

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 159:

The Brave Art of Motherhood with Rachel Martin

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J: Rachel Martin is my guest today and she believes in the power of the human spirit to overcome, to thrive, and to find deep joy, and because of that, she pours out her heart via these platforms. She's the writer behind the site, findingjoy.net, and author of 'The Brave Art of Motherhood', a fantastic book. Her articles have been translated into over 25 languages, her site reaches millions of visitors every month, and she has a robust engaged Facebook community. Her content's been featured in The Huffington Post, iVillage, the Today Show, Star Tribune, NBC Parents, and many more. She speaks worldwide encouraging moms and entrepreneurs to live each day with purpose and drive. Beyond that, she's a single mom to 7 and calls Nashville, Tennessee her home. Welcome to Vibrant Happy Women, Rachel.

R: Well, thank you for having me, I'm excited to chat today.

J: I am too, I am too. And I know you have a really fantastic quote for us, what is that?

R: Well, I have 2 quotes, so I'm going to share with you that... because you love the quote that kind of inspires my our lives, and it's actually the one that drives me is one by Eleanor Roosevelt that says, "Do one thing every day that scares you." But I have to add to that that in my room, my office next to that, I have another quote that says, "Do one thing every day that makes you happy."

J: Mm.

R: And I think that there's profound truth in both of those being side by side. And sometimes the things that scare us, the things that make us fearful, that make us pause, are actually the places in life that can make us deeply happy, we just have to take that step.

J: Mm-hmm, those are great, "Scares you and makes you happy," they are good side-by-side ones, for sure.

R: Yeah, they are, I didn't even realize that they were side-by-side until my... I think it was my twelve year old said to me, "Do you know, mom, that you have those 2 quotes that are almost the same except for one word?" and I thought, "Oh, interesting."

J: Yeah, really, really. Well, how have you followed that quote in your life, or those quotes, I guess, the 2 of them?

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R: Well, I started realizing that I was kind of a slave to fear for many of my years, and I didn't want to admit it because that seems fearful admitting it, so it was a dichotomy there. But all of a sudden, there was a day in my life probably about 10 years ago where I realized life is going to pass me by no matter what, and it's my job to either decide to live life with full intention and really grab the days that I have or just allow it to pass by. And the older I got, you know, there's more that you come face-to-face with. I had had friends that were in their 30s that died from cancer with young kids, and I remember thinking like, "I don't know the number of days that I have, and for me to live thinking I'll put off till tomorrow doing the things I love and want to do or that make me happy is almost being foolish. It's assuming that I'm going to get to live to be 80." And I decided to no longer live with that assumption but to live with this kind of tenacious desire that Eleanor Roosevelt really talks about when she says, "Do something every day that scares you." There's oftentimes little things that can scare us, it's not like we have to jump from a plane. Sometimes, it's just making a tough phone call or deciding to change one thing in our life. And actually, those things can become (like we talked in the beginning) places of great happiness and joy.

J: So name a couple of things that have scared you that you did anyway, just give us some examples.

R: I went to Haiti to document a mission trip on my own. Most people that go to Haiti go with a group of people. This is the first time that I had ever traveled out of the country and I had an opportunity, because my site had grown, to do that. And it terrified me, but it became one of the most profound and life-changing places actually in my entire life. Moving to Tennessee from live... I grew up in Minneapolis, lived there my entire life. But 2-and-a-half years ago, I decided to do the hard thing, sold most of my stuff, packed everything up, drove a 28-foot Penske truck in the middle of the winter through Wisconsin and Illinois and moved to Tennessee, and it's been an enormous blessing.

J: Wow! And you had all your kids with you? (Laughs)

R: I did, I did. And it was one of those days where, the night before, you could hear, it was the Alberta clipper wind roaring through Minnesota at that time, and I remember thinking, "How am I going to drive that truck?" And there were all these advisories for vehicles because of the wind. And the entire time driving it, I was terrified of it honestly, but I just remember gripping the wheel, driving through Wisconsin, trying to keep it on the road. And as time went on, I started to actually love the experience of driving this truck. I'd wave at truck... semi-truck drivers, it was just... and by the time we got to Kentucky and almost to Tennessee, I thought to myself how this was an amazing experience that I had in my bucket list of life and how much I enjoyed learning about the nuances of driving a giant truck across country.

J: Yeah, oh, that's awesome, and seeing the good out of it; I love that. Well, let's dive into your story of having 7 kids, being a single mom and, you know, your low point in general and how you and your experience of that.

R: Well, I do have 7 kids. A lot of times people will ask me many questions, "Really? You have 7 kids?" and I'll say, "Yes, yes I do," and then, you know, it's "they're the greatest joys of my life and they're a ton of work". And I don't think that most of us ever go into parenthood thinking, "You know what? One day, I want to do this all on my own."

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J: (Laughs)

R: I think we all go in with this ideal image of what we like and what we want. And oftentimes, life happens and there are different stories that happen. I wrote a quote about how sometimes life, you have to learn to find joy in the story that you're living because it doesn't look like that picture of what you wanted. And if someone had told me 24 years ago that I'd be a single mom, I would have said, "No way, no way." But for the last 6 and a half years, that's been my story. I went through a really challenging divorce and came face to face with some pretty severe financial issues that I had hid behind and I felt a lot of shame with. And in those days, I came face to face with, "Do I ignore this or do I stand up and take care of it, not knowing all the answers but teaching my kids that we can do hard things and we can we can change situations that seem unchangeable?" So that story of being a single mom like in that space, as challenging as it is, it's also been one of the most... the places that I've the most pride because it's been a place where I decided to not back down, where I decided, "I'm just going to put myself out there and not allow labels or shame to define."

J: Mm. So what kind of shame do you think a lot of women are feeling for divorce? I mean, where is it coming from; themselves, other people?

R: I think it comes from all over the place. Most often, we can say it's everybody else that puts the shame on, but I deeply believe that we are our own strongest critic.

J: Mm-hmm.

R: And at least for myself, I tend to think, "What are they thinking about me? Oh, I've let people down." And that voice, that criticism, that, "Oh, you're not good enough. Oh, look, you failed," or all of that, it can be so deafening that it takes a lot of, I would say diligence and personal introspection to say, "You know what? I am worth not allowing those thoughts to define who I am anymore."

J: Mm-hmm. And I've had some struggles with my kid my 2 oldest teenagers, as well as marriage; and in the past more so. But I feel like sometimes, you just have to turn the shame off. Sometimes you get tired of being in that energy and you just say, "Nope, I'm not going there." Did that happen for you as well?

R: It really did. I don't know if it was getting close to being 40 and now I'm over 40, but all of a sudden at a certain place, I was like, "I don't want to live with shame anymore. I don't want to live with that own inner critic voice defining what I can do," because oftentimes, shame, it distorts the truth, it denies truth. And the truth is that we are stronger and more capable than oftentimes we even think, and we can have this life of happiness despite the circumstances that are around us.

J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So you went to Nashville, right?

R: Yes, I'm in Nashville.

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J: Okay.

R: Oh, and everybody wants to visit, they're like, "You live in Nashville?" I'm like, "Yes, I do."

[Laughter]

J: Well, so why Nashville from Minnesota? Curious.

R: So my business partner, Dan, lives in Nashville. And I had he and I started a company about 6 and a half years ago where we trained entrepreneurs, bloggers, podcasters how to be successful. And when I would travel, oftentimes I would fly to Nashville and we would drive to different places. We'd drive to Atlanta and teach and train or I'd come here for a week to work. And when I knew the flight pattern coming into Nashville, I thought, "Wow, it's intriguing because I had this second home." And the other reason was I knew I needed to give my children a fresh start, a clean slate. I had given myself it, but their life shifted in such a way to that I needed to give them the opportunity to rediscover their own heart, to rediscover who they were. And since I already had become familiar with Nashville, I knew that the move would be still hard, but a little bit easier than going somewhere where we knew nobody.

J: So you moved to Nashville, you're divorced, how did your kids settle in once you got there?

R: Well, they were resistant in the beginning because it was new, because we were leaving everything we ever knew. But now, it's been about 2 and a half years and my daughter that's here who's a senior in high school, she actually wrote this paper for her Comp class about how one of the best things that ever happened was that I was... she said that I was brave and decided to move the family to Nashville because it allowed her to see the world in a different way. And it's been this unbelievably healing experience for my kids where I've been able to observe them. It kind of blossomed into this newness of who they are and their identity, and where they've been free to no longer live with the past paradigms, but really discover their own hearts as well.

J: Mm, that's beautiful. Well, tell us more about, you know, your low point. It sounds like you just weathered it with... like a champ. So what's been going on since with that move and since settling in in Nashville?

R: Well, let's see, there's been lots going on. I've written a book since I've moved to Nashville, that's probably been my primary story since I've been here was still speaking, still writing my website, but in the process, writing a book. And for me when I was writing it, I didn't want it to be kind of on the surface, I really wanted it to be about, "How do you change your life when the circumstances of your life seemed to keep you stuck?" or, "How do you find happiness in motherhood when you've lost that who you are anymore?"

J: Mm.

R: And so in order to write it, I actually had to go back into the mindset of myself when I was in those

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super low points. Because I really believed a lot of books are written with the perspective looking back and they miss like, "What was it that made me change my mind?" Because there was a certain point where I had dealt with such severity in finances where somebody would come to turn off my gas, and yet the next day, I published an e-book; there had to have been a mindset shift. So I would go back into that mindset of then, try to figure out, "How did I get the bravery in that moment to deal with this devastating moment and yet have the faith to do something that could change my life?" So I wrote that. And bless my family and friends that were here because, when you go back into the stuff, I probably was ultra-moody for a good year because I really wanted to understand the mindset shift, that mental place. Because I knew if a mom is reading this and they're in that spot, they don't need the surface answers, they need to have somebody write something where they go, "She gets it and she went through it."

J: Yeah. So you're speaking of moms in general, so tell us more about how the book could help the average mom find herself or, you know, be a joy... (let's see, what's the title? Let me say that better) have a Brave Heart of Motherhood? I want that. (Laughs)

R: Yes.

J: Makes think of the movie, 'Braveheart'. (Laughs)

R: Yeah. Well, it's 'Brave Art' actually.

J: 'Brave Art', okay.

R: Yes.

J: Let me say that again then, 'The Brave Art of Motherhood', okay, got it.

R: Yeah. Well, and people asked about the title. So 'The Brave Art of Motherhood', first of all, I think moms are incredibly brave, we tend to not even see that as part of ourselves, we think, "Oh, that's reserved for other people." But if you've ever stayed up all night, been completely exhausted, cleaned up if your kids are sick and then got them ready for school, there's a level of deep bravery there in that pushing through and moving forward. And the art part is, I always tell moms to imagine going to a painting, one of those paint and sip classes, and there's an instructor up front and everybody's painting and nobody's painting looks the same, and yet they're profoundly beautiful. Like, somebody could have a really cool water part and somebody else's could be a mess or somebody's mountains and all of that. And what's the cool part is we're all painting, we're all trying to do the same story of motherhood, trying to be the best moms who can be, but nobody's looks the same. And that's what's beautiful about it is, in a world of social media where everybody seems like we should all be the same, I really wanted to say we can all have beautiful, different stories. Maybe sometimes someone sees and hears as stronger than somebody else's, but we can support each other in the journey. You know, at the end of those painting classes, everybody is loving everybody else's painting, nobody is saying, "Mm, you totally failed," and that's this camaraderie of what I would have wrote... written about.

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So the book really talks about agreements that we've made about life and makes us look at ourselves, makes us take a moment and be introspective. And then the middle section, I kind of call it the kick in the pants because sometimes you need a friend that says, "Listen, you deserve to stand up and run, I'm going to run with you." And it looks at excuses that we give ourselves. And some of them, for me, were like the excuse of being busy. I'm profoundly good at being busy. I am so good at it, but oftentimes when I was needing to change my life, I was busy in places that I probably didn't need to be busy in, I needed to redirect my busy. Talked about often times moms will say, "If this happens, then I can do something. If the money was fixed, then I can volunteer. If this happens, then I can be happy." And it really goes through identifying those gently and then how to break them. And then the last part is about, "How to create... how do you actually live this out?" So a lot of times, I think we get the words about, "Hey, here's what you're thinking, here's what you should change," the last part is, "How do you do it and how do you do it with friends?" because that's the biggest call for me is I think as women and moms that we do a disservice when we try to do life alone. And for no time in history do I ever think that women were, like, on their own mothering, and in this generation, this culture, it's so easy to be isolated. So I wanted to change the culture to say, "You need to be the friend to others that you need to yourself."

J: Ooh, I love that. Well, so I was recently talking to another mom, not a close friend but an acquaintance, and she was talking about the reason her kids had turned out is because she had devoted her entire life to them. And I know that all the other moms in the room...

R: Right.

J: ... who are thinking, "Yeah, we devoted our lives too and we have some different outcomes." (Laughs)

R: Right, right.

J: What are your thoughts on that in relation to your book?

R: Well, I did chuckle right then because I will tell moms all the time, "Our children... we could be the best mom in the world and our children, because they are independent free spirits with their own minds, can make the worst choices in the world, and it's not a reflection on our goodness as moms." And I think that's a very hard pill to swallow sometimes. Like, sometimes if my 13 year old, I get a note from the teacher saying, you know, his homework is late again and all this, it's really easy for me to go, "Wow, I have failed," and to exempt the idea that, "This is a this is an independent person and it's my job to guide him or her the best I can, to love them and to show up." And at a certain point, my oldest is 23 where I have to be... be their mom, love them, but also let them go and be their own independent adult. And, that's amazing, I always say, "High-5 to you if you've got that story, I can love it."

J: Yeah.

R: And I can love the mom who's broken too, whose kids have disowned her or she's going through a traumatic time. Because I can tell you this, they have both started this story wanting the best for their kids and to be the best mom that they can be.

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J: Exactly. Another friend of mine, her name's Gina, she was saying that kids are like orchids or dandelions. Dandelions are resilient, they're going to turn out how they're going to turn out, whereas the orchids, which would be about 20% of kids, they're going to be really influenced by their setting, their parents, you know, all the things. And I thought, "Oh, that could help if we decide, 'Are we raising orchids or dandelions?'" (Laughs)

R: That is so good.

J: I don't know, I just thought that was so fascinating.

R: Where moms, where I see them struggle is that the idea that they don't take time for themselves because of guilt, I don't know if you've had that topic talked about before too...

J: Okay. Well, let's talk a little bit about mom guilt. So Rachel, tell us a time when you felt incredibly guilty or sad as a mom and kind of take us into the emotions of that experience and how you shifted past that.

R: Well, I've had a couple experiences with mom guilt. Sometimes, it's a place where it's a reminder. Oftentimes we think... I think we should learn from mom guilt first of all. It's very easy to dismiss emotions and to say, "Oh, don't feel it." One time, I felt... remember feeling mom guilt because there was a game that my son wanted to play, and all weekend, I kept putting it off, putting it off, "I'll get to it in a little bit, Sam, I'll get to it in a little bit." And then comes Monday morning and he had not only... he actually packed up the game and I thought, "Ugh." Like, it was that type of guilt where I realized my agenda, I just put him off and off and off. So I learned from it. When he came home from school, we played the game, we moved on; it was a lesson. There was another time where... when I would travel a lot, I would travel and speak, I remember being on a plane from Kansas City going back to Minneapolis and crying as the plane took off because I felt this guilt about not being home and working. And for most of my parent journey, before that, I was a stay-at-home mom. And then I remembered, I tell this story about my grandfather. My grandpa and grandma were farmers in southern Minnesota, and when I was a little girl, I'd go to visit them during the harvest. And I rarely saw my grandpa and my grandma was always in the kitchen working, prepping food for everybody that was harvesting. But even as a little girl, I never doubted that my grandma and grandpa loved me, like I always knew they truly did love me, it was just the harvest time. And sometimes as moms, we're in a season of harvest. We're in a time where we have to work or we have to clean the kitchen or we have to say no to them. And when we allow mom guilt to kind of creep into those moments, we're distorting, we're losing the beautiful part of loving our kids so much that we're willing to sacrifice for them. So I want us to be careful with mom guilt because in that way because it's okay to have to do those hard things. The opposite of it, I would say, is if you didn't work, the guilt of not being able to provide would be exponentially worse.

J: Mm-hmm.

R: And I just want us to have this little bit of grace where we go, "You know what? It's okay, it's okay to work, or even more, it's okay to take time for myself." Because sometimes, and I don't know if you have

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this, but you decide, "I'm going to go for a walk. I'm going to take time for myself," and you get going, and immediately, it's like the inner dialogue starts, "You know what? You should be doing this. You know what? Did you take the kids... did you play that game? Did you clean?" I mean, and it just starts as kind of chipping away and we start feeling guilty about taking time for ourselves. Yet, I would say, if you do ever feel guilty about taking time and, you know, that when the gas tank on your car says empty, you don't think, "You know what? I'm just going to push it for the next 40 miles."

J: (Laughs) Yeah.

R: Because you know, you absolutely know you're going to run out of gas. Yet sometimes with our own self, we're like, "You know what? I'm just going to push it just a little bit more," and then we kind of deny ourselves and then we feel guilty for fueling our tank. So I want to be like this voice to reverse the culture, "It's good, you're a better mom when you fuel your tank, when you give back to yourself. And not only that, is you teach your kids the importance of self-care, fueling tank, rest and all of that."

J: Exactly. I was just going to say, when I go on a walk, I don't let myself ever go into guilt. In fact, I think, "Ah, I'm showing my kids, especially my daughters, to take care of themselves so that they don't have to hit the burnout point I hit earlier..." (Laughs)

R: Amen to that.

J: Yeah, for sure, for sure; well, this is awesome. And what would be another point you could share with us from 'The Brave Art of Motherhood'?

R: Well, let me think.

J: Or a favorite story.

R: I have to think because I'd wrote the book in a like a parable way because I think that's how we learn best is a bunch of stories. And I wrote it sharing a story with the analogy of truth. And, you know, I think a lot of us moms deal with perfectionism too.

J: Yes.

R: And I've struggled with my whole life, my parents knew it. And my daughter, Grace (which I joke about in the book), my daughter, Grace, has taught me grace. I don't know for you... with you or anybody listening is oftentimes, the names of my children are exactly what I need to know and learn or a space in my life, and Grace has taught me so much grace.

J: Mm.

R: And she has taught me about perfectionism. And one of her lessons that was so profound, it happened when I was writing the book, is we were working on homework and I was looking at grades and

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she said to me, "Do you know, mom, at the end of the semester," (because she's in high school), she said, "my 93 A is the same as my 100 A?" And I thought, "Wow, there is a lot of like freedom for somebody that's a perfectionist in that statement."

J: Mm-hmm.

R: And she knew that in order to get her 4.0, that she didn't need to get all 100's, she knew that if she could keep this one at a 93 or 94, she could devote the energy into the others. And a lot of times as a mom, as a single mom, if I was to strive to get everything perfect all the time, I would get nowhere; it would be like spinning my wheels. So I think about Grace with that statement of, "I'm going to try my best, but at the end, if it's a 93, it's good enough to get me the A."

J: Yeah, I love that, it's like the 80/20 rule. Let's shoot for 80% perfection, not 100; or 93% in your case. (Laughs)

R: Right, I'm a 93 A gal, yeah.

J: Yeah, yeah.

R: No, but it's... it's so true because, I mean, I can get stuck in just with writing or all of that. And sometimes as a writer, if I make it too perfect, it doesn't relate because it's too perfect. And so I have learned at a certain point just to let it go, and I've also learned that, if I make a mistake like spell a word wrong, use the wrong 'there' because I'm writing, somebody will let me know very quickly.

J: Right.

R: And it doesn't necessarily need to be a bad thing. It doesn't need to be a grade of like, "Wow, you messed up," it can just be this element of being real. And I think there's this beauty in... as a writer or as a mom in being willing to have those parts of us that aren't so perfect-looking together because it creates that camaraderie that we all need.

J: Mm-hmm, so, so true, to let go of that and just be human really. (Laughs)

R: Oh, I celebrate being human. I've learned that if your friend comes over and you apologize for your house being normal (which, in my case, when the kids come home from school, it means backpacks, places stuff on the table, probably dishes on the counter), if I apologize if you come over, I have set the precedent that you have to apologize when I come over or have it all tidied up to a certain degree. So I would say just invite people into your real and don't apologize for just being real because we all have that, like there's no way to get through motherhood without a messy sink.

J: Mm-hmm, for sure, for sure, giving other people permission to do the same, exactly.

R: Yes.

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J: Well, let's have a quick break for our sponsor and then we'll come back and talk about all of your favorite things.

Alright, welcome back, everyone. We're going to talk about your favorite things, if that's okay, Rachel.

R: I would love that.

J: Alright. So this is always what moms want to know, to be a fly on the wall in another mom's house, what does your morning or bedtime routine, or both, what do those look like in your life?

R: Well, it's crazy definitely, but I have learned this one thing: is I control how I enter social media. I used to wake up... because my alarm is on my phone, wake up and then immediately look at social or immediately look at my email. And I realized that I became a passive participant in everybody else's world. I think it was Brendon Burchard talks about that when you go into Gmail, that you're immediately a slave to everybody else's agendas. And it stuck with me and it's made me think about social media. So when I wake up, I intentionally choose to not go onto social media or any of that until the kids are in school and everything else is ready, and then I enter into the social media world on my own terms.

J: Ah, yeah, that makes so much more sense. You then get the important things done, rather than those urgent email things.

R: Well, and I think too is, whether we believe it or not, but you go onto Facebook, you're immediately inundated into everybody else's worlds.

J: Mm-hmm.

R: And I'm a huge supporter of like cheering and high-fiving everybody and loving everybody's accomplishments, but sometimes they can almost make you (if you're not mentally prepared) feel like you're a step behind or feel like, "Oh, I should have been doing that." And I almost... I started to become aware of all of the emotions that are driven by going into the social world immediately. And it was almost like I wanted to give myself that gift of breadth of perspective of planning my day before I went in and saw what all was going on.

J: Mm, yeah, and knowing where you're headed instead of getting lost in the flow of someone else's river.

R: (Laughs) Yes, that's so true.

J: Oh yeah. So what else do you do in the morning to kind of fill your cup as you start the day?

R: There's a meditative app (I can't even think of the name of it) that I love. If I use that every day, it's just that level of mindfulness. And then, I like to read a book...

J: Oh yeah.

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R: ... actual physical book. And I set the timer because I get anxious because I think, "I've got so much to do." And then when it's warm, I do run, and running is an amazing way for me to kind of clear my head and to push myself in ways that I didn't think I could do.

J: Mm-hmm.

R: Because, for many years, I thought... I told myself, "You could never run. You could never run, Rachel..."

J: (Laughs)

R: "... because you're a group player, like you like basketball." And I convinced myself, I wrote about this too, like I convinced myself, "You can't run." And then where I live in Tennessee, there's a beautiful walking trail, and every morning when I drop off the kids to school, I'd see all these people running. And all of a sudden, one day, I had this thought, "What if you ran?" and I decided to follow that and I started running. And I tell people all the time with goal-setting that my goal isn't to wake up and run 2 miles, my goal is to put my shoes on, go down my stairs and go out past my mailbox, because if I get to that spot, I'll run the 2 miles. But oftentimes, if I wake up and think, "You're going to run 2 miles," I'll just tell myself, "You're too busy."

J: Yeah, yeah.

R: So I make micro goals.

J: Yeah. And then once you to start the micro goal, it will end up being longer anyway. (Laughs)

R: Right, exactly.

J: Yeah.

R: Exactly.

J: What's your favorite happiness tool or one of them?

R: My favorite happiness tool it's music, hands down, music. I tell... if you think about your favorite movies, there's a beautiful soundtrack that goes with it. And if laundry is daunting, I'll tell people to put Adele's 'Skyfall' on while you're folding laundry and it will feel like the most awesome experience ever as you're folding those socks. And music, to me, can be this unbelievable way to redirect focus, whether it's to energize yourself or to calm you down or just to give a little bit of perspective. Music, for me, is hands-down my favorite happiness tool.

J: And your favorite easy meal.

R: Okay, you're going to laugh, because I know that you asked for recipe, but here's my breath of per-

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mission to moms. My favorite easy meal is to walk into Kroger, to go over to the easy meals that are prepared for you in the refrigerated section where the... where everything's diced for you and the garlic is ready, and I'll make that. And I used to feel guilty about that like, "You know what? If you..." I would hear myself say, "If you were a good mom, you'd walk around and get all these ingredients."

J: (Laughs)

R: And I realized I am a good mom when I realize my own boundaries and limitations and what season I'm in. I'm preparing them a meal with fresh vegetables, somebody else may have chopped it, but I'm taking 20 minutes and finishing it...

J: Yeah.

R: ... and my kids love it, and that is my favorite thing to do.

J: Okay, you just blew my mind actually. Okay, we all know about the box meals that come prepared, but this exists in regular grocery stores? How have I missed this? (Laughs)

R: It is so brand new... so, like I said, I live in Nashville so Kroger and Publix here have these like meals that are pretty much already prepared like... and it's like it's a kit. So I feel like I'm a chef, my kids are like, "Look at you, you're the chef!" And... but it's pretty much all ready for me and I just sauté it and cook the rice and the kids think it's amazing.

J: Wow. Is it cheaper than the box subscriptions or have you compared?

R: I think it's about the same.

J: Uh-huh.

R: And it's sometimes, I look at it and think, "Wow, it's \$15 or 20 or something," but I've also realized that there are seasons for it and I'm trading time, I'm actually trading time for convenience at that place. And honestly, it's a good thing, like I've realized there's a lot of freedom in that moment of deciding, "Tonight, this is what I'm going to do."

J: Mm-hmm, that is so great. I can't wait to see if we have it here. (Laughs)

R: You know, it's awesome, it's... and I've saved a couple. My kids will be like, "Could you make that stir fry again?" and I'm like, "Sure, we can do that." (Laughs)

J: Yeah, that's easy, cool. What's your favorite life hack; little random trick that helps you?

R: Cleaning my kitchen the night before.

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J: Ooh, that's a good one.

R: I learned that probably 10, 15 years ago, there was a lady on the internet; I think she's still there, Fly-Lady.

J: Oh, I know her, I know her. (Laughs)

R: Yes, I have met her before too, and she used to do... she was brilliant; she had an email subscription service before social was anything. And one of her thing was, "Shine your kitchen sink before you go to bed," and that changed my life; one simple thing every night cleaning my kitchen sink. Because when I wake in the morning and my kitchen sink is clean, I feel like, "Alright, I'm already ahead."

J: Yeah, oh, that's a good one, that's a good one, for sure. Favorite book.

R: It's called 'One Year Off', it's written by David Cohen. It was written late 1990s, and it's about a family that decides to sell everything and travel the world. They sold all they had in San Francisco, and it documents when they lived in France and when they went to Cambodia and Australia. And it's a great story, but what I also love about it is the possibility that you don't have to stay boxed into a norm that the culture tells you need to do, you can do this and experience things that you didn't even imagine.

J: Hmm. Are you thinking about doing it? Not yet. (Laughs)

R: Not yet, I did travel. I did... I've gone to New Zealand, spoken there a couple times, I've gone to Haiti. And I'd like my kids to have that experience of understanding that there... that the world isn't just isolated to where they live now. Which is partially what I loved about moving from Minneapolis to Nashville is, culturally, it's very, very different. My kids sound different than the kids that live here in Tennessee, they just have that Minnesotan voice. And it's just been these cool nuances, even learning that the cart at the grocery store, they call it a buggy here.

J: Ah.

R: And I want my kids to have the experience of, "Wow, everything isn't the same," and where they can learn to respect the differences in that way.

J: Mm-hmm, that's smart. And here, water fountains are called bubblers. Isn't that the strangest thing ever?

R: It is.

J: Did you have that in Minnesota too?

R: So I didn't, we called them water fountains, but I had a perfect teacher in high school that was from Milwaukee...

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J: Yeah.

R: ... and he would call it the bubbler. And I just would... I would chuckle.

J: (Laughs)

R: But, you know, it's the difference between pop and soda.

J: Yeah.

R: It's all those different little nuances, the way you say caramel or caramél, it's fascinating just the difference in language in 1000 miles.

J: For sure. Well, what does it mean for you to be a vibrant happy woman?

R: It means really embracing today, the gift of today and planning for the future. You can learn from the past, but it's this kind of tension between really loving the moments that we get to live and living with vibrancy and intentionality for what we possibly could get to live in tomorrow.

J: Mm, that's beautiful. And let's have a challenge from you to our listeners as we close.

R: Well, what I would love to challenge everybody to do is to take the one thing on their to-do list that they keep putting off keep rolling over to the next day and doing it today. Because I can guarantee you that, not only will getting it off the to-do list give you margin and space, but it's also a level of bravery of finally accomplishing the thing that you've been putting off doing.

J: Beautiful, do it today, "Eat that frog," as my friend says.

R: I love that quote, it's so true.

J: (Laughs) Well, this has been amazing. Everyone, go get your hands on 'The Brave Art of Motherhood' by Rachel Martin. You've been a fantastic guest, thank you so much for being on the show, Rachel.

R: Thank you, it was very fun.

J: Take care.

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