

Speaker 1: Couple five, mom and Monique.

Monique: I really love my mom so much. She's an amazing woman and yet, I have such a difficult time feeling close to her and it's been like that since I was a kid.

[00:00:30]

Speaker 3: This is a family of three, a mother, a 29-year-old son with special needs who lives with the mother, and Monique, a 28-year-old other child who lives separately. The session is between the mother and Monique.

[00:01:00]

Mom: Monique is a very sensitive individual. To me, it seemed like she didn't trust me. Now I see that she just didn't have the tools to really find a way to communicate, so our relationship has suffered in that way.

Monique: I have a brother who's on the spectrum and that's really affected in our family the way we communicate our emotion. As a kid, it makes you feel like you're it. You are your parents' rock and not because you can be, but because you have to be. You have to be that.

[00:01:30]

Speaker 3: When I think about the relationship between mother and Monique, it is the relationship between a parent and the other child and in this instance, the other child is not the special needs child, which is the situation of the brother. It is the child who lives in the shadow of a sibling who needs a lot and who takes up a lot of the attention, a lot of the resources, a lot of the time, and a lot of the protection, leaving the other child to their own devices, having to grow up very fast, having to become often needless because there is just no room for another one who needs so much more from mom, but there is a price. In this session, we will discover what that price is.

[00:02:00]

[00:02:30]

Monique: I love my mom and I want to deepen that relationship.

Speaker 3: And mom was immediately ...

Monique: Oh, mom, do you want to say how you reacted to it initially?

[00:03:00]

Mom: I told Monique my interest is to support you and I know how much this means and I want to be part of it, but it's helping to realize a dream of Monique to meet you and I don't-

Speaker 3: You know what's interesting?

Mom: Yeah? Yeah?

Speaker 3: [00:03:30] When I read Monique's interview, there was very little about meeting me. Actually, there was nothing about meeting me. There was all about meeting you and having a different meeting with you. First of all, you're a massively impressive woman, mom, the way you take on institutions, the way that you got the system to help you, even if the system doesn't always want to help, the way you supported your children, each one with their respective needs, the way you've done it all by yourself.

[00:04:00]  
Monique: Massive.

Mom: Yes.

Speaker 3: You have been so resourceful and so resilient and the way that you then give back. You're fearless.

Mom: [00:04:30] I have an obligation. The more I get, the more I have to give. I know the challenges have been there always, but at the same time, when I said there's one place that I saw to be the match for Monique and this school was like \$60, 000 a year tuition and I said I won't ask for anything else if I can just get this to happen. It took two years, but we got it. Our partnership-

Monique: That school saved my life.

Mom: [00:05:00] It did and I knew it because I saw what the public school was doing and as much as saying you're traumatizing my child. You're making Monique wrong for things that are inherited, but I know that-

Speaker 3: Where did you get that wisdom?

Mom: It's just-

Speaker 3: Where did you get your wisdom?

Mom: I think it's that passion and love that comes from loving your child and seeing that the world is not-

Speaker 3: No, but you have love and wisdom. Where did you get your wisdom and your fierceness?

[00:05:30]  
Mom: I think it's been my upraising. I lost my father when I was six and my mother had learning disabilities, had developmental disabilities that I did not grow up knowing, that I didn't realize the scope of it until I had my own.

Speaker 3: Can I ask what just moved you when mom was talking?

Monique: [00:06:00] Oh, just because I think the older that we both got, I think this happens more, but I think when I grow up, it's very rare, it's very rare to see you cry. It's very rare to see you say, "I'm tired." It's very rare to see you say, "I'm sick." I feel like the older we get, the more you're willing to tell me. It was the other day on the phone, the other day on the phone we were talking and it's the first time I've ever heard you say that.

Mom: I know. Very recent. I'm very-

Speaker 3: So you're very pleased to see mom cry right now?

Monique: It's ...

Speaker 3: Relief to see mom cry. It's a good word, please, by the way.

[00:06:30]

Monique: Yeah, it may be that, but it's also so scary, I think. I think it's scary to see someone who I still have an inner child, I still have an inner like nine or five-year-old in me that still sees you as the hero, the unbreakable one, the one that is always going to fix my problems, the one that always knows what to do, the one that's always going to save me or save my brother, like you're it. You're that. To see you get older and to realize that, you're much more complex. You're much more human and part of that is being tired. Part of that is not always knowing and part of that is pain. You are that to me and yet, you can't be.

[00:07:00]

Speaker 3: In all parent-child relationship, there is a developmental arc. The child grows up and gradually becomes stronger. The parent continues to grow and becomes older and becomes gradually more fragile and more vulnerable. The child wants the parent to see them as stronger, but the child struggles sometimes to see the parent as becoming more fragile because if the parent becomes more brittle or more vulnerable, maybe they won't be able to be there and so life and death are constantly in the background of any living relationship.

[00:07:30]

[00:08:00]

Monique: I get frustrated and I love him so much and yet, I'm so angry. I'm so angry. I grew up feeling so angry with the way that we had to grow up and the fact that it was not his fault. It's not his fault and yet, it was always about him.

Mom: [00:08:30] It pains me when I realize when I go back to having my little girl who was needing time and I couldn't be there a lot of times because I always had to help and contain and-

Speaker 3: What does he have?

Mom: He's autistic and I was told he would never speak. He would never learn, that I needed to put him in an institution.

Speaker 3: And you defied all of that.

Mom: [00:09:00] And I said, "No. He is whole, complete, and nothing lacking and we're going to move through it and we're going to do everything necessary to provide him the quality of life." After when I learned about Monique's challenges, I knew that he was only in our lives because through everything that he gave me to learn, I was able to know what to do for Monique. That's what he's been. He's been the best learning source. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:09:30]

Speaker 3: [00:10:00] What I understand, tell me if grasp this, is that I think you find yourself, Monique, sometimes in a pickle because when you watch mom, you admire her. You're thankful and yet, you missed her. At the same time, she gave you so much, so how can I miss her? I should just be appreciative, but I do have feelings of things I miss, but I don't feel like I have the right to tell her that missed them because she's [inaudible 00:10:06] and so I have no right to be upset, but I can't be angry because I love him. Of course we are angry at people we love and we are angry at the situation, even if we also appreciate what happened. It's a combination of things, but for you, it becomes a pickle. It's like a pretzel. I feel this, but I don't have a right to feel this and then I'm angry at myself for feeling this. Then I feel self-pity because I feel that I should be able the right to feel it and I deserve to have those feelings, but no, I can't really have those feelings. Now put this in your own words. Something like this?

[00:10:30]

Monique: Something like this.

Speaker 3: All right. How to create.

Monique: Not too bad for what, 20 minutes of knowing me? Not too bad, you know?

Mom: For me, it's that guilt of always saying, "Oh, baby, don't cry. Don't cry. It's going to upset your brother," and always-

[00:11:00]

Monique: In the background of all of those moments was, "I'm going to comfort you," and then five minutes later, "I'm so sorry. I have to go to the other room," because the boy is going to throw himself against the wall.

Mom: Yeah, yeah, or he's going to dart out and I'm going to be chasing him for three blocks and trying to contain it so that the other one would not explode.

Speaker 3: Is it still like that today?

Mom: No.

Monique: No.

Mom: No. No.

Speaker 3: Can you leave him alone?

[00:11:30]

Mom: We can. Yeah, we can. We can.

Monique: Without worrying about or constant-

Speaker 3: Are you living together, the three of you?

Mom: No.

Monique: No, not anymore. Thank God. I love my mom. I love my brother so much, but I honestly-

Speaker 3: You don't have to say it every sentence. See, that's part of what happens is that before you say, "I did something for me," you have to justify, as if you can't have the normal developmental-

Monique: I feel like a shitty person.

[00:12:00]

Speaker 3: Why? The normal developmental story would say at some point, you're going to move out.

Monique: Yeah.

Speaker 3: But you introduce it by qualifying when, in fact, you don't have to justify anything. It's part of growing up.

Monique: I don't know why I feel angry you saying that.

Speaker 3: Tell me.

Monique: I don't know. I get so angry. My thing is anger. I don't know. I feel-

[00:12:30]

Speaker 3: When anger talks, what does it say? Can I hear it? Can we hear it?

Mom: We're grownups here.

Speaker 3: Yeah, but sometimes we're not sure how well the police will work, so I fear that if we let it out, it's going to burst out and it's never going to stop.

Monique: Yes, that one. My anger is just no, you don't get it. You're not understanding. You don't get it. You don't understand.

Speaker 3: Me?

Monique: Your or ...

Speaker 3: Anybody.

[00:13:00]

Monique: ... my own therapist or my mom. I grew up not letting myself feel the anger that I did towards my mom, not letting myself feel the anger that I did towards my brother, and I finally realized okay, I've been angry for 21 years. I've been angry for 21 years at my mom. I've been angry for 21 years at my brother. I don't let myself feel angry because anger feels like a betrayal. It feels like I'm betraying the people that I love. It feels like if I would-

Speaker 3: That's the pickle.

[00:13:30]

Monique: That's the pickle is it feels like betrayal. You know how quick I say no to him when he wants something? Like that. Sometimes it's something totally reasonable and it's okay and my first thing is no because I feel like you didn't do that and so I feel like I had to do it.

Speaker 3: Meaning mom didn't put any limits on him?

Monique: That's the feeling, that's what, yeah, so I feel like I grew up feeling like I was the second parent, that whole thing where it's like you're my kid and I'm going to treat you like my kid, but also, you're the second parent and so you watch him and you take care of him and feeling that confusion of like okay. I feel like I had to be dad. That was me and I felt the pressure of being dad.

Mom: He relates to you as mom.

Monique: Yeah. All the time. He's always like, "Oh, I'm sorry, mom. I mean Monique."

Mom: Always.

Monique: All the time.

Mom: Always. He always says, "These are my parents."

[00:14:30]

Monique: That's how I simply told the thing.

Mom: When he introduces us, he says, "These are my parents."

Speaker 3: Does he get your pronoun right?

Monique: He gets it right, but it's been a struggle for both of you.

Mom: Yes, it's been a real-

Monique: He gets it right out of I know that upsets Monique and so I'm not going to say it, which I feel like is how most people get my pronoun right. I know that's going to upset Monique, so I'm not going to say it, which that's not the story. That's not why. That's not what it is. It's not some word. God, this pisses me off so much. It's not some word to not say. It's if you really see me as who I am, I am many things. I am many genders and I am genderless and I flow between those and if you see me as just Monique, then you understand that Monique is the only way to address that. Monique is me.

[00:15:00]

Speaker 3: Monique grew up as the daughter of her mother and the sister of her brother. At some point, Monique decided to take apart the categories from daughter to child, from sister to sibling. Monique was Monique, not a she, not a he, not a they. The relationships stand. The categories change. Monique gave us the permission to use the name Monique as the all-encompassing reference and pronoun.

[00:16:00]

[00:16:30] I like when you say you don't get it. I wouldn't presume to get it, as I don't know you. I don't mind for a moment the fact that that makes you angry because there's a part of you I imagine that feels that you held so much in, nobody can get it because even you haven't seen the magnitude of it. The issue is not that you're angry. The issue is that you don't allow yourself to be angry and so it becomes very choking inside. At some point, you can't breathe. Then on top of it, you can't be angry because how can you be angry at something that happened to someone that is not their fault. Then you can't be angry at mom because you see mom and how hard she struggled and tried. Then if mom doesn't cry and if mom doesn't ever say, "I'm tired," or let you in on the fact that it's a lot, then you can't have those feelings either. If mom won't allow herself to have those feelings, then you can't have them, so it's very good when mom shows her vulnerability, when mom tells me I fought for it, and cries at the same time as she says it because then if mom allows herself those feelings, then she will be more receptive when you have them, too.

[00:17:00]

[00:17:30]

[00:18:00]

Monique: You would think she would be.

Speaker 3: And ...

Monique: And I don't feel like that. I feel like-

Speaker 3: Like she needs you to be strong all the time, as well?

Monique: Sometimes I feel like I tell you that I'm sad and then your go to is, "Well, don't focus on that. You should be focusing on this and you have so much." I can see the value in that, but sometimes I'm angry. I feel sad. Then oh, you're angry and you feel sad. Okay. I feel like the root of it is like if I'm sad, if my child is sad, if my child feels that depressed, if my child feels that angry or that much pain, then I, as a parent, must've done something wrong or I failed somehow because I fought this much and I fought for this long for my child to be happy and for my child to feel empowered and to be happy and if my child is not that way, then I did something. That's what it feels like.

[00:18:30]

Speaker 3: Is that what it is?

Mom: No. I'm relating to what Monique is saying in terms of I am an optimist.

Monique: But then that makes me feel like I have to hold all the sad feelings, like I'm the gatekeeper. I'm the gatekeeper of all the pain. I'm the gatekeeper of all the sadness.

Mom: Now, I was relating to what your were saying in terms of you coming and saying what you're feeling and me wanting to always go to the solution.

Monique: Yes.

Mom: That's what I was relating to.

[00:19:00]

Speaker 3: Do you know what she's asking you?

Monique: Monique is asking you.

Mom: Yeah.

Speaker 3: [inaudible 00:19:32]. Thank you. Yeah, what Monique is asking you.

Mom: For Monique to be in her own-

Monique: Monique's own.

Mom: Monique's feelings about how Monique is feeling and not about me trying to solve it.

Speaker 3: [00:20:00] What would you say makes it difficult for you because what you're saying is I'm different and that doesn't make it difficult. That just means you're different. What makes it difficult for you to give her-

Monique: Give Monique. It's-

Speaker 3: No, no, you're absolutely right. I can see the training I'm going to need. I'll give myself a few more minutes.

Monique: Yeah, no, no, that's okay.

Speaker 3: [00:20:30] I'm going to learn it. When Monique talks to you and what Monique wants is, more than anything, a recognition and a permission to feel whatever Monique feels. [00:21:00] Monique isn't asking you to do anything. The recognition is a massive doing. Permission is a massive doing. On some level, Monique says maybe it's difficult for you because if Monique feels sad, you feel responsible for it as if you didn't do enough of a good job. I don't think it's that.

Mom: No.

Speaker 3: Right?

Mom: [00:21:30] No. No. For me, it's about then we put a bandaid on it. This is what's worked for me. I don't want to be in the sad place because if I open the floodgates, it's so enormous.

Speaker 3: That's what makes it difficult.

Mom: [00:22:00] Yes. Right. What's worked for me is let me find the solution and so that way, I don't have to wallow in the space of sadness because I'll be too weak to stand up again. This is a long haul, which is the reason why for years I would not say I'm tired ever.

Speaker 3: I understand.

Mom: Lately, I allowed myself to say that and guess what? I'm tired.

Speaker 3: [00:22:30] When the mother speaks about the long haul, it is the long haul of living with a special needs child, of a husband who left when Monique was three, of having no

family in this country, of being an immigrant, of having to do it all by herself. I feel the weight, the sacrifice, but I also know that only when you can say I'm tired can you actually get the energy to get back up and not the other way around.

[00:23:00] If I need to be strong, I got to be strong all the time because if I let a slight bend, then I'm going to break. At the same time, you're not the same person, the two of you, and so you're saying to Monique, "When you come to me with your sadness, I can't let it be because if it touches mine, I'm too afraid of my own. That's why I can't be available for yours." Then Monique says, "I don't have my own feelings because he borrows his feelings from me. With mom, I can't have my own feelings because she gets too scared that mine would trigger hers. Then I get angry because even though I love these people deeply, I need to feel that there is room for me to have my own interior life without one of them closing it off and the other one entering it into the point where we become one."

Monique: Yes. Yes, he borrows my feelings. Yes, there's no room for me. Yes to all of that.

Mom: Yeah, he has a difficult time even finding where Monique begins and where he begins. He's like so-

Speaker 3: The same thing happens with you. Mom, the same thing happens with you, that it becomes unclear where you stop and where she starts, where Monique starts. At least this one I caught myself. No, no. It is a translation.  
[00:24:30]

Mom: Yeah, totally, totally, totally.

Speaker 3: It's good that I get to practice it myself because I see that we are all binary brainwashed.

Monique: Yes, we are.

[00:25:00] Speaker 3: When Monique comes to you and Monique says, "I'm upset," if we can create some space, some psychological space between Monique and you to the point where you can make room for Monique without instantly taking it on and having Monique sadness run the risk of triggering your sadness, which you can't allow yourself to connect with, I fully get it. If I let that feeling come in, it will break me and I won't have the strength to do all what is expected from me to do. On the other hand, that's the fear of many strong people and yet, when you look at Monique, do you think Monique is strong?  
[00:25:30]

Mom: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yes.

Speaker 3: And Monique feels?

Mom: Yes.

[00:26:00]

Speaker 3: So Monique is living example that it's not necessarily that if a feeling comes in, the whole structure unravels.

Monique: You think I'm strong?

Mom: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: You don't know that?

Monique: No.

Speaker 3: Okay. Mom, can you say it again?

Mom: I do believe you're strong, yeah.

Speaker 3: Say more.

Mom: I think you're strong. I think you're capable. I think you're brilliant. Is it okay if I give you a hug?

Speaker 3: [crosstalk 00:26:32]. Yes.

[00:26:30]

Monique: I feel like this is so rare.

Speaker 3: Shh. Just take it in then if it's so rare and just breathe. That's it. It's not much more you need to do. This doesn't happen often enough for mom to hold you while you're sad without being afraid that you or her will unravel, meaning strong people cry. I'm happy for you two to take ... Stay, stay, stay, stay, stay because I can only

[00:27:30] imagine that most of the time, when you try to do this, you would've been interrupted.

Monique: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mom: In a second. In a second.

Speaker 3: Just holding.

Mom: He comes and he looks and wants to find out that Monique is okay and he keeps asking, "Are you okay? Are you okay?" He is so attached. He's so intertwined and he's so sensitive.

Speaker 3: But we're not going to bring him in. We're not going to bring him in. That's the whole point if we're going to keep this moment for both of you because one of the consequences of your lives has been that you haven't had enough moments just the two of you, just mom and Monique.

[00:28:00]

Mom: Even now.

Speaker 3: Even the most generous, loving, caring sibling on occasion wants to have mom for themselves.

[00:28:30]

Monique: I feel bad about that though. I feel bad that I need you, too. If I need you, too, then it's like then I need too much.

Speaker 3: You do somewhere understand that this is warped or do you believe it? You're allowed to want mom for yourself at moments, even if you are the more resourceful child. You're not taking anything away from him.

[00:29:00]

Monique: I'm taking away from you, though.

Mom: It doesn't deplete.

Monique: There's only so much of you. You're one person.

Speaker 3: Mom, you need to have a chat with Monique's feeling that thinks I should have zero needs because my mom is tapped out and, therefore, I should be need free. Then I get so resentful about having to be need free because it's basically inhuman. Then I don't know where to go with it because I'm angry at it, but I can't come to you because I feel for you and I have to take care of you and then how is going to take care of me and blah, blah, blah. We go into the loop again.

[00:29:30]

[00:30:00]

Mom: I have the capacity for more. I have so much love, but I, too, want to embrace you and not just be there for you, but also share with you and hold you and want to have time with you and we're going to do it. We're going to carve out time, specific time, because I do feel like there's so much that needs to make up for, all the years of not being able to, not finding the way to. What do you think about that?

[00:30:30]

[00:31:00]

Monique: I don't know how to feel about it. No. I know how I feel about it. I don't like how I feel about it. My reaction to that is like well, that sounds very nice. I don't know if it'll happen. I have such resistance sometimes when you call me on the phone. I feel it in your voice that you miss me and you want to spend time with just me, too. I don't want to because while I want that so much, the on top, protective layer of me

[00:31:30]

[00:32:00] is just like I know I'm just going to get upset because it's not just you. It's him and I don't want to be in that energy that I feel like I have to be in to be around the both of you. I'm trying real hard not to qualify it and then I'm sorry that I feel like I push you away. I want to do that. I want to spend time with you. I want it just you and I. I want that very much. Also, I'm scared.

Speaker 3: Of ...

Monique: That I will-

Speaker 3: That I will reject the very person that I want the most attention from.

Monique: [00:32:30] That I will get there and we'll sit down and we'll have lunch or dinner or something, like sometimes we try to do or we do, and I will say, "Oh, this is what's going on in my life and I feel sad." Then you will go, "Don't focus on that." Then I'll feel angry.

Speaker 3: The distrust is that you will lure me in to thinking that we can be close and that I can be open with you and when I will be, you'll close the door on me.

[00:33:00]

Monique: It's just the energy of distrust. I love you, qualify, but there is that energy of I can't settle here for too long.

Speaker 3: Every time you're about to express a negative emotion-

Mom: You qualify.

Monique: I never knew how much I did it until I sat in this room.

Mom: Me, too.

[00:33:30]

Monique: Yes, because I feel like a shitty person if I don't and I feel like that's what the pushiness is, so it's like oh, it must feel like this, so it's like oh, no, no. No, no. They're not getting that part. They don't understand that. That's not what they're getting. Then it comes out as no, it's really this, this, and this. I think that's what pushes people away.

Speaker 3: [00:34:00] It's very, very useful. This may be just completely my thought, okay? Let me qualify me for a moment. We're all going to qualify each other.

Monique: Okay.

Speaker 3: I think that that precision for you having lived in a family where the boundaries were so blurred, where mom's experience is your experience and your experience

[00:34:30] taps into mom's fears and the feelings are your feelings, that precision is where you hold the boundary. That precision is where it says this is Monique. You don't get it is a way of delineating the lines around Monique. It's very important that you do  
[00:35:00] that. I always think that if mom doesn't get the pronoun right, it's another way of making sure that your identity remains always delineated. The day she gets it right, something will almost be lost ironically.

Monique: I don't know why that feels so true, but yes.

Speaker 3: Then I was saying as long as she has to remind herself, every time she reminds  
[00:35:30] herself, every time I remind myself, I am helping to define you and defining you has been a major challenge for you for multiple reasons, gender being just one component. That's only one.

Monique: Yes.

Speaker 3: Every time I don't get it, it's another way of delineating no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You don't have Monique yet.

Monique: What the pronouns do, it's like there's the little child that's like make sure they don't forget me because if they didn't forget me, good.

[00:36:00]  
Speaker 3: I am not surprised that Monique is working very hard and will get there at defining an identity that highlights only you.

Monique: Even when I sense people that try and they miss, sometimes it's anger, but  
[00:36:30] sometimes it's just gratitude. It's just I see it. I see the effort and I am so grateful, even if you miss.

Speaker 3: Thank you. A name is an identity and an identity demands recognition. It's always a two-way, how I see myself and how you see me, how I define myself and how you  
[00:37:00] define me. Well, Monique deeply aches for that recognition. It's as if Monique is saying I don't just want you to see me. I want to see the efforts that you put into seeing me.

[00:37:30] When you call Monique and you just say, "Miss you. I want to spend time with you," and Monique, on the one hand, appreciates and pushes you away, what do you do?

Mom: I think I go into I understand.

Speaker 3: Understand what?

Mom: I understand that right now it doesn't work for you because that's what happens.  
[00:38:00] The words that are said to me are, "I'm sorry I have to cancel. Something's come up. Maybe we can do it another time."

Speaker 3: Okay. If you reach out and Monique says nay, eh, whatever, and you accept it, part of you thinks I'm being tolerant. I'm being accepting. I'm being open.

Mom: Being understanding.

Speaker 3: Right. The distrusting part of Monique says obviously, she didn't really care that much. If she really cared, she wouldn't just accept a first no. The distrusting part of us says show me you really want to and if I don't instantly jump, will you actually insist and not insist because you need, but insist because you want for us, so you're not going to accept this anymore. If Monique said I'm not sure and [inaudible  
[00:39:00] 00:39:00], you just basically say, "Okay. I can push it back by half an hour." If you don't insist, I don't experience it as you being understanding and respectful of my life. I experience it as if you obviously didn't really want it in the first place.

Monique: I just keep finding it so funny I nod yes and then I go no right after the yes. The no is  
[00:39:30] from the place of it's not good because it pushes people away.

Speaker 3: We get angry at the people we love. Can you conceive of that?

Monique: No. There is a part of me that very quickly is like no.

Speaker 3: That's right.

Monique: That makes no sense to me.

Speaker 3: You know that you love mom and you have all kinds of angry feelings toward mom and some of them you know are justified and some of them you know are just the result of a lot of other things and you've actually lived with the whole package of feelings. It's more the fact that there is a part of you that says those are legitimate and those are not and you have a whole closet of what you call illegitimate feelings that are not allowed towards people that you love, towards people that suffer, towards people that try so hard. You're not allowed to have a single need because they're maxed out. Then you get all upset because we all have needs, mom, too.  
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Monique: Yeah. I have a whole closet full of legitimate needs, which is why I want you to just sit on I'm in pain, just sit with me because when I was a kid, the only person who was there for my own feelings was me, which is why I get so pissed off, anger, because I had-

Speaker 3: But you just said now and how was that?

Monique: That was good.

[00:41:00]

Speaker 3: Okay. Mom, from now on, when Monique wants to be sad or is sad, period, next to you, there it not much to talk. Actually, your words are not useful at that moment, at that moment. What you did is what needs to happen and the distrusting Monique at first is going to arc and push you away and you will just take your hand and press a little more gently. That pressing says I am here. I'm here to stay. You can fall apart and I'm going to continue.

[00:41:30]

Mom: I'm not going anywhere.

Speaker 3: That's it.

Mom: That's it. Yeah.

Speaker 3: That's right.

Monique: It feels right. How do I let the anger be okay in me? I can feel it in my body, but I can never fully act on it. I can tell you I'm angry right now and I feel angry because I feel misunderstood, but it has to be calm. It has to be calculated. It has to be this way.

[00:42:00]

Mom: Has to be controlled.

Monique: Mm-hmm (affirmative). The moments I try to control with you, I've showed you so little of my anger that when I show you that anger, then it's like I'm a different person instead of just-

Speaker 3: Well, there's a third version. Mom, I can imagine that that's not the way you typically see me because generally, I come to you and I tell you that I'm angry, as if I was telling you I like this flowerpot. I'm not surprised you would think that that's a different facet of me that you haven't seen I'm practicing. We're up for some new stuff. Get ready because I plan to do more of this because I think that the way I've been doing it I'm about to have an ulcer. Mom's afraid that if she starts to cry, she will never stop. The floodgates will come up and she will not be able to get back up, but you're afraid that if the feelings of anger come out, you will never be able to stop either.

[00:42:30]

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Monique: I think it's also that I don't want to ...

Mom: You think I'm going to love you less?

Monique: I don't want you to leave. That's not a conscious fear because I never would actually think you ... I've never had that fear. I never grew up with the fear of mom will leave.

[00:43:30]

Mom: Well, if you think that it's going to hurt me and overwhelm me and break me, then I could die. Right?

Monique: Yeah. Yeah, I think actually you're right. I think that's the bigger fear than actually you leaving because I could never see you actually leaving.

Speaker 3: As we reach the end of the session, I want to go beyond giving the acknowledgement and the permission of the child's anger and the mother's

[00:44:00]

sadness. I want to see if we can create a moment of intensification for each person to actually drop into those forbidden feelings. It also became clear to me that mother and child had not had much time alone for all those years and that more than anything that was being said it was the preciousness of being enveloped with each other, holding each other, crying with each other was probably more important than anything else. It required me to stay out of the way and to just make that space possible between them.

[00:44:30]

[00:45:00] I'm going to step out for a moment because you so need this precious moment of just the two of you.

Monique: I don't know why I'm so afraid that you're going to leave.

[00:45:30]

Mom: Just want you to know how important you are to me. I'm sorry for all the times that it was very hard for you to not show your emotions because your brother was taking all the room and all the time and all my attention. I know it's so hard on you having to be the understanding one. I didn't mean to push your feelings ... I'm sorry if it was understood as you were not important or that your feelings were not important. It really mattered to me, but I didn't know what else to do. I didn't mean to hurt you.

[00:46:00]

[00:46:30]

Speaker 3: They for the first time in years are actually alone with each other without the fear that the phone will ring, that there will be a knock on the door, and that they will be interrupted. After that, when they leave the office, I offer to them to be in the room next door because the session is over with me, but it isn't really over. It's just the beginning of hopefully what will be a new phase in the relationship between mother and child.

[00:47:00]