

Love and Language S1E2: Breaking the Silence: Honest Conversations with Two Hearing Parents About Their Emotions Around Their Child's Hearing Loss Diagnosis

Christy: [00:00:00] You are listening to the Love and Language Podcast where we inspire hearing parents of d/Deaf children and remind you that as long as you are giving your child love and language, you are doing a great job.

Christy: Hi Beth.

Beth: Hey, Christy.

Christy: I'm so proud of us.

Beth: Happy Monday. What day is it?

Christy: You have a lot going on right now, so I'm not surprised that your days are mixed up because yes, the book launch is what we're getting like down to the two, two weeks away.

Christy: Oh,

Beth: two and a half.

Christy: Yeah. So remind everybody real fast before we start the show about your book, cuz we're gonna be talking about it and are excited.

Beth: Yeah. The ABCs of Inclusion, so little alphabet book for kids. Each letter is based on a real child with a different diagnosis.

Beth: It comes out on World Down Syndrome Day, March 21st. So we're getting

Beth: close.

Christy: Yay. And last time we chatted with each other, we had not officially launched the podcast yet, and we can say it's official. We have the podcast out into the world, love and [00:01:00] language that you're listening to.

Beth: We have the transcripts on the website for these episodes.

Christy: Yes, it is very important to us that everybody has accessibility to it,

Christy: So we're here, we're on episode two, and we thought it'd be a good starting place to share a little bit more about how we navigated our emotions in this time, because I think in the beginning there's a lot of guilt about how we're supposed to feel about it. There's guilt in general, we'll get into that, but you almost don't feel safe to express out loud if you're feeling upset about it because you are still grateful that you have this beautiful child, especially who, in my case, otherwise very healthy baby.

Christy: It felt selfish to feel upset, but we also want to be as real and honest and raw as possible. Cuz everybody processes their emotions differently and finding out that they have a kid with additional needs or something that they weren't expecting, like we talked about in the last episode.

Beth: [00:02:00] Yes. And the minimizing I am a big minimizer, so that is something I think is worth touching on too.

Beth: Comparing it to somebody else's worst isn't going to do you any good in the healing process. So

Christy: That's a good point. It'll be interesting for me to talk about that on this episode because I don't know if I've ever touched so much about that on out loud to people because it is one of those things.

Beth: No, just thinking, this is a healing thing for us too in a way. It, we talk about this, but I don't know, the last time I had in depth conversations about.

Christy: Yeah. That is true. I can say what I'm feeling, but to have a conversation about it is like a whole different scenario.

Christy: Why don't you go first,

Beth: going back to that day always gets me . It feels blurry. I don't remember super clearly everything that happened.

Beth: But I also feel at the same time, parts of it are very vivid and so it's something that I've often wished that I almost had more documentation of, which is so easy to say in retrospect, I have two pictures from it, which I revisit often, obviously, but I wish I had those raw emotions in, a format that I could look [00:03:00] back at and be , wow, we've come so far, but also it's okay to feel this way.

Beth: The main thing I think that I was feeling when we actually got his diagnosis wasn't shock or surprised because I touched on, we had a pretty good idea going into that test what we were gonna hear ,

Beth: , no pun intended. Yes, no

Beth: the news we were going to receive. And so I think more than anything it was just feeling like out of control.

Beth: not out of control. It like I was spiraling, but more like I didn't know what to do and I don't like not knowing what to do. , I like having like very logical action steps and lists and like that's how I make sense of things and figure out what's gonna come next. And so when you're just bombarded with information that was our experience, at least, we were given like these thick books that I still have at home. I don't know why like I hang on to them. I guess just as a reminder it's just a lot to take in and it's not necessarily the format that you wanna be taking it in, in, oh. I don't wanna sit at home and read three binders

Christy: sorry. I was just gonna say if something unexpected happens in day-to-day life, say an emergency or whatever[00:04:00] you have ingrained in your mind if this happens, I'm gonna call 9 1 1, or, this is the action that I take if this were to come up you have a plan and a way to process the next steps before anything ever happens.

Christy: Preparedness. This is part of the reason why this podcast is important to us and what we're trying to do here and have these conversations because, When both you and I feel like went into these appointments, it was that lack of preparedness. Not even with, I don't know, you maybe expected it a little bit more than I did, but it's still hard before that appointment to find out what the next step would be.

Christy: It would be a lot easier looking back if I had already said, okay, if it is hearing loss, I know my next step is gonna be this.

Beth: Yeah. And I think it's important to touch on like the degrees, like some people listening probably went into that and got the news that like their child had moderate, severe progressive hearing loss.

Beth: And obviously those steps are gonna be different than Cooper who had zero hearing at all. [00:05:00] So obviously the next step that we took was figuring out if he was a cochlear implant candidate and implementing a s.l. . But for some people it's hearing aids. For some people it's wait and see

Christy: Exactly, I again, not being prepared. I didn't even know there was degrees of hearing loss. I honestly thought if you were d/Deaf, it meant that you're in total silence. I, for some reason, I just went all or nothing in my head on what hearing loss was. And when I got the diagnosis they told me she had profound hearing loss, and that was still confusing me.

Christy: I was like, wait, does that mean she's d/Deaf? What is profound hearing loss like? Obviously I can make sense of it now, but in the moment no words were making sense. So then. , they don't tell you your child is d/Deaf, like you might expect it in before the appointment.

Beth: It's funny you bring that up because and I forget that I did this because now it's just so easy to say.

Beth: But I refused to say d/Deaf for the first, like at least couple weeks. I don't know why I just, it wasn't in denial. Like I knew what profound hearing loss meant, but I think that word just scared me for some reason and. Now [00:06:00] it's so preferred because I know like the depth of the culture behind it and it's it sounds so much less medical versus like profound hearing loss.

Beth: I think it's just funny like what we choose to pick up that makes us feel better or worse during hard moments. .

Christy: Exactly. It is probably why a lot of families go through this is you felt scared. It's that fear of it because as hearing parents who didn't grow up within d/Deaf culture or around d/Deaf people, the word d/Deaf is it is not now, but I, because we're being honest about our feelings in the moment and the diagnosis, the word deaf did feel very overwhelming and powerful and so foreign.

Christy: and I think maybe on my end it was a little bit of denial at first as well because I was like, what? No, once I got home, I was like trying to process it. We still were banging pots and pans by this sleeping baby's head.

Beth: I blasted my phone in Cooper's ears more times than I can count when before we got his diagnosis just to see .

Christy: I know you're like just [00:07:00] I know that this very professional like really evidence-based program they use to diagnose hearing loss, is accurate.

Christy: But these pots and pans, you don't know until they pass that test. It's interesting because whenever Cameron, my oldest was in my belly, I

would put my headphones with music on and she would kick. And whenever Charlie was in my belly, I would put headphones on my belly and I would tell my mom all the time, I'd be like, man, this girl does not like music. remember Cammy used to kick all around when I did that? And Charlotte doesn't it's just so funny to look back now and be like, oh my gosh. She just literally was born d/Deaf because of genetics.

Christy: Some babies have a progressive hearing loss. Some babies might develop an infection in utero or after or receive a medication that could cause them to have hearing loss. But Charlie just never, , never had a hearing. Okay, so go back to it cuz we got off on a tangent because of the word deaf- the tangents that many parents hear in their heads when they are trying to go through this diagnosis. [00:08:00] So you were there with your husband. You talked on last time that you felt more aware than it might be because of everything else that you were putting together for Coop's diagnosis.

Christy: So were you more like just ready to get the diagnosis or were you nervous or indifferent?

Beth: I think mainly I was holding onto hope that it was, that middle ground hearing loss, like maybe he had some hearing, but it just wasn't like great. Which in retrospect I'm glad was not the case because, it let us take steps faster than we maybe would've otherwise. But it's funny, like you don't know what you don't know. . And so I think that more than anything was what I was holding onto. I knew what we were gonna hear. Like I said in my mom gut doesn't mean that it wasn't hard. I think the way that they like put it when they came in the room was that they had no response, was the wording they used.

Beth: You have these questions, but it's just, you're not, also not gonna retain any of the answers really. . And so I know I asked like a couple things and mainly got the information I mentioned. And then I remember thinking , oh my God, I [00:09:00] have to stand up and walk out of here with a stroller and a baby and get to the car before I start sobbing for whatever reason.

Beth: I just wanted to be poised about it as soon as we got to the car, I just sat in the passenger seat with him and just sobbed, holding Cooper in my arm sobbing. Don't even know what Brandon was doing at that point, honestly.

Christy: What did he, what was his reaction in the appointment?

Beth: You the fact that I don't remember probably means his normal reaction, which is very just not nothing, but like I think he just always needs

to be that or thinks he needs to be that to my like more all over the place demeanor.

Beth: . So I think he was more just taking it in and maybe being the one better at listening at that point. . But yeah, he, I mean he said, I remember him sitting down like in the driver's seat and I just was like, I just need to hold him and cry in the passenger seat right now and we just need to sit in this parking garage.

Beth: And that's what we did. And the other thing, I think I said this last week too, like we'd both driven there for some whatever reason and there was no way I was driving out of there. I don't know how you managed that. You said you drove after that and. , I would've been like in this like funnel of not being able to see or hear anything around me.

Beth: It [00:10:00] was still a state of shock.

Beth: You also do what you have to do.

Christy: Exactly. Everything else in motherhood when someone's oh my gosh, how did, how do you do this? Or how did you make through that?

Christy: With like deployments or whatever the case is? You just, have to, so you just do what you gotta do. You definitely find new strengths that you didn't know you had when you're dealing with so many things in life. But this specifically,

Beth: yeah. And obviously speaks volumes to my own parents, but all I wanted at that point was them , sure I was 27 years old. You just, you want who you want in moments like that.

Beth: And I wanted my mom and I wanted my dad. I knew my mom would just let me feel what I feel, which she always has. , and that my dad would have a very logical approach and just. Look back on like things that have happened in life and be like, remember when you felt this way and look where you are now.

Beth: That's really what it was for me for the first couple days, was just letting myself feel what I was feeling and cry a lot.

Beth: That's always been the way that I've just it's like I have to get it all out of me before I can take the next steps.

Christy: At what point or was there like a certain information you've read or [00:11:00] did you talk to somebody in particular where you started to feel a shift?

Christy: Like with that more hope and less okay, yeah, I'm ready to do this and do what we gotta do. .

Beth: I think it was twofold. I I think last week I touched on a little bit that Brandon's got relatives who are d/Deaf and used a s I primarily. So having a conversation with her, I think we were just talking like Facebook Messenger and realizing okay, like either way this is gonna be fine.

Beth: We can give him access to both of these things. That was really helpful. But then, and this is one of my like favorite stories cuz it was one of those moments where you're just like, wow, like too many things lined up.

Beth: And it was after his diagnosis, probably like a week or two and I had ankle surgery in the midst of all of this because why not ? But I was back in my hometown and one of my best friends had driven there with me. And we were walking into the clinic and the little boy in front of us had cochlear implants I don't know if I just wouldn't have noticed them before. I wouldn't have known what they were or whatever, and I like looked at Amanda and I pointed them out and I was do I say something? Do I not? And like I ended up not saying anything because I was, they're at the doctor, I don't know what they're doing.

Beth: They don't know me. , [00:12:00] I probably would've started sobbing and then this guy would've been like, okay. And so later that day I was going through Facebook messages. Long story short, a friend from home actually had somebody to connect me with and it ended up being this kid's mom.

Beth: Oh my gosh. And cuz yeah. Yeah. So when we started talking, I was like, this sounds really familiar. He's like the right age. He's the, there's not that many people in my hometown that this could be and so it was really cool when that all aligned and we ended up having dinner with them.

Beth: And I think that was a turning point for Brandon, maybe a little bit more than me because at that point I had found you online and. I was the social media person, like we like today where Brandon really isn't. And so I'd seen a lot more of this is what his future could look like.

Beth: This is what happens. And Brandon, I think was still in that unknown and so to actually sit down and have dinner with their family and see this sassy four-year-old talking and taking his ears off and you know, like seeing

a little glimpse of our, oh yeah, future I think was helpful for both of us, but really, especially for Brandon.

Christy: Oh yeah. I think that the first time that, [00:13:00] especially like we knew we were gonna choose cochlear implants a little bit down the road, so the first time that you actually see a child in real life interacting with their cochlear implants on, it's just oh my gosh. Wow. Like it is like the most hopeful thing you can do.

Christy: So that's why if anybody listening, if there are d/Deaf communities, if there's hands and voices in your hometown, we have a families to families group where I'm from in Virginia. So seeing that little boy with the cochlears on his head and then talking to his family is like your first moment of relief you would say?

Beth: Yeah.

Beth: My first big moment of relief was finding your page . Oh. Just for, cause that's really, I think you were like the first person on social media that I really came across that was like sharing about it and the fact that.

Beth: Number one, that you answered me and just acknowledged what I was feeling

Beth: I think from that, the really emotional couple days following the diagnosis, I think after that I was just in information gathering mode.

Beth: Like it made me feel good to have [00:14:00] information. I used to work in journalism, like I just. Getting as much information as I could, learning what I could, figuring out what the next steps were. And , I remember the first time early intervention came to our house when Coop was like eight weeks old, and they had all this information to give us.

Beth: And by the end of it, the lady was like can we just hire you to go to people's houses and talk to them? ,

Christy: And it gives you that so like you feel some sort of control over just like what you can.

Beth: . And if you're paralyzed, like that's totally valid too. Everybody handles things differently. Exactly. And yeah, that's probably a good segue into what about you specifically in terms of after, because you weren't expecting it as much as we were, I don't think.

Christy: No, we touched on, in the introduction episode, I was not expecting a hearing loss diagnosis at all, and I, it's on me. I did well. It's, I shouldn't say it's on me. See, this is me going back and blaming myself still. You had another child

Christy: too. Take

Christy: the, yeah, I did have a 21 month old and this new baby trying to breastfeed with everything going on. I wasn't worried about it and it wasn't my top priority [00:15:00] list at the time. I was, had a husband who was about to deploy. There was a lot going on. even before having her, I'm trying to think like what was my biggest fear or biggest worry.

Christy: I don't know. I was just so happy anyhow honestly so happy. Like I go through, I know everybody reacts to postpartum period differently. But I get like that crazy euphoria for the first couple of weeks. So I wasn't nervous going into it. I wasn't scared. I had literally was just going in there on my high. It almost felt like I got the wind knocked out of me, like you just hit a home run and then you're slide into first base and the first basement hits you and then you're just down it just so unexpected. I just thought we were just gonna keep running the bases and make it home free. I was confused what profound hearing loss was. I just remember being like wait, Like I had to ask, are you saying that my baby's d/Deaf?

Christy: Because I was still trying to figure out what she was saying. I hadn't started crying yet, and I was just like, a little shocked. And then when I said, coming back to the word d/Deaf and just us [00:16:00] not knowing much about, it's when I said, are you saying that my baby is deaf and that's when I just broke down crying, sobbing. The room is so dark. I just remember coincidentally , all of my senses seem so Low when I try to rethink the moment because it's so dark in the room cuz they're trying to keep the stimulation low for the baby and keep her nice and quiet and asleep for this test.

Christy: So it's low. I can't even read the papers they're giving me because I like need a lot of light I was not processing, I was upset and then I got in the car. Again, I don't remember anything they told me. Actually I remember cuz you know they show you the speech banana right away. And showing me a jet and was like, this jet could take off next to your baby's head.

Christy: And she wouldn't hear it. And I was like, ah. Oh, wonderful. Okay, .

Beth: I just said that to somebody like two days ago because we were like literally the same word for word thing and it. Oh

Christy: yeah. So okay.

Beth: That puts it in perspective, .

Christy: It really does.

Beth: Now Cooper can hear an airplane a mile away and I'm like, [00:17:00] what?

Christy: Isn't it wild? It's everything. And I think, it's funny you say that because we live in Virginia Beach, we're a few miles from Oceana, so there's always jets flying overhead, and I think because of how that jet reference was always said to us, describing Charlie's hearing loss the first time that she heard the airplane.

Christy: I was like, it chills right now because the first time she heard the airplane I was like, oh my gosh it feels bigger than probably it would to anybody else that probably is why it feels so big that first few times that she points out the airplanes. But I just got in my car I called my husband and Told him and he was, like I said in the last episode, he was just very confused and I was crying so hard that he couldn't really fully understand. And it's still, it's about a 45 minute drive home. So he was coming home from work so he can meet me and talk about it.

Christy: And then same as you. I immediately go to I want my mom and dad, I [00:18:00] wanna talk to my mom and dad . So they're always my next call. . I just feel for people who don't have a good support system , because there are so many people who have to navigate this or, and much more without a steady hand to hold or, without just somebody who can listen to them. It's easy to get in our own little worlds with our problems being, again, look the minimizing thing but truly having a support system through this is what makes the difference. That's why we wanna build this here. There's a Facebook group parents of Children with Cochlear Implants? Yes. Are you in that? Oh, that's like my number one resource for anything. I use that search box anything I find out at an appointment, I'm just typing it in to see if anybody else has gone through it.

Christy: So I would say when I came home, I can remember putting Charlotte in her rock and play before they were recalled that's when my husband got home and we're, he was crying too. Like we were both crying and just looking at her because in the moment we [00:19:00] thought, like our immediate thought, not knowing any better

Christy: that somehow she would be missing out on something in life or she wouldn't have the full fulfillment of music and just, we thought

something was going to be taken away to not make her life as fulfilled as we expected or hoped, which now of course, looking back, could not be further from the truth.

Christy: But in the moment, that's a normal way to feel. We don't know any better. You just, like you said, if you don't know what you don't know and we sure as heck didn't know and yeah. Then we proceeded to bang pots and pan next to her head in her little rocking play. Yeah, and still like the denial emotions.

Christy: One thing that really had the ability to make me or break me in those beginning moments were how people responded when I told them.

Christy: So I was very nervous about sharing with people at [00:20:00] all. I don't know why I was very guarded with the information and kept it private. For, longer than I keep most things private, I think. But I just wanted to know more about it before I share with people, because it's hard when you, I'm like trying to predict what questions somebody's gonna ask.

Christy: And I also had a feeling of guilt because I hadn't known why Charlotte was deaf at this point. So I, I didn't know that it. Her genetic code and just how she was born to be. One very big feeling I had was that guilt and feeling to blame for

Christy: her again, at the time, what I was thinking was going to be a different life that, she was gonna have this hardship and it was going to be all my fault and I was like going back through, like I was looking at when does the ear develop in utero and trying going back in the calendar and being like, , where was I at this stage?

Christy: Was I around something that could have caused this or was, did I do a workout [00:21:00] and do something? I was really blaming myself for a lot of things, I was trying to prepare myself with the question somebody could ask when I was figuring out when I wanted to tell people, and the reaction of people saying, I'm so sorry. Which again, people don't know what to say. I wouldn't know what to say before either necessarily, but when you do finally open up about it, so many people are telling you, I'm so sorry. Yeah. And you're like, oh, like there, because you know the, it just reinforces your worst fear which now obviously, it's the responses that were like, she's the same baby that has brought you so much love and joy. This is who she was born to be like, her life is going to be fulfilled. You're gonna make sure that she has everything that she needs, like it's going to be okay. Those responses were so important and just made all the difference.

Christy: and I know that nobody would [00:22:00] ever mean anything by saying they were sorry cuz they don't know what they don't know. But

being able to process it now and looking back, it, it is like not something anybody should feel sorry for. We have this in incredible baby, just build up the mom.

Christy: And it's hard to even if somebody says to you. This doesn't change anything. She's still the same baby that you've been loving on for the last month before you knew she was deaf. And that's true, but it's also I am not the same person that I was. And it does change things.

Christy: Yeah. It does change things. And it's yes, of course she's still her but like I will never be like, I will never be the same in a good way now. Of course. But it's like recognizing Yeah. Yeah, like you are, this is something that. You, your family is dealing with and you're gonna deal with it and you're gonna do just fine.

Christy: How can I help? Do you need a babysitter for your other baby? . So you can go to these appointments. Do you need somebody to go

Beth: to appointments with you? Yeah. Yeah. That was the other thing, like. . My mom knew that I was still like in a state of [00:23:00] shock and needed somebody to be with me to actually hear the information

Beth: Exactly. Write it down and so I could just listen. But I think it's also a good segue, like I didn't even realize I did this until we were just having this conversation. Like when we did share, on social media or with people I still have the posts saved in my phone notes. I haven't deleted it.

Beth: And I literally laid it out in like question format, like what we know colon. what this means, colon, what's next? Colon, what you can do, colon. I didn't even realize I was trying to get ahead of all those questions that way, or keep people from saying certain things. But I think honestly like we didn't deal with a ton of questions or a ton of I'm sorrys I think probably because of the way it was presented.

Beth: And that's totally up to you and like how much you feel comfortable sharing, obviously as a, not everybody wears their heart and their sleeves like we tend to. But I think that helps a lot too cuz I didn't, I was putting it out there, but I wasn't prepared to like, have tons of back and forth conversations about it yet.

Beth: , like I was still drained, .

Christy: And a lot of the answers I think at that point are like, I don't know. . Yeah. And then you feel this is your baby. You feel like you're supposed to

know [00:24:00] all. I don't know why. I still don't know anything about anything. It changes every day in parenting, but you just feel so protective

Christy: We watched a YouTube video ,

Beth: you realize the full circle part of that, like with your video being on Unaccused now. It's so like your video is the video that people watch

Christy: sometimes . It's so interesting. It is. You know what, it's one of those things I'm like, obviously clearly we were put in this position for a reason.

Christy: You and I both. Even though I have my own full, issues with the viral video and all of that, in hindsight, it's fine. We are supposed to be having these conversations and she was supposed to be the baby on that video.

Christy: She has brought a lot of joy to a lot of people and she's also been a reason for these conversations to happen and a reason for people to talk about deaf culture, cochlear culture, like how it's changing and just have it be a bit more of a mainstream conversation.

Beth: And just for quick background,

Beth: that's the video when [00:25:00] she's getting her hearing aids turned on, right? Yes. Kinda lights up and smiles and

Christy: Yes, this is when she gets her hearing aids for the first time at two months old. Circling back to the emotion part, it really does come full circle.

Christy: That was probably like when we're talking about like those happy. Joyful moments of hope that day. Nobody can take that away from me. She was so happy. She still is. To see her smile and see how much she just liked to hear, like I knew we were giving her a gift, which, made it an easier segue into the surgery part months later.

Christy: But when we first found out people weren't sharing on social media

Beth: you were going through that in 2017.

Christy: 2017 and I'm like, looking back the only person sharing, which I found her later, is that girl Lucy from the UK who has a little boy

Christy: and yeah, this video, like some random video of these two little boys that were about five years old [00:26:00] playing on a playground with their cochlear implants. And I just, . Oh my gosh. I never heard of cochlear implant in my entire life, and I certainly didn't know that deaf kids had an option to listen and speak. In my head. The only option was sign language. I didn't even know there was another one.

Christy: . And so I think that's important too cuz I feel like sometimes when people are having open conversations with me with different beliefs, they think that our audiologists like pushes this on us. Yes. When I'm like, no. Like I don't even know if they brought up the word cochlear . Nobody ever pushed anything on us.

Beth: I'm sure there's people who do, but that's not a everybody's experience. Cause that's what I was thinking as you were saying that too, about I assumed American Sign Language, so I was like, oh, they must not have pushed it on you.

Beth: Like I still jumped to that too, even though it didn't happen to us. Yeah.

Christy: Did I feel again, I don't remember what information they gave us, and that's on me . , but nobody pushed it on us. We saw that video and I knew that I wanted to ask about it and find out more because it was so amazing [00:27:00] to see those boys on the playground.

Christy: And that's when I went onto the group on Facebook. It's Parents of Children with cochlear implants. And again, to speak to the fact that people weren't sharing about this stuff and this group is private, you can't just get into it. So I had to wait till. , I had to answer questions. I didn't even fully know the answers to the questions yet, to get into the group.

Christy: But that group changed my life cuz that was the first time I could see pictures and videos of kids with cochlear implants or hearing aids and moving forward. And they're not an a s l heavy one, of course. I definitely looked into a lot of a s l deaf culture resources equally as much. But , Just being honest of what was giving me a lot of hope and excitement was that I didn't know hearing technology existed.

Christy: I wanted to see if she was a candidate and explore it further. And then we dove right into learning all the things and learning ASL

Beth: yeah, I think it's natural for you to want your child to experience the world the way you do. Not only because [00:28:00] like it's what you know, but because it's how you know how to.

Christy: You worry about that isolation part when there's no other members of your family that are deaf and I'm just saying honestly how we felt. With the other side of the coin too, big D death families celebrate when they find out their child can't hear in a lot of cases. We're not celebrating one or the other. I was getting excited about the hope that she wouldn't have to feel isolated growing up in our family, which obviously we would never allow that to happen, we wanted to explore all the options and I'm glad we did.

Christy: It's not like we wanted to seek an easier path for her it's not an easier path that we were seeking. Emotion wise, it's still a spectrum. Even being here five years later, I still dance around how I say that these things because I'm a hundred percent sure, I'm a hundred percent confident in the choice we made for a family, but I can't be a hundred percent sure what Charlie is [00:29:00] going to want to do and when she's an adult or how she'll wanna communicate.

Christy: You know how she'll want to choose to or to choose not to immerse herself in the culture. I can't make those decisions for her and I still have nerves around that and I still have insecurities even about it's here we are on a podcast speaking about it. I'm insecure as heck about a lot of these conversations, but again, we're building a safe place here for hearing parents of deaf children

Christy: for me to feel safe saying these things because I know a lot of people do feel that way. For me, I'm always gonna worry about my kids no matter what. I'm always gonna have anxiety about things, hearing or not language wise, or not, like all the things. I don't know if that'll ever go away, so maybe I'm just been worried

Christy: before she was born. I'll be worried until the day that I die. I don't know, but I've been happy every second of the way and like even

Beth: every second.

Christy: Yeah, like I do feel like an [00:30:00] immense joy of having them. No, I'm not. Not euphoric

Christy: when they're getting heeded across the room when they're

Christy: toddlers. No, your girl's definitely still on a standard dose of Zoloft since the day Charlotte was born.

Christy: Yeah, always yeah, I'm always at least 50 milligrams happy. But no, it, and that's another thing, post postpartum anxiety and depression for

me, after Charlotte was more intense. I felt not depression as much, but the postpartum anxiety. and

Beth: so interesting. Cause I feel like I didn't struggle with it at all because I was so busy with all, everything with him.

Beth: Oh, that's right. Yeah, that's a conversation maybe for another time, but yeah, .

Christy: Yeah.

Christy: But it is important to touch on for the moms listening though, because the diagnosis period is between two weeks and a month old. Our hormones after having a baby at two weeks and a month are like the worst.

Christy: That's the worst possible time. That euphoria that I was talking about when I'm marching in there all baby heaven high, it's like got the wind knocked out of me [00:31:00] with the news and then my body was like, oh yeah, you just had a freaking baby. So all the emotions and hormones were just a lot on top of it while trying to just, yeah, I forget that.

Christy: Cammy was 21 months old. All the things. I think the emotions are so much more complicated than How did you feel finding out your kid was deaf or not, like we all have so many other things going on. And we all are at so many different stages of being prepared, going into it and coming out of it.

Christy: I hope that we are helping somebody going into their appointment.

Christy: . I think you can definitely find looking at Beth and Coop's page or My Page and so many others now it's, social media is a blessing and a curse, but, Seeing kids today and seeing moms that like can laugh and joke and we're not sitting here sad or feeling sorry that our kid's deaf.

Christy: That was just a very real and very, distinct emotion of the past.

Beth: Yeah, like it still comes up, but. Now it's more [00:32:00] oh my gosh, coop can take his ears off and I can listen to my True Crime podcast in the car and, I can stomp around and vacuum when he is sleeping

Christy: Oh, so funny you say that true crime in the car is my like, I was like, that is the superpower. I can listen to all the things and yeah,

Beth: he was complaining about my music the other day and I looked at him and I was like, then take your ears off. And he just goes, And whips 'em across the car.

Beth: I

Beth: was like, okay,

Christy: and we all have our special things that, our own superpowers. But I'm like, yes the ability to just turn off at the end of the day.

Christy: Such a superpower.

Beth: I wish I could do that because of my deaf child half the time

Beth: deaf kids. Not quiet. Not quiet,

Christy: There's so many things. We definitely need to do a what nobody told us before we had deaf kids. . Oh, all the things. Yeah, emotions are just a spectrum.

Christy: And I know I'm gonna face different fears, thinking about her mainstreaming into a classroom one day and just being on her own one day. But I have these same anxieties and fears [00:33:00] for my hearing kids but also, I feel like we get to experience a joy that other people don't. When we see our child experiencing these different language milestones and

Christy: when they hear an airplane for a first time, again, chills. That's not something most people would take note of, but for us, we're like, oh wait it's such a it's a miracle moment to see your deaf child recognizing a sound that is a very beautiful and just, it's hard to wrap your mind around. And then first sign seeing your baby sign . or seeing my other daughter sign, hearing Charlotte say any new word, working hard I don't take those moments for granted. So I do think as hearing parents, we get to experience these cool little miracles and moments of joy that other people don't.

Beth: Even when Cooper uses like the word end in a sentence or like he's starting to speak in more full sentences.

Beth: And it's something that I celebrate all the time. Yeah. He talks nonstop and I'm like, oh my gosh, just be [00:34:00] quiet sometimes. But then I'm like, okay, thinking back to, when I was scared, I would never hear

him say, I love you. The other night in the dark, he was saying, I love you mom. I love you, mom.

Beth: I love you mom. I love you mom. Like just wasn't even taking a breath. And I was like, if only I can have seen this moment .

Christy: Oh my gosh. I know. Just when you feel like you got your emotions and everything under control, I'm sure something else will happen anyhow and throw you for loop, but that's life with or without a deaf child and there's no black and white like we discussed. You're allowed to feel what you feel and you're allowed to share that or keep it as private as you want. Nobody has to do a TED talk on what their feelings are or what they're going through experiencing their child has a hearing loss as a hearing parent. You don't owe anybody a way to grieve, a way to celebrate whatever is you're doing is fine. It's just, it is what it is. You're human and I think having a good support system, being prepared. I think those are the things that make the biggest difference of [00:35:00] moving past that initial shock and fear and sadness.

Beth: Piggybacking off of that, like I don't think if somebody had told me like, Hey, you can snap your fingers and move past all these emotions.

Beth: Like sure, maybe day one I would've said, yeah, let's do it. But I think there's so much growth to be had from that and that's where I look back and compare what I was feeling and thinking and going through to where we are now, and it's just there's a lot of beauty in that contrast for me.

Beth: . And sometimes I am, I'm watching Cooper interact or he is saying something that I haven't heard him say, and I just cry because it's overwhelming, to think you weren't gonna have those moments, or you weren't going to experience him talking to a friend. Yeah, it's just, it's important to feel the lows in order to fully appreciate the highs, I think is what I'm trying to

Beth: say .

Christy: That's a hundred percent true. There is no high without the low and it is just a beautiful, natural part of it all.

Christy: And sometimes messy. And, it's funny, I mentioned I had a fear about telling people that Charlotte was deaf, and [00:36:00] now I have to remind people that Charlotte is deaf. So it's , we move past one thing and now you know, you're into the whole other thing. It's a journey.

Christy: Ups and downs all the way I could say worth it all on my end for sure.

Beth: I would agree even on the hard

Beth: days, . .

Christy: And there's lots of 'em. And that's okay too. Do what you gotta do. I treated myself to a lot of Chick-fil-A cuz I deserve it. I just can take care of myself when I can.

Beth: Coco melon. You want . Cocoa melon? Sure.

Christy: It's a gift.

Christy: Hopefully this conversation was, enlightening for professionals as well. It's a little bit harder to understand what the parents are feeling in that moment. Obviously my audiologist had amazing empathy and they always did a really great job of that. Hopefully listening to these conversations is an insight that you can't get from a textbook.

Christy: And, sometimes these appointments are so quick and you're in and out. I know I, as a health professional, didn't get to see this side of things. [00:37:00] Knowing what this conversation would look like now, obviously it would address things a lot differently to parents. So just hopefully it give you a little bit of a feeling of feeling normal and that you feel like you can just, just be where you're at, feel what you gotta feel.

Christy: As long as you're giving your child loving language, you're doing a great job. Look, if anybody doesn't know what to say, when they find out their kid is deaf or you know they have a family member, say that and then direct them here and they'll be with good people.

Beth: Thank you guys for listening and obviously we're always looking for feedback and topic ideas and guest ideas. We've had a couple come in these last week via email over on our website, feel free to send those in, and we look forward to sharing this episode and a lot more.

Beth: All right, have a good day everybody.