[00:00:05]

[MUSIC] This is Tell me Your Story, Special Edition, where we address relevant topics for our community.

Welcome back with our conversation with Mothers at Work. In the description of each episode, we will provide a content warning and resource for support to our listeners.

In other cultures, in my family, for example, family support was always around because everybody [OVERLAPPING].

[00:00:33]

That's an incredible thing.

[00:00:34]

Yeah. None of you had that. I assume that many mothers, many families in these big towns I believe, also wouldn't have. Because that makes a huge difference, doesn’t it?

[00:00:45]

Oh, yeah. We're going to move closer to my family in June because it's just it's too much. It's too much money, it's too much on the two of us by ourselves, we haven't had a date. [LAUGHTER] Because if you want to go out by yourselves, you need to pay for a sitter and that's just another cost.

[00:01:04]

That's another cost of daycare.

[00:01:08]

It's just it's too much so we're moving closer to my family so that they can help. We can get more breaks, hopefully reconnect a little bit. Just not having friends and family close by is too much when you have two little kids.

[00:01:22]

How was it for you, Lakshmi?

[00:01:24]

My mom lives in Connecticut and she's still very healthy and active social help, like on a weekend or if there's some time during the summer where the kids you can go to her house in Connecticut, they'll do that. But in terms of helping 9:00-5:00 when we're at work.

[00:01:41]

Or when they were kids like that toddler as in [OVERLAPPING].

[00:01:43]

Not so much that. Say it again.

[00:01:46]

Did your family live nearby?

[00:01:48]

She is a couple of hours. She might come up for a couple of days or I would send them there for a couple of days. Then I have a sister who lives in Boston, so she does help too, babysit if we want to go out one night or if I have something to do when our [inaudible 00:02:03] is not available. They're healthy fortunately in close proximity, but not so much, and they also worked as well. Having them their jobs and take care of my kids wasn't really an option.

[00:02:18]

What about you Sasha. Or was just you and Adam?

[00:02:20]

Look, the part of the reason we move back here is because my family is here in the Boston area and I grew up here. We were in Rochester for seven years and when we had kids there, we had a lot of friends that we've made there and we had a wonderful nanny. It's a simpler life and things are more affordable. We had options, but we moved here. My parents live nearby and my sister lives nearby and so that's created opportunities, especially like economies of scale because my sister and I share a babysitter for after school. My parents, they're still both working full-time and they're not going to do the hands-on labor of childcare, but they're available to help with evenings periodically. But having them close by, it's like there's just a little bit of a buffer built-in and also with my sister's daughter, and my younger son are at the same preschool. It's a Jewish preschool and the school is closed for like the first day of Passover and the last day of Passover and for Tisha B'av and for Simhat Torah, which are not necessarily holidays that we as reformed Jews are observing, but we have to coordinate. What are we going to do in those days to make sure that somebody is taking care of the kids and then we'll do that jointly.

[00:03:47]

That's another blending that you have to be always on top of everything.

[00:03:51]

My sister isn't incredibly good planner. When the two of us are in charge, it's easy to work out. Then we have a text chain that's like all of [OVERLAPPING].

[00:04:02]

You're saying that your sister is a good planner?

[00:04:04]

Yeah. It's a lot of planning when there's like two households, essentially three if you add my parents and a babysitter who's coordinating among us. The babysitter also helps another family and it makes it very confusing. She's fabulous and balances lots of things, but she also doesn't focus on details because she's not that kind of a person. It takes me and my sister, it's a lot of comedy in the text messaging. [LAUGHTER] We have one chain that's me and my sister and our spouses and the babysitter. Then another is that same group plus my parents. [LAUGHTER] Sometimes my mom doesn't realize it's a group chain and sometimes we share information that doesn't need to be shared with the whole group. It's never embarrassing, but it's always comical. My sister periodically will say to me that she wishes her husband had read-only rights because sometimes he will go off to work and do the same thing that Rob does. He's like somebody will pick them up I'm sure [LAUGHTER] Then he'll make some comment to the babysitter that is totally off base with what's actually happening. Then we have to rein it back in and be like, don't do that.

[00:05:06]

I am so sorry to make a comparison but it sounds so much like Mrs Maisel episode [inaudible 00:05:09]

[00:05:12]

She is an aspirational character in my life, [LAUGHTER] so thank you for saying that

[00:05:16]

Because sometimes I watched one of those that dissolves and that family dynamic, that confusion, that the chaos sometimes it feels so alive.

[00:05:25]

It's not that funny.

[00:05:26]

Yes.

[00:05:27]

But sometimes it's chaotic

[00:05:29]

Later you will agree to laugh about that. But the reason I was asking about support groups and everything, I think it depends on the culture and how every family is. In our family for example, when my sister had her first baby and then the second one, we were all nearby, she needs to go to work. We were, please drop the baby here because we'll take care of them. I spoiled my nephew badly. I was beaches and everything. Birthday for every month until he was 1yo and then, all those kinds of things. My sister, her first daughter, Vanessa, the same. I think that gives to the kids a different dynamic as well when you have [OVERLAPPING] than when you live a big town, like when my sister moved to Sao Paulo, that's a huge town. She just stayed there for two years and then they all came back because she said, I can't, it's so much and only when they come back weekends, for example, when they are home, they just want to stay home and the kids wanted to go somewhere because they are home or at school a week long.

[00:06:37]

Well having that family backing and support is amazing. Especially when we talk about how expensive, it's such a financial issue. Just having a little bit of that support, I think, does make an enormous difference. I think about Elizabeth Warren tell stories about her aunt coming to live with her when she had two young kids and she felt like she was failing because she just couldn't manage to be a mother and an employee and do both roles 100%. Her aunt was like, I'll come help you honey and came and lived with her and took care of her kids. I think that's extraordinary when that can happen.

[00:07:20]

Once we're in this conversation about support and non-support lifestyle, how is dealing with the emergencies, in two different situation. For example, you are back to work. You have your kids, daycare and all that. Then you come to work. How is being at work and dealing with emergency at home or daycare. If you are at home and you would give that attention, how is dealing with the demands from work? Because I know the three of you, I know some of the work that you do relate with issues in general, the cries that comes, the requests for accommodation, accessibility to the DOS office, exam period, that's very tense. How do you manage the emergencies?

[00:08:07]

When you are at work, call from home, when you are home, call from work, or you have to bring work home.

[00:08:12]

I think with a home emergencies in those moments, those are priorities, at least for me. I'm fine saying I need to leave work and go and pick up Sophie or pickup Ethan and deal with what's a priority with me. My kids are our priority. That I'm okay with. I just think if it's a minor emergency, like somebody fell or cold or [inaudible 00:08:34] or fever, Audrey might pick them up if I need to be at work and if it's not a true emergency. I will say definitely balancing things at home with a demanding job is difficult. Certainly, I don't think Andre has the same, as excessive, career driven mentality that I have so something, I tend to work after five. He doesn't always understand that and I'm like, but this is actually an emergency, this something happened to a student, I need to do it and you need to take care of the kids. It's back to this thing about communication. I just need to be very direct and clear and that's the priority in that moment. Sometimes I think it's certainly causes some friction and I can probably also be a little bit better about setting work-home boundaries. As I said I tend to take things home. But it also, I really like work. It's my in my character and my my career is really important to me. And so sometimes that does cause me to not be fully present at home. I probably could do a better job of that so I'm trying to be like on weekends, like my weekends are my weekends and maybe not answer 50 emails over the weekend, maybe you could probably wait until Monday morning. But when there are emergencies, as you know working in the Dean of Students Office successfully, there are things that come up that have to be taken care of.

[00:10:04]

That's part of that

[00:10:05]

That's just part of the job.

[00:10:08]

You Sasha.

[00:10:10]

I agree with a lot of what Lakshmi said. I think we're never striking a perfect balance. We're always trying to make small adjustments to calibrate which priority we should be leaning into at which time. I think the fact is, when you talk about this rhetorical concept of can you have it all? It can never be at the same time. There's always a trade-off and there's always opportunity costs. But it's trying to determine what the main priorities are at any particular moment. Carolyn and I talk about this, and you know this. On our team, I think we have challenges with figuring out how to curve out the work boundaries. And being at home for a couple of years in the pandemic has made this even harder to make the boundaries clear. Because I think when we were in our home environment doing work all the time, and now that we've worked at home many days, it's very easy to make dinner and then go back and respond to some emails. My husband and I, we tried to intentionally be present for certain periods of time. I get very frustrated with him if he's standing in the kitchen on his phone when we're trying to make dinner or feed the kids or have dinner because I feel like we need to preserve that. The kids are looking to us as models. I've seen all these cartoon memes of kids trying to get their parent's attention sitting at a desk in front of a computer and the kid says, when are you done, then she says not now. I remember reading a book to my younger son during the pandemic. It was, Where is my mommy? I don't know if that's what it's called, but it's one of those Dr. Seuss type books. It's a little bird hatches and the mother has gone to get food, and so the bird goes through this adventure trying to find its mother. And so goes and asks the dog, are you my mother? And the crane, are you my mother? Then I kept saying where is my mother and my kid just looks at me and says, "Mama at work, mama at work." In a sense I didn't know what to make of that, I was sad, but at the same time, he wasn't bothered by it, he was just stating a fact. If she's not in the nest, you stupid bird go back in the nest and wait for her, she'll come back from work. So I thought this is just, it is what it is and he understands that. But as long as I am present with him, when I can be present with him and that's meaningful time. I think that's what I try to aim for, so that when I'm when I'm present with him, he knows he has my attention, but for both kids. But that they recognize, I'll say to them, this is a conversation I need to have or I need to respond to this and then I'll come down and I'll do the puzzle with you. Did you come up with your answer Carolyn?

[00:13:05]

Did you come up with an answer for this?

[00:13:10]

I think I've had to give up a lot of the type of worker I used to be, and that's been really hard for me. I could just work and it didn't impact anyone else really, and now it does. So if I'm at work and I have to leave because someone's sick and they have to come home from daycare. Then I feel like I'm letting work down. If I'm at home with the kids and something happens at work and I can't respond right away because maybe Rob's at work and not able to help me, then I feel like I'm letting work down. So that's been really hard. It's been a hard adjustment, I've worked with Lakshmi and now I work with Sasha so I think they both know that I want to do well and I want to give 100%. But when you have kids, you can't always. I'll try to get work done if the kids are home, and we have a very small apartment so my desk setup is in the dining room, and if they see me on the computer, it's like a magnet. They just come and they want to type in. Mason has almost sent some draft email. [LAUGHTER] If Rob's home, I'll go hide somewhere within the bedroom, but they're old enough now they know and there'll be banging on the door and trying to find the policy and the hap to say in this email and everything's just a little harder right now. I've had to come to terms with that. That as much as my career is important to me, my kids are the most important, so there are going to have to be times.

[00:14:54]

Does the flexible time from pandemic on changed everything helped somehow, because I know the four of us, Sasha came a little bit later, Lakshmi, Carolyn and I know each other longer. And you were there for those full weeks of work and then depends on the celebration, orientation, or commencement. You doing are more than a full week, and you know what take that work home. With the flexible schedule that allows you to enter work in remote, does it help somehow? I don't believe that based on your response, Carolyn, that this is something that is that that easy, you work from home everything is perfect. It is not. But somehow alleviate that the whole frustration or stress of being at work for five days a week and then have to do with everything else.

[00:15:50]

Sure. The days that I'm working from home and they're at daycare, I don't have to deal with traffic and rushing to get them daycares right down the street or I can finish work, start their dinner, have it ready when Rob brings them home, when he's picking them up from daycare. If I take a lunch break at home, I can do other stuff around the house that I wouldn't normally have to do if they were around. So there are definitely benefits to it

[00:16:16]

But there is a lot of misconception to, and I want Lakshmi and Sasha jumping in whenever you want because I am a witness here working with the three of you that I haven't talked to you much early in the morning. [LAUGHTER] [inaudible 00:16:31] 9-5 in. Sasha, I have talked to her and not her fault, my reaching out to her and asking you things very late night sometimes anyway, there see what we're doing [inaudible 00:16:44] here, trying to figure out these things for tomorrow or next week.

[00:16:48]

I never brought my laptop home before the pandemic.

[00:16:51]

There you go exactly.

[00:16:52]

And now it's just always there. So if I'm up at five with Mason, I'll check my emails then, and if something's easy enough to respond to, I'll respond to it. We've talked about this setting boundaries because we don't want everybody to think that we're ready [inaudible 00:17:06]. We are doing a lot of delay delivery through Outlook. That’s a tool that we put in use lately [OVERLAPPING].

[00:17:14]

Things I don't get to by five, I have to wait until 7: 30 when they're down and I'll be on the computer's till ten at night trying to catch up for. But Sasha had to teach me how to do delay delivery [LAUGHTER] setting limits is hard.

[00:17:29]

One thing that I want to go back to Sasha is, we talked about how to make this balance. I have witnessed you twice, at least, one at work when you were having a meeting and please know everything that was, I know you know me already. But we were talking and having a conversation in our meeting. I always asked just for two minutes of Sasha’s time. The people who don't get [OVERLAPPING].

[00:17:53]

Get an hour later, we're getting to number 2 of our agenda [LAUGHTER]

[00:17:56]

This measurement of the time [LAUGHTER].

[00:18:01]

It's like an outer planet [LAUGHTER] in the solar system just different units of time.

[00:18:04]

Yeah, so I used to have two minutes again is a specialist time that became two hours. Now I can have just a minute. Answer is offering, can you just have 30 seconds? Is there? But we were having a meeting in her office and we were talking about this suddenly she got a message from her nanny that was supposed to pick up her kids in daycare. Something happened, traffic or whatever happened, and she said, I won't be able to make it and Sasha had to leave because it was almost the time to leave work as well. Then Sasha said Edgar, I'm so sorry, I have to go. The reason that I was asking this balance in terms of the emergencies that happen, a lot of people don't see that and I think there's a lot of the policies or rules and whatever it is that we have at work, we never observe or you don't know, enough to judge too severely our coworkers in that nature. The main reason that I'm talking about mothers at work, it's really because of the level of accomplishment that you have to do in one side and the other. That it is your private life. Unrelated to our professional life but if you affect each other and you should be more mindful of this situation. If someone needs to leave, not always someone needs to justify it to everybody, hey, I have this emergency. Just understand and let go and eventually, you are going to figure it out or find out or be more mindful about that presence. That's what I want to know more about this balance and how you deal with that because that is also the judgment, you are guilty. Lakshmi brought something, when she said I should do better. I hear you saying and you express that, but the three of you saying, oh, I shouldn't do this, how much more you can do because I'm tired just listening to this conversation. [LAUGHTER] I don't have kids, I don't have a pet and I can just go home and enjoy the whole weekend and then I feel like oh my God, I deserve to be in then. [LAUGHTER] Just listen to your saying and it's still trying to blame herself for this.

[00:20:16]

Well, that's just the mother's trope is just always feeling in each environment I am not the best worker that I could be because I have so many other obligations that are in the back of my mind and then at home, I'm really not the best parent that I could or should be because there's all these work obligations that are mounting. I think for all of us because we work in the student services space and also Carolyn and I we're going to work with staff to some degree and you work with staff, when people have human-related emergencies, it's hard to say, well, I'm going to deal with this when I can, when I get to it and sometimes they really do need attention and they need somebody to direct them in the right place at that. Sometimes you have a moment that you have to seize in these interpersonal environments. But like you said, and work has to be done at work. We don't have the benefit of always being able to flex to everybody's personal obligations but you are right. Even if people don't have kids, they may have a relative that they're caring for, they may have a parent that is elderly and needs additional care. Everybody is balancing a lot and they bring that into the work environment. We all do a service to each other when we can recognize and appreciate that. But we all tend toward perfectionism, and so it's hard like what Carolyn expressed, she feels like she was a different worker in the past because she had more of her time to herself and now it's the joked that there was this meme early in the pandemic where it was Dolly Parton working 9:00-5:00, but instead it's 9:00-9:03, 9:05-9:08. [LAUGHTER] That's what it's like when you especially if she had Viv at home for a year. You do it in whatever small increments you have and we joke about how we both aim to get eight hours of work done in a four-hour period.

[00:22:19]

This is a perfect sagway for me for my next question because we are talking about not being perfect mother than not being perfect workers and everything else. This question goes, I have to tell you a little background story about this because I wanted to ask you your opinion about that as well. I read an article, I think 10 years ago. I am one of those people come from a family that discipline for kids and behavior and everything else that should be very, your kid don't go to other people's houses and mess around and open drawers and destroys everything. You have to control them. You have to give them some discipline. That was in my mind, that comes the unconscious bias all over in judging people and then this caught my mind because I was at Kohls. I love Kohls sometimes [inaudible 00:23:08] [LAUGHTER] so I was at Coles' and there was a mother and there are two kids and they were running around wild and I was like, Jesus, this mother cannot control this kid. Why did you bring them and all that feeling? Then I took a week after there was a nice, bright, bold Kohls’ mother and there was someone who was just judgy like me, who then became a mother and she sent a letter saying, I'm so sorry for being so judgmental for and then she goes to describe what a mother goes through with their kids that doesn't have. I'm here trying to choose something for me in the store. I don't have time. Let them be far away just for me to have this moment. Then she goes on and on. That stuck with me until now. How was your life before, how you perceive the mothers' behavior children of other people, and now how you see in yours, in your own? You still have that more or less my experience of being judgmental and then here, learn this or not.

[00:24:17]

Somewhat judgmental. I grew up with not very strict parents, but there were expectations and you don't misbehave, all that stuff. But working, I worked in a preschool with children who had autism and or behavioral challenges so I learned a little bit earlier than I probably would have otherwise that you don't always know what's going on, whether it's with the child or with the families. I've tried to be more open-minded. But now I fully get it and I'm the type of mother I never thought I would be. Screen time? Sure, if it buys me 10 minutes of quiet. Cookies? Great. M&M's? Have it.

[00:25:00]

Technology?

[00:25:01]

Yeah.

[00:25:02]

IPads, phones, and everything?

[00:25:03]

Anything for 5 minutes of quiet, I would give in and Rob is shocked. He's like, I'd never thought you but it's when you just crave peace and quiet. I have to work on it because I don't want them to turn into little monsters [LAUGHTER].

[00:25:22]

I don't know. I think more recently I've relaxed my expectations. I think early on I had this fairy tale idea of what being a parent would be. I was like I'm going to have my daughter. We're going to be like go into museums every day in New York [LAUGHTER] and I'm going to take her for long walks in Central Park and it's going to be ideal again. It was maybe like 2% of that, but the rest was challenging. I don't know if I'm judgmental, but I've had other people judge me. I remember one time in New York, Sophia was like four or five. We had to get somewhere really quickly if she wasn't feeling well and I think we had to go to the store to get some medicine. She was pretty tall and big and I put her in a stroller to go get her medicine and her feet were near the sidewalk. I was like, I don't care. She needs to get medicine. I'm in a rush and somebody walked by me and said, oh my God, I can't believe you have your daughter who is that big in a stroller. [LAUGHTER] I said something nasty to them. I'm not going to repeat what I said. I shouldn't have said something in front of my daughter but I was like, you don't know, just stop. Unfortunately, we don't eat dinner at the same time every day. We don't always eat together because we have very different schedules and Sophia has the band or basketball, and Ethan has soccer so my expectations have relaxed I think a lot more in terms of home in the past few years. But I'm not sure. I think the question was also about like.

[00:26:56]

You're right on there. I think that you cover it in a good way and I go back to your question to Sasha.

[00:27:02]

I've definitely relaxed my expectations. It's hard to be a perfect parent all the time, especially when you do have to go and do a job for a lot of the day and then when you're tired, you have to come home and do another job. I don't do a perfect job ever and I think that's fine. But yes, I've had those moments. One comes to mind when we were in the Dulles Airport, which is not a great place to be stuck with two small kids. I think we were flying to San Diego and we ended up our flight was severely delayed and so we were in Dallas. We had flown from Rochester to Dallas and we were there at the kids were like 3 and 1 at not great ages to travel and it was like during their nap time, we were stuck in the airport waiting for a plane and they were both ready to fall apart and so we went into one of the gift shops and then Ben insisted that he needed a flashy Rambo hat that said princess and then Sydney proceeded to take every single one of 7,000 key chains off the key chain rack on the floor while I was trying to negotiate with Ben about the hat. I was like, whatever I'm buying the hat and then I sat down on the floor trying to put the key chains back and must have looked like a complete wreck because some woman and her 13-year-old boy came by and she was like, why don't we help this woman put the key chains back and I felt so ridiculous. Then she made some comments. I've been living in France for many years, so I'm not familiar with American parenting. I felt very attacked in that moment. [LAUGHTER] I was just like you're not even directly insulting me, but I really feel the insults and she was very helpful and I was appreciative, but I just didn't know how to handle that situation other than to just walk out and buy the hat and then 5 minutes later Ben, we got to add them and he said, I don't want the hat anymore, [LAUGHTER] so then I had to go and return it. Then they both fell apart and started crying and one of them through a shoe at me while we were waiting. We both picked them up and put them in baby carriers because they could both fit in those at the time and they both fell asleep as we were waiting in line to board the plane and I was like, oh for God's sake. Of course, they napped while we were waiting in line and then woke up when we got on the plane. [LAUGHTER] They're not all experienced.

[00:29:10]

Then we have the lady going back to France and say, [OVERLAPPING] so he's American.

[00:29:12]

Then just say, well, look at this. This woman was a total mess in the airport. She couldn't control her kids. They were taking key chains. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:29:19]

This is how Americans are raising kids now [inaudible 00:29:22] [LAUGHTER]

[00:29:22]

I know. It was not my best moment, but it is what it is, it's just getting through it.

[00:29:30]

In the end, just to wrap up our conversation, mothers do not come or whatever we know about magazines and stories and everything, or you have a guideline, none of that work, is a very particular individual experience.

[00:29:49]

It's just foreign to us, I guess. It may exist just not here. [LAUGHTER]

[00:29:58]

[inaudible 00:29:58] I assume that might be a general situation. I can tell that in terms of my sister, was a very independent. Still is a strong woman with the hairpins. But my sister changed completely after the first child, and because we were close and we often have conversations, I asked her, "What happen to you?" Who are you here in this conversation? Then she came to tell me, and that stuck to me until this day and still thinking about it, when she said, "I was fearless, nothing bothered me. I could do whatever I wanted and I could fight." For sure that she had that mentality. She said, "As soon that I had my first child, my life completely turned and I start having fear that I will not be there for her, that I could not know eventually what would happen to her. I don t think about me anymore. I think about her the entire time." Is that the same with you, the same thing?

[00:31:03]

Yeah.

[00:31:03]

Yeah, for sure.

[00:31:05]

One thing just to add to this, Lakshmi, you mentioned just now that you've finally relaxed a little bit. I don't want to sound that's a wrong way for you, Carolyn, and for you, Sasha, because your kids are seven now.

[00:31:22]

Relaxation is in our future.

[00:31:24]

Exactly. How old is Sophia?

[00:31:27]

Sophia's 15 and Ethan's seven.

[00:31:29]

You finally came to relax a little bit, you have less than a word about certain things?

[00:31:34]

I think so, like screen time, whatever. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:31:41]

I do have to say. In the moments where I'm alone with the kids because Rob's working and it's hard, I give so much credit to parents who have to do this on their own.

[00:31:49]

Absolutely.

[00:31:51]

So much credit. It's really hard when you have a partner and I cannot imagine how hard it is when you don't have partner.

[00:32:00]

Without any support.

[00:32:03]

As much as I can complain, I am grateful to have a partner in this because it's hard work. Now, I have to ask another question. We are not going to end this conversation ever.

[00:32:14]

Okay.

[00:32:16]

We're talking about how difficult it is in all senses. Tell me how reward is because there is a feedback there. You don't do all this. I'm not trying to twist this, I just really want to know the moments or even when you are not with your kid, what is that feeling, because there is a rewarding feeling. Can you describe it or not?

[00:32:43]

I don't know. When I pick them up out of their cribs in the morning, it's just a little feeling. They love you. Regardless of if you make mistakes with them or if you lose your patients, they love you and they come to you and you're their safe place and it's beautiful.

[00:33:06]

Lakshmi.

[00:33:08]

I think same. My kids have very distinct individual personalities. Sophia's getting older and thinking about college and what she wants to do. It's rewarding, and I feel very thankful to be able to help her and Ethan to become good people and to hopefully be happy and well-adjusted and to reach their goals and their dreams. So to be a part of that, I think is really extraordinary.

[00:33:46]

Nice. Sasha.

[00:33:47]

I loved watching their curiosity develop and them turning into personalities that are separate from me. When you said we are thinking about them all the time and worry about what could be happening at all the time, and there's nothing worse than feeling there's a pain that you can't take away. Sydney is very interested in science and baking, and so he'll throw a bunch of ingredients together and put it in the microwave and makes soup literally, [LAUGHTER] and it's not bad. Or he'll throw a bunch of cherry tomatoes in a pot and stir it up with stock and make tomato soup. It is really cool seeing them become people. Or Ben, really get into karate or do drawing videos and come up with something, discover some new interest or ability that's totally separate from me. It's exciting. Kudos to all of you as coworkers. Another thing that comes to mind is, in a prior life, when I was working at a law firm, some of the advice that I got for coming back to work after having a baby is to basically never mention the baby unless anybody asked specifically. Because you don't want to be seen as the person who just talks about being a mom all the time and then put on that a track. It was striking, and I kept that in mind when I came back from maternity leave, especially with colleagues who didn't have kids because I didn't want to be seen as somebody who is a little bit less serious. But in this environment, I feel like we all are a little bit more successful if we bring our whole selves to work and recognize that there's more to us than just who we are in the office.

[00:35:35]

I think that's very important. I think this is a wrap.

[00:35:41]

Are you sure because I was going to go up?

[00:35:42]

Yeah. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:35:43]

Carolyn had another brilliant thought that you don't want to cut off.

[00:35:46]

Beautiful comment there. Thank you very much for your patience during this entire project. Come and sit with four hours here, even when you made a mistake to require two hours. [LAUGHTER]

[00:36:01]

Whose mistake?

[00:36:03]

I don't know. [LAUGHTER]

[00:36:05]

[OVERLAPPING] The gremlins in the recording studio.

[00:36:07]

Who pressed that Play button instead of Recording button there? [LAUGHTER]

[00:36:10]

Who would do that?

[00:36:11]

But thank you very much for coming, for talking about your personal lives, all the journey that you had before you had your children and after. I think this is a beautiful story and I hope people enjoy as much as I did talking to you, and for everything that you do here. I think you are fantastic people. I'm so happy to work with you. Thank you, Carolyn.

[00:36:36]

Thank you.

[00:36:37]

Thank you, Lakshmi.

[00:36:39]

Thank you, Edgar.

[00:36:39]

And thank you, Sasha.

[00:36:41]

Thank you. The feeling is mutual. Thank you for your interest in this topic in the first place.

[00:36:46]

Thank you very much. Now, for a brief outtake. [NOISE] Here is how it all started. You are still talking about siblant?

[00:37:01]

We're just going to recreate it exactly as we did before.

[00:37:04]

Word-by-word, what's happened? [LAUGHTER] Tell me, Carolyn, is that what's meant to happen?

[00:37:08]

Sibilant.

[00:37:10]

I have to split my mint out. [OVERLAPPING] [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:11]

Carolyn also wants to put on the record. She wants a raise.

[00:37:15]

We're still talking about Indian food and my raise.

[00:37:17]

Indian food. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:22]

Now it is recording.

[00:37:24]

It is recording?

[00:37:25]

Yes. Now we have to be [OVERLAPPING] in our best behavior. You took care of that chewing gum? Thank you.

[00:37:33]

I took care of it. Thank you.

[00:37:34]

By the way, your hair looks fabulous.

[00:37:37]

As always. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:39]

You just comb it with your fingers. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:43]

She is radio ready. [LAUGHTER] We've all got great faces for radio.

[00:37:49]

That's the cue. [NOISE]

[00:37:53]

Before I respond, I'm compelled to say it because it's like knowing the back of my mind. Are we definitely recording?

[00:37:58]

Yes.

[00:37:58]

We are. Hundred percent.

[00:38:00]

Now you bring that to me, pause. [LAUGHTER]

[00:38:04]

I'm sorry. I can't stand it. I know we are.

[00:38:08]

Now we are.

[00:38:08]

Now we've confirmed.

[00:38:09]

No, that's good. Thank you.

[00:38:10]

For our listeners, we had a mishap the first time we did this.

[00:38:14]

I'm going to cut this. [LAUGHTER]

[00:38:16]

That's going to be the outtake. I'm going to go right seamlessly into my comment about my life pre-kids and my life now, which are basically indistinguishable. [NOISE]

[00:38:32]

I think this is a good wrap up. I'm really happy with this conversation. I hope when we have our panel that I'm going to [inaudible 00:38:43] I'm going to knock on each departments. [LAUGHTER] Could you please come to this panel for this conversation because I really want to have more stories if people can come and relate to this.

[00:38:54]

I think it's important for people to hear. I've learned a lot about Carolyn and Sasha today, and I think we work in a very intense environment here and for folks to hear that there are other people who are experiencing the same things or talking about the work environment and how they can balance things. I think it's extraordinarily. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:39:20]

Awesome. [LAUGHTER]

[00:39:21]

Awesome.

[00:39:23]

For everybody listening out there, until our next topic, our special edition, see you soon, bye-bye. [APPLAUSE]

[00:39:58]

[MUSIC]