**Mom guilt and the juggle of motherhood**

**Intro**

Welcome to Sense by Meg Faure, the podcast that's brought to you by Parent Sense the App that takes guesswork out of parenting. If you are a new parent, then you are in good company. Your host, Meg Faure is a well-known OT infant specialist and the author of eight parenting books. Each week, we are going to spend time with new moms and dads just like you to chat about the week's wins, the challenges and the questions of the moment. Subscribe to the podcast, download the Parent Sense App and catch Meg here every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now meet your host.

**Meg:** Welcome back moms and dads. I'm Meg Faure occupational therapist with a very special interest in new babies right away from birth through until three or four years old. I have a real passion for helping parents to navigate all of those tricky parts; so, whether it's getting your baby to sleep through the night, or dealing with developmental delay or dealing with a really grumpy colicky little baby or just simply looking at feeding. And each of these areas are very big when they are part and parcel of your life and one of the challenges you are facing and so each week, I have a look at one of these areas. And as we are joined most weeks, we joined actually by Cassidy who is a first-time mum to Little Max. And Max is at this stage 25-week-old.

So, we've been tracking Max all the way from the get-go and if you missed those early episodes, please do go and check them out. We started right from the first week that he was born, we talked about him being in the neonatal and we've gone all the way through the journey with him, sometimes with sleep issues, sometimes sleeping really well, sometimes with feeding issues and then there's also the health and development that comes in as well. So, we really do cover off everything each week with Cassidy and Max. And what we try and do is we try and look at some of the highs and lows and as Cass brings them up, I start to kind of debunk them and demystify and just add a little bit of wisdom and I hope that you will find it as helpful as I think Cass does. So, Cass, it's always wonderful to have you, so special to have chartered the journey all the way through with Max and we almost halfway there through the first year because he's 25 weeks old.

**Cass:** I know, it's absolutely crazy; I was thinking about it because I remember when we first started doing this, I thought, wow, 52 weeks every week. Especially when, I was like, that's going to be a lot that seems so far away that we'll be doing the last one and then the other day I thought, my God, we're halfway through doing it. It's gone so quickly.

**Meg:** I know it's gone way too quickly and you know, Cass, when I was talking and thinking about everything we've been through, I mean he has gone through first of all some really serious neonatal issues initially we thought and then of obviously has had absolutely no repercussions from that, which is incredible. And then he's gone through sections where he would just not feed and he stopped gaining weight and in fact his weight started to drop and so, there was some concerns around that. He's also gone through stages where he wouldn't self so, and he was needing a huge amount of help to be able to settle to sleep. So, we've kind of been through the full gain, but so what is this week held for us?

**Cass:** I mean you; I think you've mentioned, as you were talking through all the things that you do, I was like, oh yeah, I need to talk about that, but very exciting moments this week. We mentioned a couple of weeks ago he was sitting for three seconds. He is now sitting.

**Meg:** Oh, that's amazing.

**Cass:** I was getting stuff ready and outside the other day and he was just sitting in the boots of the car kind of watching me and he's just properly sitting and we had a teddy picnic in the garden…

**Meg:** It's very precious. It's…

**Cass:** Yeah, it's really lovely.

**Meg:** Well, it's such an amazing milestone sitting and it's a milestone that parents hang on there for because they, it's really the milestone when little ones start to have a little bit of independence because you can plunk them down on the floor and they've got their hands free to be able to do what humans do, which is be dexterous and I think that's why it's such a shift. A couple of interesting things about shift, it classically happens at six months, so he was maybe a week or two early. What's interesting about it is that it is our most, other than smiling, it's the milestone that happens pretty much for most kids on exactly six months and it's really interesting because rolling is a very wide range. I mean you can roll anywhere from kind of three and a half months all the way through to six months for the first time.

Walking is incredibly variable. I mean it can start at nine months and go all the way through to 18 months and all of that is typical development, there's no delays there. Whereas with sitting, it really happens at six months and maybe a week or two before, maybe a week or two after and one of the reasons that it's so universal is that it's actually our easiest milestone. So, while it's the one that parents think, oh my goodness, I can't wait for this to happen and it's such a big thing like you know, frees you up but it's actually the easiest milestone and that's because it requires very little other than kind of a little bit of balance obviously in some protective reactions, but it doesn't require complex coordination of muscles. Whereas rolling and crawling in particular, but even walking, but those two in particular are hugely complicated and that's why they're so variable. So, he's done it, he's done it spot on and you're going to find that for the next three months you are going to have the best time because you can be hands free and he's not moving it. So, enjoy

**Cass:** Already trying, he’s already, when he is on his tummy, he goes into kind like a tepee shape because bum goes up in the air and he's sort of in this triangle. So, he's definitely, I mean, my husband and I were actually laughing this morning. We were saying it's every time it's like he masters one thing and then he's just like right, I'm now onto to do the next thing and he's getting really frustrated, but no, it is lovely. This morning I had him sitting on the floor and I put a calendar and some wooden spoons and he was sort of messing around and with the calendar and the wooden spoons and his eyes and things like that and just as you say allows him to do so many different things. So now I can give him different things that are more interesting for him because I don't want to buy new toys. But I can see he is getting a bit bored with toys he's had for a long time. So now that he can sit, it opens up a new world, so yeah.

**Meg:** It is a great milestone.

**Cass:** Yeah, now it is. And the other exciting thing, I mean he's a very busy time is his first tooth has come through.

**Meg:** So, you said to me last time that he was pretty much getting there. I think you could see it almost and now he's through. Did he go top or bottom?

**Cass:** He's gone bottom. His bottom right tooth is going through.

**Meg:** Excellent, so that's typically the way the little ones teeth actually, bottom teeth first, but you do get little ones who can do a top and sizer first, crazy things. But that's spot on. So, he's doing it by the textbook this week.

**Cass:** Yeah, they're really sharp. I got quite as sharp because…I mean we've been really lucky. He hasn't really affected his nights, but he, on the Sunday night he woke up at kind of 11:30 and was really upset, which was very unlike him. And I knew he'd been teething, so I gave him a bit of capol, he resettled and was fine and did his 2:30am feed and went through to the morning. And then I just sort of thought, I'll just see how those teeth are getting on and suddenly I felt it and I said to my husband, I was like, I think I've worked out why you woke up screaming at 11:30, this like saber tooth was coming through this. They're really sharp.

**Meg:** They are, and then they grind, they've down a little bit so they've become less sharp. But yes, you can actually understand why they do because a bit of discomfort and as we discussed last week, they can actually go off their food. So, if anybody missed last week, it was actually two weeks ago conversation around teething, go back and have a listen because we go through like how to know whether they're teething and what to expect.

**Cass:** Well and it's interesting you say that because actually the food thing, it's becoming a bit of a, and the only thing we've ever had with Max where he's been a little bit tricky is feeding where he's just, you know, I don't want to do that. And you mentioned in your introduction, how that can be quite a stressful thing and we have overcome it with the milk. Actually, in the last week he has been so hungry for his milk and he is now shoving the bottle into his own mouth and you can't get it in there quick enough and he's getting really as soon as he sees the bottle, my goodness; give it to me. He's crying when the bottle's over and he's getting about eight ounces. But if you try and put a spoon near his mouth, he nahnah’s and just going absolutely, nope, I'm not having. It doesn't seem to matter what it is. He is better if with self-feeding. So, he doesn't, he quite likes putting his own spoon but it's almost like when he realizes that there's food on that spoon, he then is sort of like, oh no, I'm not interested in that and he can spit it out. Sometimes there's a lot of drools that comes as soon as he has food in his mouth and it seems to anything that was in there quite often will dribble out. So, it's actually not been the most smooth, wonderful weaning journey that I was hoping for.

**Meg:** Yes, now there'll always be something that's in to challenge us. I think everybody has it differently. But let's just talk about this going or food now because there's kind of three little things that I want to think about. The first one is that sometimes if little ones, and I'm not saying that this is the case with him, but sometimes if little ones are having too much milk, they then actually go off solids and what happens after six months where he's moving towards, is he's actually going to go towards only four milk feeds in 24 hours. So, between around about six and a half, seven months he'll go into four milk feeds. So, he'll actually go off his milk kind of mid-morning or mid-afternoon and then he'll end up having an early morning waking either mid-morning or mid-afternoon and then evening and then that one extra feed in the middle of the night.

So, the problem is that if he has more than that, so if he's having more than his kind of five full bottles, which is what he's having now or has very full five full bottles, he actually won't have the appetite for solid. So that's the first thing is that we sometimes, because they're not eating solids well, we start to offer a little bit more milk, but then actually that then takes away the appetite for the solids and so we get into the social cycle. So, it's not happening for him yet, I don't think, but it's just something to keep in mind that you don't want that reliance on milk to come through.

The second thing that happens at a round about this age is that they start to really choose to eat according to their sensory personality and he's a settled baby and a social butterfly and that means you do need to up the flavor now and the variety and the color and the texture. So, our social butterflies prefer interesting things, they don't like the mundane, they don't like the same. So if he had started on let's say zucchini, that becomes boring. So now we have to flavor it up, we need to put some herbs and spices with it, we need to put some cheese sauce with it, we need to make it more interesting. And that's one of the things that we do in the Weaning Sense book and even in the app as well, is we look at really more flavorful foods.

So, my second piece of advice would be to actually be a little bit more experimental with his flavors now. So literally if you and Alex are having lasagna for dinner, you can actually literally take that lasagna as it is as long as you haven't salted it. The only exception is salt, so try not to salt your adult food now and salt it when it's on your plate, but as long as you haven't salted it, you can actually take that lasagna with its complex flavors, its white sauce, its argon, whatever it is, the stronger flavors and actually put it through a milli, or through with a stick blend or whatever it is, and you can offer that to him. And I think you should try that because at this age he should be on all allergens. He shouldn't still be requiring new allergens. So, he should have had egg, fish and nuts because that's allergy preventing. So, we do want him to have those and if he hasn't you need to move on it before six months and then start to try him on that.

So that's the second thing I would recommend. So, watch the milk, increase the flavor and then the third one you've hit the nail on the head, which is many babies skip the mushed food stage and go straight to self-feeding. So those babies do great on purees right in the beginning and then when you start to move them onto more textured purine onto more of a mush, they actually don't like it and they actually want to then start to self-feed and that's where the two bowl approach comes in, which I can share with you if that's something that you, he's moving onto finger foods.

**Cass:** Yeah, so interestingly on the second one with varying it, I mean he has very rarely ever had exactly the same every single…, I think maybe had each flavor combo once or twice. I've got all sorts of different vegetables in the freezer and I mix up the combinations. I've also, he's had mint p and salmon, which is a recipe from the app or he's had chicken and green…, he's had all sorts of lovely things. His porridges in the morning, I didn't even know you could do the things I'm now creating with it.

**Meg:** Brilliant, give us an example.

**Cass:** This morning he had very exotic coconut and banana porridge. He's had pear and coconut. He's had…My goodness, what else has he had? He's had a combination of oats. He's had sometimes he had rice porridge. I mean I have tried all sorts of different combos.

**Meg:** And how does he do on that porridge because he’s having his milk very late.

**Cass:** Actually, this has also changed. We've had our first and it didn't happen, I mean it's happened one night and then the next night it didn't happen, but we had a night where Max didn't need a feed at all in the night.

Mag: Wow, that's amazing.

**Cass:** We woke up at around half 11, quarter to 12 and was a bit so restless and I gave him a little bit of a cuddle and his teeth, he sort of was really stuck in his hands. I gave him some CALPOL, he fell asleep again very quickly and that was it. We didn't hear from him again until 6:15. So I never did the feed, I barely slept, because I kept waking up and I am like any minute now he's going to need a feed.

**Meg:** So true.

**Cass:** So, but I was also so excited, I was like, wow, but I also knew that that was going to be a one off. But of course, what that meant was in the morning he was hungry, he was ready for his feed first thing. So that was really interesting because he did a 6:30 feed and then I gave him, went to go and give him his porridge at about quarter past 7 in time for him to have that and then go down a little bit later about 8o'clock for his sleep. It didn't seem to make any difference.

**Meg:** To how he ate the porridge.

**Cass:** Yeah, and I had bits of pear, he sort of put them in his mouth and then just threw them off the edge of the high chair and he was interested by them but not as food more as a, what is this thing?

**Meg:** Spare mutation.

**Cass:** Yeah, as I mentioned with the spoon, he's just, as soon as the spoon comes anywhere near, he's not so keen unless it's got teething granules on it, then he cannot…I don’t know what…It's a white powder that he can't get enough of, it's very concerning. I don’t know what actually teething granules are, but he can't, he's sucking on the spoon, he's trying to get as much of it off. That is the only thing. This morning he did open his mouth and take two spoon fills of porridge, which was huge and I was overjoyed but that's kind of, that's a really exciting moment for us.

**Interlude**

 This episode is brought to us by Parent Sense, the all in one baby and parenting app that helped you make the most of your baby's first year. Don't you wish someone would just tell you everything you need to know about caring for your baby, when to feed them, how to wean them and why they won't sleep? Parent Sense app is like having a baby expert on your phone guiding you to parent with confidence, get a flexible routine, daily tips and advice personalized for you and your little one download parent Sense App now from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting.

**Meg:** So, I think, look I mean a couple of things I think take the pressure off you and him. If he only has two spoonsful leave it, remember that until six months milk is the priority. So, we don't want to cut back on milk and he's having the right amount of milk so keep going with that. He's also not losing weight, which is always important. He's a well-covered little boy in the 70th percentile, so he's doing well in that respect. So yeah, I mean I would just offer him a little bit more variety, little bit different flavors and always offered the two-bowl approach. So, the two-bowl approach I usually start when they're about six and a half months, so he's a little early on this one, but it can work and it certainly it's follows the kind of baby lead weaning philosophy. So what you do there is you give him whole steamed food of whatever you've got. I know you mentioned just now you give him pear, I presume that's not hard pair, that's esteemed pair, is that correct?

**Cass:** Yeah, and also like the other day we were having a roast and he had a bit of broccoli that he was sucking on.

**Meg:** That's perfect. So, the only things you don't want to give him are whole nuts obviously and then any of your fruits like pear and apple that are hard, you really want to be careful of those rather great those, so those need to be grinded so that they're smaller but I would start giving him his own bowl and a nice idea is to actually replicate what's in the other bowl. So, for instance, if you are feeding him, and I know that you've cooked up a whole lot of meals already, so I would suggest and because you've got all those ice cubes, keep those for your bowl and then give him whatever you and Alex are going to have. So yeah, that steam broccoli is a great idea and then put a little bowl of hummus next to it that he can actually dip the broccoli in the hummus and just let the hummus off instead of having to eat the whole broccoli.

So allowing him to experiment a little bit more and being a little bit more less pressurized around meal times is a good idea because he is well covered, you don't need to worry and he's sleeping well as well. What you'll probably find with Max is that he will need to drop to four feeds in a day before his appetite comes up again and that could happen between six and a half and seven and a half months that he'll actually drop a feed altogether and usually it's one of the day feeds. So, what'll typically happen next is he'll go 6:30 or his case I know 7:30 or 8 for his morning, misses his morning bottle altogether and have a snack at that time and then have an afternoon bottle at two because he'll become fussy on those bottles, he just won't want them and then the evening bottle and then the one in the morning will move till like three o'clock or four o'clock and that's what you can then expect for a couple of weeks and then we'll move out that early morning feed altogether with some water if it needs be.

**Cass:** Okay because he'll be having breakfast instead ….

**Meg:** Yeah, and remember everything swings then because if he wakes up and has it bottle at three in the morning, you're not going to wake until 7:30 for that milk because the priorities is solids and so what will change then is that you'll offer him some milk when he wakes up at six, but if he rejects it, you'll actually give him the solids in place and so that's how milk just very naturally starts to decrease until by the time he's a year, which is only six months away, he'll be having only 300 meals of milk in a day altogether. It's a lot less, it's about less than half of what he's having now.

**Cass:** Okay. Yeah, because I mean I have been looking forward to weaning for such a long time and it's just, Yeah, he just doesn't, it's like he's not interested in it. And I read about social bus flies, changed the environment. So, I've tried him outside, I've tried, but then he's just too distracted. Today he had his lunch in a wig wham in a local manor house garden that his nanny has taken him to and you know, he was very distracted so he wasn't, he didn't do so well, but he had a little bit, what he does love and is a great thing for teething is one of the, I stick a frozen berry into one of those teething, sorts of sucky things. He sucks on his straw frozen strawberry or something like that and he absolutely loves that.

**Meg:** Okay, excellent. So just with that, that would constitute a snack because it's got fruit juice in it, so just limit how, because if you're having too many of those that can also run the appetite. So, make sure that those are happening in mid-morning, midafternoon or after a meal so that they're having as well…[inaudible20:38]

**Cass:** Yeah. They're like his put, he's allowed one a day for pudding at lunch.

**Meg:** Oh, that's excellent. Good. So, Cass, one other thing I wanted to ask you about is how's it been for you? Because I mean, that transition to motherhood and you have seemingly taken it in your stride, although I think for many moms what goes on behind closed doors is not what everybody sees and hears. I certainly for one, found the transition to motherhood really, really, especially with my first born really tough. It was like I just wanted to do everything right and James did things differently and it stressed me a lot. I don’t know, have you had moments where you've kind of gone through periods of a little bit of stress and so on.

**Cass:** Yeah, definitely and actually a really interesting article came out the other day from somebody who's a mom and she had basically written exactly what I had been thinking. There had been a moment I'd gone around to my mum's the other day and I just said, I found myself just saying to her, I just don’t know if I actually am a good mom. I don’t know if I am cut out to be a mum and just because all my life I've wanted to be a mum and when I was a little girl and growing up, I have known that I've always had this wonder of how am I going to do the career thing because I've also wanted to have my own business and do that side of things, but I've always wanted to be a mom and I think it's been quite a shock to me how it hasn't necessarily come as naturally as I thought it would. When he is crying or fussing, especially with the feeding or when we've had struggles around feeding, I found that really difficult and I've just thought, I think there are people who deal with this better.

I'm not dealing with this very well. I can deal with a high stress situation in a business world but put me here and I'm not coping with it and every morning I wake up and I say to myself, I am not going to have any wine today and then it gets to about 4:30 and I'm like, oh, I can't wait. Can I wait until this evening? I just have that glass of wine and I said to my mom, I just don’t know if that's how it should be and it's really, it's so much harder than I think I ever anticipated and the days that I am out working are much easier days than the days I am being a mom for the full day. And you know, I think you could say that till you're blue in the face, until you're experiencing it and understanding there is no harder job. I don't think.

**Meg:** Yeah, I'm a 100% with you and, and found it exactly the same. I think that in some ways, look, I mean, I know that when you're a career mum, well a career woman as well as a working mum, the juggler is different and the juggle is hard and the guilt is there. So, there's a combination of other factors that you don't have the full capacity to deal with sleep deprivation because you are going to get up and work. You might have more frustrations in some respects, but at the same time that having that respite of actually being away from them is actually, it's important and we kind of cling onto it and that doesn't make us bad or good moms, it just is the way that it is.

I think one of the things that you said, which really stuck with me is that you always wanted to do it really well and I mean, I know that I'm a bit of an A-type personality and I really wanted to do my mothering perfectly because this was my new role in life, and actually what's quite interesting is that there's very good research that shows that when you do things so-called perfectly, in other words, everything goes according to plan. It's not really good for little ones and little ones actually are supposed to have moms who are simply good enough, not perfect. And there's this phrase that is the good enough mother and the good enough matters actually can fail up to 75% of the time and if you just get a drag 25% of the time and kind of repair, they call about repairing frustrations or repairing, it actually is absolutely fine for little ones. So, a suppose part of it is giving ourselves a break and recognizing that it's just being good enough.

But there is another part that is just, yeah, I mean there were other aspects that I found that was like the loneliness and the drudgery. Like there's nobody who tells you you're doing really well and you changing nappies and making food and you're tired and then they don't want where you've put them or it's just unrelenting and it's lonely and I can remember very clearly Philip arriving home from work late one Friday evening and I used to hang my hat on the fact that he'd be home at five and he walked in late and by that point I'd already put James to bed and I was so angry with him that I hit him, I mean I don't do that but I was so angry I just hit my hands against him and I said just leave, just go, like, if you don't want to be involved, don't be involved and it was just me feeling completely spent and at the end of my tither because I've done it for the whole day and I’ve had no help and no support on those days.

**Cass:** Yeah, and I mean, it's interesting, there are a few things; One, going to work is so easy to do actually, and when you've got a really long to-do list, which everybody has, when you've got the time to go and sit at a desk and make your way through that to-do list, it's one thing. But when every time you try and get to do one thing on the list, your baby is crying or wakes up or isn't going down as easily as you hoped you would or something like that, that's really challenging and it's fine if you do one or two days, but when you're having to do that day in, day out that's quite tricky.

But the other thing is going to work is you get to revisit your old self and I think there's a huge, in fact my physio said to me that there's a grieving period when you become a mum that no one talks about and you're actually grieving yourself before you had a baby because that person's gone and that's not a bad thing, it's not a good thing, It's gone and they are not coming back because you are now are a mom and that does require changes in your life. You can't just go to the shop when you want to go to the shop. You can't go and sit with your friends and have a bottle of wine and not have to worry about anything. Even if it's, I'm going to wake up with a headache tomorrow at 6:00am or whatever. I think that has been really hard for me on a very shallow level, on a physical level, but also on a mental level as well, that I really underestimated that grieving period and I really miss that person and that life. I would never want to go back there because that would mean I didn't have Max.

**Meg:** There is a lot there.

**Cass:** And there is a guilt that you feel around that, you mentioned guilt. I think somebody asked me when I was in London, are you just loving it? Are you loving being a mom? And I sat there for a while and I thought, no, I love Max. I love Max more than anything and I would never, ever not want to be Max's mom, but I don't think I can actually honestly say that I love being a mum and I really thought I would love being a mum.

**Meg:** Yeah, and you know, that's a huge thing that you're saying because I think it's almost like forbidden ground. I think probably every mum who is listening is feeling exactly the same way that you know, that you mourn that loss of who you were, you mourn your marriage. I mean, that pressure that comes into your marriage when you have children is just, nobody prepares you for that. You know, how many nappies did you change today? Well, it's your turn to get up now. I did the last and you fight over stupid things and when he wants to go and play golf, it's like, what? Like, when do I get to do something like that? You know? So yes, I think people don't admit it and I think what you're talking about is absolutely real and I think for some moms even there's a further resentment for against the child as well and there can be that ambivalence, which also doesn't make you a bad mom. It just is real, it’s really, really hard and nobody talks about it.

**Cass:** No, and I think that's the thing, is then, because nobody talks about it, you think it's just you, one of the things I was saying to someone the other day, people would listen to this podcast and they'd think, God, everything's just going so fantastically for her and she know it all, it seems so easy and wonderful and she's also happy on the podcast and that sort of thing and you don't really talk about the stuff that comes with it and I really do. I think any mom that anybody looks at who thinks, oh, they're loving it and they're having the best time and it's all wonderful, that mum's probably hiding a lot more than a mum who's being a bit sober, it’s been a bit of a tough day today.

**Interlude**

If you enjoy my podcast, I would like to share one of my favorite podcasts with you, The Honest Hour. Christina Masureik is mom to two boys and a third little boy on the way. She's an American expert living in Cape Town, South Africa since 2008 and decided to start sharing her experiences in parenting since 2017, having grown up in a dysfunctional family environment in her own childhood, which led to her adoption at the age of 10. Christina is passionate about finding purpose and presence in parenting as well as exploring our own opportunity for healing and personal growth as we navigate the world of parenting our own children. Christina believes in ending the trauma cycle and that in parenting our own children we can learn how to re-parent ourselves. So, pop on over to Christina's podcast, The Honest Hour.

**Meg:** That whole being a brown vulnerability talker actually speaks to this as well and you know, I'll never forget when James was a baby, there was a very well-known pediatrician in Cape Town and people who live in South Africa will probably remember this is going back 20 years who committed suicide and she very carefully planned and plotted exactly how it would happen. Her baby was the same age as mine and she asked her husband to take the baby out and go and get them a coffee in the morning, Saturday morning and she shot herself and people could not believe it. I mean, she had everything, she had the lifestyle, she had the husband, she had the career, she had the new baby and I think it was such a shock because I think that sometimes the people who've got the most perfect veneer are the people that are cracking the hardest underneath and that goes for, I mean I was certainly like that as well. I think a lot of moms thought that I had it all waxed, but inside it was hard, you know? And I think mums nowadays, thankfully and I do think 20 years ago people really didn't talk about this, but nowadays people can go on social media and say, listen, it's not all pretty. It's sometimes really, really tough. But it is a conversation that people need to have.

**Cass:** Yeah, definitely and I think, you know, I'm really lucky. I have a very easy baby and the grand, I mean, no baby's easy, but he's a very good baby. I have a lot of help. My parents are right here and I have a nanny two days a week and I have a very wonderful partner and all, you know, Alex is amazing and I find it a challenge. So, I can't even imagine what it must be like for so many people who, it's just them day in, day out, there's no support, they don't have their family nearby. I know people who have that and I have the utmost respect and love for those people because I think there's this challenge that… and because everybody, every mum in the world has been through it, you sort of think, well I can't, there's so many people doing this in much worse circumstances, but it doesn't change the fact that your emotions are real and they're valid and it's really, really tough.

**Meg:** Yeah, and I think the message in it is, you've got to create safe space for people to be able to have these conversations and if you never show your vulnerability, nobody else will either. So, it's almost like taking your kind of, a call in the sisterhood of motherhood, your group or your clan and actually being vulnerable because it takes one of you to say guys I'm not coping this week, or I'm teary before bath time every night, or I'm angry at my husband half the time and I can't even articulate why, it takes one person to say that. Or like sex is really a mission, like to think about having sex again, even six months after the baby's born, I'd rather get some sleep actually. So when you start to have these like really candid conversations in a closed room with close friends, you'll find that everybody else comes up and goes, Yep, that's exactly how I'm feeling too.

**Cass:** I heard a story about a couple who apparently, I think they had three kids and they've both gone back to work and they used to just book a hotel room at lunchtime because the idea of having sex anyway was just not a joke.

**Meg:** Exactly, look it is, and I think it's important to be real. I think it is that vulnerability, number one, and then the second thing I was going to say is, and it doesn't happen very much anymore, or at least I don't see it, is mom shaming and I think we went through a patch of the world in just after the early naughties kind of nearly 20 years ago where mums would slam each other and luckily I don't see much of that. Do you see much of that on social media or is it more gentle now?

**Cass:** No, I definitely don't see on social media any mum shaming. What I do see, and I have to really remind myself, is the picture perfect on social media and people only post, and as I said earlier, there's this whole mental side, but there is a real physical thing as well. I always really enjoyed my exercise and that's the thing, and I'm getting back into it now, but I see moms posting pictures and their figure, it looks like they've never had a baby and I'm like, how? But then I think, I've got to remember there are filters. There are things people can, you can't trust what you're necessarily seeing on social media; whether it's mental, physical, the perfect baby, there's no such thing

**Meg:** No, it's not, it's all gritty and anybody who tells you any differently is covering it up. It is gritty.

**Cass:** Yeah. So, I think it's no mum shaming, but possibly shaming yourself because you think you're not doing as good a job as what you are saying on social media, which is not the case.

**Meg:** Exactly, very interesting. Well, Cass, thank you for sharing and sharing so candidly, I think you're in good company and yeah, and was just lovely to hear all about all the exciting things this week as well.

**Cass:** Yeah, looking forward to updating you with, I mean, it seems like every week there's just something major happening.

**Meg:** I don’t know, I mean, you wouldn't be able to think that every week there would be like such big changes, but I guess what's going to be fabulous is to be able to look back and listen to these podcasts and actually track his life, which is amazing.

**Cass:** Yeah, I love it already and when I listen back to them I'm like, oh my gosh, I'd forgotten about

**Meg:** No, it's incredible journaling. It's wonderful. Well, thank you for sharing with us Cass and doing it so freely. All right chat soon.

**Cass:** Bye.

**Outro**

Thanks to everyone who joined us. We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download Parent Sense App and take the guesswork out of parenting.