

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much



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With Your Host

**Amanda Hess**

[How to Love Yourself No Matter What](#) with Amanda Hess

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

If you feel like summer is supposed to be relaxing, but actually feels overwhelming, overstimulating, and honestly, just exhausting, you are not alone. And no, you are not broken. In this episode, I'll give you 3 ways to better understand what's really going on so you can stop blaming yourself and start building a summer that actually works for your life.

This show is for women who've been labeled, misdiagnosed, or misunderstood. Whether you have a diagnosis or just know deep down that you experience life differently, this is your space to stop fixing yourself and start trusting who you already are. My name is Amanda Hess. Let's go.

Hello my friends, and welcome to the podcast. I cannot believe that the date I am recording this, we were only a few days away from the first days of summer. It is so interesting to me, living where I do, living in British Columbia in Canada, how much we all crave summer, and then how summer can become this out-of-control beast.

When I was younger, I think that summer was so easy and carefree. And I think that so many of us remember that summer experience and really crave that experience in our lives now. But as we grow and as we start embarking upon our lives, it becomes more and more difficult to create that carefree summer vibe that we're really looking for. I think that really what happens is the days start to warm up and we have the assumption that summer means freedom and fun and ease.

But the reality of summer is unpredictable schedules, overstimulation, increased emotional labor, especially if you're managing kids, guests, vacations, dogs, cats, and all the things, right? And then for neurodivergent or sensitive women, for those of us that have sensitive nervous systems, the lack of structure can lead to really quick dysregulation that feels so out of control.

In theory, we think that when we get to summer, we can put it all down and have that childlike experience that we have of summer. But the reality of summer is just a very different animal. And I know for myself, having now an 18-year-old, navigating summer as your life's complexity increases

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

becomes more and more of a chore for most of us. We don't want it to be a chore. We kind of forget that it's a chore, but it becomes a chore.

And what I want to do today is share with you how we can make summer into something that isn't a chore. So it's great if all the people in your life are having a great time and having a beautiful summer. For many of my clients, they'll tell me that their number one goal is to make sure their kids are happy, to make sure that their partner is happy, to make sure that everybody else is happy. But in doing so, we kind of forget that we're supposed to help ourselves feel happy.

And we also forget that feeling happy is an emotion. And that means that emotion isn't created by our circumstances, it is created by our mind. Feeling happy comes from the inside, comes from the thoughts we think, comes from the beliefs we have, and comes from the way that we treat ourselves. And too often, the way we treat summer is with a laundry list of to-do items. So we end up in this situation where we have more to do than we can keep track of. And we find ourselves feeling behind before summer even starts.

I was even talking to a client of mine today we were coaching, and she was telling me about how she was going on a trip and how she was looking at the week leading up to the trip as a list of items to get completed and how she could then realize on this call when I said, what would it look like to slow down, that she was missing an entire week of her life to get ready for this trip. We do this in so many different ways. So I really want to unpack this and give you a summer, this summer, that is including freedom and fun and ease, that is something that you can look back on and look back on with warmth, but also live in and find the lived day-to-day not to be a grind, not to feel like you're never good enough, not to feel like you're always behind, or feel like at the end of the day that everybody else is having a great time and you're just not.

Let's first just talk about your nervous system. Let's talk about what is happening. So when you are in your regular day-to-day life during the fall, the winter, the spring, there is a rhythm to your life. And so you have school

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

or work. Your kids have school or work, right? You have dinners always at the same time together. There are activities, but they're planned and they're on the calendar. All the time is pretty much accounted for with respect to what everybody is doing during the week. And then even on the weekends, we have a routine that we fall into when it's not summer vacation time. So we are really and truly just living in a structure.

What happens in the summer is we have less of that. So we might still be going to work, but work might be different, or we might have time off from work. If we have kids, more than likely, they're not in school. If we are looking at the rest of our family, everybody is kind of on the move. People are traveling. People might be coming to visit you. You might be going to visit others. You might be going on family vacations, going camping, going to the trailer, going to the cabin, going on a family trip. All of these things can be taking place.

And what this creates is less predictability. So when we're on a trip with other people, it's less predictable. We don't know what those people are doing, thinking, saying. We don't know what's going to happen. There are so many changes to what is happening circumstantially for our brain. And then on top of that, we don't have those anchoring things that we use from our day-to-day life.

So for instance, if you're on a trip, I'm going to my husband's sister's place this coming weekend. And the whole family is going to be together. So it's going to be like my husband and his brothers and his sister and their spouses and our kids, and we're all going to come together with his parents who are also coming into town. And we're all going to be together. And we don't usually spend that kind of time together, and we're going to be sleeping in the same place, and we're going to be waking up in the same place, and we're going to be having every single meal together, and we might go on a hike together, and we might do all of these things, right?

On one hand, it's wonderful to be able to spend time with family, and on the other hand, it is putting stress on your nervous system. My nervous system is going to have to handle more than it is used to. When we have more

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

people around, right? So I'm going to be around all these people. I spend the majority of my day during the week by myself in my house. It's just me and Barkley, my sheepadoodle. That's it. We're the only ones home. And now I'm going to be surrounded by people, and I'm going to be surrounded by people all the time. So to be able to disengage, I will have to actually physically disengage because if I don't, I get no recovery time. So you have less recovery time around people, which means you are putting additional stress on that nervous system and you're not giving it any of the recovery time that it needs, and so you get closer to burnout.

On top of all of that, we add in the pressure to make the most of it, that this is summer. This is the time. This is when we enjoy. I don't know about you, but I can think of multiple experiences where I've been with my family as a kid, as a teen, as an adult, with my teenage kids, with my young kids, and this belief of this is not what this should look like. This, we're at the beach, dammit. We should be having fun, but nobody is having fun. There's kids crying, there's adults yelling, there's adults that look like they want to start crying, and everybody is just on edge. And it's partially because of this internalized guilt of, I need to make this the best experience of your entire life. We have to make this wonderful and beautiful and amazing and all the things all the time.

And so this is what's happening to your nervous system, right? Your nervous system is just put under way more stress, more pressure, more circumstances for it to navigate. And so then when you bring in that you're a highly sensitive person, when you bring in that you're neurodivergent, right? When you are the type of person that your brain just needs a little more care because it reacts a little more intensely than potentially other people's brains, when you have that going on, we can reach our limit without knowing it. I know even for myself that you can mindlessly fall into this and not know it. It's just this trap, this trap that you fall into. You don't even realize you've fallen into it until you're all the way through it, right?

It's only when you start yelling at your husband because the way he's brushing his teeth is making you crazy that you realize something is off. Something's wrong here. Why am I reacting in this way? Why do I find the

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

way that my family is breathing to be frustrating? Why am I crying because my shoe has a knot in it? You know, really seeing that, oh my gosh, my nervous system is overloaded.

And usually, this will happen in one of two ways. Either we will be in that family environment and we will lose our shit, or we will tolerate all the way through it, and then we will fall apart and experience this anxious dread after the event. This is what I want to help you avoid because it does not have to be this way, and it does not have to look like this. I want you to know that it's not wrong for you to feel this way. You're not broken. There's nothing that's going wrong. Your brain is just honestly not wired to thrive in constant change and chaos, which is what vacation tends to be. Even if you just go on vacation with you and your partner, this can take place if we are not taking time to be very intentional about how we are regulating ourselves and taking care of ourselves.

I will also say that in most cases, you've probably never been shown how to regulate your emotions, how to take care of yourself emotionally, how to grow your emotional capacity, let alone how to plan for your own needs. And what I will tell you is that you don't need to push through this summer, but you do need support that is designed for you. I think where I want to start with this is understanding first of all who you are. If you are a deep feeler, if you are the kind of person that emotions are intense for you, we have to own that as being a part of who we are. And we need to start caring for that extra when we are in a scenario that is going to require more of us because circumstantially, it's just a lot.

Even when things are good, even when you're going to a wedding, even when you're going on your dream holiday, even when you are doing the things you said you always wanted to do that are genuinely pleasurable things that you have planned for yourself, even when, you will still need to be aware that your nervous system can be overloaded and that we need to be aware that raising the circumstances and raising the chaos and raising the lack of predictability is going to have an impact.

## **Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much**

So if you want to have a beautiful, wonderful summer, it is essential that you first of all own who you are. That's not a matter of being in a position of thinking that you are somehow messed up, that you have to identify with this disorder or that disorder. It's because of your disorder that you can't have a good summer. Please don't do that because that's not what I mean at all.

But one thing that I do hear from my clients is like, why do I have to be the one that does all the work? And what I need you to know is you don't. You don't need to do all the work. In fact, you thinking I need to do all the work is putting additional stress on top of your nervous system. So we have to be careful about that. Instead, what I really invite you to do is to start thinking about what is needed for me to feel emotionally and mentally okay.

And when I ask that question here, you might be looking at this question going, I don't know the answer. And I want you to know I've got you. I do know the answer. And the answer starts with we have to slow it all down. So if you're the type of person that has planned out your summer and you have a list, and on that list is all the different things that you guys are going to do and all the projects you need to complete and all the ways that this, this, this, this, and this needs to happen, I want you to take that list and I want you to crumple it up and I want you to throw it in the garbage because this is not what I'm talking about here. This is not what we're going to be doing here.

Instead, what I want you to do is to consider why you don't plan any rest. Okay? And maybe we start with, are you planning any rest? And chances are, my friend, you're not because rest is not going for a hike. Rest is not making a family dinner. That's not rest. Rest is also not zoning out to TV, okay? I'm not shameifying rest. I'm not making you feel guilty for it. I'm not telling you, I'm not vilifying watching TV, but what I will say is that we need to rest and we need to learn how to rest our mind and we need to know how to rest our emotions. And the way that we can do that is through nervous system regulation, right?



## **Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much**

So very simple practices of moving your body, connecting with nature, using your senses being intentional. The first thing that I will always ask my clients when they come to a call and say they're struggling is, tell me about what you've been doing the last couple of days. And they'll tell me all the things that are going on. And then I'll ask them, what have you done to ground and center yourself? And quite often, the answer is nothing. This is the telltale sign, right? We're not taking care of our nervous system. We're not taking care of ourselves. We're not putting ourselves in a position where we can thrive. We are buying the line from our brain when we start to feel that anxious energy that I need to go faster. I need to go faster to get where I'm going, which you don't because you're not going anywhere.

The analogy that I like to give is that we're always walking on a path, and we keep walking and we don't stop walking. So the only time you stop walking is when you're dead. Now, I don't mean that to sound like, oh my god, it's so exhausting to be walking. Instead, what I'm saying is the act of breathing and existing is the walking, okay? So we're walking through our life. If we look around and we don't like what's there, we just need to take a path in another direction. We just need to take the path off to the right, the path off to the left, doesn't matter. Just keep walking. You always have the opportunity to change the path. It's always available to you.

That to me is a really simple way to address summer. So when you're looking at your path that you're on for summer, right now, you might be feeling a lot of stress and anxiety and think, I just can't wait till I get to rest and put it all down. But you've got to realize that's the idea of I'm going to get to the end of the path and I can just sit at the end of the path and sit on the beach. No, you're not going to want to sit on the beach because you're going to sit on the beach and you're going to realize that the beach is quicksand, okay? It's going to be a problem. Your brain doesn't want that. Your nervous system doesn't need that. And that's not to say that we don't rest. It's just we don't assume that we're going to just drop every tool that we've ever learned and that we've ever used, and instead just say, "Eff it," and then let our unintentional mind run the show.



## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

We are not going to do that this summer. We are going to be intentional. We are going to regulate our nervous system. We are going to know, hey, if I'm going on this family trip, how am I taking time for me? Where's the time where I reset, where I do things that work for my nervous system? Where am I having fun? Where am I spending time with maybe just my partner or just my kids, right? Where am I taking time for just myself? What are things on this trip that are going to really speak to me? How am I taking care of me? How am I ensuring that I'm not saying yes to things that I know are going to deplete me and make my summer into a garbage can? Right? That's what you want to be looking at.

Where do I need to place some boundaries here? Where do I need to say, this is what I will do and this is what I won't do and just own it? Where do I want to step into summer and say, this is the experience that I'm going to create for myself, not this is the experience I have to do because it's what's expected of me? The thing about summer is it's just a brief period of time. We're talking 8 weeks, really. I mean, you could say 12, but most people consider summer to be July and August. At least we do in Canada, okay? I will say we have beautiful Septembers here, but by that time, my kids are back in school and I really don't view it as summer.

So if you're really looking at 2 months of summer and wanting it to just be really amazing and not feel like too much, but in fact feel just so incredible. What we want to start doing is we want to start tapping into really being just in tune with ourselves. In order to be in tune with ourselves, we need to take our time. We need to go slow. We need to slow things down. We need to listen to our intuition. We need to hear ourselves. We want to get to a point where we are so comfortable with ourselves that we can advocate for what we need.

There's a peace that comes with it when our regulation is in check, when our emotions are being allowed and processed, when we are intentional with our thinking, we can plan a summer that's not, you know, so, so structured that there's no room to move. But instead is structured in, I'm making sure that I'm caring for myself, I'm making sure that I'm regulating my nervous system. I'm making sure this is something I want to do. I am

## **Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much**

focusing on pleasure every day. I am ensuring that my experience of summer is one that is delicious for me. Not because I drop everything because my life sucks, but instead because I'm intentionally cultivating and creating the experience I want to have even when I'm at work, even when I'm doing the things. I'm going to let other people be responsible for their own emotions and I am going to be only responsible for my own.

When we do that, then we can start creating a summer that is like a fuck yes summer. And that's what I really want for you is to have a summer where you are just so excited by the experience of it. Instead of spiraling, irritable, shut down, checking out, you are loving it. It's perfect for you. And when it goes off track, when you realize the path you're on isn't the one you want to be on, you know exactly what to do and you just change paths.

So it starts with understanding yourself instead of judging yourself. So instead of being mad at yourself for not being able to get through a family dinner, understanding why that might be happening for you. Hey, have you regulated your nervous system? Have you given yourself time to be by yourself? Have you given yourself permission to say no to the dinner because that's also allowed?

I want you to look at your summer and there's a couple of things that I can offer that you can do. First of all, build in recovery time. So build in recovery time in your day-to-day. Build in recovery time at work, at home, when you're with your kids, when you're with your family. It doesn't have to be long, 5 minutes, a breathing break, but it can be longer. Name your sensory limits. Decide how much you can handle in a day. If getting up and having a family breakfast and then going for a family hike and then going with the family to the pool and then going on the boat with the family and then having a family dinner and then having a family fire is going to set your nervous system on fire, then don't do all of it. Stop performing for other people. Do what's good for you.

And I'll give you an example. So when I go to this family thing this weekend, I know that they love to go for a hike. But let me tell you, they do not like to go for a hike the way I like to go for a hike. I love hiking. I do. It's

## Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much

so fun. I don't understand why we have to walk as fast as possible. I don't understand why it needs to be a race. But I have reached the years in my life where I have just decided, if that is going to be the way that this hike is going to go, I'm just going to walk by myself. When they say, "Hey, want to go for a family hike?" I'll be like, "No, I'm good." And you know what I'll do? I'll just go on a hike by myself and it'll be wonderful because I can walk at my pace. I can listen to a podcast if I want to. I can just take my time and be in wonder and look at the beautiful wildflowers. And for me, that is delicious. So they can go for their hike and they can enjoy that experience and I don't have to be mad at it at all. That's a boundary. And it allows me to really tap into what works for me.

And then just know this, you are allowed to like your life, but you have to build it for your life. You are allowed to like your life, but you have to build it for your life. So your life has to be by design, something that you want to be a part of, something that you want to experience.

So the 3 things, right? One, you're not broken. Your nervous system is overloaded. That is what is happening in the summertime when we just let it be free. We are not let it be free kind of people. All right? Number 2, you've probably never been taught how to support yourself in seasons like this because they're different, and they require more of you. So we have to learn how to deal with that. Number 3, you actually can create a summer that works for you if you're intentional, if you are being very intentional with how you set it up.

Here's some questions that you could take and journal on this week. Where do I feel the most pressure to make summer look a certain way? What part of summer actually drains me the most, physically, mentally, or emotionally? And lastly, what if I believe that honoring my capacity was just as important as meeting my obligations?

If you're nodding along to all of this, I want you to please come join me for my free coachathon. It is called Take Back Your Summer. It's 5 days of short, powerful trainings and live coaching designed for women like you, the ones who feel like summer always ends up running you over. No fluff,

## **Ep #267: When Summer Feels Like Too Much**

no fix yourself energy, just tools, nervous system support, and community that actually gets you. This is your opportunity to learn and get coached in real time. Go sign up at [amandahess.ca/summer](https://amandahess.ca/summer). We start the week of July 14th, and I would love to see you there. Bye for now.

Thanks so much for listening. You can look forward to a new episode of this podcast every week. And hey, if you like this podcast, do me a favor and leave a review. When you do, it helps this podcast grow, and it allows me to help more women just like you. And if you just know that you need help putting this all together, why don't you book a free consult with me? We can talk about you and what's happening in your life and put a real plan in place to manage the stress and anxiety for good. Just head on over to [amandahess.ca/bookacall](https://amandahess.ca/bookacall) to set that up.