

# The Divorced Christian Woman Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Episode 6 - The Kids Aren't Okay (But They Will Be)

**Heads up, friend:** What you're about to read is a raw, unedited transcript straight from the robots. That means you'll find some weird words, funky punctuation, and moments that make you go, "Huh?" If you want the real experience (and to actually know what's going on), I recommend reading the polished article, listening to the full episode, or watching it on 1.5x speed with captions on. Your brain will thank you.

**Natalie:** Welcome to episode six of the Divorced Woman Podcast, the divorced Christian Woman podcast. This season is called The First 365 Days after Divorce, and today I have with me Diana, Loretta, Wendy, Jillian, and Lisa, who are all divorced Christian women, and we are gonna be talking about parenting post-divorce.

So welcome ladies. Let's get into it. Question one. How did you talk to your kids about divorce? About the divorce, once it was over, and some of you maybe have older kids, like adult kids. Maybe you have a combination of underage children, maybe you have little kids. Um. It'd be great to get some examples of kind of everything.

Like how did your, how did your kids respond to the divorce? Um, how did they, how did they do with the going back and forth, maybe if some of your kids were younger, what was that experience like for you? I.

**Jillian:** I can go first. I, um, I have a younger son. He was almost three when our divorce was final, and so he had memories of us being together and would ask my ex, not really me, but he would ask my ex about, you know. Um, why we weren't living together, supposedly so I've been told. Right. But, um, oh, but it usually was also, it was more of like, oh, I remember, I remember when mommy and daddy were in the same kitchen.

Like little comments like that. Mm-hmm. But really, we, I, I haven't been asked those questions of him yet. And for me, uh, I know that's gonna be something that we'll have to talk. About, you know, moving forward and, and he, I'm sure he'll have questions moving forward. Um, my, my answer is still gonna be very

much the same of what I tell other people though, of we just weren't a good fit together.

I wanted him to be someone he wasn't. He wanted me to be someone I wasn't. And it, it just, it wasn't good. And it's much better that we are our co-parents and, you know, and just look at the, the benefits, the positive sides, the upsides there. So it did have, uh, we had some. Tough transitions for about the first year.

Um, on our transition days, we did a week on week off, which for a child that young is pretty uncommon. Usually they will recommend a different schedule, but I was willing to try it and that actually worked out the best because my son would need one to two days to transition to my house where there were more tantrums and meltdowns and emotions.

And so it, it was better to get him into a groove at my house. Um, and I also knew. When, uh, on Mondays, those were our transition days. Mondays, and sometimes Tuesdays were gonna be a little rough. Emotionally there would just be bigger, more emotions. Uh, and once I saw that pattern, I knew to expect it. And so I also had a lot more patience and understanding with him and with myself of like, okay, I know this is hard right now.

It's okay, Jillian, you've got this. Yeah, it's a hard day. Like you, you're fine. Just breathe.

**Natalie:** Did he. Get better over time as far as the transitions or how, how far out are you from this?

**Jillian:** Yes. So we're almost two years now. And I would say for, uh, I can't even remember when it, it really changed because it's been, at least for this calendar year, maybe going on, you know, seven to nine months.

We've had really smooth transitions now. Okay. So there still, um, are some meltdown moments and. Being mom, he can be a little bit more clingy with me. And, and I also know, he's like, I can see how he has to be a certain person when he's at his dad's house. Mm-hmm. And so there is more freedom and more flexibility at my house and he can have certain emotions and all his emotions are safe here.

And there are still some boundaries on that. Um, but I would say the transition days in particular have been better for the last. Six to nine months. Okay.

**Natalie:** Yeah. Just to give hope to some people who feel like, oh my gosh, is it gonna be like this the right and have I completely destroyed

**Jillian:** my child? You know?

Right. Yeah. No, it doesn't last forever. It does get better.

**Natalie:** Yeah. I wanna jump in here too and say my, I was just sitting down and eating dinner with my kids the other day. We all eat dinner. I still have four kids that are still at home and it's just, you know, mom and the four kids. We're sitting down and eating.

And I looked around and I said, you know, 'cause my kids have gone through two divorces. Their mom has been divorced twice. And I said, are, how are you guys doing? Like, do you ever stop? Like, here we are, we're sitting down eating. We don't have a traditional family. It's just, it's just mom and then the kids.

What do you guys think about that? Does that ever cross your mind? And my daughter goes, mom, most families are like this. What are you talking about? So they don't do none of them, they all thought that I was like weird for thinking that, but also they're, you know, almost eight years out from, and really almost 12 years out from actually when I was separated from their dad.

So they don't have a lot of memories of what traditional family might have looked like, although we did have a traditional family from about seven years in my second marriage. Um, but it wasn't their dad and it maybe didn't feel, you know, I don't know if it ever felt totally normal, but. Anyway. I just wanna say that just to normalize that, you know, it's not normal at first.

It doesn't feel normal at first because that's not your normal, but when you start getting years under your belt, it becomes your normal and I. Everyone adjusts and everyone, if you go into it with that attitude of like, this is gonna, we're gonna be okay, and there's nothing wrong here. This is just how some families are, and families are all different.

I think that helps people. It helps the kids. Feel a little more stabilized in their nervous system. And also I think it gives them less judgment on other families who look different from the traditional mom, dad. 'cause I was very judgmental of families who didn't have a mom and a dad and you know, two kids, right?

If it was the family was too big, that was weird. If one of the parents was missing, that was weird. If they had the baby out of wedlock, that was weird. Everybody else was weird except for the families with the mom, the dad, and two kids. Maybe three. Maybe three kids. Yeah. Okay. Anybody else? What about middle school kids?

Does anyone have any like middle school or high junior, high, high school kids, Loretta?

**Loretta:** Yeah, so at the time that I filed, I had um, 10 to 15 four boys.

**Natalie:** Oh, wow.

**Loretta:** And so the older ones and I come deep spiritual. Legalist home. So when they would go to their dad's, like there was a lot of scripture being spoken about how things should be and those kinds of things.

So I would take a lot of incoming of them trying to sort through that at triangulation. And what I found was the two older ones were a little more steeped in that, and so I had to have a lot of those conversations. Then the younger ones, like the third one, kind of the scapegoat. He was just like, yes, I can now join swim club and I can go fishing and hunting and queing and it and all these things I couldn't do before.

So, so I had the gamut. Right. Um, I. And some that talked more openly with me, like, I don't know how to have a relationship with him. Do I even want to? Um, and then the older ones who were telling me how I should be doing it right and that I should get back together and they should write all of that stuff.

But what I gauged it by the, the progress I used to walk into my counselor's office and I would say. My life looks like a Maury Povi show. How did I get here? I mean, I had, I had CPS on my door. 'cause I told my son, you're now free to talk to anyone. You want to process this. If it's not me, you can talk to a pastor, you can talk to whoever.

So he goes and shares some things that, you know, it got a little sketchy in my home when I stopped walking on eggshells. And as he shares this pastor thought he needed to, you know. To, to tell someone. He's like, required reporter. Yeah. And so I happened to come home and knocking on the door was a police officer, so.

I, I mean, so into my counselor, I go, how is this my life? Like, really, how is this my life? I was the homeschool mom, had it together. I had a really great Christmas card, all this stuff, right? But so after the divorce, I told my C counselor, I'm like, okay, I think I've graduated. I, I'm getting my diploma. I'll call you if I need you.

Well then, you know, as things progress and life happens with kids and teenage boys, I call them back up and ask if I could go into the master's program. And now I go in for what I call a tuneup. So when things come up, and the great thing I wanna tell every mom out there is, especially if you have teenagers, not every problem your teenagers are having is because of your marital status.

Yes. Like it's just not, yes, and And it's not even so much about your ex or what they did or didn't do. Sometimes kids and I, and I try to tell myself and think back to how I was when I was a teenager. One of my kids is little A, DD and I, my oldest one's a little more out there and I think. That was me.

Like at that age, I was that immature in my brain. Like I get it. Right. So the like, letting go of those expectations, it makes me less defensive and less judgy of myself. And I, I, you know, our brain likes to try, you know, everything's gonna be awful and they're gonna end up on drugs and on the street, right?

Yeah. Um, so just accepting that sometimes they're just teenagers.

**Natalie:** Yes. I'm so glad you said that. Well, let's, so let's talk a little bit more about that, that those emotions and that behavioral stuff, um, the changes that you may have, if you did notice any of those kinds of changes in your kids after the divorce, did they become more agitated, more, um, did they have more issues at school?

Like what, what was your experience with your kids at, with your kids after the divorce was over and they transitioned to this new life? Diana.

**Diana:** Yeah, I thought I'd also chime in now because I had mostly adult kids when I got divorced, and so three adult boys and a young teenage, you know, like she was 13.

14 in that range. So, um, so it was interesting. None of them, you know, I did, didn't have like behavioral acting out with them, especially my adult boys. They all had different questions or not, and I would address those, but one of them I. One of my kids and I've promised 'em, I wouldn't share, uh, anything that would give it away.

So outta the four, you can guess we're not gonna pinpoint anyone. One of my kids did ask for therapy and I was like, thank God. Because I suggested it to many of them before for different reasons. And so I was very happy to get this, this one in, and I don't know how much it was. Uh, they think it was helpful, but I think even a little while, like six months or so that they went that.

It just gave 'em a place to process through some stuff. So that was great. I recommend that if, uh, for all ages of kids and another one did not want therapy at all, but had been struggling with stress and anxiety their entire life. And this is, I think Loretta said it la at a different time this panel was talking, but um, I don't know exactly what it was, but like she wanted to stay married for the kids and then she realized it was time to.

Get divorced for the kids. And this particular child that was struggling with stress and anxiety all their life started to notice. Improvements week after week, month after month, day after day. Wow. Without even getting therapy. So I just, uh, you know, I feel like all of us probably think our situations are atypical, and yet sometimes they may be typical.

I don't know. So take that for what it's worth and have some hope for that. If you're not divorced Yes yet, and you're considering it, or if you are divorced and your kids haven't settled out yet, like some of the ripple effect could be really good. So hang tight, hang with them and always offer.

Unconditional love. That's one way I worked on getting through it with all my kids. Lots of I love you. I always love you. Yeah. Every day. I love you. And hugs.

**Natalie:** Yeah. Yeah. Good. Lisa.

**Lisa:** So my kids are very similar, um, in age to Diana, um, 17, 20, 20 and 22, um, when I got divorced, that, that's how old they were. And so, um, for me, my relationship with them was always, it always had a filter.

So the filter, was it, how's dad gonna feel about that? Is, is this the right thing? Am I parenting good enough? So I like walked on eggshells with, even with my relationships with my kids, because we were all living in this very tight box of performance or imper perfection and all, all of that. So. After divorce or after I guess I separated.

And then, you know, in the process of divorce when I was living in my own space, um, I remember the first Christmas I gave them each a key, like that was

one of their gifts. And I said, you know, this may not be the home you grew up in, but this is your home and you're welcome here anytime. Um, my daughter was living with me, but the three older boys, um.

Had their own place. The twin boys moved in, um, and they lived together still to this day. So, um, there what I've seen, the behaviors like they. They saw that it was toxic before I saw it was toxic. So I was I wasn't telling them anything that they didn't know. Um, but I think from, from, you know, their perspective, it was trying to, um, you know, navigate this new normal right now.

Now we visit dad over here and we visit mom here. And I always wanted to be that safe space for them. So just holding space for them. Um, you know, one of them and myself we're in therapy and that's been very helpful 'cause anxiety, um, depression, uh, that all kind of is a real natural, um, side, side gig for the kids in those, um.

Relationships in, in the marriage, in the families that have such emotional dysregulation going on, um, all the time. Yeah. Yeah. So I think creating safety has been my, my boys don't talk much, like, they just don't talk much. But watching my daughter evolve, she's the one that's talking to them and their relationships are just so sweet.

**Natalie:** Oh, that's neat. That's neat. So what, can you guys share maybe one or two things that really help have helped your kids cope since the divorce? Is there any, um, anything specific, Wendy?

**Wendy:** Yeah. My, so both of my kids were, um, adults when I was divorcing. And, um, my, my daughter actually had. Been married and moved out already, but, um, my son lived with my ex for a little bit and, um, but a huge, a huge help has been for me to give them space, um, to talk about things or not talk about things.

You know, I just always have over and over again, let them know. You know, I'm here and I will always listen to what you wanna talk, what you wanna say. And to over the years, it's been a long, long game, right? And, um, but gradually, um, like my son and I are able to talk more and more about things. And I believe it's because, um, there's a safe place there where.

He can with me. Um, I hope he believes that he seems to where, um, yeah, he, he knows I will, I will listen. I will sit and listen and I'll say, I'm so sorry that happened to you, or, I'm so sorry. You know, I'm so sorry and, and I love you so much. No matter what has happened, no matter what you do. And, um, just



being now being able to be an, a fellow adult empathetic witness as well as their mom and just not pushing, you know, not pushing about things.

**Natalie:** Yeah. You know, I'm gonna, let's combine this question also with another one where we were gonna talk about. Maybe outside resources too, or books or therapy or support groups or, you know, like even practical things. Um, feel free to chime in and share outside sources too that you, that you're, that helped your kids.

I, I, I'll, I'll share something really quick. Um, something that helped. So I had kids all, all ages, like small when I was separated, my youngest was two and then. Then by the time I was divorced, he was five and then all the way up to in their twenties. And, um, I had nine kids and one of my kids, uh, was a, a boy who was 15 when the divorce was final.

And he chose to live with his dad instead of coming and living with me full time. And I, I gave him a choice. I said, you know, I'm not gonna tell you, we're not gonna do the custody thing with you. You're too old for that. Him and his, his, anybody above him. I said, you guys decide what you wanna do. I'm totally fine.

I can have a relationship with you no matter where you live. So he stayed with his dad, but I, but I went out with him every week. I would take him out for breakfast so that I could, you know, connect with him, because I think kids just want connection. They just wanna be, they just want to know that we like spending time with him.

And I love spending time with that kid. And, um, he's such a good, he was such a good kid too. Well, he still is. Anyway. Um. That changed things. I didn't know that this was gonna happen, but several months later he actually asked me if he could move in with me and the rest of the kids. And so, um, and he didn't go back and forth.

He would go and visit all of my kids, love and respect their dad. I. Honor their dad, you know, as their dad. They're, they all have good relationships with their dad in spite of everything that's happened. But I just wanted to say that when, that, at the beginning of the divorce, it feels so messy. Everyone, all the kids are all over the place.

Some of my kids, like some of my kids wanted therapy and went to therapy. Some of them refused therapy. Well, they tried, but then they just didn't say anything in therapy and the therapist was finally like, I don't think they really



wanna be here. It's not really helping them. So, um, and then some kids, several years later.

Then, then they wanted to go to therapy, and then therapy was actually effective for them. It's an ongoing journey. You know, we're almost eight years out from the final of the divorce and it's, we're still, it's like an ongoing journey, but that's what life is anyways. Like someone said it, they're, they're gonna have problems whether their parents got divorced or not.

Um, and, and this is just, this is just. These kids have these challenges and other kids have other challenges. So I think normalizing the messiness of it too. If I would've known that at the beginning, if I would've had hope that there could be, you know, healing that my kids would grow, that they would be badass by the time, you know, like I'm looking at them, they are a million times further ahead in their emotional intelligence development than I was at their age.

In their self-awareness, in their understanding of where other people are coming from in their compassion. So I'm for, for all of those reasons, I'm, you know, I just, I have no regrets. Anybody else have any other resources or things that they did that really helped their kids? Loretta? Yes.

**Loretta:** Um, so I think, I don't have specific this book or that book, although you have a ton in Flying higher, but it was more like the concept that, like my counselor said to me.

Most people go through this journey at 30 or 40 years old figuring out their relationship with their parents when they have kids, whether it's, um. They had, but whether their parents stayed married or not, right? We kind of all went through that journey of sorting it out and the sooner your kids are able to have figure things out with both of their parents, the further along they're going to be, they're just gonna have a head start.

So what the best thing I did, and it was after sitting down and going through, uh. Your workbook. I was on the boundaries and I thought, what is stressing me out about boundaries? And it was being in the middle and trying to manage their relationship with their dad. So I sent a group text and I said, all the kids have phones now.

If you wanna sort out visitation with them, whatever they, he lives a half mile away. Just figure, do that directly with them. And they try to. I had to leave the house a couple of times and just not be around for that transition. So because I knew they were gonna, it would always try to come back on me.

And it was the best thing I did because then what came out of that, as I look back and it, when you're in the middle of it, you can't see the progress. You cannot see it, yeah. Until later. So that's what I wanna tell you. But we have had, and I wrote this down, each kid came to me at a different time needing to learn the lesson of boundaries.

They were being triangulated a lot. You know, I was no longer the one managing it. So. He grabbed another one to parent file, right? And then he would move on to the next one. And so as they would come at me, I would get this explosion of emotion and I, you know, a few minutes into the conversation, I would realize she talking to my kid.

Talking to the person who's been talking to my kid and they were trying to make them a conduit to arguing with me, right? Yeah. About usually about the Bible and what the Bible said and that I should stay married and all of that. So I said, you, you are not, this is not your job. You should not be in this position.

These are adult things. You should not be in the middle. I will not engage in this. I'm not gonna talk to you about it, but this is how you set a boundary. But he'll get mad. Okay. That's okay. He's, he's mad all the time anyway, right? Well, yeah. Okay, so then, so, so we learned about boundaries. You talked about concentric circles before.

That was the best thing, because one of them came to me and says, I don't even know if I wanna have a relationship with him. And I said. That's okay, you can sort it out. And then I pulled out a piece of paper. I drew the concentric circles I shared. I was able to even use that in explaining, I used to tell all dad all these details.

He was my best friend he was supposed to be. And then it would come back on me and he would hurt me and break my trust. So he moved further out on the circles to where I couldn't even talk about the weather with them sometimes because it would come back on me. So you need to learn where. Maybe a relationship with them is only playing the guitar with him, or it's only going to a game or, or, you know, whatever that looks like.

It doesn't have to be a specific thing. So we had those conversations and they can use that in, in life with a boss, with friends, with girlfriends, whatever that is. Right. And then, um, yeah, really giving them permission to have a different type of relationship with different people, um, and that you can forgive somebody.

Without having to be close to them, we were able to have those conversations. Yeah. Um, but it was through, over the course of years. Right. So you can't see it. Can't emphasize that enough. Yeah. But the healthier I got, the more knowledge I got, the less defensive I got and allowed these conversations to even happen.

**Natalie:** Yeah.

**Loretta:** That's, and gave me the tools to help them when they came to me.

**Natalie:** Yeah. That's, that's amazing.

**Lisa:** Okay. What. Oh, go ahead Lisa. I just have one more thing that I wanted to add and, and that is I think when you're going through the divorce, like it's almost as if you know, you're so consumed with your own journey and your own pain and you know, trying to put your own boundaries up.

And, and I remember with each of my kids post-divorce, I. I asked God to give me like the opportunity to have the conversation, and I just said to them, I said, you know, I, we've all gone through this kind of war of, of sorts and we're on the other side, and I said, I was so consumed with my own feelings and my own hurt and my own processes that I know, I know that I.

Didn't have even the brain capacity to, to really understand how this affected you.

**Natalie:** Yeah.

**Lisa:** And I wanna know, is there something, are there things that you know you really hated that you're still stewing about? Like, tell me, I'm here. I wanna hear it. Even if you think it's gonna hurt my feelings, I wanna hear it.

**Natalie:** Hmm.

**Lisa:** But I would've had really hurt feelings in, in the midst of it. Like I, I wasn't at a spot that I, I could have handled it, it would've crushed me if they would've said something mean to me. But now, you know, months and a year later, I, I feel like. I'm at that place. I've done more growing because of Flying higher, to be honest, that I'm at a place where I can emotionally hold space for them to be God honest with me.

**Natalie:** Yes. And that's

**Lisa:** been very helpful.

**Natalie:** Yes. You, I think that is such a good point. 'cause when we are in the middle of the divorce, we're drown, we're drowning, we're under the water drowning. It's really hard to help someone else. Who's drowning when you are drowning as well. And then after the divorce you kind of come up for air and then you realize, oh, my kids are drowning.

And then you have the capacity to reach out and help them and hold space for for them. Yeah. Okay. Let's talk, let's talk about, this is kind of related. Did any of you guys have exes who spoke badly about you in front of the kids? Or involved, I mean, Loretta just kind of shared a little bit about that, involve them in your adult drama and then how did you handle that?

This, and this is like after the divorce, you know, post-divorce.

**Diana:** My ex didn't talk badly about me, that I know of, but he tried to, uh, kind of triangulates to, I don't know, get me back or make it look like he was the good guy or he just loved me so much and. So he would say around the kids like, oh, I miss your mom, and I just love her so much.

So the kids would come to me and be like, dad's so sad and blah, blah, blah. And so I guess it's similar. It doesn't matter what they're saying that's kind of pulling the kids in and triangulating. So I just called him out on it and I don't know how much it actually changed it. It seemed like it died down the more I called it out, but I'd always send it via email.

So it'd be a nice, easy record where I could find it and I would just say I, it's, uh. It's not appropriate for the kids to be coming to me and, and telling me how much you're crying and or to tell me how much you love me. It's not appropriate for the kids. Or another time, my, my daughter was like so worried that he didn't have money, and so I'm like, she's afraid that you're gonna lose your house, lose the car and everything.

You talk so much about how you don't have money, you are totally stressing her out, and if that's the result you want. That's what you're getting. If that's not the result you want. Perhaps you would keep that stuff to yourself. So I think that that, in my case, helped, you know, okay. In the, um, before Flying higher, a lot of women going through divorce go through Flying Free.

And the divorce course has where you can profile the person so you know what this person is that you're dealing with post-divorce, you, they're the same person

you dealt with when you were married and during the divorce. So you'll know if they're gonna respond. To a certain kind of communication or not, and I know some of you can't do that communication.

It's not gonna go well, or it's gonna escalate. Yeah. Then you just have honest conversations with your kids. So I've done that too, where I'm just like, I know that your dad's saying this, but the truth is he's an adult and he can take responsibility for his own life, his own relationships, his own money, and whatever.

That's not actually yours to worry about. He has the ability to go make more money or all these other things, and he's not, I don't know why. I don't think you know why either, but that's, that's his story. It's

**Natalie:** so confusing. Yeah.

**Diana:** So that's my 2 cents on that one.

**Natalie:** Yeah. I've had to tell my kids, like when they've come home and told me interesting things, like I stole all the fire or all the smoke detectors out of his house, and that was like the best.

I was like, well, what do you think? Do, do you think that I stole all the smoke? Do you think that what he said was true? Probably not. I can't see you doing that. Yeah. Well, what do we know about dad? I mean, what have you observed? Yeah. Dad sometimes doesn't tell the truth. Okay, well then if he tells you something like that, you, you know, you can make your own best guess about what actually happened there.

Let's talk about holidays, you guys, holidays, birthdays, graduations, all the things. How have you guys managed those things? Um, to, well, you know, how, how have you tried to minimize the drama? How have you tried to, uh, deal with your kids and their emotions about it? Because everything changes, Christmas changes, and you maybe had, like we did specific traditions, we did every year on the clock, and the kids loved those things, and then all of a sudden, now it's all fruit basket upset.

**Jillian:** So my son was turning three shortly after we got divorced, and I decided I was gonna host his party that year because I wanted to be able to kick anybody outta the party who did not play nicely. And so I was like, I'm gonna plan it. I'm gonna pay for it. I'm hosting it. This is my year. My ex can host it the next year.

But I like, I really wasn't sure how, between my ex and my dad and other people and his. His side of the family that were gonna come for the birthday. I wasn't sure how everybody was gonna play together. And so, uh, everything was fine. There were no issues, there was no drama. Um, but just not being sure how things were gonna respond because things were still very tense right after the divorce.

And so I knew I wanted people on their best behavior and if they weren't going to be, that's fine, you. But like now I have the right to kick you out. So I very intentionally chose to go that route. And now it's about creating a new, like a new normal. Um, and being that he's so young, we can do that. So Christmas has been to go visit my family.

They live out of state, and so usually when it's. Thanksgiving or Christmas and, and I have my son. Then it becomes more of like, it's a trip. It's when we travel. It's, it's just establishing those, um, those new scenarios. Mm-hmm. So it's, uh, maybe a little bit easier for us now at the, this young age. Um, but that's, that's how we've done things and things have gone really smoothly with that.

**Natalie:** Yeah. So it's more of a parent parental attitude, right? Mm-hmm. So you've got this little child who maybe doesn't remember everything. But if your attitude had been, oh no, now we're not gonna be able to do this and we're not gonna be able to do that, that, that, that energy, little kids can pick up on that and they can feel very anxious about that.

But you just kinda like, you're badass, Jillian. You just kinda, as soon as it's like, yeah, I'm gonna take over this birthday party and I'm gonna, we're gonna do this fun trip and we're gonna, you know, and that provides stability for emotional stability for your young child. That's amazing. Yeah. What about those of you who had older children who did have experience, have traditions?

They remembered Wendy,

**Wendy:** that yeah, that was, it was kind of tough for a while. And still, honestly, every year, every year, every holiday and celebration is different because I lived at, but it's been okay. Alright. It's um, it's kind of been an adventure really. 'cause I was living with a friend. He let me move in.

She was divorced too. She is divorced too. And um, so it was like, I was living with her for two years and so it was kinda like her traditions, you know, and, um, and you know, I just, and I just chilled and participated the way Well, and

she's also, she's the other mother-in-law though. She's my daughter's mother-in-law.

Okay. So, so. It was different. But then we did have some family crossover. It was interesting. But, um, so then my daughter, you know, and her husband would come, they live overseas most of the time, but when they would be here visiting, you know, they'd. Celebrate Christmas with us, but it was different. It was not the kind of Christmas we, you know, had in our home.

And then when my son was living with my, um, ex for a little while, he would just, I would let him know what we were doing, you know, Hey, we're having, you know, Christmas dinner at this time, or Easter dinner or whatever it would be. And I'd be like, if you want to, you know, if you're free, I don't know what you're doing.

I don't know what you and dad are doing or anything like that. So do what you, you know. What works best for you, but if you wanna come over and open, and he would come over and like open gifts with us for a little while and hang out, maybe watch a movie, you know, all um, we had some of the other kids there too, um, my friend's kids and stuff.

So anyway, we, I just did stuff like that. Now my son has his own place, actually. I lived with him for a couple years. I've been all over the. So I lived at his place for a little bit. So then we were together and would just, we had really quiet, really quiet holidays. And then this last year, now I have my own place and so.

I invite again, it's just always been the same thing. Like, Hey, what do you wanna do? Uh, I feel like doing this. Let's kind of not do the huge gift. Like last year we were like, let's not do the huge gift thing. Let's just kind of hang out. And we made, he and I, he came over to my place and we made, um, terrariums, like I had these jars and I got all this stuff.

Not your typical Christmas thing, but I was like, you wanna make terrariums? And he was like, yeah, I've always wanted to do that. So we had a meal and made terrariums. So anyway, it's just been all over the place for me and I've just been rolling with it and, and it's been good. So.

**Natalie:** Nice. Loretta. Not,

**Wendy:** oh, sorry.



**Loretta:** Okay. Well, mine, mine, I was lucky because mine didn't like holidays and poo-pooed them and they're was of money and we shouldn't, you know, he just didn't wanna do stuff. Right. So when, so I ended up with him a lot more than the pap paperwork from the court said. So that, so that was great. But the cool thing I just wanna share this little story is that we weren't allowed to have Christmas tree 'cause they were pagan.

And so my first holiday we had, um, my first Christmas we had I think four in the house. I think last count I had five or six Christmas trees. And you're making up for lost time, criticized for how much candy ended up in their stockings. And so the first year, I mean it was like. They were very full of sugar.

Let's just put it that way. It was just this kind of, we could breathe, we could breathe and it was great. And um, so it was just a fun little story about the freedom that that came with, with being able to do it on our own.

**Natalie:** Yeah, I think tr when you think about TR traditions, the thing that we love about traditions is that they bring us together.

That and that can change. And even families who I think we have to remind ourselves that. Families that don't have divorce in them also change traditions over time. 'cause kids get older and don't wanna do the things that you did when they were younger. Kids get married, kids have their own families, kids, you know, and they can't come home and they move to other states and they're going to school and they're so, it's always going to change.

I think every family goes through this needs to be flexible and grow in their traditions with their family. I think also just normalizing that like it's not because we're necessarily 'cause we're divorced, that we're changing, it's 'cause we live, we're human beings who live on planet earth and everything always changes on a regular basis.

And it's okay. The, the big thing to me about holidays is can we get together? Can we do it? We can make geraniums, we can eat tacos on Thanksgiving if we need to. Like, it doesn't matter as long as we're together. We're gonna close by, um, sharing maybe, uh, maybe we could go around and you could share one piece of advice that you would give to the mother who is upset and terrified that she has just ruined her children forever.

Now, because she is a divorced single mother, what would you say to

**Jillian:** her? I would love to take this one first because, um, my, my experience growing up with a very emotionally and verbally abusive dad was it, it was really tough and I wished from a very young age that my parents would've gotten divorced.

And so, wow. Going through it when I was waking up to what was happening in my marriage, I, 'cause I vowed, I promised myself when I was 12, I would never marry anybody like my dad. And if I did. The off chance I did, I would get out as fast as I realized it. And so I remembered that promise. That little, little promise stuck around all those years, and I remember that as I was thinking about leaving my marriage, and that's why I left was because I knew what it was like to grow up and that type of environment.

I knew that I would not be able to shield my son from everything. It's not like I could be the martyr and take the hit. He was going to experience the same exact thing that I grew up with. And I was not gonna let that happen. So there was, there was a fire of determination to protect him from that. And, and I know my mom had the best of intentions by staying, she tried to do the right thing by staying in her marriage and keeping the marriage together.

And for us, it did more harm than good. And so I, I don't, I don't want, I don't say that to criticize her or to criticize anybody for how long you've stayed, but more of just to recognize. A different perspective of like, I am proud that I chose divorce. I am proud of the courage that it took to walk away from a seemingly really good life with a great house and vehicles and a husband who makes a good amount of money and you know, all of this quote, stability.

To be able to walk away from that and to break cycles of this was really powerful.

**Natalie:** Yeah, I think what you're communicating is you are a good to this woman. You are a good mother. You made a hard choice for the good, for the ultimate good of your children, even though it might hurt and feel very upsetting to everyone right now in the moment you did a visionary, made a visionary decision mm-hmm.

In order to, for the long-term benefit of you and your children. Yes.

**Jillian:** Yep. To benefit the kids. Yes. Yeah.

**Natalie:** Anybody else? What would you say to this woman, Diana?

**Diana:** From my perspective, uh, well quick statement. I think staying sometimes is more likely to ruin our kids. Forever than leaving. Uh, so consider that possibility as well.

But I'm gonna come from the place of being a child of divorce. So my dad divorced my mom when I was just three years old, and I believe my sisters and I were better off because what happened is we got, ooh, gets me emotional. We had a healthy and available mom.

**Natalie:** Mm.

**Diana:** Because of the divorce. And she was a good, good mom.

And I imagine we wouldn't have gotten the best of her if that didn't happen. And, um, my dad wasn't awful to me. My sisters had different experiences with him and his strictness and and such. Um, but I still was very observant and I got to see how he. Did things and parented, and I got to see how my mom did and so I did.

I think sometimes it's like, you know, with money, they say how you could, you can tell a counterfeit bill by studying the real bill. You don't go out and study counterfeit. You study the real bill and then you can tell which ones are counterfeit, okay? Not that a parent is, or a person's counterfeit, but it's like you can tell what's healthy by spending a lot of time with someone who's healthy and so.

If you're wondering, did I just blow up our family and my kids are gonna be ruined forever? You might have just done the absolute best thing for them. Now you get healthy and you model that to them and it's gonna be beautiful.

**Natalie:** Yes, yes. And I'll just do a plug. Come join us in Flying higher. All of these women come join us in Flying higher 'cause we will help you get healthy.

We will support you on that journey so you can be the best mom that you wanna be. Loretta.

**Loretta:** Yes. And the more, to kind of piggyback up what Diana said, the healthier that I became, the, the less defensive I needed to be with my kids. And, and then I could see them growing and learning new things. I just had a 13-year-old need to choose a coach, um, make a a decision.

And he was able to do that 'cause he could kind of see manipulation tactics, right? This just happened yesterday and I also had, um, the. I was able to, when they come to me, dad thinks you're a Jezebel. Leaning into not, not being defensive, but leaning into it. Yeah. You know, but you can call me Jesse or Dad thinks you're a lib liberal.

Oh, he does. Tell him I really am. 'cause then he'll stop trying to get back together. You know, but as soon as they deflated, they're like, as soon as you stop resisting Yes. And being defensive, it just deflates it. I mean, I will never forget where I, I'm probably off topic of the actual question, but I'll never forget where I was driving.

In fact, when I drive by the narrow, I sometimes it flashes back. They were coming at me with things their dad had been saying and trying to get back together and all this stuff, and, and I said, um. I don't know what I said, but they said Dad would be mad. What? Well, if we say that, dad will be mad. And I said, it's okay.

God gave him his very own brain and he gets to think and feel what he wants with it, just like we get to. And there was suddenly just silence in the car. And I'm thinking, where did that come from? And it was from being immersed in your programmed in Natalie and all the podcasts. But I took that on. It was a shift in my brain of belief to allow other people to have their feelings.

And also I, I find myself trying to manage my kids' emotions and even just had a counseling session about it. When my kids are sad, I have a really hard time with it. I have to try to make them happy. And it's like. Being able to allow them, they're having a human experience. They're teenagers, they're, they're going to be, be there for them, but I don't have to fix it.

They're allowed to have those emotions and for me to get healthy that way. I had, I had my son, uh, uh, who had a party. He no showed. It was a miscommunication, but. I changed it, I redid it. I coached myself. Who am I gonna show up as love? My other son was looking at me, watching me prepare this dinner for a kid who was unkind to me and he says, you're a really good mom.

And I'm like, what? He says, why would you do this? He wasn't nice to you. And I was able to tell him, I'm gonna show up how I wanna be in my heart. 'cause it has nothing to do with anyone else. Yeah. I have to live with me and how I show up. Yeah. And you get to do the same thing. So anyway, you get those little wins in the middle of beating yourself up all the time.

Exactly. Which really sustain you. Right.

**Natalie:** So beautiful. Thank you for sharing that, Lisa.

**Lisa:** Yeah, so I think, you know, it's hard to see when you're in the middle of it, even post-divorce. I think, like I remember just battling back and forth. Maybe it wasn't that bad. Maybe I made the wrong decision. You kind of second guess yourself and you gaslight yourself again because, you know, he was normal during this, that, the other thing with the kids, um.

And so I, I think. To give yourself the grace and respect that you really deserve. It's something that I don't, I don't think I did. Maybe I thought I was, but now looking back at how I felt about myself, I didn't respect the girl with my name, and now that's my job. That's my job is to, to think about her first.

Because when I'm thinking of her first, it's not selfish, but it's actually the best thing that I can do for my kids.

**Wendy:** Yes.

**Lisa:** Is is honor. Honor and respect myself, and my values and my needs and my wants and my desires. And I think your kids are gonna feel that from you when, when you start showing up for yourself.

**Natalie:** Yes, that's right. Amen. All right, you guys, thank you so much for joining me for this episode. We last epi the, the last episode we went around and these ladies all shared the work that they do. They all have jobs, they all have their own businesses or side gigs or. Big gigs or whatever, they all have things that they're doing to put food on their tables for their kids, and I will, we don't have time to do that today.

You can listen to the last episode, episode five if you wanna hear them talk about it, but I will for sure put their links to all of their, the beautiful things that, the beautiful work that they're all putting into the world in the show notes. So be sure to check that out as well. Some of the things that they're doing might be something that you actually need in your life.

Thank you so much for joining me ladies, and for those of you who are listening, and until next time, fly higher.