had to ask for help, I would have been getting your perspective, the caner interviews, all of the different authors that you've interviewed, and experts that you've interviewed. That's the kind of resource that I wish were out there. Three and Four years ago, when we were going through all of this.



08:46

Thank you.



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Obviously, you know, that's why that's why I do this. But I I there's something really important that I want as an important takeaway from this for everyone listening because as I sit here, and I'm I'm listening to and I'm watching you, and it breaks my heart every time to see how moved you are. And you know, this really does strike a very deep chord with you. And I think this is so important to point out because I think that when our kids come out, regardless of how they come out, you know, the majority of us feel that it's so important to be like, Okay, we've got this we're going it's good or happy we're or fine. And you know, in so many cases parents knew already or had a feeling already so it's not that much of a shock, right. But there is I think for everyone the Movie real change, right, which I've talked about so many times, and this is an example of it, where it's okay to acknowledge that the movie real is changed. It's okay to mourn it, it is okay to be sad,

being sad that it has changed, being, you know, frustrated and having all of these emotions that are other than I'm so excited. It's not a bad thing. This is actually very, very good and very healthy. So as I sit here and watch, Steve, and listen to him, and I think this is really important for everybody to hear, because this is a good and healthy expression. And especially knowing you know, we're, we're four years into this, and you all have heard from Connor. And, um, you know, we're all pretty open about how all of this has worked. So anyway, I just wanted to add that in there really quickly.



11:05

So one of the things Sure, the other reason why this podcast is so great for somebody like me, um, you interview authors, and get all of the great points from the book, and I don't have to read the book. I think.



11:26

Yeah.



11:27

Steve is a big if this is like Audible for you. Yes. Yeah. Like, like the cliff notes version of audible? Yes, yes. Yes. Oh, my goodness, Well, I'm glad I can provide that service. So anyway, in the months that followed, Connor coming out kind of in that the spring, the summer into the fall, what were your thoughts and observations of how Connor was working through his coming out process?



11:56

Um, at the time, I think like you I was, I was led to believe that things were going very well. He told a few friends that went well. He seemed to be handling everything well with the mix of school and basically just, I thought everything was going as well as could be expected, I would ask an occasional question. And he would give a reassuring answer. And I foolishly would think that answer was perfect. Now, everything is going just like I hoped. Unbeknownst to both of us, of course, Connor was very skilled at saying what he thought we wanted to hear, and then covering up a whole plethora of risky, dangerous, unhealthy things that he was pursuing at the time. Let's see. And also, I had this feeling that he was pushing me away a bit. And I just assumed that was some sort of son, Father, dynamic where my father knows I'm gay now. So he's probably not going to want to, you

know, hang out with me or bond with me. And I thought, that's what it was. Because I, I did try to connect. And he would kind of politely, you know, shoot me down, but say, everything's fine. Don't worry type of third,



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I'm gonna jump in really quick there too. Because I think the other piece of that is that, you know, Connor was 16 1617, you know, these early these early stages. And that is like the pinnacle, the time when typical teenager or teenage development is kind of creating that space between the the teen and the parent, they're getting ready to, you know, spread their wings and fly, right. So there was also that component where we were like, well, it could be that too. So there were a lot of tiny little pieces that, you know, did lend them a limb to what was going on.



14:19

Go ahead, sorry. Oh,



14:20

um, let's see. I, in my mind, he was just pushing me away because he thought it was a little awkward or whatever. What I didn't realize was it was more or less, just giving him the room to be able to do some of the stuff he was doing without us being aware.



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Did you ever have a moment or a time where like, your intuition started kicking in like, this just doesn't feel right. Like I've talked about that here and there.



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You definitely had a much better intuition for that. Because you spent so much time so much more time talking with him. in great depth, and like I said, it was with me it was much more at the time, thankfully, things have come full circle, and I'm able to have nice conversations long, you know, meaningful conversations with him now. But at the time, even if I tried, or when I tried to come up with a couple of things like, hey, it sounds like a good topic to talk to kind of about, he really wouldn't spend much time answering it, wanting to talk about it. So I didn't get the same type of intuition, you got that there was

trouble brewing, that's for sure.



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That that was something else. I know, the night that I finally looked at Connors phone, you know, after many weeks of my, my intuition, telling me something was wrong. That night is completely etched in my memory, and it will be, you know, forever and ever, what is your memory of that night, and then the month that followed it.



16:06

Um, I would say, I was sick to my stomach when you first came down and told me what you would discover. I was in absolute shock 10 times more shock than when he first came out to us. I had I felt fury for the people who were taking advantage of Connor, and then also utter sadness and despair for him. And for that it has spiraled so far out of control. That was that night. And then the following month, at least at the beginning. A lot of my mindset was wanting revenge against the people that took advantage of him to punish them, constantly worrying about him. frustration, over the fact that Connor, he was that was a stage when he the only thing he knew about the gay community was what he had learned online. Mm hmm. And that he felt he knew everything that there was to the gay community because of these seedy people that manipulated a teenager, I would say that was that was that month was just wanting him to understand that there was a whole nother wonderful world out there that he just wasn't giving a chance to, and stead bogging down with this bad stuff. Right.



18:04

And I wonder, too, I remember, I felt like, we were scrambling so much to really kind of figure out where his lies stopped and the truth VM, so we could really figure out what he what he needed, where, you know, how we could help him? And certainly, again, you know, he, he didn't necessarily want help at initially, he was understandably angry. I just remember, you know, feeling that whole month, like, like, everything was just unraveling. And, and I was working really hard to, like, keep it from completely falling apart. And it was like, we just kept learning new information. And, okay, what do we do with this and, and the whole, you know, scramble to what kind of help does he need? And then, you know, meeting with an AED consultant, and oh, my gosh, she has to go away. And all this is this is how, you know, realizing how incredibly dangerous as we learned more and more. It was just so much information. Is that just me? Yeah, it was



19:22

it was difficult to try to. I mean, we had three other kids, my own company, and trying to keep everything sort of together. And the whole time like you said, Connor never at least up until the time when we finally went to Newport Connor never felt like he even needed any of our help with any of that. He thought he had it all under control, and he knew what he was doing and we were overreacting. I just wish were some resource for teenagers to that they would rely on. I mean, because I do remember, you tried to connect him with one of his old grammar school teachers that was out as being gay and Connor thought he was the greatest teacher back way back when. So this would be wonderful. But he didn't want the help of people in the know,



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like positive, positive influences. And I think that's the biggest thing. He didn't want it. And, and he's hit me, he's talked about that a lot too, about how once he, once he realized that, you know, there is this big beautiful world out there, right that, that he was in the darkest corner, the you know, the underbelly at this point of the gay community, but also, you know, people and resources and he didn't want any of it. He didn't want therapy, he didn't you know, he knew how to game that he knew how to game everything. So it was a really tough spot to be in



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the first person in the in the gay community that he actually listened to as a good resource was Daniel at Mumford. That's when he finally opened his eyes to the fact that there is another world of, of the gay community that's actually nice and caring and wonderful. But that was how many that was a year into the over a year rollercoaster ride. Yeah.



21:35

And I think that was all part of the like, his self loathing, you know, he had such intense self loathing, and was so angry that he didn't feel like he deserved anything good for quite some time. So you had the unenviable and heart wrenching experience of flying with Connor out to California to Newport Academy and dropping him off there. I know, this is a really hard question for you. But I think it's really important to share with everyone because that was horrible.



22:18

Yeah, it was. It was nerve wracking. Very little sleep the few days before and then during, always on edge with worry. When if he tries to sneak off, even, for instance, when he would go to the washroom at the airport, or at the restaurant, we were at, like, if it took too long. A little bit of panic.



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would jump in.



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And then



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he would appear and I'd be like, it was so foolish of me to worry. I mean, where was he gonna go climb out a window or whatever. But other than those moments, it is odd to say, but both that traveling to California and even traveling to Montfort. Two months later, whatever, those were actually also, we had a lot of laughs. Because, at least on the way to Newport, Connor was actually agreeable to going. So he had kind of relaxed, he didn't need to do a whole cover, and a whole facade about how he felt or whatever. And so the, the rail counter came out, and we were able to enjoy. Like, he's hysterical with observational humor. So when we were at the airport or at the hotel, just him pointing out something and just laughing a lot of the time, dropping him off, doing the tour of the house. Although it was a nice facility, it was still torture, because he knew nobody there. You could see the nervousness. And the fact that this is our was a 16 or 17 or 17 year old, just being dropped off with a bunch of strangers, even though he was 17. And in his mind, I guarantee you and many of your 17 year olds I guarantee you think they're just on the cusp of being the most mature adult possible. He was still this little boy



24:57

who was



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in college credibly scared. And also who was trying to be incredibly strong

 25:12

for my benefit,

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then of course, going back to the hotel, I probably sobbed for four hours. That was, even though I called home, talk to Heather, everything, you know, told her the update on the house and everything. When I hung up,

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I just remember

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feeling so incredibly alone. And then as far as whether it was the right decision, or when I knew it was the right decision, I can't say that day I felt like it like it was. But when we first talked with the therapy team there, that's when I really got the feeling that these people get it. Unlike somebody, the therapists back here and in our home area, they won't necessarily let Connor work the system. And they be able to get through to see the rail counter. And that was when I realized this was the right decision.

 26:29

Good job. And that was really hard. I'm really sorry.

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You can edit all that out, right?

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No, I mean, I can.



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And just building on that just a little bit. Because I think we've really talked about it to a decent degree. But in Canada, we was first in Newport for two months, and then at my prayer hall in North Carolina, and Asheville, for five, and there's so much that happened and discussed bits and pieces of it. But overall, what were those months like



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for you?



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So many ups and downs, our visits, especially our visits to Newport, to beautiful Newport Beach, California, which isn't a tough place to visit. Those were, I mean, other than a little edginess at times from Connor, those were actually very helpful. It was obviously great to see him. But also, I felt like I did learn some important lessons in their program. I feel like I've definitely and this is a huge pointer for any parents, more specifically dads, I've learned, and I can't say I'm perfect at it, but validating. Hi, I quite honestly knew, or I had zero experience of validating prior to any of this. I always try to be very positive. I try to be very optimistic. So if somebody in the past, if somebody whether it's Connor, or Heather or any of my family, if they would come to me, they've had a terrible day that something bad happened. I would always instead of saying, I understand how you're feeling and that must be terrible, or whatever I would be like, hey, but what about what about this one like little silver lining? That is a huge lesson to learn with any of your kids that if they take the effort to come to you and tell you anything serious, anything sad or whatever. Validating their feelings is the most important thing. And then you can move on to how can we help or how can we, you know, move out from this mindset. But I guarantee you the first thing they want to hear is, I understand I get it or whatever. So that's one of those things that came from the first couple of months. Behind the scenes. It was an absolute roller coaster because of insurance. It was literally like every day a call or an email about that process. Were they going to allow him to stay as long as needed. Were they going to pull the plug on all of the financial backing for it. Because for those of you who have not experienced one of these programs, they are exorbitantly expensive. With that said of course most of them are worth everything



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but



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There was a lot of ups and downs with that. And then I would say the only other thing I recall distinctly from that period was, it was probably the first time that I was able to actually sleep through the night. Because I knew he was saying, yes. Whereas for how many months on end, we never,



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we didn't sleep for months. Yeah. So you are absolutely right. I've never talked about that. But that is so



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true.



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Reminding me reminding. We did finally sleep. That was a really great thing. On top of everything else, we're so sleep deprived, Oh, my goodness. Holy cow. I'm sure you all have, have gotten a very good sense of Steve's personality. And, actually, I will tell you that you are quite lucky and fortunate to be able to see this side of Steve, because this is not a side that everybody gets to see. This is something that, you know, like he said, I think earlier in the episode, he is funny, and he does handle everything with humor and sarcasm. And I know I've alluded so many times the fact that there's so much laughing in this house. And a big reason of that is because of Steve and Connor and Isabel have both inherited his, you know, funny, dry, witty sense of humor. So the fact that you're able to witness this side of him much as equally as beautiful, and I feel very lucky that he is allowed himself to open up and to feel all of these things. I'm just really, really grateful. So as I am a verbal processor. And I think this is obviously very stereotypical, but women tend to be verbal processors, right? So we would talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, until we figure things out. And was it hard to have me verbally processing all the time, while you are also trying to process all of this?



32:39

I honestly don't recall. there being a time when I felt, you know, felt to myself or thought to myself, Oh, no, not again, she wants to talk about it again. Because honestly, it was the most important thing in the world. For, for us and for our family. So, no, I never felt like you.

You verbally tried to go through it too often. I would say, you know, it was, if you were bringing it up, there was a chance there was also some new information I wasn't aware of too. So that was helpful.



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So I vividly remember our ad consultant telling me that crises like hours destroyed marriages. I remember where I was standing in our house when she told me that because it was so rattling to me. But our marriage actually became stronger. I think this would be an awkward time for you to say otherwise.



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You can edit



33:59

my response?



34:00

Yes. Why do you think it became stronger?



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First of all, first of all, let's get rid of the elephant in the room. I agree our marriage became. We already had a great marriage. And this bond that we had over all of this made it stronger. And I believe Honestly, it was because we were on the same page with everything. How we felt about everything. How we wanted to respond to everything. It just made us work together even more and rely on each other for more support and more love. I could see if we didn't agree like if I pushed back on any of the topics. If I had this approach were like, I don't know the the terminology but like a meathead guy. Like, oh, that we're not going to do that with our kid or whatever, then I could see where marriages would have a damaged result if both spouses weren't on the same page. Because this is an emotional, incredibly emotional time for us. And if we weren't already, already a strong marriage to begin with, but then also, just on the same page with everything, it could have gone south for sure. And even like this, especially in the, the Newport days, we even were able to because the scheduling of the parent weekends, we had one whole night to

ourselves. So before we'd fly back the next day, so we actually made those into nice little getaways with just us because my family was watching our kids. So you were secure with that they were okay. And that gave us a little free time to actually have a nice dinner, walk the beach, do whatever. So.



36:07

Yes,



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so true. Do you think that therapy played a role in any of that?



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Can we say her name? Yeah, with Kate? Yeah. As long as I don't give her last name. For Kate who handle, I would say it was more couples therapy and family therapy. But yes, I believe Kate was helpful. Because if there ever were times where one or one of us didn't necessarily necessarily see eye to eye on this, Kate was a very good help in bridging the gap. And for some perspective, like if one of us felt a certain way, she was good at letting the letting that person



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at least



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keep an open mind about what the other person was thinking or whatever. So I think that was very helpful. And, again, just being on a united front. I mean, we could have gone to, you know, family therapy, couples, therapy, whatever. And it could have been useless if we weren't already united in our goals, and our beliefs about Connor and our dedication.



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Happiness think that's a very valid and important point, I just thought I would bring that out because it over time. Of course, I had already been seeing Maureen for a number of

years. And then we started seeing Kate, a month or two after Connor came out. And then you started seeing your therapist about a year later. So it's super helpful just for I think, all these pieces kind of worked together. And being being able to work through things and become educated and find support and find information. So at what point if any, were you able to relax and just go with the flow?



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Have you been able to relax? Well?



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I would say yes, I'm, you know, definitely capable, are more prone to be relaxed for years in when Connor was at Newport, and even when he was at Montfort. Even though there were some emotional ups and downs and both processes. I was able to relax more. So again, as I said earlier, because he was safe. And hopefully because he was learning especially when he both places, I felt like he was learning some important life lessons. at Newport. I think he was learning more about himself and then at Montfort I believe he he learned a ton from Daniel, about the fact that there is a good healthy gay community out there. And he can have fun participating in that. And so that helped me relax. And then you know, going there and visiting him every time was also nice. So I learned to go with the flow pretty well with that during those days. Now, I am more inclined to be relaxed with Connor or because Connor seems like he's turned the corner. That doesn't mean I doesn't mean I have this, this idea that there's not going to be any more bumps in the road or any other issues that we have to be incredibly worried about. But he seems to be, as you've mentioned, so much more comfortable with himself so much more in love with who he is that he feels more comfortable being honest with us. And even when that honesty is something he knows, we don't necessarily want to hear. He's willing to be honest. And that's all I can ask, right? If he has a bad day, if he does something that he regrets, rather than just covering it up, actually bringing it to us and telling us, you know, I'm frustrated with myself because of this and, or I'm worried about something. And he wasn't doing that during the the roller coaster ride of the first two years, three years. So



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yeah, it's very, very true.



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We have a family group chat since Connors in New York, and we all have things that we want to share on a weekly basis. And so it's an awesome place for everybody to kind of chime in. And there's very entertaining banter that goes back and forth. But of course, since right now is the age of COVID. Connor has only one class that's in person. And he's currently his dorm is in Manhattan and his in person classes in Brooklyn. So this was about a month ago, and he was, you know, texting in the group chat about how he's so frustrated, you took the train to Brooklyn, you know, all these things.



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Because the class got quiet.



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Yeah, the class got canceled, something else happened and, and everybody's chiming in on the group chat, oh, well go get a coffee. Well, you know, stop by and see a friend, well do this. He finally says, I just need for you guys to validate my bad experience. And we were I mean, laughing so hard, because this is just part of this. And the fact that he can verbalize that. And Natalie has he learned how to really verbalize his needs. And like Steve said, we've learned how to do this so much better, and really pay attention. But because of all of this is evolving, Grace and Rowan have learned as well. So they're so much more aware of, you know, communicating, you know, with us with each other, and not being afraid to be honest about what's going on, which I think is a really huge takeaway for, you know, everybody, all six of us. So, when you think about these past four years, this is a wacky question that I've come up with care for you. But what kind of visual would you use to describe the past four years of our life?



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Our lives?



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Um, okay. Okay. This might take a little bit for you to get the visual, so bear with me, but also, being a Miami hurricane myself. I like this analogy. It's like living on a Caribbean island. And it's hurricane season all year long. So there's the calm before the storm when everything seems okay. But then slowly, another storm develops, and it's coming straight

towards your island, and it's overwhelming. Then you spend time cleaning it up, picking up the pieces after the storm, and then the next cycle starts again. That's kind of the way it's it says though, you lived in the Caribbean island, only during hurricane season.



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I think that that's very, that's a good visual.



44:01

It's Yes, that is



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for sure how it felt and being on all the time. And so hypersensitive and hyper alert and when you were talking about being you know, worried you can kind of go there's the kindness when you were at the airport, taking him to the airport, going to the bathroom, you know, and being worried. There's still times where things happen that I know he's in a far different place and he's doing so well but he'll say something or do something I am still triggered.



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When you know, when I am outside, I still walk over to look at his bedroom window because I am sort of scarred. So I think that's a good one. I like it. So I just want to wrap up today with General words of advice question. You



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know, we, you and



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I have grown a lot as parents together and as people individually, can you share a few of the biggest areas of growth that you see? And what advice or words of wisdom or comfort Can you share?



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There's three things that I wanted to give as words of wisdom, or as advice more to the dads out there. top of the list is find a therapist. Never think that you're strong enough that you don't need extra help or support. Heather, and others, including Kate kept telling me that it would help. I never felt it was necessary. I didn't like the idea of sharing my feelings with a stranger. I felt like I was doing just fine. And like I said, especially for the dads who are listening, or if the moms want to make their husband, listen to this section, many of you feel won't feel like opening up to your buddies about something sensitive like this, like your LGBTQ child, a therapist is a great outlet for you. I thought I was doing perfectly fine, until I completely lost my temper, and yelled at an employee at my office over something very small, very minor. And that's actually when I realized I needed to take everybody's advice and find a therapist. I was very lucky to find the one. Well, Heather found. The one the one that I've been speaking with off and on for, for I don't know how long, a half years



47:11

I okay, if it's that long. The key is also understanding. I see Ed. Well, before COVID, it was like once every two weeks or once every three weeks, it's not something that you need to be like, okay, it's Thursday, I've got to go to the therapist. If you're not comfortable with the concept, it's okay to just go. When you fail, you need a little extra help, or something's been bothering you. During COVID. I honestly have not talked to Ed as often. Because I'm not a big fan of the zoom call at this point. But once things get, hopefully back to normal, whenever I'm sure I will go back and speak with a and it's an at this point it's become. At the beginning, it was literally 15 minutes of counter conversation. But now it's Hey, how's Connor doing? Quick touch upon that. And then any other stuff going on, it could be work, it could be my own family, my own parents, any of our other children or on that rare occasion. Okay, something was happening. But, but again, I think that if there's any takeaway that is other than learning to validate, that would be the second most important thing that I learned in this process, which is, you know, it's good to have a therapist, even if it's just once a month you speak to this person.



48:52

Number two,



48:54

a lot of times during the ups and downs of the coming out process and the journey that your child is going through, you're going to feel tired, mentally exhausted, just, you know, needing a break. And then at that very moment, something might come up that's that kind of triggers to you that that's a such a suspicious statement, or that doesn't make sense. Or the answer your child gave you to whatever question just seems like it's a bit off as easy as it would be to just take that answer and be like, okay, and walk away, because it's a lot more difficult to confront it. That's definitely a lesson that we learned the hard way. You're almost like wishful hopeful that what your child is telling you is the truth. But you do need to like Heather said with Her intuition was was eating away at her and she finally looked at Connors phone and found all of that disturbing information, you do need to be brave. And trust your spidey sense, for for those of you who are not Spider Man fans, just trust your intuition that something's wrong. And don't ignore it, because that's when things get worse. It could even be your child, you know, reaching out, asking for some help, but not having the courage to outright ask. So they kind of give a half hearted lie to something, just have the courage to bring it up. And in my case, I would bring it up to Heather, because I wasn't fully sure if I was thinking, you know if it was coming out, right or whatever. And then we would approach Connor about it. But that took a long time, because like I said, the easy way out is, okay, good to hear. And head on out. The last bit of advice, at least when you're not in the middle of a pandemic, is if there are any opportunities for you to take your child on a trip, a long weekend, anything where you can have some good one on one time without a whole bunch of interruptions. Jump at that, as kind of, as Connor got older, his tastes changed, where we really didn't have much in common. And I would even like say to him, Hey, let's try to do something. What do you what do you want to do? And he would tell me like, Oh, well, I really like EDM music. And I'm like, Oh, okay. Let's totally go see. Let's go see a show. But, so that never really worked out. Because I love sports, Connor couldn't care less about sports. So it was tough to find that connection. When I took him to Miami, the real Miami for those of you who know of Miami of Ohio, I mean, Miami Hurricanes. We went for a campus visit. And we stayed on the beach, and we had a blast. And it doesn't matter that we you know, don't have a ton in common because we were able to just enjoy being outside being at the pool, being at the beach, going out to dinner, and just laughing. So the same goes for both of our road trips, dropping him off at NYU. Normally 15 hour drive is not a highlight of anybody's life. But those were a lot of fun. We would stay overnight at a hotel somewhere along the way and go to dinner and just laugh a lot during the drive. So even if you think you don't have a ton in common, if there's an opportunity for you to do a little weekend getaway or whatever, where it's just one on one time with you and your child. I suggest you jump at that opportunity. There you go. Nice.



53:21

Well done. Just a good job.



53:24

Thank you. And thanks for bearing with me with my occasional audio problems.



53:32

Not audio problems. Absolutely. Sweet. And



53:39

just, you know, it's



53:41

a lot of what restores faith in humanity and people having feelings and loving their kids. And thank you for sharing that. with everybody.



53:59

It was my great pleasure. If there are any dads out there listening, or again, moms that are listening that want the TED to listen, feel free to email me. I'm happy to answer any questions. Heather Oh, put me on the resource page. I've heard her talk about that.



54:19

Steve will be in the show notes. Yes, I will put his email in the show notes for sure. So and he means that absolutely. He's not he wouldn't say that just to be polite. Because he doesn't typically like to answer his phone or email. So he does. He does mean that 100% so thank you. Thank you for doing with this with me, darling.



54:45

My pleasure.



54:46

It was super fun and just so excited that this is how we're celebrating the one year anniversary of just braid. This is pretty awesome. You finally



54:56

you finally got me I



54:58

finally booked you on the show. That's, that's exciting. I just want to thank everyone out there so much for joining us today and for listening and just your reminder to just breathe, to take those few minutes every single day to focus on your breath, and to calm and center yourself. Just like Steve said, Just now you can email him, you can email me at any time with ideas with feedback with questions, both his email and my email will be in the show notes. If you have a few moments, please, I would so appreciate either reviewing just to breathe on your platform of choice, and or subscribing to my website to stay informed. It's chrysalis mama.com and you can sign up for my monthly newsletter there as well as access to tons of resources which I am constantly updating. Please join the just breathe Facebook community. It's a private facebook page to chat with other parents and allies and share this podcast with anyone who needs to know they are not alone.