

# GED\_S01E29\_The\_Good\_Enough\_Dad\_Chadden Hunter\_240424\_MID12-40\_FINAL.mp3

**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 Chadden Hunter.

**Lisa Wilkinson:** [00:01:07] Chadden it looks amazing. Thanks so much for joining us. How does a guy from Cairns in Queensland end up working with the great Sir David Attenborough?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:01:15] Yeah, well, I was studying monkeys out in Africa, living the the Dian Fossey Gorillas in the mist dream, if you like. And David came out with his film crew. This is going back 15 years ago. And I realized that those film crews were able to reach so many more people than I was with my studies. I think probably four people ever read my PhD, but about 40 million people saw my first film. And so that epiphany about the power of television was so powerful that I decided to become a film maker.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:01:42] That's Chad. And being interviewed on The Project about his work as a wildlife director, a job that could be argued as one of the most exotic, exciting and adventurous ones in the world. He's been face to face with wild polar bears, slept next to volcanic lakes and shared a tent [00:02:00] with Sir David Attenborough. But Chadden's most recent adventure, may be still ahead of him when his wife Gemma

goes back home to the UK for several weeks while he stays home to solo parent. His three children Jago, six, Zia, four, and Cassander, 20 months. Hi Chadden, welcome to The Good Enough Dad.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:02:22] Hi, Maggie, wonderful to be here.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:02:25] What was the morning like in the house this morning? Calm or chaos?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:02:30] It's always pretty chaotic with three of them in such young years. The, you know, the needs of individual little ones are so, they're so mind numbingly all consuming. And I think that's the thing I get frustrated with is just I mean, we've chosen to have three kids this close, but each one of them deserves more attention than you can give them. And whether it's trying to get porridge in their mouth or trying to get them out of their pyjamas or trying to get shoes on them. So yeah, it's generally, yeah, you're stretched. You're stretched a bit. Mornings are brutal that first few hours.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:03:05] Can you paint a picture of what your childhood was like, and were your sisters good playmates, or what did you get up to?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:03:12] Yeah, well, I was born in Mount Isa. My father was a field geologist, which meant he was away a lot. And that was something that I didn't really notice at the time, because you only know what you know, but but I know that, um, pretty much my mother brought myself and my two sisters up as a, as a single mum, and I think it, you know, I watched her work and I watched her toil and had so much respect as I got older and older, so much respect for the workload that she went through as a single mother. And I know that had a huge impact on me in terms of of appreciating what a mother goes through at home, what that insane amount of pressure is like. And I know that that, you know, that had a big impact. I mean, we had a lovely childhood. My, you know, my mother was larger [00:04:00] than life and could fill the role of two parents. So I wouldn't say it was a underprivileged childhood, but I didn't really have that father figure around the house.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:04:09] Mount Isa ... Pretty wild and open. Did you spend a lot of time in nature, and when did you fall in love with it so deeply?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:04:16] Yeah, that was that was something certainly from an early age. We were always, always outside. We moved from Mount Isa to Iran to follow my father's geology. Um, you know, I kind of still call Cairns home town. That's where I did high school and came of age. And and in Australia, it is a very outdoorsy upbringing, and it's something that I know had a huge impact on me from an early age, chasing bugs in the backyard and being fascinated by birds or anything you saw. And certainly as a dad now, I just I find parenting outdoors so much easier than indoors, and I don't know whether it's my upbringing or just just the fact that there's a lot more space to, you know, to let them, you know, find their way as opposed to trying to, you know, trying to entertain little kids in a tiny room.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:05:02] I'd like to argue that's exactly where they're supposed to be. And that's one of the challenges of living in a digital age where it's easier for them to be inside. But we know that it has enormous influence. You're talking to a girl who was raised on a farm with, you know, 10,000 sheep and 5000 acres, an enormous amount of freedom. So we were blessed with that. Now, you said your dad was a field geologist. He was away a fair bit. And he travelled a lot. And your parents divorced when you were five. But when did you hang out with him? When he wasn't away on those big trips?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:05:34] Yeah. It was later on that I think I developed my my strong relationship with him, probably into primary school age and certainly into teenage years. He became a really great friend. We swapped a lot of letters, my sister and I, and he was always good with, with advice. And then we would go and spend holidays with him. I think my mother was probably a little bit jealous because she'd done so much of the hard work. And here was, you know, dad getting the fun holiday time. And [00:06:00] it still, you know, to me, i thought that having two parents who were happy, who were good friends, who were wise adults in my life and who were happy, was probably a more healthy thing than, say, being in a family situation where there was unhappiness with a couple. And so, you know, there's two sides of, well, two sides, many sides of every family situation. But for me, I never saw it as something lacking. I always valued those times with my father. I valued the travels we did. Even when I was a teenager, I could go and go backpacking with him, and we could go on wild adventures through

South America for a month, or Africa where he was studying. And so I really valued that in a way. You know, I kind of see him, you know, his role as being much more important in those later years.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:06:48] Sounds unbelievably idyllic for a lad who likes an adventure, doesn't it? Really. So what do you think you learned from your own dad, even though he was doing the good fun stuff?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:06:58] Well, I think my father, he was a scientist as a geologist and of course, I went on to a life in science as well. And I think part of that experience is a real empiricism, a real, um, looking at the world logically, taking your time to assess the situation without a knee jerk reaction, looking at evidence, there's always two sides to a story. My mother, um, is a bit more of a, you know, high energy person and, you know, goes with the heart. But certainly from my father that learning a slower approach, you know, he would say things like, you know, if in doubt, zoom out. And it was just always a kind of a mantra about reflecting on a situation. If you had an argument with another kid at school or you were feeling down about something a teacher said or something was upsetting, it was always about taking a step back, thinking about things more calmly and logically. And I think that was something that I really valued every [00:08:00] time in my life when I've overreacted or had a knee jerk reaction, and certainly in my own parenting. I noticed this with my kids. Those times when you snap, you kind of really get frustrated with yourself and at work situations, you name it. It's always been something that, well, it's rarely ever been a good thing. And so I think something I've learned from my dad was really that approach to logic and, and empiricism as well. Like, like learning the world through understanding as opposed to somebody telling you how things should be.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:08:28] Love it. Um, and if you chose to change anything he did as a dad what would that be?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:08:35] Well I think, I think the thing is in, in hindsight obviously the time away was something that was regrettable in a sense, whether that was, um, you know, to do with his, his job or whatever, it's water under the bridge now. But I know that that's had a huge impact on me and my choices as a father, you know, to to not have him around in those formative years. So I've really, I guess, taken that on board.

And I think it's really hard as it's been sometimes. I think that's really been something that I've tried to, to change is to, is to just to be a much more present dad than he was able to.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:09:08] And your mum obviously was, you know, the solo mum, the big presence in the parenting sense. Do you think there's, there's obviously things that you're, you've taken from the way that she's been a mum into the way that you are a father. What are some of those things?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:09:24] Oh yeah. So as a mother, I mean, she's a um. Yeah. I mean, a very kind of larger than life character. As I said, I think she kind of filled a lot of boots there. Yeah, I guess confidence. I think that was something that she really, really bred into us. Um, the fact that she, you know, had to kind of go solo and be strong and I think she was always coaching us on on being outspoken, being, you know, I guess being able to speak our mind calmly, but, but having the confidence to have that presence. She encouraged all of the three of us kids into drama classes early on. [00:10:00] And I remember my sister loved dancing, and so that was just part of her dancing class add on. For me, it was a bit weird. It's like, what am I going to get out of dancing class? I mean, the class was 19 girls, you know, one boy. And um, and it was fun, but but the one thing it did enable me to do was to improve public speaking, to improve, improve the ability to stand up in front of a class and to share things. And so I think, uh, that was something that my mother really taught us was fearlessness in life, was to absolutely to fear nothing. She had that that lion heart in her. And I think that's something that she passed on to the kids for sure.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:10:35] Wow. You had both parents with a bit of fearlessness, haven't you?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:10:39] Yeah, yeah, in a way.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:10:41] Now, you've said those great adventures with your dad. Was there a point do you remember as a boy, going to become an adolescent and on the journey to manhood, that you felt that relationship did change from a father son to kind of mates? And where might that have been?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:10:57] Oh, yeah. I guess probably some of those, those holidays when, when we travelled together and might have been making decisions together. Uh, I mean, I'll, you know, a lot of kids won't forget the first time that they're taught how to drive a car. I remember being out in the desert in Western Australia on a salt pan, and I would have been pretty young. I mean, I might have been 13 or something, but there was a Jeep and he's like, well, do you want to learn how to drive it? And I remember this giddy excitement of driving a Jeep across a salt pan and pressing pedals. And I think that's something that a lot of dads often can offer in parenting is they they can be that parent that helps encourage the child out into the outer world to take further steps to, you know, to do the slightly more adventurous things. And I think the mothers often where you go for the, and this is complete stereotyping and I do forgive me, but often that maternal character is where you go for solace and kind of inner peace and sanctuary. Um, and, you know, the father, [00:12:00] all of it is, is where you're allowed to kind of do something slightly more adventurous. You know, I mean, I often find it doing it with my kids, like, well, you can climb to the top of that, but, you know, don't tell mum type thing.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:12:11] Yeah. I think that's one of the shifts we're seeing, though, in fathering is the fact that we're creating a safe dad, that you can also go for solace now, and that's one of the most beautiful shifts that we're having. And also mum can also be the ballbuster, you know, and I think that's what we need to do, that whatever works within a team as a couple, whether they're in the same house or two houses, that's what we've got to focus on, don't we?

**Maggie Dent:** [00:12:44] When your wife Gemma was pregnant with your second baby, you made a really big decision. And for someone who was an adventure holic like you, it was huge. So what was it that made you take that leap to have a break from your incredible career?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:13:00] Yeah, I was lucky enough that I was working for the BBC at the time, who have generous career breaks. I could hold on to my job. It wasn't wasn't paid break, but I could go back to my job, um, no questions asked. And we were going to have two under two. Jago was 20 months when Zia was born, and she happened to be born right on the day that a big David Attenborough series, Seven Worlds, One Planet, came out. And when we saw that timeline coming together, I just

said to Gemma, I said, look, how often do the stars align like that? If I don't take a career break now, when will I? And I said, okay, I can take, let's see if we can do the maths and see how long I can take off. And we calculated, we thought we could survive for about ten months of me taking time off. But the deal was, okay, let's go and do it somewhere fun. We were going to go and live in Bali or Sri Lanka, or ... we ended up in Byron Bay, just coincidentally thinking we could find a bit of a community vibe there. And we happened to land in March 2020.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:13:57] Wow.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:13:57] Which of course was just before the Covid door [00:14:00] shut everybody into place in Australia. It was almost like musical chairs. Wherever you were in March 2020, you ended up being stuck longer than you'd planned to be. But it was an incredible experience. We're in a beautiful little town that was empty of tourists. It was really, really quiet. It was Covid lockdown and in some ways a lot of my friends had continued working and were frustrated by trying to do work during Covid were very jealous. I was like, well, if you're going to be locked in a house having an infant and a toddler. Yeah, we weren't trying to homeschool, luckily, I had friends going through homeschooling and that sounded like torture for all generations. But yeah, it was partly it was inspired by, I guess, knowing what that workload was you know, Jago our first baby I found such an intense experience and I just.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:14:47] [00:14:47] I remember saying to Gemma, um, a few months in, I said, this is a 3 to 4 person job. It's like bringing up one baby is a 3 to 4 person job, and I'm an evolutionary biologist. So I knew enough about our ancestry. I knew enough about us as hunter gatherer social primates. I knew that the human baby is such an intense journey that evolutionarily, we had aunts and uncles, we had elders, we had a lot of that cohort that would inform and, you know, give that support and other voices in the child's life. And and we didn't have family around for any of our three.

[00:15:25] But anyway, so I think the intensity of going through the first one, I was just like, okay, well now we've got two under two, there's no way I, you know, Gem is the love of my life. I couldn't wish her to have that workload solo. So partly it was a, you know, responsibility thing. I mean, I'm the eldest in our family, and I think you do feel a little bit of that weight on your shoulders. That responsibility was part of what inspired

that taking the time off. But yeah, it was an incredible an incredibly lucky and great decision for our family.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:15:55] The ducks certainly lined up for you, didn't they? You know there are some blessings [00:16:00] from Covid as well. And you landed in somewhere like Byron Bay. Okay, let's wind the clock back a little further to how was it when Gemma had your first baby and were you away a lot? Like, what was it like suddenly becoming a responsible dad rather than this adventurer who had just done all these spectacular things?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:16:24] That was really tough for me. I was 45 when I had Jago, our first. And of course, I'd had such a long life of living the dream job, being able to travel wherever I wanted. And for me, the shock people talked about childcare as being hard and all parenting is hard. And I kept thinking, well, the technicalities around keeping a little one alive aren't that hard. I knew how to change a nappy because I had a sister who was 12 years younger. I was the only male in the house anyway, so I was, you know, I did a lot of kind of parenting bits. I knew how to change a nappy and I knew how to bath a baby, you know, even getting food into them. So I kind of thought that's it's not technically that hard.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:17:03] But what I found really surprised me was the psychological journey I had to go on myself. And, you know, I've talked to parents since and I was like, well, it's not so much the childcare. It was the fact that I went through a process of anger, denial, bargaining, uh, finally acceptance. A grief process. And I guess it was a grieving for my old life. It was a few weeks in, you realised, oh, my God, I'm never going to see another sunset in my life because sunsets, when we're doing bath time, mayhem, bewitching everything.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:17:36] I'm never going to read another newspaper in my life. I'm never going to have a cocktail in my life. And it's very selfish. But I think that was. What I feel like maybe isn't enough preparation for for new parents out there is the the psychological journey that you have to go on to accept that you are now to put it bluntly, a slave and a servant for a few years. And you've got [00:18:00] to find a way of of internalising that, not getting too grumpy in front of the kids. Um, whereas, you know, we had books and books on how to change nappies and how to do milk and how to do



nighttime routines and sleep training and gentle parenting and you name it. I thought, wow, okay, but I didn't read one single thing on how the father or the mother deals with that resentment you have about having your life stripped away. And I think that's something that, it's not cool to talk about. You can't talk about resentment when it comes to having little kids because it's the joy of your life and it's the gift and, and whatnot. So that caught me off guard with the first.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:18:35] Thank you for articulating that, because it's something I know, i've worked with a lot of women who were very career driven and independent, and I think if you have been completely independent to nearly 40, you were 45. And then suddenly that mat is ripped out from under you, and you are now at the mercy of an unpredictable being who you genuinely are delighted to have brought into the world. And yet it pisses you off at times. Yeah, and it is very much like, oh heck, okay, I can do this, but really, you are losing a whole identity and you've expressed it so beautifully. Thanks for that, Chadden.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:19:11] Oh my pleasure.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:19:12] You've got a really tricky patch going down right now. I remember being a mum mainly with a dad that worked very long hours with, you know, four and under three of them, and it's hard work. But what is the most challenging thing again, is it the unpredictability or is it fitting life and work around this?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:19:33] I find it's time. I think it is just that pressure on your time as an adult. If you're trying to hold down a career as well, whether you're the breadwinner or not. And so I think that pull that we all feel in terms of splitting your time between work and the kids, if you have multiple kids that are young at the moment, in the mornings, I'm stepping over our one year old to get down the hallway to get the school bags, and [00:20:00] he chases after me, moaning and moaning, and then I say, sorry, Cass, I can't, and I step back over him and I'm running back to the kitchen to try and get toast on, or try and find the school uniform. And the poor thing. He's not a moaner. He just wants a cuddle. He just wants to be picked up. And our four year old Zia, you know, stuck in the middle, she's very, you know, she's a resilient little kid even at four. But she'll want to tell you something about unicorns there in the morning when you're trying to get ready. And she'd be, listen, daddy. And if you turn away, she's going through a

phase at the moment where she'll just snap and crumple into a ball and weep because you didn't let her finish the sentence and you completely understand. It's not even unreasonable. It's not what she's reacting to is not even unreasonable. It's like, I am so sorry, Zia, that I have not had the time and the chance to give you three minutes to listen to the end of this unicorn story. You know, your brother's late for school and no one's brushed their teeth, and I think to that, that time, that one commodity, I think so many parents would, you know, we'd give our right arm to have more of it in the day.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:21:10] And it is impossible to meet all of the needs of even one of your children full time as a one on one. And that is where we have dropped the ball a little bit, because traditional kinship communities, there was a whole bunch of people, there was another lap, there were more arms. There was someone picking up for you. There was someone who covered your base. So that loss of village really is one of the biggest pressures I find on on parenting today. And we're doing something that's evolutionary not healthy and yet we don't have an alternative. So except to soldier on because they will get older and you will have them out of nappies and they will be able to feed themselves and maybe one day sleep in their own bed or whatever. But it's a it is a journey of unpredictability when we all [00:22:00] like predictability. And one of my biggest messages I say to parents and now you'll probably do this in the next month, is you could be late some days, and instead of beating yourself up for being late, we go late with love. I've got unpredictable children with no understanding of time. As long as I get them there, it's all okay.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:22:26] So we all muck up and it's only human. But is there a noticeable, you know, you've just nailed a whole morning full of possible failures, but is there one that you've kind of have a special regret for?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:22:39] Uh, well, the one thing that I most think of as a failure in my parenting is, is those moments when you snap and you lose it and you try to be patient and you try to be patient, and, um, you know, we're all into gentle parenting these days, and you try to get down on their level and not overreact. And just every now and then, whether you're tired or you're just strung out, you just lose it and you scream. And I kind of, I, Gemma and I talk about, you know, we're gentle parents, but we talk about what the neighbours must think with our little kids. The amount of times that you

just you snap and yell, and it's every time that that happens is when I feel instantly that little sense of regret and like, ah, I've lost it. And I go and apologise and Jago our eldest, who's six, he's very sensitive and I think, you know, a bit, a bit like I was when I was a kid. And he really takes it on board. You know, if you yell at him, he'll articulate and say, daddy, you know, you yelled at me. Um, and you feel rotten. And so I think you learn and, you know, you keep trying to not do that, but the one, the one thing that I think most parents have this one like red mist trigger, don't they, where and for me, it's, um, it's to do with physicality. I don't want to call it violence, because when they're 3 or 4, they don't, they're not malicious. [00:24:00] They just don't know. But it's when Jago would get physical with his little sister. And I guess growing up in a household full of sisters and women, you know, that idea that you would you ever touch one was like, um, you are you're an older, you're a boy, you never touch your sister. And I would, you know, kind of grab him by the shoulders and yell something. And I remember always being angry at myself for doing it, but it was the one thing that, um, you know, he could drop something or make a mess or make a mistake or be bratty. But the one thing that often triggered my red mist was when he was physical with his little sister. So I need I recognised that as being my trigger point, and Gemma is much better at stepping back and saying, look, let's just calm down and you know what happened and these things happened. But, um, that's that for me is a fail that I kind of keep having to keep an eye on.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:24:52] And I think the fact you were raised with sisters rather than having a brother yourself, because what we've discovered is that often boys don't use words to say how much they like anyone or their friends or their sister, and so often they use physicality as a form of affection. We call it, you know, aggression nurturance. And it can be triggering if you're not used to it. Whereas I was raised with a house full of boys forever slapping, jumping, wrestling, jumping, farting, whatever. So it was my normal. So it was not your normal. And when we reframe it going, he's looking for connection with his sister. And yet we do need to let him know that sometimes it can hurt, that you didn't mean to. But you're right. Can you see why that's.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:25:34] Absolutely, absolutely. And I think that it probably happened to me a lot when I was younger, as the eldest brother with two younger sisters, if I probably was physical in our household, there was probably very little sympathy. There was no other male role model, and it was probably it. You know, my

sisters and mother probably came down pretty heavy on me for being just a little boy. And so you're completely right, Maggie. I think, you know, I haven't had that exposure to little boys when I, when I see Jago [00:26:00] with his prep mates and they're literally rolling around in the dirt and they've got, they've got their, gritting their teeth and it's so physical I love it, I love watching it. And I'm like, oh God. Yeah. They're just and you can see it's like he's had this, this little pent up, animalistic kind of, um, urge there. And they just they'll just kind of, you know, rough and tumble for hours. But it's yeah, it was something that I think I was probably cracked down on me when I was a little boy. And. Yes. And I see that kind of that little bubble up point happen with me now as a, as a father as well.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:26:29] Great example of a, uh, an imprint from our childhood. Okay. So I'm asking you a big question right now, given that you've travelled the world and seen how the world really is, what is your biggest fear when it comes to parenting and raising your beautiful three children now?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:26:47] Yeah, I guess at the moment mine is still quite young. Obviously they're not on phones or anything yet. I think it's the things I hear from other parents about social media that really scare me. Um, and I think that that keeping our kids safe in a digital world, you know, because I would have said the environment, I would have said what we're doing to the planet. But I think.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:27:08] I thought for sure we were going to go off there!

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:27:12] i would have gone there. I think, I think that's a little bit more kind of existential. But I think just in terms of pure parenting, I feel like there's, um, the challenge of, of trying to keep kids safe in a in a digital world, when we're in a world where you can't, you could go live, live on a farm, but you, you know, your kids will still be there on their TikTok with all their mates. And you know, that kind of like cyber bullying combined with the power of AI now terrifies me. And I'm still gosh, I'm still, you know, eight years away from it. But when I listen to a podcast or hear parents of teenagers talk about it, that's something that I'm like, God, I don't even know, don't know what the answers are you know, in terms of, I've got a few years to kind of come up with some plans, but that that's something that does scare me for kids.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:27:58] I'm just hoping that our [00:28:00] big tech companies grow a conscience and decide to focus on the well-being of our children rather than using them as a source of making a lot of money.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:28:08] Well, exactly.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:28:14] Now's the time for a big dad brag. So can you share one of your biggest dad wins that you think you've done so far?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:28:24] Uh, well, I mean, I would have said the time off being able to take the time off, but not everyone can do that. So that's a little bit indulgent. I was lucky there. I would say the one thing that I love doing, I work as a filmmaker, I work in storytelling, and I switched from science into filmmaking because of the power of story to move people. And so I know that that's a very, very hardwired thing in humans. And then I watched little kids with their imagination, and it's so rich and so open, and they're so open with it that I, I often love jumping into that world. And so if we're trying to get them to do something or trying to get their attention, that use of story or imagination is something that I often turn to like if, you know, they kind of grumpy about putting their shoes on or, you know, those little power struggles where it's about, you know, saying no to food because that's one of the few things they have control over or saying no to putting, you know, shoes on or getting dressed. I'll often go into story and imagination and try and almost not so much, i don't want to use the word brainwash them, but I like to fill their imagination with something like, well, let's talk about what would unicorns eat to get those super beautiful powers? And what would, which dinosaurs would put on which shoes in this collection? Do you think the Stegosaurus would put on these ones? And so I think, I think that's something that I always drop into as a parent when, when the kids are being tricky is, [00:30:00] um, is just dropping into imagination and storytelling, you know, trying to kind of like come up with a kind of a something that, you know, do you want to hear a secret come to the front door? I'm going to tell you a secret. And of course, you think, God, I haven't even come up with anything yet. But I had to come up with something.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:30:15] Now, Chadden I think there's a pathway to picture books there. Don't you think you could be writing some kids picture books if you've got those things? Gosh, go for it.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:30:26] Yeah. I mean, you know, reading reading books is a big thing in our house. And, you know, we love doing it together.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:30:33] All right so one other big question that a lot of our dads have really felt like, whoa is if there's only one thing that you want your kids to have learnt from having you as their dad, what would that one thing be?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:30:50] Yeah. I mean, I guess I guess it is compassion. I guess it's having that ability to have sympathy, empathy with other humans to be able to, you know, I see it in, in my six year old boy and it makes me so proud when we, we got a message from another mother at school on WhatsApp, she just said, oh, I just wanted to say that my son said that Jagp is the kindest boy in class. And I asked him, oh, why? And she said, well, I fell over and I hurt my knee. And Jago came up and said, Arthur, are you okay? And you know, Gemma and I, you know, almost cried over getting this WhatsApp because it just was a beautiful example of of him having some, you know, compassion and caring for other human beings. And so I think that's that's something that you would just love to be able to instill in your kids.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:31:39] Yeah, so our final question is, if you could wind back the clock, which is only a bit over six years, what advice would you give to that pre dad who didn't know what was really going to hit him about being a dad?

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:31:54] Um, yes, that is a good one. Um, I [00:32:00] again, I'd probably focus on the personal psychological journey. I'd probably say, look, you are going to have to give up a lot. You're going to have to appreciate those small moments. There's a lot of tedium. There's a lot of just relentlessness. But there's something about those, those little kids. I remember thinking that about a year or two in, there's very few people on the planet that can make you laugh and smile, guaranteed. At least once a day there'll be something that that baby does, or that infant, that toddler, that little kid. There's something that that kid does that literally makes you guffaw out loud, guaranteed, no matter how grumpy you are with them for the rest of the day. And there's no adult that does that to you. There's no one else in the world that does that. And so I think it's, you know, look out for those moments because the rest of the all consuming ness, you know, you might be a bit resentful for, but there will be those little,

those little diamond, those little moments that are irreplaceable. And yeah, don't miss those when they happen.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:33:04] So it's going to be harder than you think. But the rewards and the, the moments of ecstasy are going to be worth it.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:33:11] Yeah, I think so. You've got you've got to focus on, on those bits and, and that it gets easier. I think that's the thing that other people might have said. I probably missed it at the time, but I think, you know, I would tell my, my previous self, look, it's not forever. It feels forever, you know, that that, you know,

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:33:27] I remember seeing friends for the first time at work after six months with the and we brought Jago go into work to show him off as you do with your first born. And of course your work mates are like, oh my God, he's six months! That's flown by. And I looked him in the face, like that was the longest six months of my life. And in a very, in a very Buddhist way, because you, you live every moment so intensely, you know, one minute with a crying infant can feel like 1 hour or 1 hour when it's 3 a.m. and you're trying to rock them and they're sick, that that [00:34:00] can feel like an eternity. And you live those moments so intensely as a new parent that the expansion of time is, is phenomenal. You really feel like this is never going to end. And it's only we're only eight months in. So I feel like, you know, like coaching, coaching myself on that, that look, you know, there will be , there will be a sunset down the line and you'll be sitting there with your kids enjoying it one day. And, you know, it felt like you were never going to see one again.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:28] Absolutely. And what a privilege it is to be able to bring miracles onto our earth.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:34:32] Absolutely. Yeah. Joy.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:34] Chadden, thank you so much for your time and good luck for the adventure of having the three of them for a three week window. You've got this.

**Chadden Hunter:** [00:34:43] Wonderful. Thanks for the support, Maggie.

**Maggie Dent:** [00:34:46] Wow. Chadden has certainly had a really interesting life and some interesting reflections on becoming a dad. So with some more great tips to add to our Good Enough Dad checklist. Firstly, I loved his dad's advice that when stuff happens, you pause. When in doubt, zoom out like step back and have another look at it. Secondly, the arrival of that first baby when you first become a dad might be more difficult than you would expect, and it's okay to miss your old life and to grieve your old life. And thirdly, especially when you've got more than one little guy in this big, busy window of nappies and kids who don't sleep and poonamies just remember, it might feel like it's going to last forever, however, it does get easier and before you know it, you'll be out the other side. I'm Maggie Dent, and this is The Good [00:36:00] Enough Dad. Follow us on the listener app or wherever you get your podcasts.