

[00:00:00.160] - Lisa Qualls

Hey, friends. Welcome to episode 205. We are so happy you're here with us today. We are looking toward the end of 2022, and we thought it would be great to sort of recap a little bit of the year and reflect a little bit on both of our lives and what's happened in 2022. I think we both have experienced the value of reflection. We both work with spiritual directors, and I know my spiritual director is always moving me toward pausing. We tend to just rush on through life, and she's always encouraging me, pause, reflect. What was good, what was not? What do you want to continue? What don't you? I mean and a lot of deeper questions too. So we were chatting about this this morning, and to be honest, this is spontaneous. This is like if Melissa and I didn't live across the country from each other, and we were getting together for coffee, and we're like, hey, let's use this time in a meaningful way. Let's talk about 2022. So here we are, just talking about 2022 with no preparation.

[00:01:08.760] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. And reflection is really hard for me because I am moving quickly. I'm always looking towards the next thing. So when Lisa says, we thought this would be a good idea, what she means is she thought it would be a good idea. And I know that it is a good idea, but it's like one of those things where, you know, you're like, oh, that sounds hard, and then you're like, which means I should probably do it right? So, Lisa, what have you learned in 2022?

[00:01:36.790] - Lisa Qualls

Oh, my goodness. I feel like I've learned so very many things, but it's hard for me to narrow down. Okay, I'll tell you what. I actually need to think about it a little bit more. So why don't you answer first? Melissa, what did you learn in 2022?

[00:01:54.640] - Melissa Corkum

I learned a lot about grief. So we lost my dad in April. That was the first person in my cognitive explicit memory who was a daily part of my life to lose someone in that capacity. So that has not been a fun learning journey, but I think it's been a healthy one, and I think it's helped me think through a lot of things about other types of grief that we've talked about here on the podcast, like ambiguous loss and disenfranchised grief, and all of those things. I have also started doing something that I actually swore, like, I would never do, which we all know is a really good formula for meaning that you're probably going to have to do that at some point in time. At least that's the way my life goes. And I started working with adoptees, and so that has been a huge learning space. And I am an adoptee, and I always am saying here on the podcast, we need to honor every individual story and follow our kid's leads. And so even though I have lived experience in the space, that's one piece of the puzzle. And so it's been really such a challenging journey, but also really rewarding to be in spaces with other adoptees, both as a participant in groups and then also I've been leading some small groups through enneagram material, and that is really fun to me, too.

[00:03:28.920] - Lisa Qualls

I've loved seeing you develop that because you have all this that you bring. We're so used to supporting adoptive parents, but you bring so much as an adoptee in your experience and your knowledge that I'm really, really glad that you've branched into that. We've talked about in the past that I'm a first mom, birth mom, and every time I think about, should I expand into that space, it's too painful. I don't think I'm in a place even after decades, the loss is still so profound that I don't know that I'm the person to do that right now. Like Suzanne Stabile says, what is yours to do? What is mine to do? She asks that question. And every time I think about offering support to birth moms, I'm like, Is that mine to do? Maybe not yet. Maybe someday, but not yet. But I do love that you are doing that.

[00:04:23.260] - Melissa Corkum

Well, I'm putting my spiritual direction hat on, Lisa, not because I am one, but because I am mentored by one. And I can hear my spiritual director saying to you, like, what's the invitation in that for you, Lisa? And then, what's the next thing if it's not to jump into that space?

[00:04:41.440] - Lisa Qualls

I think the invitation in that is probably for me to continue to process my grief, even though it feels scary. For me, grief has been so much part of my journey as an adoptive mom. And not to go too dark

and heavy here, because that's not really the point of this episode. But grief is, the thing about grief. It's interesting that we're both talking about grief, but I think that is an important point to note that we are shaped and changed by grief, and it is a profound experience. And so for me, I find myself wanting to weave more and more of grief work into the work I do with adoptive parents because there are losses, and we've talked about that before. The invitation for me, I think as 2022 is coming to a close, I think I'm in the process of becoming a spiritual director. My spiritual director says I am a spiritual director, and I'm working toward embracing that and saying, yes, I'm a spiritual director. And I'm going through this program. I think the invitation for me is to really explore more about grief, my own and other people's, and be prepared to support people through that in my work as a spiritual director and as a parent coach. Yeah. So I'd say that...

[00:06:08.020] - Melissa Corkum

So that's what you're learning in 2022, because you started your spiritual director program.

[00:06:11.760] - Lisa Qualls

I did. And actually, when we were talking, as you were talking, I thought, okay, this is what I learned. I learned that obviously, I know that we cannot all do it all. But 2022 for me was a year of saying no to so many things. It was a year of clarifying that pretty much I need to really focus on my family, and this spiritual direction program and then some of the work that you and I are doing together. Like, I had to sort of narrow it down, and I don't like missing out on things. I'm not as bad as you are, Melissa. Like, you really can't stand to miss out. But I don't like missing out and having to cancel things and say no. Like, every time a speaker request would come in, I'd be like, oh, maybe I can do it. And finally, I had to just realize for 2022, my answer has to be no, because my family had so much going on. We had a wedding. We had two weddings, sort of, the same daughter, but a wedding in the US. A wedding in the UK. And two grandbabies and two new grandbabies, and those things right there.

[00:07:18.820] - Lisa Qualls

And then a very special trip with my mom and sister. So there were so many very big family things that I had to just step back from almost anything that took me away from home very much. That's been hard for me. But what I learned is it's okay. It's okay to step back. And there's a part of me that fear that's like, oh, if I say too many no's, nobody's ever going to ask me again kind of thing. But that's not true, because I know the Lord will bring exactly what he wants me to do into my life, which will end up on my calendar. I don't have to I don't have to worry. Like, I can just trust. And right now, my family's needs are really intense, so I need to be okay with that. So I'd say that's one of the biggest things I've learned is it's okay to say no. And even if it means I miss out on things that I wish I could do, that I want to do, and it's okay to say a whole lot of yeses to my family, because there are things that won't ever come again with my family.

[00:08:23.510] - Lisa Qualls

These two beautiful granddaughters I have, saying yes to canceling everything else so I could be present for my daughters and their new children. And saying yes to traveling to the UK. Which sounds really, really fun, but it was a huge deal to manage. But traveling to the UK. And just all these different things. So I'm learning to be better. As I'm talking, it's all coming clear. I'm becoming better.

[00:08:49.170] - Melissa Corkum

This is why it's important to reflect, right?

[00:08:51.640] - Lisa Qualls

We were having coffee. Everybody's probably listening, saying, okay, we get it. We get it. You learn to say no, and you learn to say yes. But that is essentially what I learned. I learned to be better at saying no to what I need to say no to, and yes to what I do.

[00:09:03.630] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. I would say I am also doing that, and it's simple and yet very hard.

[00:09:09.900] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, it really is. So, I mean, for all of you listening, it's an important thing to reflect on, being clear. Like Suzanne says, I always think of this. What is mine to do? What are the things that God is leading me to say yes to coming up in the future? Like, as we're looking toward 2023, and what is he leading me to say no to? And it doesn't have to be no forever. Maybe it's just no. Like, for me, it was no for 2022 on a bajillion things that felt like, in order to say yes to what was most important.

[00:09:41.810] - Melissa Corkum

When we ask questions like this, I immediately go to my head. I'm thinking, well, what am I being invited to? What did I learn? And as you're talking and as I'm coming off of a meeting with my spiritual director, I'm thinking, man, these would be great prayers. God, what was I supposed to take away from 2022? Or, God, what are you inviting me into into this next year? Or what should I be saying no to? She also spends a lot of time trying to get me back into my body and my heart. Right, so what's your heart saying? Or when you think about those things, where do you feel it in your body?

[00:10:20.130] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah. Where do you feel in your body? Yeah. I think I learn a lot by writing, so sometimes just simple lists, like, what do I feel God is leading me to say no to? What do I feel God is leading me to say yes to? Just literally, like, brain dumping it out and saying, okay, Lord, give me clarity. What are my yeses? What are my nos? What did I say yes to in 2022? That probably should have been a no? How did that feel, and what can I learn from that? So I do think there are a lot of opportunities for reflection. Okay, I'm going to ask you a question now. When did you experience God's kindness in 2022? Toss a few off the top of your head.

[00:11:05.730] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. Such a good thing. So connected to my dad's death in April. He actually passed away on a Thursday morning, and our son was scheduled to get married in our backyard two days later. So that Saturday. Which is crazy, and we pulled it off, and it was the right thing to do, but we felt God's kindness in just that day. Like, April in the mid Atlantic is kind of a toss up, like, weather wise. April showers bring May flowers, right? Like, it could have been this disaster of a rainy day, and it was gorgeous. It was, like, the perfect temperature. There was sun in the sky, and it just made everything feel like it could go smoother. So I felt like there was a ton of kindness in that, being just, like, feeling like the perfect day. Because there's really nothing we could actually do about the weather, obviously. There's just been a lot of little things. Like, to say them out loud would be kind of weird, but just little things. I thought, like, man, it would be really great if this little thing this little thing would make my life easier, and then it just would be there.

[00:12:18.040] - Melissa Corkum

I feel like God provided in these lots of little ways. And I know he stretches us in seasons, but I did feel like a lot of this year was, like, the kindness of not too much outside of dad being sick and losing him. But there were a lot of other, like, just really sweet, beautiful moments with our family, with our granddaughter, with other family. And so all mixed into all the other tricky things of being in this sandwich generation. I'm in that stage where we're still actively parenting. We have two grandkids, so there's like, that extra level, and we have parents who have more and more needs, which is tricky.

[00:13:06.040] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, definitely. I mean, I'm definitely in that position as well. I was thinking what popped into my head when you were talking, Melissa, is just the unexpected kindness of God with your family's embracing this cornhole and your son being able to do it with your husband.

[00:13:22.830] - Melissa Corkum

Cornhole is a kindness in 2022, for sure.

[00:13:25.170] - Lisa Qualls

Yes. And the fact that your 13 year old and your husband and your whole family, but really, the two of them going to tournaments? I mean, what an unexpected, joyful thing.

[00:13:37.460] - Melissa Corkum

So fun. Yeah, it's really been great for all of us. There's actually a tournament on Fridays. It's more of like a community thing. And it's free. So because there's no money involved, I feel like I can participate without pissing anyone off. And so we've done that a couple of times and yeah, I mean, rhythm and repetition, like Hours and hours, Yeah, and relationship. Hours and hours of throwing. And we've made new friends. Like, we are in a neighborhood that has not been super friendly in some ways. Like, I don't know, I think culturally, whatever. And we have a really nasty homeowners association. But we have connected with this family down the street. We had kind of knew them a little bit. Mia has babysat for them before, but it turns out the dad in that family is as obsessed about cornhole as my husband, Patrick. And so it's just been another, like, way sweet connection. They have two little girls who are a little older than Ava, so he'll come up to play cornhole with Patrick. He'll bring his girls up. Now Ava has a playmate, so there's been all these additional pieces of kindness and just super fun.

[00:14:42.410] - Lisa Qualls  
I love it. That's really nice.

[00:14:45.010] - Melissa Corkum  
What about you, Lisa.

[00:14:46.840] - Lisa Qualls  
Oh, gosh, I can come up with a lot of things. This is easier for me than what did I learn? In a way, I think a couple quick things. Obviously, becoming a grandmother. I mean, what an incredible kindness. And maybe I've said this before, but I always expected that I would be a really young grandmother because I started my family young. And as it turns out, all of my adult kids have started, well only two of them have started having family so far. So they're marrying later, they're starting their families later. So I became a grandmother much later than I had imagined I would. And it is so sweet. These baby girls are just so, so sweet. So I just returned from Boston after being with my daughter and son in law when they gave birth to their first baby. And I think I shared before that she had some special medical needs that required them actually to relocate to Boston from their home and give birth to her there. And we just saw the kindness of God in multiple ways, everything from the beautiful birth to how well she has done physically while they've been there, they are still there now.

[00:16:09.990] - Lisa Qualls  
And the other thing I would say maybe above all, and I don't want to get too choked up, but seeing my daughter and her husband just navigate this so beautifully, like my son-in-law, I've gotten to know him in such a deep way after sharing a hotel room and basically living at the hospital. I mean, the three of us with the baby were just at the hospital all the time and seeing just what an incredible father and husband he is. It's just been a huge, huge blessing and a sweet kindness, for sure of the Lord in this year.

[00:16:51.600] - Melissa Corkum  
Isn't it great when our kids pick spouses that we really like love. We have just one kid who's married, and we were just talking about this the other day. They were over and I was like, man, I'm just really glad I like Liz so much. I mean, like, we would obviously welcome in, like, try to support whoever our kids bring home, and sometimes it's more of a stress than others. And we just adore Liz and her son. A kindness too.

[00:17:23.660] - Lisa Qualls  
We have four married kids now, right? Yeah, four. And I adore all their spouses. So I'm really, really, really thankful about that. I did want to share one other thing that was a kindness of the Lord in this year. And to protect the identity, I will have to leave out some details. But we had something really unexpected happen with one of our kids. And you know, as you all who are listening, the healing journey with our children is long. And I think for many of them, the trauma and the attachment wounds are going to be with them throughout their lives. But we had a situation with one of our kids where he made a reckless decision and there was fallout. There were things that had to be dealt with. I think he expected us to be very angry, to kind of react in a harsh way or something, to make his life harder, place a lot of heavy consequences on him. And it actually happened while I was at my spiritual direction program, and I had quite literally told my little spiritual direction triad that I felt like the Lord

was leading me to become a person of peace.

[00:18:40.920] - Lisa Qualls

So I'm talking about becoming a person of peace, like, really embracing that into my soul and being a person who brings peace, because I don't naturally bring peace into situations. I can be a little angsty, as you know, melissa so I'm quite literally processing this, and then I get this phone call about this incident. I feel like the Holy Spirit took Russ and I on a little journey, a parenting journey, something we hadn't experienced before, where we brought peace into a complex situation. And I think we were able to demonstrate love to our Son in ways that we had never been able to before, where we really had his back and we supported Him and we were very reasonable. I think it has opened doors of healing in our relationship that I'm completely... I would say if you'd asked me what surprised me the most in 2022, this is probably it where I am surprised by the power of some healing. And, yeah, that happened in this incident. So I guess maybe God's kindness is he's actually teaching me even still, that I can grow in my faith, that I can learn to listen better, that I can let the Holy Spirit lead me, and that it results in really beautiful fruit.

[00:20:03.180] - Lisa Qualls

So for all of you out there who are thinking my kids are never going to heal, with two of our kids this year, I feel like there's been some pretty profound healing.

[00:20:12.940] - Melissa Corkum

I love hearing that. So, Lisa, what is God inviting you to continue in 2023 when you reflect back on 2022 and then moving into 2023?

[00:20:23.360] - Lisa Qualls

I think he's inviting me to continue to really seek clarity about my yes's and my no's, in order to balance my life in a good way. And to make sure that I am doing the things I'm most called to do. Because, gosh, there's so many wonderful things we could all do, right? I mean, there's so many...

[00:20:46.830] - Melissa Corkum

Tell me about it! So many ideas.

[00:20:48.250] - Lisa Qualls

And the problem is, it really I do not do well when I'm spread really thin. I do much better when I'm pretty focused. And you have to tell me this all the time. I'll have an idea. And you'll be like, and yes, does that move you toward your goals? No. No, that would be a distraction for us. That big idea that I have would be a distraction from what God has really called us to do coming up in 2023. So, yeah, I think being really good with my yes's and my no's, and I'd say the other thing is just to really continue growing in my walk with the Lord. I mean, I've been following Jesus for decades. And the beautiful thing is we always have a long way to go. I feel like I have a long way to go. But my spiritual director and my program are really pushing me to go deeper in areas that I haven't necessarily explored before. And I'm really excited to be offering spiritual direction to adoptive parents on a very small scale right now. But I'd say those are the things I feel invited. Oh, and to finish our book. And I have another book in the works, so writing, writing, writing. How about you? What is God inviting you to in 2023?

[00:22:06.340] - Melissa Corkum

I think for the last two years, but definitely this year, really leaned into the practice of slowing down, making time for things that I know are good for my body and my spirit. So really prioritizing things like getting out on walks or turning off the car radio. Spending more time in silence, whether that be centering, prayer, or again, just driving in quiet so I can hear my own thoughts and hear God. And so sometimes that doesn't feel, like it used to be that those were the first things to get canceled in my day. Like, if I felt like I had a lot to do, I'd be like, I don't really have time to take a walk, or I don't really have time to get myself to yoga. And I think a combination of being in spiritual direction, and then just my body, like, I feel better, like, I have low back issues now, like, all these things, right? And I'm finding that things like hot yoga help my whole body feel better. It takes some of those aches and pains and all the things that distract me from doing so. Even though it takes, like a chunk of time, it's still really

good.

[00:23:25.330] - Melissa Corkum

So I think I'm going to continue to be a little bit choosier with yes's and no's, to protect the time to care for my nervous system. A couple of years ago, I started being really intentional about saying yes to spending time with family. Because, again, it is easy for me to be the workaholic, to be like, I mean, you all are watching something that I probably wouldn't choose to watch. So you watch that, and I'll like, you know, I'll take my laptop and go in the other room and get some stuff done. And so I was always finding excuses like, yeah, I could do that, but it's not like, what I love to do. So I'll just go do my own thing. And our kids are getting older. PJ and Mia will probably move out in the next couple of years, and we have Ava now. And these years where they still want to hang out with you. And she wants to, you know, like, cuddle in the morning or interrupt my sleeping, my sleep-in Saturday, or whatever.

[00:24:32.960] - Melissa Corkum

Like playing cornhole. Like this last Friday was a perfect example. We have a billion things to do. We're going down to town as soon as we finish recording here. I'm going to miss probably two solid days of the working week driving and this like, long list of stuff to do. And Partick was like, do I go play cornhole with us? And like everything in me was like, no, you guys go. Like, I mean, it meant the house was going to be almost completely quiet. And I just thought like, oh, that sounds so great. And then in my head I was like, no, it's probably really important. Patrick and I have not we've been like passing ships for the last couple of weeks. And I was like, and his love language is time. And I was like, no, you know what? I should go. I should go play cornhole. And we did. And I have things that I really wanted to get done over the weekend that didn't get done and it will be okay. And I think that thing where you have things that you wanted to get done and they kind of fall off. Like either you miss deadlines or just like all of a sudden it sits on your to do list for so long and then you're like, wait, do I really need to do that? Has been really a gift too, because I'm realizing if I don't get to all those things, the world doesn't stop turning. And so it's kind of forced me to say, prioritize those things. Because then I take away the 4 hours alone I had in my house on Friday and now I have this little snippet of time on Saturday to work. And then I have to look at all of the things on the list and be like, okay, well, what's the number one priority?

[00:25:59.360] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, it's been interesting with our work because we've got this deadline with this manuscript. And so every day I just write that on my planner first thing, manuscript. And then if that's all that happens, that and taking care of my family. Then that's what happens, because it is the number one goal right now is to wrap up a really big project. So it's a good feeling. But I understand that pull though. Like, if I ever get a chance to be alone in my house, it's just dreamy. But I also need to set aside all my, this is what I want to accomplish, in order to make time for the people I love. All right. I think we should move in a slightly different direction and talk about some of our favorite things from 2022. This would be impossible to say my very, very favorite, but what is one of your favorite things that you read in 2022?

[00:26:59.200] - Melissa Corkum

I really loved the *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*. I think it's like historical fiction. It's almost like reading a biography, but I don't know that it's reads more like fiction than actual biography. But super interesting. A lot of stuff that I never knew. She was the head of the Post Empire, like Post Grapenuts, like cereal. But then it turns out that that turned into General Foods, and they own, like, so many brands that I had no idea because I don't pay attention to that stuff very much. But super interesting story. So that was a good read. What about you, Lisa?

[00:27:41.740] - Lisa Qualls

Usually I keep a list every single year of every book I read, and this year I did not do that. And I'm sitting here at my desk, all the books around me, and thinking, okay, was that my favorite? Was that my favorite?

[00:27:53.190] - Melissa Corkum

Okay, well, just list some of the ones you read.

[00:27:54.430] - Lisa Qualls

Oh, gosh. Okay, well, I just finished reading. *Start with Hello* by Shannan Martin. It is really good. Let me read the whole, it's right here on my desk because I want to leave an Amazon review for her, which is an opportunity to tell you amazon reviews really matter for authors. I never, ever used to leave reviews. I would just read a book and think, wow, that was great, and move on. Until I became an author. And now I know it actually makes a difference. Authors really do read your reviews, and we really do care. And Amazon has these crazy algorithms, and the more reviews you have, the more they let the books show up for people who are searching for things. So there's my plug. If you've read *The Connected Parent* and you have never left a review, I would be profoundly grateful if you would do that. It would mean the world to me if you would do that.

[00:28:44.880] - Melissa Corkum

Same with the podcast. Although I did just hear a rumor that reviews don't actually matter to the algorithm, but we actually do read the reviews, and it does help us continue to record every week to know that there's people out there listening and enjoying. So also another plug. If you're listening, if you're new, or even if you've listened for a while, and you have something kind you would like to say about the podcast, leave a review.

[00:29:08.340] - Lisa Qualls

Yes, you are welcome to do that. We would love it. So anyhow, *Start with Hello*. This is the whole thing: *Start with Hello: (And Other Simple Ways to Live as Neighbors)* by Shannan Martin. The book surprised me. I don't know why, because I've met Shannan, and she is such a passionate person about many things, but the poor, the reforming the prison system, race, all these important things. So this is not a fluffy hospitality book, really. She goes much deeper. But it's also really simple and joyful, too. It's not about complex sorts of things. Like, here are some of the table contents, like. Tender is greater than tough. Familiar is better than fussy. Listening is better than talking. Well, hello. That's a good one for me because, you know, I mean, we have a podcast because we like to talk. But she actually does include at least one recipe in here. But it's really more about why is hospitality even in the Bible? Why does it matter so much? And who are we supposed to be hospitable toward? Is it people only like ourselves that are exactly like us? Or it took the book went in directions that I didn't expect, and I really, really liked it, so I would recommend it a lot. I really enjoyed it, and it's probably the most recent book I just finished.

[00:30:33.640] - Lisa Qualls

Another author I was introduced to this year is Ruth Haley Barton, and she's a spiritual director. And I've read a number of her books as part of my program, but also just for my own personal growth. But one of the ones I really enjoyed was *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. So also really enjoyed that book. And it's been part of that, and some other books have been part of really reminding me of the importance of the Sabbath. We were part of a faith tradition in a church for a long time where we really celebrated the Sabbath, and then we got away from that. And I've been moving back toward that for a while now, but I find myself thinking about it and being more thoughtful about it and what does it mean to honor the Sabbath? And it's a gift, you know, and how do I want to use that gift and approach that gift? So anyhow, those are just two of many books that I've read this year.

[00:31:34.010] - Melissa Corkum

Okay, so with all that reading, are you watching anything?

[00:31:38.290] - Lisa Qualls

Probably more than I should, but yes. So usually I will have a show that I'm watching on my own. And then Russ and I will have a show that we're watching together. And then our son, who lives with us, too, our adult son, the three of us will have something. So I would say, for me, one of the things I've been watching and it's been around a long time, but I'm still watching *Call the Midwife*. I enjoy that. And that's one that I tend to watch by myself. I don't have to wait for anybody else's schedule. I'll just watch that on my own. Together with Russ and my son, we have been watching *Abbott Elementary*. Do you watch that, Melissa?

[00:32:18.370] - Melissa Corkum

I've watched some of it. We don't have hulu, so I can't go backwards to watch the first. But I did watch a couple of episodes. I was on a girls weekend, and it's one of those things you can kind of, like, pick up in the middle. Like, every episode is kind of funny in its own right. Yeah. Hysterical.

[00:32:32.880] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, it's smart. It's smart and funny. So we enjoy that. And then I think I'm trying to think what Russ and I have barely been watching together. You know, things come and go for sure. Well, I've probably said this before, I don't remember if we finished it in 2022 or not, but we really enjoyed *Madam Secretary*. And I don't know where you can find that right now. But that's something that we really have enjoyed watching together. And we are finished with it, which I'm a little sad about, but we really enjoyed it. And, of course, *This Is Us*. *This Is Us* was a great show. We loved that and we watched that until it ended. So, yeah. How about you? What are you watching these days?

[00:33:09.970] - Melissa Corkum

Well, on my own for the last year and some change, I've been binge watching *Grey's Anatomy* from the beginning. Because I didn't watch it when it originally started and my girls told me I needed to start. Yeah, I have a thing about finishing things like complete series. So I couldn't, like, start and stop. Anyway, on the plane for my last speaking trip, I finished what was available on Netflix. And so now I'm caught up. Now I'm watching it in real time, almost crazy. Lisa is giving me a crazy look because we started watching around the same time. And I've been to watch apparently more than she does.

[00:33:44.520] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah. I am nowhere near being current, but same thing. My adult daughters were like, mom, you gotta watch this. There's some things I really enjoy about it.

[00:33:52.750] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, it's like that really mindless, you know, TV. When Mia and I have a chance to watch something without Patrick, we've been watching *Glow Up*, which is like a reality TV about makeup artist. She's a really artsy girl. And so we watch that. Patrick. Mia. So we have the same thing. Like, I have things I watch by myself, things I watch with Patrick. Things I watch with if it's just Patrick and me, we've been enjoying *The Movies That Made Us*. It's like a documentary series on Netflix. And so it talks about what went on behind the scenes in terms of the mechanics and the making of different movies like *Dirty Dancing* or *Jurassic Park*. But it's not like the mechanics of the actual making. It's not like the director's cut. It's like the politics, like how it got funded, where they screen script came from, how it got canceled or moved studios or all that. I don't know, I find it incredibly fascinating. And every time we get to the end, we're like, it's really amazing that any movies got made in the 80s and 90s. Because so many, like, almost didn't happen. Like, we just watched one *on Forrest Gump*, which was super interesting. When Patrick, Mia and I are all three together, which is happening less and less lately. But we've been working our way through the Dahmer series, which I know isn't everyone's like thing.

[00:35:09.540] - Lisa Qualls

It's more it's so depressing and disturbing.

[00:35:11.680] - Melissa Corkum

I know. Well, Patrick and Mia picked it. This is, again, one of those things where, like, I would probably be like, y'all do that and I'll go do something else. But what I will tell you is, now that I know what I know about the brain and early childhood trauma, it just changes your perspective on.. Like, I'm finding. And I don't know that the documentary necessarily created this, but just because of what I know, I'm finding, like, I have an incredible amount of compassion for this man, and it doesn't change, like, what he did, obviously, or excuse it in any way. But I just look at the way his life went, and in some ways I'm like, well, duh. What do we all expect? And two, I'm like, he's painted as this monster, but it's so much more than that, if you know anything about psychology in the brain and attachment. And so, anyway, not everyone's cup of tea, but that's what we were watching, and that's it.

[00:36:10.990] - Lisa Qualls



I hear what you're saying, though. Like, the way I view people, my kids will sometimes think I'm compassionate to a fault. But yeah, I mean, I look at people and I think of their woundedness, and I don't know how I would feel about Jeffrey Dahmer, and I do not plan to watch that. But, yeah, it changes how we view people, for sure. What are you eating these days?

[00:36:39.710] - Melissa Corkum

Everything. So we have a really good friend who's a chef, and so he has a list of restaurants that he wants to try. We always trust his recommendations. And recently we had a chance to do a trip. I was already on a speaking trip, kind of out this way. And so we were able to meet them in Vegas. And we did kind of this, like, once in a lifetime thing where we went to a three star Michelin restaurant. That's the top, like, you can get one, two, or three stars. We've done some Michelin restaurants before that were one star, and they were very good. And we've also been to other really good restaurants that almost seemed comparable to, like, the ones with, like, one Michelin star. But if you're a foodie and you can kind of save up and budget, like, do a three star. It is just this level of service is out of this world. The food was amazing. I'll give you an example. So at the end, we're having dessert, and they come around, they're like, does anyone want coffee or tea with dessert or whatever? And so I'm an herbal tea drinker.

[00:37:45.280] - Melissa Corkum

I don't do caffeine. And so I was like and not all restaurants can do that. Like, they usually just have, like, Lipton or something weird, you know, basic. And so I was like, well, do you guys have anything herbal? And they were like, well, we have two options. We could bring you the herbal tea cart or, like, we have, like, tea bags in a box I'm thinking, who picks teabags in a box? So I kid you not, Lisa, they brought out, I call him the Chinese herbalist. I don't know for sure what his exact job was, but he was of Asian descent and he came out with a whole cart full of herbs and custom mixed and herbal tea for us on the spot. Washed and muddled the herbs and brewed them for us tableside.

[00:38:29.670] - Lisa Qualls

Okay. I've never seen that. I've definitely never been to a restaurant like that either. That's really something.

[00:38:36.430] - Melissa Corkum

So what about you? What are you eating?

[00:38:38.460] - Lisa Qualls

I would say the two things that I am loving cooking.. And this is probably not different from a lot, this is how it's been for a lot of years. But I really love making curries. And which is what we're having tonight for dinner, we're having a chicken curry, coconut curry. And I also love cooking different kinds of Mexican food. And the thing that I did this week is I made some pork barbacoa in the instant pot. And then I made a bunch of burritos with rice and beans and the shredded meat and cheese and different things. And I rolled I think I made about 32 pretty good sized burritos. And then I freeze them all on cookie sheets and then I individually wrapped them in plastic wrap and stick them in gallon ziplocks. And all the guys in my house, it's just me and all these guys, and they all love that. And my youngest was running out the door to school and he just reached in the freezer and grabbed one of these and they're big, one of these big burritos and took it as he went. So I would say those are the things I'm enjoying cooking. And nothing very fancy around here at the Quall's house, but that's what I'm enjoying cooking and eating right now. Always. Curry and Mexican food are my favorites.

[00:39:58.840] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, I got to come stay with you while we were writing earlier this year and I think I got both Mexican and curry while I was there.

[00:40:06.870] - Lisa Qualls

You probably did. You probably did. Alright, I think we should wrap up with one last question. What sounds fun? Okay, well, I should back up and say that we both really enjoy Annie F. Downs and her whole podcast is called *That Sounds Fun*. And she ends with every guest that she has, She asks them what sounds fun? And so what sounds fun for you in 2023, Melissa?

[00:40:33.790] - Melissa Corkum

Oh my gosh. All the things like so many possibilities in a new year. True. I'm trying to think we don't have anything big planned in 2023. Like super notable. Okay, well, I'll tell you all the things that people are talking about. You all can't hold me to this like it's going to happen. But Mia wants to spend time in Europe. And we were like, well, we want to go too, so she told us we could. I don't know if we'll do that. But Patrick and I, this is the other big thing that happened in 2002 was that we celebrated 20 years of being married and we went on an anniversary trip to fish, fly fish in Montana and go to Yellowstone, which was beyond our expectations because we didn't really have any. And Yellowstone way exceeded our expectations. And so I know you've been there, Lisa. You've worked there.

[00:41:26.370] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, we were there when we lived there for summer when we were in college.

[00:41:29.610] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. So if you all haven't been to Yellowstone, I would say of all the parks, it's a good one, maybe the best. And anyway, so Patrick would like to spend a month fly fishing in Montana. Now, he won't just do that. He does have a job that's like flexible. So I'm sure he'll work some too to finance whatever this thing is. So we're to the point where all the kids, except for Ty, drive have jobs, like are pretty self sufficient. So we could take Ty and rent an RV and live in Montana for a month while Patrick can fly fish.

[00:42:08.920] - Lisa Qualls

So you'd be near me. You can come visit me.

[00:42:11.010] - Melissa Corkum

I know. And I fly fish on our trip. And I don't think I would fly fish everywhere, but I would probably fly fish some, too.

[00:42:18.900] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, maybe Ty would like it too.

[00:42:20.880] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah, we'll see. It takes a little bit of coordination, but he would have fun doing whatever we would do out there. So that's what Patrick is talking about. And we'll see what happens.

[00:42:32.510] - Lisa Qualls

Well, that would be really amazing. I traveled so much last year for family things. I told myself at the end of last summer, I am not traveling anywhere in 2023. The summer of 2023, I'm not traveling anywhere. And already I can feel myself tempted. But we bought this little shack. It's a cabin, but I shouldn't call it a shack. I should be more grateful than that. It's a rustic little cabin that was built around 1940 in a state park in north Idaho. So we don't actually own the land it sits on, we just own this little structure. But it's a very, very cool thing that we had this incredible opportunity to buy it. And last year I hardly ever got to go at all. And when I went, it was only to work. Like Isaiah and I spent the parts of the summer when I was home, we spent painting and stuff. And it's tiny. Who would have known? It took us so long to paint this little, teeny tiny cabin. But neither of us have a lot of experience with exterior painting. I've done lots interior, but anyhow, this next summer, I'm hoping to spend more time there if possible.

[00:43:39.940] - Lisa Qualls

I'd say the other thing that sounds fun for 2023 is, I hope a little more time with Russ. We have been parenting for 35 well, almost 36 years, and we need to make a little more time for each other. So I'm hoping to do some fun things with him. I don't know exactly what they'll be, but last weekend we went for a really beautiful hike up in the state park. It was great. It just reminded me, gosh, it's fun to be with him. So that's probably what I most want to do in 2023.

[00:44:11.140] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. I also thought this is the first time that we don't have a huge construction project underway that will disrupt our ability to have people over. I mean, I'm not like, a huge hospitable. I don't do big, elaborate gatherings. Like, we just have people over, and I don't even clean most of the time. But we have not had a bathroom for guests or literally a place for anyone to sit in our home for, really, since the beginning of 2020. And so it's made us feel a little bit isolated. Now we can have some people, like, play cornhole in the backyard, and we've had a couple of people over to do that. But we have a hall bathroom now. We just emptied our living room back into the basement. The basement isn't finished, but at least all the stuff is out of the front room. And so I am looking forward to having more people over in 2023 as well. That sounds super fun to me.

[00:45:05.530] - Lisa Qualls

It does sound fun. So if you've been listening to our ramblings here, I hope that you're thinking, well, what would I answer to this? Maybe get together with a friend for coffee. You don't have to record it like we just did, but you ask each other, what's something you learned in 2022, and when did you experience God's kindness? And what is God inviting you to in 2023? And then, of course, you can always share your favorite things. But there's something really good about just pausing. Even though as we're talking and thinking, I should have said this, I should have said that, that doesn't matter because it's actually just pausing and reflecting. That's so valuable.

[00:45:42.040] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. And I think the other thing is, sometimes when we get together, we're so brain dead from parenting or whatever, and we tend to only talk about our kids. Or we can't get past, like, what's the weather? Because we feel like we don't socialize anymore, and so we don't even know what to talk to people about. So I feel like this gives a chance for you to have, like, a good, substantive conversation with someone, and that's life giving, at least to me. So we hope it's life giving to you, too. This is our last episode for 2022, which is why we wanted to spend some time reflecting. And so we hope that you all have some chances to do a little reflecting, some points of joy as we walk into the last part of this holiday season, which we know can be tricky. This is a great time to catch up on past episodes. If you haven't and now there's over 200 for you to listen to. And we will be back the first Tuesday in January with a Mailbag episode.