

Episode 83. And The Oscar Goes To...

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SPEAKERS

Deana Thayer, Kira Dorrian, Future Focused Parenting



Deana Thayer 00:00

You know, Kira and I are huge fans of questions. You can learn so much and get so much more out of your children when you're leaning in and curious. But I have learned along the way that often after I express that gratitude, my next step actually has to be asking if they're okay with the asking. And what I mean by that is, I've now learned to say something like, Okay, I want to just check in are you sharing right now just to tell me and you just are looking for some listening? Or are you okay with some follow up questions, or maybe some of my thoughts and feedback, and then they get the chance to set the tone for right now. I'm just sharing this with you. I don't really want you to weigh in, or Yeah, you can ask me some questions about it. That way, I don't inadvertently step in it right out of the gate by coming out with a bunch of questions. So I've really found that that's been helpful.



Future Focused Parenting 00:51

Welcome to Raising Adults, the groundbreaking parenting podcast that starts with the end in mind. We're your co-hosts, Deana Thayer, and Kira Dorrian. We created Future Focused Parenting to take families from surviving to thriving. So join us as we help you stop raising kids and start Raising Adults.

K

Kira Dorrian 01:14

Well, hi, everyone. Welcome to season four of Raising Adults Podcast. I am so excited. Deana, I know you're so excited. I can't believe we made it to season four. It's insane, don't you think?

D

Deana Thayer 01:26

it is. It's kind of an amazing but fabulous milestone to hit.

K

Kira Dorrian 01:30

It's so exciting because like when you start a podcast, you kind of know you have to be in this for the long haul. But there were some moments. There were some moments where it was like this is a long haul. So I am just so thrilled that you're here and that you're listening, our fabulous FFPs thank you for being such an amazing community and coming back for season four. We're so incredibly happy to have you here and we have such a cool season ahead of us. We've made a couple little changes. There's some things afoot we want to just briefly tell you about. But seriously, like, the podcast is like taking a little twist this season, it's going to be so, so much fun.

D

Deana Thayer 02:10

Yeah, we're really looking forward to bringing you some kind of different stuff. You'll still hear our format. And you'll hear from us. But there are some new things we're adding one of which is coming fairly soon. So beginning August 17, we're going to be running a four week mental health series. And we're going to be tackling some big topics that parents face with their children, things like depression and anxiety and body image and even self harm. And what we're doing for that series is bringing on some experts. And so we look forward to bringing you their expertise around these issues, and sharing with you how you as parents can help support your children and or teens. If they're struggling with those issues, or just how to spot them in case it's not something that's come up for you yet. So we really encourage you to listen in. That'll begin August 17, and run for four weeks.

K

Kira Dorrian 03:03

Yeah, and we're so looking forward to having other voices on this topic because even though I have a background in mental health, a couple of these topics really are gaps for me, things that I just don't specialize in. And it is always good to bring more voices to the table when it comes to these giant topics where the more tools you have, the more

information you have, the better. So I'm really, really looking forward to that series. And then we just want to let you know, we just want to give you like a heads up that we have something very exciting coming down the pipeline, which we are going to announce in two episodes. So on our third episode of the season, and that is membership, we are going to welcome you to the FFP family and we have some very cool things that come with membership, including an online video library, some free swag, and the possibility of having a monthly q&a with us. So we just wanna let you know that that is coming and you will get more details later. But for now, welcome to season four. Thanks you for listening. And we will dive right in. So Deana, we have a fun one today.

D

Deana Thayer 04:05

We do! You've earned a spot on our awards show today. And the Oscar goes to us. And you! And so we're gonna chat about those moments in parenting where you have to put on the I'm not shocked face, even if perhaps you are shocked or scared or upset or any number of other emotions, and just how we do that as parents, why we do it and when it might be appropriate. So we're going to talk about those sometimes Oscar worthy performances that we have to give as parents.

K

Kira Dorrian 04:38

Yes. Oh my gosh, I have said for a long time that I feel like motherhood is the most intense acting job I've ever had. It's like seriously, sometimes I am floored by what's really happening on the inside of me versus like what my face looks like. You know, it's a constant acting job, even though we want to be authentic as parents, that recognition that we have to, we just have to be careful about how much goes on to our children and how our reactions are so important, right? They really feed off of those reactions in lots of different ways. And how important it is to kind of take that pause that Hunter talked about on her episode like that. That really careful pause. And and go for that Oscar. It's so important.

D

Deana Thayer 05:27

Yeah, it is. And that's actually..what a lovely segue here because that's my why for this is that pause is sending my children a message. Well, the pause along with the I'm not shocked face I want to be clear, is sending the message that you can tell me anything and that they can expect from me support and non judgmental listening and that I'm not going to fly off the handle. I think that's so important, especially if we do get some news that we don't love on the inside. We want to make sure that we're still a safe place for that news. And so for me, that was absolutely the driver behind working on my Oscar worthy

face.

K

Kira Dorrian 06:12

This is so interesting because we have an identical why. Is this is this like the first time they're identical?

D

Deana Thayer 06:18

Oh, yeah, I think so because we might have similar ideas, but there may be come out from a different angle. But no, I don't know if we've ever had a mirror image why ever!

K

Kira Dorrian 06:28

Yeah, I feel exactly the same. It's like, I know that they're gonna feel safe if there isn't like an enormous reaction to something hard. And even though I'm inside having enormous reactions, they're, you know, you don't want to push them away. And I think sometimes those huge emotional responses, they feel that way. It makes that person shut down a little bit like, oh, maybe I shouldn't have told them and a friend of mine put it really well. She was saying that oftentimes she just doesn't tell her mom big scary stuff unless she absolutely has to. Because she says, I don't want to have to navigate my mom's feelings about it when I can barely navigate my own. And I thought that was so profound and immediately was like, I need to avoid that at all costs. And it makes sense, right? If you have a parent or anybody in your life, that's going to have this major reaction now you're suddenly dealing with and navigating their feelings, when really what you've brought them are your feelings, and you want them to be able to hold space for your feelings. If that space is taken up with their feelings, then there's no space for yours.

D

Deana Thayer 07:38

Yeah, and in all likelihood, they've already brought you something that's pretty big and hard for them. So they don't need to also be working through how it's hard for you.

K

Kira Dorrian 07:45

Yes, exactly. This came up when my mom died. It was really interesting. I remember telling a friend of mine, you know, when we found out she was terminal, and my friend just fell apart and it wasn't her fault, but that's exactly how I felt. It was like, okay, I guess I have to be the strong one. You know, and, and that's not how we ever want to make our kids feel. We have to be the rock, we have to be the strong one. And this is part of how you show

them. That strength. And that quiet sort of I've got you is by monitoring those reactions to the particularly hard stuff, which is hard. I mean, I'm gonna put my hand up and say, despite being a trained actor, I really struggle with this because I'm very emotional. So I tend to have a huge reaction on the inside. And this is definitely something that I have not yet mastered. I mean, definitely a work in progress. For me.

D

Deana Thayer 08:38

It's a growth area for everyone. I don't know if anyone gets this perfect the first time unless they've had a chance to do a lot of practicing maybe in other situations, but actually, that's something you brought up before we even started recording is a great way to practice this. If you have littles and maybe you're not in a challenging conversation. So tell us about that because I thought it was so great.

K

Kira Dorrian 08:59

Oh, I mean I think one of the one of the simplest ways to work this muscle and it's certainly one of the ways that I've done it. Although again, work in progress, is like when your kids are little, and there's a major fall on the playground or you know, there's something big and obviously scary even to your own eye, happens...to not have the, you know, the giant gasp and the like, sprinting toward them with like, Chariots of Fire behind you, you know? But instead, take that moment of pause. And as you know, I'm a big proponent of "Are you okay?" versus "you're okay!" because I see parents go the other way. They're like, I'm not going to react, and then I'm going to tell the child that they're fine. And I don't agree with that either. But, you know, to take that pause and, and put on a smile and say, Are you okay? And on the inside, you're like, Oh my goodness, this is the worst thing ever, they're going to die!!! But on your face, you're smiling and saying, You okay? It's really working that muscle because kids...first of all, they so read us, right? They so react off of our emotions. But the other thing it does is it doesn't give them a chance to do that self check that you and I encourage all the time, which is instead of telling them they're okay, let them figure out if they're okay, let them get used to doing a body check and figuring out did I survive? Am I okay? What do I need, you know, letting them start to hone those skills. When we have a big reaction we deny them that because we are telling them how to feel about it. Much like saying you're okay is also telling them how to feel about it. Having a giant reaction tells them how to feel about it to like, you should be terrified. This is the worst thing that ever happened to you. So it's, and this is not easy, I mean, I'm not at all suggesting that this is easy, but somehow kind of threading that needle, as my friend Kellie says and walking the line between the two of, I want to make sure you're okay. But I'm going to do it in a way that suggests that you're going to tell me what's going on with you. Does that make sense?

D

Deana Thayer 10:54

It does and that's why I think it's a great chance to practice in a situation where maybe a child falls down or they're having a little scuffle with another child. And maybe you even feel your child has been wronged and you don't jump in and swoop down. And I mean, that's, that's an absolutely beautiful and a little bit, even though it might feel high stakes if they did skin their knee or get injured in some way, it is lower stakes in the sense of they haven't brought you this really scary thing for them or maybe a hard thing or a vulnerable thing and said, Here, help me hold this or tell me how I should feel about it. Because sometimes they're not even sure when they bring you one of these big conversations. And that's the context I think of it in the most is a preteen or a teen coming to you with maybe something they've done or something they're feeling that they're not even sure is okay. Or maybe they have an identity question that comes up because all children are working to answer that Who am I question but that really comes into focus in those tween and teen years and so often you're going to have to use the I'm not shocked face far more in a deep conversation in those later years. And so if you can practice it with a fall off the big toy, how much better?

K

Kira Dorrian 12:13

So what have you done? Because you've had more of these moments. I mean, just by the sheer nature of the longevity of your parenting journey, compared to mine. We've had a couple we've had a couple like, Okay, I'm not shocked by what you just shared. Tell me more about that. But I'm curious, has there been a running theme for you about how how to navigate that? And what's the feedback then? Because you have older kids like, what's the feedback been about that? Have you revisited some of these moments? And they were surprised that you were actually on the inside falling to pieces? I'm just kind of curious the the longer term impact of a choice to have an I'm not shocked face.

D

Deana Thayer 12:55

Yes. So I'll answer the last question first, actually, because any longtime listeners know, I do a lot of check ins with my kids about my parenting and where are the areas that I've fallen down. What do you feel like is going well? What changes would you like to see? And this is one that I've asked them about about some of those bigger things they brought me. How do you feel like I handled it? I never really heard them be surprised that I handled it calmly. And I take that as a compliment, I'll be really honest. I think the fact that they weren't expecting a blow up or a gasp or some overreaction is great. And it says maybe I was practicing when they were little. Yes, I for sure was practicing side note. So that really makes me happy. I think that's really validating that that part wasn't a surprise, but they are able to articulate how nice it is to know I'm not going to freak out. And so they've

been able to tell me, you know, it's nice because I know I can tell you and you're not going to panic and we can just talk about it. So I absolutely encourage that follow up though. Of course not soon, especially if they've brought you something really big. But you know, when it's really in the rearview mirror, maybe a couple months down the road, you might say, you know, when you first brought that up to me, how do you feel I did? Because I want to make sure I repeat the things that you thought were helpful and that I don't repeat the things you thought were not. So I absolutely suggest that and that's why I felt like it was important to answer that first. Ask your kids I mean, even early grade schoolers, I'm talking five, six, you can check in about something. You know, when you fell down the other day, was it helpful what I did? It is amazing how insightful they are. You know, I really liked that you brought me a glass of water and a bandaid, but I didn't like that big shout you made when it first happened. It's amazing. They can tell you.

k

Kira Dorrian 14:43

Well and you get such honest feedback from kids, especially when they're small, right? I mean, they will tell you exactly what they liked, and what they didn't. They will not pull any punches. And if you're asking those questions, even if it's tiny little things you do start to get a pattern around the behavior that is effective for them. And the stuff that you're like maybe you're not even aware that you're doing. I've certainly found that when I do regular check ins, that I'm like, oh, there's a pattern here that even I wasn't aware of, I need to be more mindful of that. So they can hand you those things really nicely.

D

Deana Thayer 15:15

You're right, you're gonna get a lot of honesty, because their filter is not fully developed, especially when they're younger. And that can be really helpful. It might be ouchie, to hear, but it can be really helpful. And I also agree that you can identify some patterns and figure out the best kind of systematic approach. And what's even better is when you ask for feedback, you can learn. Even...and this was all the way back in season one, I think we talked about how different kids need different styles. You can learn what works for each of your children, because it might not look identical, you know, maybe both of your children really appreciate that you don't have a strong reaction, but one of them likes follow up questions and one doesn't. So I think asking those questions is really important. And that leads me to what I have done and it's really only three things. So I won't talk for very long. The first is, along with that face, I always make sure that the first thing I express is gratitude that they've chosen to come to me in the first place. And so whatever I'm thinking or feeling on the inside, I might be absolutely reeling, I make sure that my first sentence is something along the line of thank you so much for telling me about this. And I think that's gone a long way toward that creating that safe space, so to speak. So that's a

first thing just expressing that gratitude. And you know what? That part I don't get an Oscar for because I am grateful that my kids tell me stuff. I know people who are parents of teens who have felt that relationship grow cold and distant. And I am grateful that I am not in that boat. And I don't want you to hear that as me patting myself on the back or being braggy at all. I'm just genuinely grateful. So that's the first thing is really just making sure that in first sentence, there's some expression of gratitude that they've brought me this topic.



Kira Dorrian 16:59

Awesome. So we're going to take a little break and tell you about our sponsor. This is something new and exciting. In Season Four, we take breaks for sponsors now! We're going to tell you about them. And we'll be right back with Deana's tips two and three.



Future Focused Parenting 17:13

Today's episode of Raising Adults is brought to you by the Homeschool Buyers Co-Op, which is the largest Buyers Club for homeschoolers in the country. It's run by homeschoolers who have a love for family and a deep commitment to homeschooling. And what the Homeschool Buyers Co-Op does is give families the purchasing power of school districts, which means that you get 10-90% off of curriculum. Plus registration is free, and they have a ton of free resources available as well. They also have a smart points reward system. So the more you buy, the more you've earned. And if you register for your free account with our referral code, which is ADULTS, you will get 5000 Smart points right away, which basically gives you \$5 to spend on the site immediately. So register for your free account today and use our referral code ADULTS by going to <https://homeschoolbuyersco-op.org> that's <https://homeschoolbuyersco-op.org>.



Deana Thayer 18:08

So another thing that I like to do is another verbal piece in the moment and that is asking follow up questions which can take the form of "tell me more about that" which actually Kira mentioned earlier in the episode or asking, Oh, that's interesting that that happened, how did that make you feel or things like that, but here's what I've done as my children have gotten older. I want to just talk a little bit about the progression. You know, Kira and I are huge fans of questions. You can learn so much and get so much more out of your children when you're leaning in and curious, but I have learned along the way that often after I express that gratitude, my next step actually has to be asking if they're okay with the asking. And what I mean by that is, I've now learned to say something like Okay, I

want to just check in are you sharing right now just to tell me and you just are looking for some listening or are you okay with some follow up questions or maybe some of my thoughts and feedback, and then they get the chance to set the tone for "right now I'm just sharing this with you, I don't really want you to weigh in", or "yeah, you can ask me some questions about it". That way, I don't inadvertently step in it right out of the gate by coming out with a bunch of questions. So I've really found that that's been helpful as they've gotten a little bit older.

k

Kira Dorrian 19:23

That makes so much sense because if you are starting by staying calm, then you're preventing them feeling like when I tell mom something, you know, or dad something that they come at me with a big feeling. And then if you're asking permission to ask questions, you're also preventing that okay, she was nice and calm, but then she like, just completely hit me with all these questions. Right? I'm going to avoid that in the future. I don't want to be questioned like that. Whereas asking for that permission creates more safety. So it's like you've created a safe space and now you've made it even more safe.

D

Deana Thayer 19:53

That's exactly it because, and again with that every child is different thing, some children really view those questions as so loving. Wow, my parents really want to know more. And some don't view it that way and might view it as a little bit intrusive or maybe didn't, but start viewing it as intrusive as they get older. So that's exactly it. And then the last thing is about how I take care of myself as a parent around this issue. And what that means is whenever I've had to use my I'm not shocked face and my thank you so much for telling me. If I do happen to be freaking out on the inside, I make sure that I get some care for myself after this conversation. And that can look a number of ways it might be that I still really need to internally process or they've asked me, please don't say anything about this. And that means I need to do some self care, and just maybe go take a walk or get some time alone or whatever that is and fill in the blank because it's going to look different for each person. But if I have permission to share or I just need to share my experience of the interchange, then I make sure I have access to my supportive people. So my spouse or my Mom, I still talk to my mom so much, or a good friend where I can say, Wow, this was a hard conversation. And if I have permission, maybe I share both sides. If I don't, I can at least share my experience of the interaction and say, here's what was hard for me about that. Wow, I was so caught off guard, I had no idea. Just to be able to take good care of myself mentally and emotionally, if I have been handed a hard thing, and was not able to say it was hard to my child. So I don't think that's a piece we want to skip. And it might be a little bit counterintuitive. It might not be something you would have

thought to include. But please take good care of yourself as a parent, if you've been given a hard topic to deal with, or you've been faced with a situation that you weren't ready for or you weren't expecting. Your ability to handle it effectively and even parent through it effectively, is going to have a direct correlation to how well you're taking care of your feelings around it. That's what I've found.

K

Kira Dorrian 21:55

Yeah, I think that's so true. I think those are great. I mean, I love the model. You've always done this so beautifully. But it really is like a step by step. So first you wear your I'm not shocked face, then you ask permission to ask question, then you go care for yourself as you feel all your feelings that you've been holding in tightly for the entire conversation. It's so smart. The one thing I would add to that, that I try to do when I'm successful at this, because again, I think this is a work in progress. And like a lot of parents we just aren't going to get this right every time especially if you lean emotional like I do. I try and pat myself on the back when I've done it well. And really notice like that went well. I handled that really, really well. Because it positively reinforces it for me and kind of makes me want to do it again the next time. But also as a parent, like how many wins do we really feel? Like most of the time, we don't feel those wins, those are few and far between. And most of the feeling is like ah, parenting is hard or oh, I just didn't handle that the way I wish I had, you know. So to catch those wins, like when you feel like you've handled this well, to be like, I did that really well, I created a space for them to come back to me next time, that is so important that we take the time to acknowledge that for ourselves.

D

Deana Thayer 23:09

So important, and it reminds me of our happiness episode, like, take time to notice the happy because then you can capitalize on it more. And I think this is the same way notice your wins. Notice your victories as a parent. That's great advice, Kira.

K

Kira Dorrian 23:23

And I think you know, the other thing I would say about this really comes more from the times that I failed. And I feel this is the same about, like, we talked about this a little bit on the yelling episode. But I remember when my kids were really small, a friend of mine said, you know, when my kids were little, I used to yell and eventually I reached a point where I realized that it wasn't helping anything. All it did was upset my kids and make me feel guilty. So I got this like moment of tension out of my body, but then I just ended up feeling worse and they felt worse. And so that was the thing that helped her stop yelling. And I would say I've had that same experience. Both with yelling the few times that I've

really lost my mind I've been like that was a complete and utter useless endeavor. Like, it did nothing positive. And I think it's the same with the times that I haven't successfully navigated something kind of big or hard. I've looked at it and gone yeah, that was useless. Like all I've done by having my big reaction or slamming them with a million questions is watch them retreat. You do, you see your kids like literally retreat. It's the same with yelling, they literally like go inward. And so much I try and catch those times that I've done it really well so that it positively reinforces those times where it hasn't gone well instead of like going down a shame spiral because I'm not a big fan of shame. I think guilt is good, but I'm not a fan of shame. You can use that as an opportunity to go okay, what did I see was I saw them retreat. That's not what I want. So I need to be doing something differently. It just reinforces how important those steps that you've laid out really are. So really even if you get this wrong, it's such a great learning opportunity as a parent, and you have the opportunity to get it right next time, which means you're more likely for them to bring it to you again to get it right again, right, it can spiral in a really positive way, if you're paying attention.

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Deana Thayer 25:15

I agree. Well said.

K

Kira Dorrian 25:17

All right, FFPs. Well, we hope that you found that conversation on an Oscar winning performance and how to give one on a regular basis helpful. As we both said, it's definitely something that, you know, I think when you're earlier on in your parenting journey, you're much more likely to still be building this muscle and as Deana has shown, as you build that muscle, and it gets stronger and better, you're just going to reap the benefits of your kids telling you how grateful they are that they can talk to you about anything. And that's I think, what for most of us parents, especially FFPs, that's what we all want. So, before we wrap up and give you our awesome quote today, we do want to just update you on our season finale challenge that we gave you guys. What are you going to be working on let you know how our experience was for our couple weeks break. So Deana, how did your couple weeks go? Can you remind everybody what you were working on and how that went?

D

Deana Thayer 26:09

Yes, I was working on doing better at talking to my kids about being Brown, not just Asian. And also, self care, I had started adding it to my to do list to make it more of a priority. And I would say both went well. We used a long, long car ride for a quick change of

scenery getaway, to have some good race conversations. And it's great because when your kids are, I don't want to use the word trapped, but they kind of are and you have a little bit of a captive audience. And I think you can get them to engage a little bit differently. And so a long road trip was helpful for that. And I have to say, I have found an increase in self care. There is something powerful about well, it's on the list. There's been a few days where I've had to cross it off and go you know, I just didn't get time to read today. Or that foot soak that I had planned. It didn't happen but for the most part it's been kind of game changing. It's on the list. So it's more likely to happen. How about you?

K

Kira Dorrian 27:06

That's awesome. I love that. My two were...one was to be really leaning into my kids when they want to spend time with me more. So really saying yes, when they reach out and then every day seeking out one opportunity, because they are kind of turning that corner, age wise and it's gone really, really well. Again, there's something about being intentional and setting that intention. It's been front of mind. And there's been so many times where Rhiannon and in particular will be like, can you read me a story, you know, at three o'clock in the afternoon. And I've been like, yes, yes, I can. And we sit down and read a story. And I think that's just like what we're talking about today. She's more likely to come back. If I'm saying yes, right? So that's been really good. And then I try and make sure that at least you know, once a day, I'm just checking in, how are you doing? Do you want to snuggle? Do you want to go for a walk? You know, that kind of thing. Oftentimes it's no one good, but at least they kind of see that I'm regularly trying. And then the other thing was I was saying I was very committed to doing the, you know, personal work that was necessary to become or maintain being an anti racist and do that kind of introspective work that's been missing. And so Dave and I signed up as I mentioned, for the Brownicity course, we had Dr. Lucretia Berry on at the end of last season, she was amazing. The course is phenomenal. It's like a 12 week course. And it's, there's something about the education piece of this that just cannot be underestimated. I am learning so much. And I feel like I was already relatively informed. And all of a sudden, I'm like, I know nothing. There's so much here I did not know. And they ask really great questions. And so Dave, and I will like sit and do a discussion with the questions that they give us and it just brings up a lot. It's just been really fantastic. So on the whole, both of those have been going very well.

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Deana Thayer 29:01

Well, we'd love to hear from you guys too, about your few weeks when we were in between seasons and what you've been working on and how it went, you can comment on one of our social media posts or shoot us an email info@futurefocusedparenting.com We always love hearing how Future Focused Parents are continuing to grow and develop. And

I do have a quote today. And it's a great one because we didn't get to touch on this too much. But I think it's so true that the other beautiful side effect of the I'm not shocked face is how many times you can at least reduce or minimize, if not totally eliminate the chance that this is going to escalate into some kind of an argument or a battle or a struggle, or your child feeling bad about themselves. There's so many ways escalation can happen if you don't respond well in the moment and this quote addresses that and it's by Stefan Molyneux. The quote is "Those who make conversations impossible, make escalation inevitable." So true.

K

Kira Dorrian 30:00

Love that. Well thanks everyone so much for listening. Don't forget to rate and review the podcast if you haven't already. Follow us on Instagram or Facebook @FutureFocusedParenting and feel free to go check out our website anytime <https://futurefocusedparenting.com>. Next week we have an amazing guest on the show Dr. Kara Powell from the Fuller Youth Institute is going to be talking about how we grow with our children instead of growing apart. It's a fabulous episode, so be sure to tune in. And then the week after that we will announce your membership options and hopefully we can really come together and create an amazing FFP family. So thank you so much for being with us today. Have an amazing week FFPs and we'll be back next week. Raising Adults is produced by Kira Dorrian and Deana Thayer and recorded partially in my laundry room and partially in Deana's new office because she moved! Swanky new intro courtesy of the mixing skills of Steve Schallert. Music by Seattle band Hannalee Thanks for listening.