SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

The Real Reason You Keep Snapping at the People You Love

with Wendy Venema · Day 4, Thursday, October 29 · The Unfamiliar Feelings

Hello and welcome. I'm so glad you're here. Grab your coffee, or, let's be honest, the cold tea you made two hours ago, and let's dive right in, shall we?

I want to start with a little story. Picture my kitchen on a random Tuesday. Dinner is on the table. Seven people, because we're a blended family of seven. Someone asks, "Mom, where's the ketchup?" And I lost it. Properly lost it, over ketchup. And I'll be honest, it wasn't the first time that week. It wasn't even the first time that day.

If you're nodding right now, this session is for you. Because today we're talking about the real reason you keep snapping at the people you love. And I promise you, it's not the ketchup.

I'm Wendy, founder of Cozy Cadence. I help overwhelmed, overstimulated moms stop carrying everyone's mental load on their own. And I don't teach this because I've got it all figured out. I teach it because I was the mom lying awake at 2am, replaying the snap, wondering what the hell was wrong with me. Spoiler: nothing was. And nothing is wrong with you either.

One quick note before we dive in. I'm not a doctor. I'm a mom who works with the mental load, and anything about your hormones, your body, or your health, please take to your healthcare provider. The other speakers in the summit will talk about what's happening inside your body in this season. I'm here to talk about what's sitting on top of it.

So let's talk about the ketchup. I want you to picture a glass of water. A completely full glass, right up to the brim. Now someone drops in one tiny drop. What happens? It spills. Not because that one drop was big, but because the glass was already full. That's the snap. The ketchup is the drop. It gets all the blame, but it's not the problem. The problem is everything that was already in the glass.

So what's in there? Most of us think of the mental load as the doing: the laundry, the cooking, the driving. But the doing is only the part people can see. The mental load is the knowing. Knowing the dentist appointment is Tuesday. Knowing the gym bag needs to be washed before Thursday. It's the anticipating, the remembering, the planning three steps ahead for everyone in the house. I've always worked from home, and nobody in my house could see any of what was going on in my head. They just saw a mom who was a bit short with them. And it never switches off.

A lot of what I carry is what I call the invisible yeses: all the things you said yes to that nobody ever actually asked you out loud. In a blended family of seven, there are a lot of birthdays. Guess who knows

every single one of them? Guess who buys the gifts and the cards? Nobody asked me. I just said yes, quietly, years ago. That's the shit nobody sees. And it's heavy.

Here's why this matters so much in this season of life. A lot of women in perimenopause tell me the same thing: "I used to manage all of this. Why can't I anymore?" You'll hear from the other experts in this summit about what may be changing in your body. But what I see is this: many women find that the glass feels smaller than it used to. You didn't lose your patience, and you didn't become a worse mom. The load stayed the same or grew, and the space to hold it quietly shrank. That's not a personality flaw. That's a signal.

The snap feels like it comes out of nowhere, zero to a hundred, but it almost never does. There's nearly always a build-up. It's just that we've learned to ignore it, because we're busy, and because there's always one more thing to do first.

So the second skill is learning to notice the glass getting full before it spills. Your body usually knows before your brain does. Some of the early signs moms tell me about: your jaw is tight, or your shoulders are up by your ears. Every sound feels too loud. You feel touched out. You hear yourself sighing a lot. Your sentences get shorter. Mine is the sighing. My kids can hear the snap coming before I can. One of them once asked me, "Mom, are you about to get mad?" And I hadn't even noticed I was getting there.

There's a moment right before the snap. I call it the almost moment. It's that split second where you feel the heat rising and you think, "Oh no, here it comes." Most of us blow right through it. But that moment is where your choice lives. You can't always stop the feeling, but if you catch the almost moment, you get to choose what you do next instead of reacting.

So when you notice it, try this. It's simple on purpose, because nobody can remember a ten-step plan while a toddler is screaming. One: name it, in your head or out loud. "I'm full." Two: buy yourself some time. Say one sentence to your family, "I'm getting overwhelmed, give me two minutes," and then step away. The bathroom counts. The bathroom always counts. Three: let your body come down. Breathe out slower than you breathe in. Unclench your jaw. Drop your shoulders.

Will it work every time? No. Some days you'll still snap, and that's okay. But every time you catch the almost moment, it gets a little easier to catch the next one.

Catching the almost moment helps. But if all we ever do is manage the spill, we're still walking around with a full glass. So the third piece is the one that actually changes things: putting less in the glass. And I want to be honest with you. The mental load can't be fixed. Not with a bubble bath, not with a prettier planner. You'll always carry some of it. The skill is learning to see it and decide what stays.

Step one: get it out of your head. Your brain is a terrible storage space. It holds on to everything at the same volume, so "buy toilet paper" feels exactly as urgent as "book the specialist." Grab a piece of paper tonight and write down everything you're carrying. Don't organize it. Just dump it. And if a blank piece of

paper feels like one more thing, the free workbook that comes with this session has pages made exactly for this. It asks the questions for you, so you don't have to think about where to start.

Step two: sort it into three piles. Mine: the things that really are yours and that you want to keep. Not Mine: the things someone else in the house could do, your partner or your kids, depending on their ages. And Not Now: the things that don't need a decision this week. You're allowed to put them down for a while. That third pile is the one most of us forget. Not everything has to be solved today.

Step three: pick one thing from the Not Mine pile. Just one, and hand it off for real. Asking for help is, "Can you take the bins out?" But then you're still the one remembering. Handing it off is, "From now on, the bins are yours. Tuesday night, every week." They own the remembering too. In our house, my boyfriend does bedtime completely, and the bins. He takes them out without me telling him which one goes out this week. That's two things that live in his head now, not in mine. We also moved our family calendar into an app everyone has on their phone. It might not get done exactly the way you want it to, but let it be done their way. One thing. That's all.

Now, I promised we'd talk about the days you still snap, because you will. I still do. When it happens, please skip the 2am trial. Go back to the person you snapped at and repair it. Something like, "I'm sorry I yelled. You didn't do anything wrong. My head was too full, and that's mine to handle." That's it. Your kids don't need a perfect mom. They need a mom who comes back. And then, instead of asking what the hell is wrong with you, ask a better question: what's in my glass right now?

If you want help with that, I made you a free workbook to go with this session. It's called The Invisible Load Release Workbook. It walks you through getting everything out of your head and onto paper, sorting what's yours from what isn't, and letting go of what doesn't need deciding today. It's reusable, so whenever your glass starts filling up again, you can sit down and empty it. Grab it, print it, and keep it somewhere you'll see it.

So here's what I want you to take with you. The snap isn't a flaw. It's your glass telling you it's full. Catch the almost moment, and be gentle with the woman carrying all of it. You're not broken. You're just full.

Thank you so much for being here. I'm Wendy from Cozy Cadence, and I'll see you around.