

# GED\_S01E27\_The\_Good\_Enough\_Dad\_Jeremy

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**Anonymous Female Voice:** [00:00:02] A LiSTNR Production.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:00:04] This podcast was recorded on the ancient lands of the Gadigal peoples of the Eora nation in Australia. I wish to acknowledge their rich and continuing culture, and especially pay respect to the elders past, present and emerging, and to acknowledge and pay respect to any First Nations people from anywhere in the world who may come to hear this podcast. We hope that we may all come to walk with gentle feet, strong minds and compassionate hearts in this global village.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:00:36] No dad wants to be a lousy dad. Aiming to be a good dad is great. But you know what? Being a good enough dad is so much more important. I'm Maggie Dent, parenting educator and author and champion of boys and men. And this is The Good Enough Dad where I chat with committed, caring, sometimes confused, and often funny dads about all the ways they've discovered to be good enough at this parenting gig. My good enough dad today is Jeremy Hutchings.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:01:06] You know, I think about life as a roller coaster ride. With the ups and downs comes how we feel about ourselves, what we say about ourselves, and how hard we are with ourselves. I know as a bloke in those years in my history where I wasn't providing to the level that I wanted, that that really challenged my sense of self and my self esteem. There was anxiety and self doubt and even depression.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:01:36] That's Jeremy talking about his battle to find resilience on his podcast The Profitable Farmer. Jeremy is a farmer, a business coach and the CEO of the Farm Owners Academy, where he dedicates his time to helping farmers and their families thrive. He's husband to Jane, dad to James, 16, Nicholas, 14, twins [00:02:00] Camila and Hugh, 12. Hi Jeremy, welcome to The Good Enough Dad.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:02:05] G'day, Maggie. Thank you so much for having me.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:02:08] What sort of a start did you have this morning in your family? It is holiday still, isn't it?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:02:13] It is holidays. But, um, it's a good opportunity for shearing. So as I speak, I've got three of my four kids running the wool shed. Jimmy, our eldest, has just finished his second week long shearing course with AWI, and he's on a handpiece and Nico and Milly are rouseabout with our farm business partner, so I'm quite happy to be in air conditioned comfort while they're braving the heat, Maggie.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:02:37] Man, I can just smell the smell of the wool, that was my childhood. It was shearing time. Phoo! All those sheep to bring in. As you know, I'm a farmer's daughter, and I reckon much of my guts and grit came from my childhood so, Jeremy, your work, which is about helping farmers and their families find resilience. Where does your resilience come from? Do you think?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:03:01] Yeah, it's such a great point. I feel very privileged having grown up on a farm like you Maggie, and I grew up on a farm with dad and two workmen who were with us for 32 and 34 years, respectively. So I sort of had three dads and two brothers. And so as the youngest rebellious son, I was always trying to keep up with everyone. And one of the things I really do love and respect about dad is the responsibility that he extended to us at a young age. So I distinctly remember an image of our two workman's sons and my brother and I, and there were four headers side by side and a chaser bin and two trucks sitting in the paddock. And the average age of the drivers of those machines was about 12.5, I think. So we were just given a huge amount of responsibility and taught work ethic, I think at a young age, and.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:03:50] I think grit and resilience comes from having to knuckle out a hard day of work, seeing my kids now in the wool shed, and the way in which they're actively embracing their [00:04:00] responsibility and willing to work a good day. I think there's a lot of pride, isn't there, that comes being young and being stretched and tested and having to do a full day's work. So I love seeing our kids sort of getting that same privilege and opportunity as I remember it.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:04:15] Oh, look, I can still remember having to pick up rocks, you know, and doing the burn offs in autumn. You just couldn't go home after four hours if

you were tired. There was a job to do. And it was that completion, which I think probably ... Work ethic, definitely. But I loved the responsibility that we were seen as being capable. And I do remember my dad teaching me how to deliver lambs because my hands were smaller than my dad's. So from 8 or 9 that was often our job. There was no big deal about it. That's how life rolled, isn't it?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:04:46] Absolutely.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:04:47] In all my research, we've worked out that real resilience is actually not just about having responsibility. [00:04:53] It's actually about human connectedness because we can't be resilient on our own. [00:04:57] And I think in the rural communities, that's exactly what we live with, don't we? If there's a bushfire, if there's a farmer who's unwell, if there's an accident that's happened, everyone else turns up. So are those support systems what you promote within your business?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:05:14] Yes, certainly. And what we've created in Farm Owners Academy is an unbelievable community of like minded, growth oriented farmers. And whether it's that community or our local community, it's just so important, I think, to your point, often when we're not feeling like we're on our A-game, we isolate ourselves and we think we've got to go it alone. And as blokes especially, I think when we're feeling a bit broken, the last thing we want to do is reach out and ask for help. And so we go into a shell. Whereas I think if we can tap that local community, reach out to a couple of people and then have like, we're lucky enough to have the Farm Owners Academy community and other groups around us. I was asked this the other day in a conversation, Maggie, about who I most admire as a child. And, [00:06:00] you know, I just remember growing up and Mum and Dad's friends were sort of multi-generational friendships in our community. And I've got so many role models and mentors growing up that I feel so fortunate for. It's just my hope that that kids these days have those connections, because we can get so much support and learn so much from people that, or those, those men and women that are that are friends of our parents.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:06:25] Well, it is actually what the village traditionally from kinship systems, the further we get from that, the more difficult it is to parent kids and to navigate our elderly parents. And that's one of those gifts, I think, that still happens in rural communities to a degree. I can only begin to imagine what you would have got up

to with two brothers on a farm, and probably a bit similar to me and my five siblings. What are some of the fun kid like memories? Boy like memories do you have from your childhood?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:07:00] So many. We had a cricket pitch that we laid one summer and we didn't realise, but we'd put it so that when you hit a good drive, it was going straight at mum's kitchen window. Um, so the goal was to try and clear that and get it over the house. But, um, just hours of cricket on this dodgy concrete pitch. If you dug it in a bit early, you miss the concrete and got the pebbles and the ball could come up at your brother's head and, you know, it all got a bit messy at times, but, you know, that was fun most afternoons. But we had a game as well in the tip paddock where all the old broken, redundant machinery was and just, just heaps of rubbish. And we used to play cops and robbers, where two of us were on the old ag bikes and one of us was on the flash dirt bike, and the point of the game was if you were the robber on the flash bike, you got caught when part of the coppers bikes touched your bike. I've just got this image of us just flying around this tip in and out of broken machinery in the air, trying to [00:08:00] touch part of your bike on the back of their bike. Just hours of fun spent doing that. Shooting on the back hill. Yeah, just so much fun. So much, so many memories. And, um, yeah, I'll always, always be grateful for the freedom that we had in those younger years.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:08:16] And what that was is actually play created and driven by children without too much parental supervision, which, you know, obviously there would have been times you've had a few accidents, but we actually know that that playful behaviour not only builds confidence, but it builds connection. It builds genuine depth of love and affection. Some of my memories, I'm sure you've also got them is picking mushies, I loved the picking mushies, pet lambs ... oh, aren't they cute swimming in the dam, big burn ups in autumn and you'd stay and did the marshmallows. Did you have that experience where you hung around, you know, with all the local kids that you knew at sporting things like footy or tennis or the golf club? Did you have that collective of lots of kids in a pack?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:09:04] Tennis on a Saturday was a big thing. Footy obviously locally, and the local bowling club became the heart and soul of our local town, Yerong Creek. And yeah, just so many memories of being down there. Mum and dad were

playing tennis when we were younger and then we got involved, and I loved the fact that we got to play sport as kids with adults. I think there was a lot to learn in that, but I distinctly remember playing tennis and then finishing tennis and then the afternoon and the evening rolling on, and it's all sort of hanging out, running around, climbing trees, just having a heap of fun as a pack of kids, I remember going to the coast the same sort of three weeks every holiday, and the touch footy on the beach with a mass of kids and mass of parents. I've really only got one goal in life, and it's to be fit enough and well enough to play, you know, touch footy on the beach with my grandkids later on. I just have so many fond memories, as you say, that that kind of pack mentality in community.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:10:05] Who [00:10:00] do you think was your biggest male role model when you were growing up?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:10:11] Growing up, my grandfather was someone I always had a massive amount of respect for. When I was home from boarding school, I'd always make a priority to head into town and to have that round of golf or two with my grandfather. Just a stern, gruff, traditional old Scot, six foot three, but just a really good citizen. And he was a bank manager across sort of Australia. He's got stories of, you know, having the the pistol under his seat and going out to take supplies out to his clients in Alice Springs. And he just had some amazing stories. But I distinctly remember him being on the golf course in his sort of late 70s, early 80s, and people coming across from other golf courses to shake his hand and say, g'day, jock, you won't remember me, but you gave me a start. And I just remember standing there as a young kid, seeing that in the clubhouse or on the just, just so often pop would get these incredible pieces of feedback about the impact he'd had on people throughout his career. And I just found that I was swept along with that. I just used to stand there in the clubhouse or on the golf driving range, or on the golf course, just hearing stories of how he had helped families have a crack in agriculture. So I always had a lot of respect and admiration for him. Maggie.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:11:29] Well, I was really lucky. My dad was very similar, a really good humanitarian who just embedded values and behaviour. He didn't need to tell me. We watched them and then we copied them. And it's a real gift, isn't it, as we grow into adulthood. As girls or boys. What do you reckon you learnt from your own dad about being a dad?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:11:58] I almost feel like I want to apologise to [00:12:00] dad in this. Maggie. I've thought about this a lot because growing up I did always have respect for dad. But he was a real introvert and a bit of an academic, and he always said he probably should have been a doctor rather than a farmer. Very intelligent. Underneath that, there was a really gentle, kind and very thoughtful leader and a great sort of gentle, kind soul. But I think as a young kid, I didn't see that at the time. And, you know, I used to sort of see some of his mates who might have been more bullish, more boisterous, more extroverted, more sporty, more vocal. I now see that in dad that that his qualities of just being very thoughtful, very kind, very caring and very quiet are things I really admire for him as I get older. Maggie, I see myself becoming more introverted, and I appreciate those qualities that dad has always had so much more perhaps, than I used to.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:12:54] And isn't that the the way that men are able to be today, that we don't just celebrate the alpha male that's loud and big and watch me chest banging. We're now looking at the other men that don't need to do that or aren't that as being of equal value. I think that's one of the most significant shifts we're seeing culturally. I was really pretty happy that my dad was a little bit like that as well. It's so.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:13:20] True. And yeah, I do love the fact that we are perhaps a little less judgmental and a little bit more open to the diversity of human that that exists.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:13:31] It sounded like you were a pretty, you know, go getter sort of boy. So you would have been hard to handle. Give him a break. Anything about the way your dad was a dad that you've chosen to change?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:13:44] Dad, I think he's quite logical. Well, he comes across that way and very intelligent. And I think with that. And maybe it was also the generation, Maggie. But he wasn't full of lots of hugs. There wasn't a lot of of narrative around how you're [00:14:00] feeling. You know, how you're getting on, son, and, you know, certainly never a real I'm proud of you or, you know, really proud of the way you did that. And maybe I'm over doing that. I don't know if you can, but I am very affectionate. I try and lean in and check in and be very conscious of how our kids and, um, how our family are ticking along and trying to have those deeper conversations.

And I certainly make a point of letting my kids know that I love them and that I'm very proud of them often.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:14:27] Pure gold. Jeremy. Pure gold. Never, ever can you do it too much? What have you found to be the most challenging part of being a dad that you've come across so far?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:14:40] You don't get a manual, do you? And I know you speak to this. Um, I think for me. Making my kids wrong is something I think it's quite easy to do. Certainly on a farm, when you give them a task, or around the house when you ask for them to do something and they don't. It's easy to make them wrong, and an extension of that is probably to shame them. And I know there have been moments in even recently where I've caught myself doing that, and there have been moments in my back story, Maggie, where, you know, busy farm, busy off farm business, busy family, so much going on that that has seen me not on my A-game. And it's in those moments where I'm probably a bit fatigued and a bit frustrated that they don't see the best of me. And it's very easy when they constantly leave their lights on and they constantly leave cupboards open and, you know, you're constantly having to remind them or ask them to follow the rules of the house, that I see myself making them wrong and even shaming them. And I love now that I'm conscious or more conscious of that and try and handle those moments differently and perhaps more constructively.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:15:54] And there's another big influence that's probably added to that German, and that is that often boys [00:16:00] were shamed and hit and made to be wrong and made fun of at far higher levels than girls. And so that creates that, that place inside them when they become dads. So it just comes out sometime because it probably is what you've heard. The very fact you're aware of it is the number one step. And then rupture is coming back to repair. And I guarantee there are times now that you're okay to go, whoa, that's that didn't come out the way I meant.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:16:34] Absolutely. I do remember feeling that way. I mentioned, you know, three dads, two older brothers. I was younger, weaker, not as fast as, not as strong as. And I used to compare myself to those men in my life a lot and make myself wrong. And then there were a couple in that family who went, who took pleasure in, you know, perhaps making me wrong for the mistakes that I would make when I was trying

to keep up with everyone. So I feel like I'm quite acute to that, because I do feel like I got to experience a little bit of that in my childhood.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:17:05] One of the things that obviously I've witnessed, and I know a lot of farming dads have told me when I visit and run seminars in their areas, is there's a time when there is a lot of time when they can be around their kids, which is great, right? And you see a lot of them. You wake up with them, you know, you work on the farm and then it's almost like solo parenting for whoever the mum is while seeding and harvesting. And I don't even know how much I saw my dad when he was harvesting. Right. How do you navigate that when you're sharing it with particularly dads who are doing the bulk of that work where they disappear and, you know, like for three months and the kids go, where's dad?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:17:45] What we try to do is two things set up the farm. So. It's not as high risk and high pressure. I'm lucky enough to have an off farm project that can provide, so we perhaps don't have to push the farm as hard as others might need to. [00:18:00] But I guess the key thing, I think, is to try and make those situations as accessible and as friendly and accommodating for families as you can. And, you know a lot of respect for my wife, Jane's father, who even in the heat of sowing, he would stop and they'd light a little fire under a tree, or at harvest they would stop and put up the picnic table and have that 45 minute lunch where I think so many business oriented and driven farmers. Today, it's head is going 24 over seven and there's no opportunity to stop for those those little micro breaks. So I don't know if that's answering your question, but I think looking for ways that you can make those busy moments balanced and family friendly is a is a great option.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:18:48] And I know that we were driving the farm ute and the, you know, the four wheel quad bike quite early. So it was quite often our job to take lunch out to dad. And so we'd fight over who got to do it because we got to see dad. Oh. Farmers. Kids learn that life can be unpredictable because we can't control Mother Nature, can we? And there are hard times like floods and fires. But what they get to witness is how everyone does pull together and helps out. And I have clear memories of helping to make sandwiches in tents when there's a bushfire, or else 8 or 10 headers are taking off a farmer's crop because he's unwell. Have you found that kids get to be



able to go with the real bumps and ups and downs, and do you think that is actually what builds the grit?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:19:47] I think our kids have more bandwidth than sometimes we give them credit for. And there were parts of my childhood where I feel like mum and dad were trying to keep [00:20:00] me from being involved in some of the conversations and some of the decisions, certainly around pressure, around money and those things. I remember not being exposed to that. I guess what we try and do is within reason, include our kids as much as we can in the realities of farming. And I think there's some wonderful lessons for them to get from that. And I think it's also okay that they see us struggling at times. And, you know, I think they definitely see us helping others. And I think they definitely see others helping us in those pinch times. But I think it's good for kids to get the warts and all reality of what life's actually like.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:20:40] So one of the things is situational distress is following the crops being washed away or, you know, everything's been burnt. And I have visited and I'd like to acknowledge the Esperance community where I worked with after a particularly nasty bushfire. And the men asked me to come back to the shed for another seminar months later. They weren't recovering as well as they thought. And I think what came out of that is that we needed to let it be okay, that men don't just immediately bounce back if their community's been burnt and farmers have lost their lives and fences have gone and stock have, it takes time. But it might not necessarily be a sign that everyone is clinically depressed. They are struggling with situational distress. And I think what we saw in when I did that is there were men who were in their 80s, and there were young lads in their teens all having a conversation about how they were coping with situational distress, because it does tend to happen in our interesting world.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:21:43] Absolutely. That was exactly the form of anxiety and depression that I had in my mid 20s in corporate Sydney. It was situational depression. It just I thought I was not okay, but when I changed the environment, everything changed for me. I think what's hard in farming [00:22:00] is that it's harder when we are in drought or there's fire or flood. It's harder to change our environment in order to sort of bounce back. But I guess what we talk a lot about at Farm Owners Academy, Maggie is building an identity of self that is standalone and to some degree separate from the results of the farm, so that if the drought is on and prices have tanked and your cash

flows stuffed, and you're going back to the bank for an extension on the overdraft, that that's not a reflection of you, that's just a reflection of the realities of the game that you chose to play. But if the farm is struggling, it doesn't mean that you're failing. So I think there's a lot we can do as CEOs of farms and as leaders in business to build up our own sense of self and to create some separation from how I feel about myself, distinct from how the farm is performing at any point in time.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:23:00] I worked for a period of time in the wheat belt in Western Australia during a significant drought because there were a number of suicides of farmers, because there was no there was no crop. That meant there was this really long period of time without the normal things to do. And one of the things that I challenged them to do was we got them to gather together and do a busy bee every Friday at someone's house on the farm. So they either built a new pergola or did the chook yard. So they worked all together and then had a Barbie and a few beers. At the end of the day, because every single farmer at the end of that drought had something done that they'd been meaning to do, because they need to see that this isn't all wasted.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:23:46] Certainly finding tasks that you can control. And in agriculture, I think there is a mindset that our results are beyond our control. The only two things really that we can't control are prices [00:24:00] and the weather. But there is actually so many other things around that that we can control. And so I guess we try and focus people on. The things that they can control, and have them set down strategic plans and shape weekly and monthly and quarterly conversations, and to go after the activities that they can control. And so in a tough season, there are always more farm improvement projects that we can do quite cost effectively that have us feel like we are achieving. And I think that's how you know, that's how perhaps we can help get through.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:24:40] So what particular parenting challenges do you think that farmers, particularly dads, face that maybe others might not be aware of?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:24:52] To come to mind. Maggie, firstly, that one you mentioned about just not being present or as available to our kids as we want to be. In those pinch times. We talked about how it's hard for the family. I think it also can be very hard for the dads. And on the flip side, it's living where we work. And so often we get out

of the paddock and out of the yurt, and we're in the house and the office is in the house and, you know, creating that separation. I know when my kids come home from tour at boarding school and two more are about to go. But when we get to that extended summer holidays and I'm still trying to work in an off farm job or, or fulfill some other things, there's a guilt that you feel when the kids want to go shooting on the back hill, or they want to actually find a farm job to do, but you just can't quite fit that in. I feel real tension personally. I know others do as well, trying to manage that interplay of kids and family with a working farm.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:25:50] And tell me, how is it knowing that your kids are going to have to go away to school and go to boarding? Tell me how hard that really is when you're you've got [00:26:00] to farewell your kids for a turn at a time. Yeah.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:26:01] It's so interesting, Maggie, because. 12 months ago, we had all four kids at home, and Jimmy and Nico went away in year ten and year eight, respectively, last year. And next week the twins go. So we're within 12 months we're going to go from four at home to none at home. And so we actually found seeing Jimmy and Nico off at boarding school 12 months ago quite challenging for us as well as them. And I think a lot of the feelings that I had of leaving the farm as a 12 year old to go to boarding school came up for me. So I think Jane and I tended to struggle almost as much as the kids did. And I think that's pretty common for a lot of parents. But it will be so interesting next week. Literally today, next week we drop them off. So, you know, Wednesday next week we'll be waking up at home with no kids and it will be really interesting. Now for me, I, I'm sort of. Comfortable with the fact that I think our kids are ready for their next challenge, especially like our twins going, they're ready for this. And I think, you know, we've supported them well to transition into this, and I think they're ready for their next life challenge. And so I'm I'm sort of getting my head around it as this is their next life challenge. And I'm up for that. But I also think Jane and I need for our next challenge, and I think we've earned the right to actually put for me, it'll be golf on a Monday afternoon and maybe setting down a goal to do a half marathon or something, or to go for some some bush walks with Jane. I think there's an opportunity for us to turn back and put some energy and attention back into our relationship and us, where so much of our focus for the last sort of 16 or 17 years has been very much on family.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:27:44] I am just going to say one thing about that boarding stuff. When they talk about that transition, make sure you let them know that homesickness is really a form of grief that they will miss. And that's okay. And it's okay to feel upset, and it's [00:28:00] okay to find it uncomfortable because you're missing all the most familiar things, and it takes a little while for the new place to become familiar. And I had to work with one boy who was really struggling, like week eight into the term, and I got him to create a box full of some little things from the farm. You could just open it and there was some wool. So he got the smell of the wool, and then he had some like bits of stuff in there. There was even some sheep poo. But what he did is every time he missed the farm, he just kind of immersed himself in the sensory that allowed him to feel closer to it. So I think sometimes we don't just dismiss it and say, toughen up, but it's a process that each child will do very differently. And yes, you are also going to go through a little bit of grieving, even though you're sounding pretty happy, really, for the golf and the walks.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:28:51] It's a great suggestion. We've given them lots of photos and a few other things, but to give them some sensory things so they can kind of smell and touch to remember, it's a lovely thought. Oh.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:29:05] Oh, we all make mistakes and muck up at times. Can you think of a specific dad fail that you'd like to share with our audience, please?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:29:15] How long do you want for the list to be?

**Maggie Dent:** [00:29:17] Maybe just.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:29:19] Yeah, I mean, we we all stumble through this, I think I am. Remember locking Jimmy in a car in a national park in Tasmania and having to break two windows to get him free from the seatbelt that he was in. And it was a hot summer's day. We lost Jimmy in Hawaii for about half a day, which was concerning. I remember Niko throwing a pitchfork that happened to land in Hughie's eyes. So there's lots of incidents and accidents as most parents navigate. But thinking about this, um, I think 18 months ago, the pressures of farm and work and all those things kind of got the better of me. And I wasn't on my A game. And, um, I touched on this before, but I was [00:30:00] turning up to the kids and family a bit frustrated, a bit angry, short, and probably fixating on the small stuff that they weren't doing. And I mentioned that before,

making them wrong and even shaming them. And that's probably the the mistake or the fail that I reflect on. I've learned a lot from that, and I choose my words and how I turn up to my now sort of adult family very differently. I was probably got into a point where I was still treating them like kids, and they deserved better than that. So that's for me. Probably the fail that I hold most closely and that I continue to try and correct around, if that makes sense.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:30:38] What would be your biggest fear when it comes to raising your four kids in today's world? Jeremy.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:30:49] My biggest fear. For them is probably that they. Don't feel good enough or loved enough by us. I remember growing up feeling like I was compared to my brothers, and I was doing a lot of that for myself, but I hope that my kids feel like they are loved and respected as individuals, and that we try and champion for that. We sort of try and find their passions and strengths and try and find work experience or, you know, a couple of them set up businesses in areas of something that they're very passionate about. I hope that they feel strong for who they are, and I hope that they never feel like they're compared to each other.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:31:35] Okay, Jeremy, time for a big dad brag. Can you share one of your biggest parenting wins that you think you've you've done when you're nailed it?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:31:46] When the kids were, Jimmy was six, Nico was four, and the twins were two and a half. We took off for four months into the outback, and there was a moment years later where the twins were at school, and they were asked which states [00:32:00] of Australia they'd been to, and, um, they got to say, yep, bend to that one. Yep. Bend to that one. Yep. Bend to that one. And um, they were then asked, well, what's it like to be on a plane? And they said, oh, we've never been on one. And so that four month trip for us, we had something like 88 nights in a swag was just a game changer for our family, you know, to have that depth of time with them. When we left, they all got a pocket knife tied to their belt. We had a stockwhip, a cricket bat, and that was about all. And we just went bush. We unplugged camping in creek beds on the Birdsville Track and, you know, heading in towards the Simpson and we didn't know where we were going tomorrow and just that freedom. That was something talking to Jane about this actually before this conversation that that probably wouldn't have

happened if, if personally, I hadn't have suggested that we needed to get away and have a break. So very proud of that. And we still reflect on and we've got photos on the wall that still have our kids connect back to that trip. You know, we've done other adventures, and I think for me, the fun and the little tips that can come from those sorts of adventures with kids and with our kids is something that I look back on really proudly. I think it really helps set them up to be competent, self-reliant, capable kids. They would put up the tent, they would light the fire, they would whittle sticks aged two and a half with their pocket knives. I'm really proud of the fact that we gave them those sorts of challenges at a young age.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:33:31] You've made memories that matter, and that's just absolutely fantastic. And I think the unplugging the mob gets together and we go and all the bits get knocked around and off the edges, and before you know it, you've got something very different where you're not. You're not worried about time. You're just able to be. And it's this being, being completely present to our kids, which is getting really, really hard for today's parents.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:33:58] It's so hard today, isn't it? [00:34:00] It's so easy, isn't it, to let our kids be on devices and plugged in are.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:05] It isn't just the scheduling we overschedule thinking that's what they all need, when in actual fact probably less is okay too. Okay, this is a big, tough question. Are you ready for it? Jeremy?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:34:15] Fire.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:16] If there's only one thing that you want your four kids to learn from you as their dad. What would that be?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:34:26] Humble and kind. There's a song that they love by Tim McGraw called Humble and Kind, and we listen to that song often, and I find myself at the end of it going, guys, that's all I want for you guys. Just just care for people, no matter who they are. Care for everyone. Don't judge anyone. Yeah, that's the key, I think.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:47] Beautiful. And your final question. If you could wind back time before you became a dad, what advice would you give your pre dad self about the journey that was about to start?

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:35:03] Wow. So I mentioned about 18 months ago when I wasn't on my A game, my brother was good enough to fly up from Geelong and, and we sat in a pub and had a beer and a chat and he knew that I was struggling. And, um, he made a comment that really sits with me that he just says, hey, because I was going on about how frustrated I was. The kids weren't doing this. They weren't doing this. You know, I didn't feel this, you know? And he listened and listened. And there was this pause and he said, hey, they're going to be good kids just because they're your kids. Forget about the little stuff he just said. Just trust that for them growing up with and around you and Jane, that whether they make their beds or not, or whether they turn their lights off or not, they're just going to be okay. And that was really reassuring. Advice like I have been strict around the rules and strict around setting down a framework for our kids on how we want [00:36:00] for them to be in our house. And I probably overdid that. So I was really nice just to hear johno say to me, hey, they'll be all right just because they're hanging out with you.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:36:09] Yeah, and hanging out with two parents who love them. Yeah. That's it. Right at the end of the day, and you're looking at the little picture and you miss the big picture. Gee, your bro's quite smart, huh? Given how much of a hard time he gave you when you were younger. Jeremy, thank you for your time today.

**Jeremy Hutchings:** [00:36:28] Maggie. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:36:32] Jeremy Hutchings, Managing Director of the Farm Owners Academy, host of the Profitable Farmer podcast, business coach for farming families. Jeremy had such wise words on fatherhood, especially in rural communities, so let's grab a few for our good enough Dad checklist. Number one, it's really important to encourage competence and responsibility from your kids from an earlier age than you probably think they're capable of. Number two. Don't over protect your kids from all hardships. Allow them agency to help and be a part of the solution. And number three, trust more. They are going to be okay, especially if they have at least one loving parent.

They are going to be okay. I'm Maggie Dent and this is The Good Enough Dad. Follow us on the LiSTNR app or wherever you get your podcasts.