

*[An inhale. A cacophony of different voices we've heard in the series:*

**Her:** If I don't fly transatlantic. If I don't fly home for Christmas. I can't do it.

I'll give up my gas car. Electric car. I can't do it.

**Hannah:** Why would you do this?

**Redditor:** Is anyone else feeling this way? Just want to know I'm not alone.

**Her:** Too soon. I can't do it.

*[A big inhale.]*

**Her:** Find five things you can see. Trees. Mud. I see the sky, there's a little bit of blue up there. I see the cabin. My parents and my aunts and uncles all built it twenty years ago. They had to carry it up log by log. I see a tree that's fallen over. It looks like it's ripped itself in half but there are mosses and little plants growing out of its middle.

The fuck am I going to do?

Four things you can touch. I feel soft, wet wood. Snow. Rough lichen. My feet in warm boots.

Three things you can hear. My coat. Whisky jacks calling to each other. I hear ...quiet.

Why would you do this?

Two things you can smell. Cold. Earth.

One thing you can taste. Metal.

If you lie back here all the trees sort of reach together at the top like a frame. On clear nights the stars here are really bright. Probably won't see much tonight, it's pretty overcast.

I thought it would be good to come up here and think.

Do the forest bathing thing.

The idea is that you go into the woods and the clean air can kind of clean your brain.

I needed to think.

I thought maybe if I lie here long enough the answer will come to me. What do I do?

What if a baby was here right now?

I hate waiting for some sort of pure intuition force to come up out of me.

It seems like the answer no matter what I think is "yes, but." "Yes-but-what-if."

Listening to your body makes a lot of sense but in this situation my body is biased  
My body wants to push the species forward, it's not a neutral observer.

I thought if I came up here and sat alone for long enough, there would be this resounding  
answer.

I was expecting a bellow.

I brought a book of Mary Oliver with me. She says:

“I would speak here of the darkness of the world, and the light of \_\_\_\_\_. But I don't know  
what to call it. Maybe hope. Maybe faith, but not a shaped faith – only, say, a gesture or a  
continuum of gestures. But probably it is closer to hope, that is more active, and far messier  
than faith must be. Faith as I imagine it, is tensile, and cool, and has no need of words. Hope, I  
know, is a fighter and a screamer.”

A fighter and a screamer. That is my cousin Emma's kind of hope. Talking to her about this  
when her youngest was a babe in arms.

**Emma:** Oh you're so tired. Just close your eyes, honey.

**Her:** He's overdue for a nap.

**Emma:** Gavin asked me last night while we were having dinner. Mitch was actually at like a  
climate meeting and so I had dinner with the kids and put them down. And uh, Gavin was like,  
what were you like before I was born? I was like, it's a hard question to answer.

**Her:** What did you say?

**Emma:** I was like, it was mostly the same, but uh, like I learned so much more since you were  
born. And then I got all kind of like emotional. I was like I'm half crying happy tears. I'm just so  
grateful for having you in my life and stuff. And then he was asking me about like, if I got excited  
before he was born, I was like, yes, I got, I was more excited, more excited than ever. Like it  
was the most exciting thing I've ever experienced. And then he looked really serious and was  
like: tell me the truth. How did it happen? I was like...how did I get excited or how? And he's like  
how did you get so excited? I was like, oh, okay. Uh, I just knew I was going to meet a new  
family member and like I was going to love you.

*[her baby fusses]*

**Emma:** Ooh. Yeah.

**Her:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, to follow up on Gavin's question, um, what do you feel like has changed since you had kids?

**Emma:** I mean, I'm always a sensitive person, now I'm gonna like cry. But, um, so yeah, I don't know. I think like, um, just, I feel like I feel more with kids. Which is like, I already felt a lot. Yeah I think that I just feel like, um, like I love them so much and I just know that like other parents love their kids so much. But I feel like I go back and forth being like really scared, but then also really hopeful to thinking like the future could be really wonderful. Like, we can invent it like a much better world.

Maybe, you know, hopefully in 15 years, we'll go back, we'll look back and be like, can you believe that it got so bad there for a minute? Like I do think that having children has made me like a more sensitive person and it's an extra inspiration I guess.

I remember my mom telling me when she had to do something she didn't want to do, she would imagine that me and like my sisters were watching. And so, like if she was like, oh, I have to go to like this medical procedure, or I have to do this, any kind of thing that wasn't going to be pleasant or whatever. She felt like doing in front of us would help her be brave or do it or whatever. And I think that, um, I think having kids has made me braver and, um, I think that it's trying to be the person that like my kids deserve is like a kind of a motivator to be like, my kids and everybody's kids, it's like, they deserve to have the people in their life fighting for them.

**Her:** Is this an act of hope?

Betting on a radically different future with all the cells in my body.

Or is hope here disconnected to outcome, not hoping *for* but hoping *by doing*.

When I talked to Kimberly Nicholas about her study, the one about the biggest changes you can make to your carbon footprint, she explained this concept of climate legacy.

The idea is that, not only am I responsible for half of my child's footprint for their lifetime, I'm responsible for a quarter of my grandchildren, a sixteenth of their kids' footprints and so on and so on until that line ends.

We're so obsessed with passing on our genetic code, our family names. And not wired in that same way to think about the bigger legacy.

I could be heaping on carbon long after I'm ashes. My responsibility here goes on a lot longer than my consciousness.

**Lisa:** As Anishnaabe, we think of our children as part of a community of care, and that there are different responsibilities and rules that as community we have towards children, because we understand that our children are our future. And that that's a reciprocal process so that as a child, I also play a role and I have responsibilities, that part of their job as children is to learn how to live in right relations and, um, in a good way, you know, with a good life on this territory that we're occupying in a way, you know, as visitors here.

**Her:** Lisa Cooke Ravensburgen is a friend who thinks about parenting in a cosmic way.

**Lisa:** I'm a visitor here on coast Salish territories and these territories are unceded and they're occupied. And I guess I think of my parenting in a way as an act of reciprocity and part of that reciprocity is to honor the relationship that, that my children have to this land that has not asked any of us to be here. That is not, holding our ancestors' bones. And so I feel like part of my reciprocal action as a visitor is to, is to invite my children into a deeper awareness and a deeper responsibility to how they can be good visitors here. I feel like that that's the least I can do.

**Her:** I ask her about legacy.

**Lisa:** There's an old teaching, um, of the seven generations and I know it's kind of been co-opted by different nations. Um, but the way that I've been taught as an Anishinaabekwe is that we're always working for the seven generations to come. And that I am the seventh generation for my ancestors. So I exist here because people prayed and fought and loved, and survived so that I can be here. But that, that whole experience of living inside lineage most certainly has shaped the way that I think about my present responsibilities as a mom. You know, I'm, I'm somebody seventh generation, your somebody's seventh generation. You're not just my child.

So we have, it sometimes feels like a burden, but it's also this gift that we carry in our bundles of, of who we want to be. I feel like in the world that, that we have a choice to, we can honour that line, that lineage of who we've been before we even arrived. And we can also honour what we hope the future might be, even in these really kind of small insignificant moments y'know?

**Her:** When you're having these conversations with these kids, like, are you thinking like these are skills, these are mindsets I want to like instill in you because there's going to be challenges up ahead. Like, do you have things that you're trying to give them right now for a future that might be challenging and all sorts of ways?

**Lisa:** Um, yes. It's a little facetious, but it's actually a little bit true. My partner and I, every once in a while we actually talk about like, should we be sending them to learn how to shoot a gun? Should we, should we be, doing more knife safety with them? We should probably figure out how to, you know, learn more about the land, the medicines and what we can eat from the land. Like, we do have, we do have these moments where we're, I think it's kind of our panic, you know, by the time they're our age, what is the world? And we won't be here when they're our age. So what do they need now that will allow them once they're on their own to kind of keep perpetuating that skill or that quality of mindset. I joke about it, but in a way it's actually true. In a way it's like I'm trying to give them what they need so that they can die well.

You know, so that they can get to the end of whatever their life on this earth is knowing that they knew themselves as best that they could, knowing that they loved as best as they could, that they made choices that were not just self-serving, but that they were connective and

interconnected and interdependent. And, and that when they made mistakes, that they did their best to repair and they did their best to learn how to be humble and loving and kind and angry when they needed to be and righteous in that call for justice.

Um, I make it sound like, so serious and we're always like in ceremony or something and that's not it at all, I'm actually quite, uh, renowned to be ridiculous. A ridiculous mother. I'm also interested in not burdening little tiny people with all of the weight that that question holds. I feel like anyway, we all have to be in that relationship with our future selves, our future ancestor self, because we're all gonna, we're all gonna be there at some point we will be someone's ancestors.

So, I feel like if you have that connection in some way, if you're an adult, who's lucky enough to kind of belong to a child, you look in a mirror. It's one of their, uh, great gifts, and like, a horribly humbling unraveling, you know, of all my beautiful stories I have about myself. Um, yeah, that, it's an, especially if you've got a kid, like my oldest in particular, who just incisively sees the world and just names, what he senses even. It's quite, it's quite amazing when he holds up that mirror and he's like, mama, and I'm like, oh, you're so right. I am so wrong. It's the greatest joy of my life is to offer myself as a, as a mama. I always say to him, I'm a much better human since I've met him.

Can I get to the end of my life knowing I made the best choices I could?

Not just self-serving, but that they were connective and interconnected and interdependent.

*Lisa echoed lightly underneath: Not just self-serving, but that they were connective and interconnected and interdependent.*

What kind of parent would I be? What kind of human?

Would I teach you how to hunt? To garden? To grow your own food?

To collect rain runoff? To sing the alphabet?

To be generous? To ask for help? To find out what brings you the deepest, lightest joy and to turn your life like a sunflower towards it? To count to 10? To be gentle?

To fight? To get mad? To breathe through fear?

To find love, whatever that looks like?

To drive, no, to bike?

To have standards that might be lower than I was raised to expect?

To have deeper connections than I might have been raised to expect?

So what am I going to leave? Nothing? Tie it up in a bow?

Or little people who will become big people, in love with the world?

*[We hear wind.]*

It's dark out now.

I used to be so scared to be outside up here in the dark. I would never have considered coming up here alone.

In a way I guess, I'm not alone.

It sucks that you don't have a say in the matter.

The best choice would be to just ask you what you want but you won't be able to tell me that til you're 16 and you call me a bitch.

I wish I could ask you or predict what you'd say but I don't even know you yet.

I hope you're happy. I hope you will be, or would be a happy baby.

It would be extremely nice if you got your dad's eyes.

I hope you get his freckles and his nose.

And his eyebrows.

What would I want you to get from me?

My hands? My restlessness. Maybe some anger.

Maybe anger would be useful.

If you were here, I wonder what you'd say. I wonder what you'd ask me.

Maybe the question wouldn't be "why would you do this?"

But rather, "what did you do about it?"

I really hope I make the right choice for you.

I hope I do enough.

I hope.

**Host:** Expectant was written and performed by Pippa Johnstone. Composition by Laura Reznek. Sound design and mixing by Robyn Edgar. Dramaturgical support from Karina Palmitesta.

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