Episode 85

Meg: Welcome back moms and dads. I am Meg and this is Sense by Meg Faure and I am super excited to welcome you back here today. As on the podcast each week we have a variety of topics that we deal with. And sometimes [00:01:00] I have an expert who comes on and who talks to me about some aspect of parenting that she's studied, or maybe she's done her 10, 000 hours in.

Meg: And then sometimes I have a mom, a fellow mom who comes in and she tells me about her experience and her 10, 000 hours of being a mom. And today is just such a day. I am super, super excited to welcome somebody who I have been wanting to speak to for a very long period of time. She is a social media influencer in South Africa.

Meg: Her name is Destiny and she is the mom of the most gorgeous little one, Alu. And so I want to welcome you here today, Destiny.

Destiny: Thank you Meg. I'm so glad I'm here. Finally.

Meg: We have, we have been trying to get this together for a very long time.

Destiny: I know.

Destiny: I mean,

Meg: one of the,

Destiny: a mom, a businesswoman as you are, it's a whole lot.

Meg: yeah, just trying to coordinate our diaries was a little bit of a drama, but I'm so glad we finally got it together. So before we even get started, I have to know what does Alu is it a full name? Is that, is that, or is there a full name to that?

Destiny: [00:02:00] Yeah. So Alu is short for Alunamta. Her grandma named her, it means it has no limits as in God's love has no limits.

Meg: Oh, my word.

Destiny: I will, I was one of those, I will name my own baby and I would look all over for good names, but my mom was just like, Alunamta. And I was like, okay, okay, fine. Alunamta.

Destiny: Oh,

Meg: has no limits. I've often spoken about there's certain cultures in the world that really do believe that there are no limits. And one of them is the American culture. I mean, you can maybe not always love the American culture, but children in that country are brought up to believe that they are.

Meg: They have no limits that they, that the sky is the limit and possibly actually not even the sky space is the limit. And when you see what they do as a nation and the boundaries that they break, it always makes me really have a lot of respect. So the fact that you've called your child have no limits. I just absolutely love that.

Destiny: I love it too. I [00:03:00] couldn't have named her better.

Meg: Yeah. And now tell us a little bit about her and tell us about your motherhood journey. How old is she? How has it been for you and kind of what have you found to be the challenges along the way?

Destiny: Oh my gosh. First of all, I have officially have a toddler. She just turned 12 months last week, a few days ago, actually. So, yes. Yay. Yay. But also I'm sad about It's like a mixed emotions type of thing. Because it's one of those things that I've looked forward to from the first month, like, oh, can't wait to celebrate her first birthday.

Destiny: I wonder what she'll be like. I wonder what she'd be able to do, all the milestones you're going to do. So now that we here, I'm just like, That went by so fast. How are we here already? It's like, so overwhelming in a sense.

Meg: Yeah,

Meg: no, absolutely. And we do, we kind of rush towards these milestones and we think, oh, we've got to get there. And it's going to be such a fabulous milestone when they get there. And then there's a piece of us that goes, hold on, slow down. Like, like this year has just gone too fast.

Destiny: it's gone by so fast. I'm saying like, I really don't [00:04:00] think I can look at a year the same way anymore just after having a baby because when you have a baby, a year goes by so fast.

Meg: Yeah,

Meg: no, it really does.

Destiny: I remember in the beginning, it was so tough. You know how the newborn stage is? It's so consuming. It's so tiring that I was like, Oh my gosh, I can't wait to get over this.

Destiny: And it feels like I'm stuck in here forever. But now that I'm past that, I kind of forgot what it was like. It's, I don't know if this is it nature? Is it part of nature that

Meg: To help us to procreate again.

Destiny: I think so. It's a trick. It's a trick. And I've fallen for it. Watching her grow has been wonderful. It's been a wonderful, wonderful experience of all the sleepless nights, the breastfeeding that no one warned me about. All these challenges have been so worth it now that, know, she's growing into a real human being, with their own thoughts.

Meg: Yeah. For sure. So, so destiny, maybe that's a good place to start. I'd love to know, like, if you look back to the first, let's call it the first three months of [00:05:00] her life. What was the one thing that stands out for you as being the biggest challenge? The thing that nobody told you about and that you wish that somebody had told you about, like just one thing that, you found to be, almost that straw that broke the camel's back.

Meg: That was so hard.

Destiny: You know what? I wish somebody had sat me down and gave me a whole lecture about breastfeeding. That's if I were to choose one, because there's also the sleep deprivation that, we were all told about, and we can't all kind of have an idea of, but the breastfeeding. Oh my goodness, I had no idea what I was walking into because I was told that, okay, you have a baby.

Destiny: Are you going to breastfeed? I was given the baby at the hospital, breastfeed and I was like, okay, how, where do I start? Where does the nipple

go? Where's the baby go? How do I hold her? It was so many questions that I had, but not only that, but the hospital, the fact that.

Destiny: Milk supply is something you have to stimulate. I didn't know about that. Nobody told me about that. The [00:06:00] pumping supplies themselves, the products you need to use to pump. All these things I had to learn on the go and it was a little more stressful than it should have been, I think, because if somebody had just told me about it, I would have been better equipped to, to go forth.

Meg: Yeah. So I think, I mean, I love that you've brought that up. I mean, Destiny, my breastfeeding journey sounds like it was similar to yours. I was told breastfeed four hourly from the day your baby's born. And of course that just meant my milk didn't come in. I had cracked nipples. My milk was supply was always low.

Meg: My, my baby really didn't gain weight very well on breast milk. I did manage to breastfeed him for six months, but it was a challenge for me. It was really hard. And I think for those moms that are listening, who are really fascinated by this, particularly if you're pregnant or if you're new in the first three months, you probably are wanting to know a couple of tips.

Meg: And so I'm going to share a couple of tips that I wish that I had been told ahead of it. so The first thing is that, and you've kind of alluded to it, Destiny, is that breastfeeding doesn't necessarily come naturally. And we all have this idea that if it is [00:07:00] natural, it will come naturally, but actually.

Meg: It doesn't happen that way. And, I think what also happens in our modern age is that we brought up in nuclear families. Our mothers don't necessarily breastfeed in front of us because they only have maybe two or three children. So we don't actually see generational nurturings, where you've got an aunt, breastfeeding a baby in front of you all the time.

Meg: It's not happening. So it doesn't come naturally anymore. That's the first thing that moms must know. The second thing is that. You do need to stimulate your milk supply for it to come in. And the best way to stimulate it. Number one is to have your baby breastfeed frequently. It's just by breastfeeding.

Meg: And so the more you breastfeed, the more your body will actually produce breast milk. And that's a big thing that people don't actually realize. And then the third thing, which you alluded to is the pumping part and pumping

wasn't done in the past and so people could say, well, that that's not necessary, but actually pumping is a really great hack.

Meg: It's a modern hack that we can use to fool our boobs into believing they need to produce a bit more. So I always recommend to moms within a few weeks to actually start pumping off the end of every [00:08:00] breastfeed, because it tells your body. This is a super hungry baby. I've got to produce a little bit extra.

Meg: And so they produce a little bit more, each day over the next few weeks. And then also you've got that breastmilk milk that you can then store away that you can actually put in the freezer or the fridge so that when you're out or when you want to have a top up

Destiny: Oh, you take a nap. Mm.

Meg: Exactly. Yeah. So those are three things that I think people really do need to know. The fourth thing they probably need to know is that the latch is everything. The baby has to take in the whole of the nipple. So not just the part of the nipple that kind of sticks out the areola, which is around it, which is against actually on your breast tissue.

Meg: They have to take in that whole thing in their mouths in order to actually get a really strong, good latch to be able to milk those ducts properly. So, those are a couple of. Of tips for tips. And then the last thing I would say about it you, I see you've got another one. So people can't see your body language, but I want to hear what your one is.

Destiny: I think the most important one for me was not to stress about it. The less

Destiny: [00:09:00] about breastfeeding and your milk supply, the better your brain can relax and kind of do its job. Your body will do its job naturally. Because when you stress about it, it's just delaying your progress.

Meg: And you know what, Destiny? I literally just a few months ago actually recorded a session with Linda Brits. I don't know if you know her. She's a lactation consultant in Gauteng in Joburg. Are you in Joburg?

Destiny: Yes, I

Meg: Yeah. So Linda Brits is up there. She's just phenomenal. And she said to me, one of the keys are to be confident with breastfeeding.

Meg: Like, you know that you can do it. And that's what you're talking about is like, just don't stress, trust your body and know that you have got the superpower inside of you to do it.

Destiny: Yeah, Definitely. Definitely.

Meg: Thats five tips moms. And then I'm going to add in a sixth one, which I think is the thing that saved my bacon.

Meg: And that was to get a lactation consultant. Did you have a lactation consultant destiny?

Destiny: I didn't go for the consultation itself. This was when I was buying what are really called the products for pumping that I spoke to a professional consultant and she was the [00:10:00] one who taught me about all the parts that you use, the adapter you need in for your nipple size, know, all these things.

Destiny: And I was like, There's a whole world of breastfeeding that I didn't even know I had access to, which obviously now opened a whole possibility of me just knowing that I can do this and I have the support I need to do it. So yeah. And as a consultant is definitely up there with. The services you can get if you have access to

Meg: Okay. So, so I'm going to just quickly go back there. I am talking about like lactation consultant who helps you to breastfeed, but you're talking about like a consultant who helps you with the, with the goods, with the, with the stuff you need. And I want to come back to what you just said, cause it's super important, but I just quickly want to let moms know that a lactation consultant to somebody who can also just help you know how to latch, how frequently to feed.

Meg: And Linda Brits as an example is just such a person, there are lots of them, so look them up. But I want to come back around to what you were just speaking about, Destiny, because I think that this is super helpful for other moms. If you. When you think about [00:11:00] your breastfeeding journey and the paraphernalia that comes along with parenting a new baby, if you look at breastfeeding specifically, what were the things that if a mom was going out to shop that you think are really important things that you had and that you would recommend she got?

Destiny: you know what I didn't think it was important at first. It's a good breastfeeding bra. I overlooked for the first couple of months. I actually didn't even think about it. I overlooked it. I was like, you know what? Save my money. I don't need this. Until, a brand reached out to me and wanted to work with me with a breastfeeding like bra.

Destiny: And I was like, well, okay, let me give it a try. And it was actually a game changer because I was not only comfortable with taking off my shirt in public if I needed to, but also the support that I needed when I would hold a baby with one hand and express my breast with one hand. It came in really handy.

Destiny: So a good bra.

Meg: And did you try various different bras or did you just have this one brand that you settle on right?

Destiny: First I tried, know, the low end, [00:12:00] just the normal ones you'd find at the regular store

Meg: So what was the brand? Do you mind saying what the brand was that you found that was so

Meg: fabulous?

Destiny: The brand is the momenta bras.

Meg: Momanda.

Destiny: Momanda, they are a brand that I've actually worked with in the past. They're the ones who reached out to me and I didn't even know about them using

Meg: No, I've heard of them. That

Meg: sounds

Destiny: me neither.

Destiny: One thing about them is that they look sexy and I didn't know I could say sexy and maternity bra in the same sentence, but they look good and they provide the extra support. So those were amazing.

Meg: Absolutely. Well, that's an important thing. So what else did you use for breastfeeding gadget wise?

Destiny: A Juha wearable pump. Yes.

Meg: Oh, the wearable pumps. Oh my goodness. Not destiny. I, when, when I had my kids that did not exist. Okay. And I just a couple of weeks ago, Cassidy, who was on with me over many months, we followed her first baby max. She's just had a new baby and she's expressing for him for little Zach.

Meg: And I went to go visit her and there she had something inside of her bra, which I had no idea what it was while she was [00:13:00] feeding little Zach cause she was bottle feeding him and it was a wearable breast pump. I'd never seen anything like it. Did yours have double sides? Did it have the two sides?

Destiny: I just got the one, but that is all I needed really, because I was breastfeeding on one boob while expressing on the other. So it worked brilliantly because not only my hands free, but I wasn't [00:14:00] stuck sitting in one corner of the couch while, I had all these tubes around me and all these things happening, which at first I did.

Destiny: So it was a really great, Switch when I switch to the wearable ones. It's a great investment. It really is.

Meg: I look, I've yeah, I mean, I've always said to parents cause, becoming a new parent is just super expensive and you've got to work out what you actually need. And I mean, I, I also don't want to mention names, but. Little branded tackies for your child, do not buy them because they will outgrow them.

Meg: Take that money and put it into a breast pump because it is something that you will use for every one of your children. It establishes your milk supply. It allows you to return to work and ultimately gives you freedom. So electric breast pumps for me are an absolute no brainer.

Destiny: the best invest in it. If you can definitely invest in it.

Meg: Yeah. Brilliant. Great. So that was your breastfeeding journey. And that was your challenge, your main challenge in the first three months. So let's first

track a little bit further down the line to kind of around six months. And I know you've mentioned it already, cause I'm going to guess that one of the big challenges that came up about then was [00:15:00] sleep deprivation.

Destiny: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. That was around the time you actually started sleep training. I was spanked.

Meg: Hmm.

Destiny: I couldn't function. The baby was not sleeping well. I wasn't sleeping well and I decided, you know what, let me take action about this before I lose my mind. So around six months is when we consulted with a professional sleep expert and We started sleep training and within two weeks, we started seeing results.

Destiny: And I was like, really surprised with how my life changed and how my relationship with my baby actually improved, because now I was starting to feel kind of like, Oh, having a baby, it's not to the greatest joy because during the day. She's not sleeping well at night. She's not sleeping well. When do I ever get a chance to sit with her and play with her and be present?

Destiny: So sleep training really changed my relationship with her. It gave me the confidence that I needed desperately to, kind of be a parent to her, be a mom, know, instead of just being the lady who [00:16:00] gives the milk and who cuddles all the time

Meg: well, I'd just like to touch on this because it's such an important topic. Sleep training can get a lot of bad press, and there are particular versions of sleep training that I don't like, but, and we won't necessarily go into that, but the point is the actual concept of sleep training your baby and getting your baby to sleep through the night, I believe is something that is very, very important.

Meg: And there are a couple of reasons for it. One is that, I think the most important thing for your child's emotional development is having a present mom who's actually just engaging, who is feeling confident, who's happy, who is able to take care of her child. Now we can all do that when we are well rested and we in a good mood, but when we sleep deprived, it's very hard to be relational, to be engaged and to be present with our little ones, it becomes increasingly more difficult. And so I think that any potential difficulties with sleep training and it can go both ways cause it's hard for moms as well as it is for little ones [00:17:00] are radically outweighed by the benefits of having a really wonderful relationship afterwards when you're arrested mom, would you agree with that?

Destiny: definitely 100%. But also, what made me feel so good about sleep training? It's just the peace of mind in knowing that my baby is getting enough rest that she's growing because we all know babies grow with sleep. Right? And now I was just constantly worried. Is she getting enough sleep? Is she growing well?

Destiny: How is her eating patterns are going to be affected when she's not sleeping well? Everything was just out of balance because her sleeping schedule was not in place. So once we put that in, uh, it, Everything changed. everything.

Meg: Absolutely. So mom's just on that. I mean, I do think that it is important to get your little one sleeping through the night. There is no question. Little ones can sleep through the night from six months of age. They often do longer stretches before that as well, but certainly from six months, they shouldn't be needing a feed at night.

Meg: And I think that this advice that destiny is giving us is good advice. If your [00:18:00] baby isn't sleeping well, either find yourself a sleep consultant in your area who can assist you, or you can do my sleep course, which is inside the parent sense app. It's the sleep sense course. And we kind of guide you through the 10 steps to get you a little one to sleep through the night, but getting a little one to sleep through the night.

Meg: It's not a luxury. It's a necessity for sure.

Destiny: Isn't it? It definitely is.

Meg: Yeah.

Destiny: I reached a point around the six to nine months, age when it feels like I was just juggling too much. And in general, sleep train or not, parents are always juggling a lot, right? But around that time, it felt like the walls were crashing in. There's house chores to be done, the baby needs to be taken care of, work still needs to be done.

Destiny: I mean, you still want to be a professional and be good at your job, right? All these things need to happen. So once you take that out of the equation, once you get a good routine down with your baby, it really does improve your life. It improves your lifestyle, improves your health. Because now your brain is awake, you are [00:19:00] present with your baby, and you're still a good mom.

Meg: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So we are now heading into the back end of our conversation. And before we go, I really want to just find out what's challenging you at the moment because gorgeous little Alu is now a year old. So what are the things that are pressing for you at the moment?

Destiny: you know what, now that we have 12 months, I'm feeling, I don't know if this is a me thing only, but I'm feeling this huge pressure to reach all the milestones. Is she doing all the 16 gestures by 16 months? Are we on track? Is she standing? Is she walking? Is she learning how to talk?

Destiny: And for the first time today, actually, just this morning, I think I experienced my first tantrum.

Meg: Possible. Definitely.

Destiny: Listen, usually, I gave her a bottle of milk and she finished it and when she was done, I think she wanted more. And how she told me she wanted more, she threw the bottle tossed it on the side and she screamed.

Destiny: I gave the bottle back to her as empty as it was, because I mean, she [00:20:00] usually has one anyway, and she screamed.

Destiny: She just threw it away. And I was like, girl, what is happening? What is this? I'm like, where's my little cute baby? Like at first you would just hand it to me, just do whatever I need to do. And this morning she gave me a tantrum. I was like, I don't know how to navigate this. I didn't expect this.

Destiny: It was like two or something,

Meg: yes. Yeah.

Destiny: My biggest challenge is navigating the milestones and how to respond to them. I don't know if she's too young to be taught to understand. No so, yeah, that, that's what I wanted to ask you.

Destiny: Actually, where do I start? What do I teach her? Cause I feel like now is like the crux of motherhood where I teach her like discipline, and everything's I'm like, Oh, all I know is just, can I just stick to just changing nappies and putting cute outfits on? Not

Meg: and stimulation starts from the day she's born. So everything that you've been doing from now up until now has actually been laying down the [00:21:00]

foundations for what comes forward. So that's the first thing, you've already done a lot of the work already, but it is worth stimulating her and let's talk about the milestones.

Meg: So first of all, the way that the brain develops is that. Whatever exposure your baby has will be what she learns. So if you say the word no to her and shake your head and move her hand away from the plug hole or whatever she was doing, she will very quickly learn to understand no, in actual fact, we know that baby's brains understand language about eight months ahead of them actually being able to say the language.

Meg: So already by the time little ones are about eight, nine months, they're starting to understand very basic things like I'm sure that at about nine months. And responded to her name. She understood if you walked into a room and you said, Alu, she would probably have turned towards you. Yeah. And so she starts to understand language already.

Meg: And then later on about eight months after that, she'll actually start to say language. But the most important thing with, with regards to language is to talk a lot and to limit screens as much as possible. And that is your telephone, your tablets, television. Absolutely no [00:22:00] screens. And the reason for that is that there's a lot of research that shows that if babies watch screens under two years of age, you can actually limit the amount of words that they say and their verbal intelligence, which a lot of moms don't know, no screens, no screens.

Meg: And the problem with screens is a couple of things. First of all it does certain things to the brain, quite similar to actually cocaine and other addictive. Properties that actually trigger pathways in the brain for addiction, which we don't want to do. So that's why we get so addicted to our phones and that's why, we end up doom scrolling and so on because of these neural pathways are being reinforced.

Meg: But also with little ones, every second and every minute a child spends, and this is for under the age of two that they spend on a screen is time that they don't spend. In FaceTime with their parents or engaging in the real world and all learning at this point, there's only two things that causes learning at this point.

Meg: The one thing is sensory engagement. So that's hearing, [00:23:00] seeing, playing, touching, moving. It's all our senses. And the other thing is emotional engagement. So the emotions of being in the context of the mom. So I always say to moms, Everything that your baby could learn on a screen, they will learn 500 times faster in the real world.

Meg: So if a bird flies overhead and you say birdie birdie, and you pointing up at it and you, and you saying it, and she can see these birdies moving across the screen. Absolutely. She makes those neural pathways a whole lot better than if you've kind of. There's been a screen and miss Rachel, whoever it is on screen has, has kind of, there's been a bird there for whatever it is, so I just definitely think that one of the most important things is to just watch how much screen time she has. Second thing is to give her lots of stimulation time. So floor time, experiences outside. And then I just wanted to speak to the actual achievement of milestones. I can hear that you are a little bit like me.

Meg: We both have an A type. We like to tick the boxes. I can just sense that you and I are fairly similar like that, but milestones are not [00:24:00] something that you have to tick on a certain date because the range for milestones is actually quite wide. I mean, I don't know if you know that babies can walk between nine and 18 months, so it's super wide range of normal.

Destiny: Okay. Because it's tough saying baby's her age or younger sometimes doing things that she can't do. And I'm like, okay, now we need to practice standing for three seconds. And I'm like, okay, we're going to do this for a week and see if we're getting results. And I understand sometimes it can feel a little too forced and that we have to just give her time to learn by herself.

Destiny: Because, eventually she will. But now my thing is, when do I start panicking? When do I start wondering, okay, this is a problem. She should be knowing

Meg: Yeah. So, one of my podcasts recently was on exactly this on when to worry what I say in it, and this is true is that you need to be looking for what we call a cluster of milestones. So, what we do is we look within a type of Of milestone and so let's take gross motor milestones. So [00:25:00] gross motor milestones at newborn.

Meg: It's lift my head off the floor at about three to four months old. It's roll at about six months old. It's sit at about nine months old. It's crawl at about 12 to 14 months. It's walk. So that's a trajectory of milestones. Now, if in that trajectory. Everything is late. So baby didn't like floor time.

Meg: Didn't roll until there was eight months. Didn't sit until they were 10 months. Still isn't crawling at a year and is only walks or is not even walking two years old. Then I'm going, hold on, hold on. I've got warning bells all over the place now because every milestone within that category has been late or delayed. But if let's say you've got a little one who loved tummy time rolled

early sat on their bum did a little bit of crawling at eight, nine months and still isn't walking at 15 months. I would not be worried at all. And the reason is that that baby's shown me that all the other gross motor milestones are along a trajectory that is absolutely normal, typically developing her walking slightly late on the later end of normal.[00:26:00]

Meg: But that's okay. So, we always look for milestones in a cluster and we look for a whole lot of signs together.

Destiny: Okay. Okay. Meg's I actually want to take you back to when we were speaking about language, in this house we speak about three languages at once in a, in one sentence in one conversation, mixed languages, right? And now I'm worried that will this maybe delay her speech that we are speaking so many languages is that will that hinder her growth?

Destiny: Or should we just try to focus on speaking one language so that you can pick it up faster?

Meg: Now that's such a great question and a very common question, particularly in South Africa, which is so multicultural. So, the right answer is that until a baby is about 18 months to two years old, you must all speak your own language. So whatever language is your mother tongue, that the language that your mother spoke to you is the language that you should speak to your little one.

Meg: And the reason for that is that when we speak our mother tongue, we convey emotion much more. It's just much more Obvious and it's, [00:27:00] it's an evident it's because they're the words that our mother said to us, so, definitely use your own mother tongue. What languages are you, have you got in your house?

Destiny: I speak is Xhosa, Alu's dad speak isiZulu, and we mix English somewhere

Meg: as well. Okay. So definitely, if I were you, I would be speaking isiXhosa to her for sure. And that would be a language that then she will definitely respond to and it'll develop her emotional and her language abilities. Now, when that changes, so when does that change? At around about 18 to 24 months, she should have what we call a language explosion.

Meg: And that means that suddenly before that she was maybe saying five, six, seven words, like a small amount of but suddenly at about 18 months to 24

months. Babies start to just like literally throw words out and sentences and they start to talk, talk, talk. And these little words come out. Now, if that doesn't happen, so let's say she gets to two years old and she's only got two words, then I would be saying to parents, you need to choose one language and pick one language that you all speak [00:28:00] to her.

Meg: But until then you can definitely go with everybody speaking their own language. And that's a good idea. It's also great for her brain wiring for languages. She's likely to be. Better at languages and obviously, be able to speak different languages, which is very important.

Destiny: Oh, that's so exciting. I can't wait. I can't

Meg: Oh, well,

Meg: it's been absolutely fabulous chatting to you. And I know we're going to have an Instagram live as well, and I'd love to connect with you again and, and talk a little bit more. I've loved this conversation. So thank you very much.

Destiny: so short!

Meg: I know.

Destiny: have tea next time, Megs, and just sit down and just talk about babies all day.

Meg: Well, if you've got a list of questions, any time that you want to do, I am very happy to do another podcast with you. I found it super interesting to chat to you, Destiny. Thank you.

Meg: I'd love to. Thank you so much, Megs. Thanks for your time.

Meg: Thanks, Destiny. Cheers.

Meg: Bye!