Bob: One of the best things you could do, as a mom, is to develop the confidence in Christ that you can be the mom your children need you to be. Here’s Hettie Brittz.

Hettie: You know, when you take a flight, they always tell you: “If there’s a loss of cabin pressure, the oxygen mask will...”—that story. Then they tell you this important thing: “Put the mask over your own face first before you help the kids.” Understanding yourself is like that. A mom, who is still struggling with herself, wondering: “Why can’t I do this? Why is this hard for me? Why do I not do this thing naturally?”—this mom, who is so busy with herself / wanting to change herself—cannot be a mom who shows unconditional love to her child. She needs to make peace with how God has designed her.

Bob: This is FamilyLife Today for Thursday, March 16th. Our host is the President of FamilyLife®, Dennis Rainey, and I’m Bob Lepine. There is confidence that comes, as a parent, when we stop and realize that God gave our kids to us because He knew, if we remained dependant on Him, we could do the job. Stay with us.

And welcome to FamilyLife Today. Thanks for joining us. We’re talking about motherhood today. I love the description of natural motherhood that I think creates a phantom that our guest has talked about. The phantom here is that every mom thinks that to be the right kind of mom—she must be naturally maternal; she must get pregnant naturally; give birth naturally; must be natural at breast-feeding; a natural homemaker; she must find parenting natural; and must keep all things unnatural from the family table. Moms are going: “I feel that! Yes; I feel like, if I’m going to be successful, this is what’s required of me.”

Dennis: Here’s the thing—that phantom doesn’t live here in the United States at all—that’s from South Africa—[Laughter]

Bob: That’s where you find those moms!

Dennis: —which is where our guest lives.
We know the truth about this—there is the same phantom, here in America.

Hettie Brittz joins us again on FamilyLife Today—welcome back.

**Hettie:** Thank you, Dennis / thank you, Bob.

**Dennis:** Hettie is married to Louis since 1992; they have three children. She’s a speaker and author, and she does live in Pretoria, South Africa, which is the capitol of South Africa. By the way, I’ve been there three times—delightful city / delightful people—a country in process but is making progress.

**Bob:** Your husband’s a worship leader.

**Hettie:** That’s right—and a music producer. He loves the church and he loves families.

**Bob:** We put a link on our website, at FamilyLifeToday.com, if our listeners would like to hear your husband sing.

**Hettie:** Oh, great!

**Bob:** We have one of his YouTube’s pulled up so that everybody can go and hear Hettie’s husband do some of this music. He does a great job.

**Hettie:** Thank you.

**Dennis:** Hettie has written a book called (un)Natural Mom. You’re really calling moms out to embrace God’s call on their lives and to realize: “Yes; you’re going to have some deficiencies, but God’s going to use those deficiencies as you raise your kids.” One of the ways that you kind of organize your book—and you talk to moms around four different styles of parenting—you compare this to trees; is that right?

**Hettie:** That’s right. When I first realized that I had a personality clash with my daughter—a therapist helped me understand that—I read a book about temperament. I didn’t like the labels that they used to describe people, and I don’t want to be put in a box. I thought, “I want to develop something that’ll describe a person without denying the uniqueness and the diversity in people.”

Trees, to me, are like that; because they go through seasons. Sometimes they’re very fruitful / sometimes it’s wintertime. And they can grow—that’s so important for me when we talk about describing people or profiling them—to allow for that possibility of transformation, and growth, and a new season, and a new beginning. So that’s the idea behind the trees.
Yes, we can see predictable behavior in certain personalities when we understand them; but the idea behind this was not to diagnose, but to describe. I love the verse in Philippians 1 that says, “I want your love to grow,” and then it says so beautifully [paraphrased], “I want you to use your head and test your feelings so that your love will be sincere…not sentimental gush,”—I think that’s the way it says it in The Message. If we can describe a person accurately, we can love them better. That’s true for moms, and kids, and everyone—so that’s the idea behind the trees.

Dennis: I want to take a quick detour; because in order to have a mom, you have to have a dad. To have a dad and a mom, generally speaking, the Bible teaches us we need to get married first. I’m looking at your wedding ring, and I’m wondering: “What kind of stone is that wedding ring?”

Hettie: I think this is called—is it tanzanite? I believe so. There’s a beautiful story behind this. I had a Scripture that played a really big role in my life six years ago, from Ezekiel 16. Some people may have read that—it’s a disturbing Scripture that talks about God picking up a little baby, who’s in her own blood, and washing her and clothing—and actually, she grows up—God approaches her, and He dresses her, and He marries her. He talks about this ring with a stone in it.

I was given this ring by my husband, because my original wedding ring was stolen during an armed robbery in our house. That Scripture that says, “I found you helpless, naked, in your own blood, and I washed you,” became a very real reality that day: because I was physically attacked by the robbers who came into our house, and I was raped.

This is almost a renewal of our marriage; because God had come after that and gave us a brand-new intimacy and a brand-new marriage, and my husband gave me this brand-new ring. So this is very precious to me.

Bob: And I just want our listeners to know that the story of what happened to you is a compelling one. You have shared that; and we have a link to you telling that story, online, as well. If our listeners would like to hear about how God got glory in the midst of that attack, you can go to FamilyLifeToday.com and hear about Hettie’s story, again, from six years.

Hettie: Absolutely; yes; and God’s faithfulness to our kids through that process was so beautiful, because, running up to that, for two years, I’d been working through a book series about missionaries from around the world, with my kids. That was part of my kids’ preparation for that night; because the theme that kept coming out of these books we were reading / these stories of missionaries, was: “But if God loves you and you’re working for Him, how can something horrible happen to you? Why does a missionary’s children die of malaria in Africa? How does this work?”
We had played this little game with our kids—we would say, “There is the newspaper story and then there is God’s story.” We would look at somebody, like Joseph, and say, “You know, the newspaper story is ‘Favorite Son Sold as a Slave,’”—you know, it’s a human trafficking story / that’s what the newspapers would have said. God’s story is: “I’ve saved a redeemer to Egypt to save many, many lives,”—that’s a God story.”

We played these games when we read these stories. We said, “What would the newspaper have said, and what does God say about this?” When this happened to us—and it was all over the newspapers—our kids could zoom out and say, “What did God say about what had happened here?”

There’s so much more to these horrific—so-called horrific stories—that seem like senseless tragedies than what we could ever know; because even a month after the event, my son, who was only nine at the time, said, “Mom, by now, Satan regrets having picked our house,” because that nine-year-old could see the profit and the gain from what had happened that day.

**Bob:** Well, and you’ve seen some of the God-story unveil over the last six years, even with your attacker coming to faith.

**Hettie:** Yes! It’s this beautiful Scripture that says: “Ask of me, and I will give you nations. I will give men in exchange for your life.” That Scripture just popped up in my mind, I think, two days after the attack. I said to the Lord, “May I ask that You will save many souls and that my rapist would be one of them?” God granted that.

**Bob:** Well, again, let me point our listeners to our website, FamilyLifeToday.com, where they can hear more of the story of your attack and how God was honored in this very vicious, very horrible attack that happened to you.

**Dennis:** Yes; and you know, what I hear you talking about, out of your drama, is to get your identity from the Scriptures and the truth of the Bible—what God says about you—not what the world may do to you or what the world may say to you. For a mom, that’s paramount. A mom has to embrace what God has said about her and embrace the design that He has given her. That’s really what you’re talking about with these different types of trees that you’re comparing moms to?

**Bob:** Yes; I have to go back to this, because I’m not an arborist. [Laughter] If we were walking through the forest together, I might know an elm from a maple; but likely not.

**Dennis:** I could help you with this, Bob.

**Bob:** Could you?
**Dennis:** I could. You help me with music all the time—I can help you with the trees.

**Bob:** The boxwood, the palm, the pine, and the rosebush.

**Dennis:** I got those.

**Bob:** So, explain to me these four different plants and why you picked these for moms.

**Hettie:** Absolutely; you know, it’s exactly—because the way you are with trees, I’m like that with people sometimes. I need to know your name so that I know, “Is this full sun, a lot of water?”—you know—“How do I take care of you so you can survive me?” I needed instructions on how to attune to my kids. I have kids who have all of those trees mixed up in them, because temperament, by the way, means mixture. So don’t for a moment think you’re going to be one of the four—you’re going to be a mixture of one or two, most likely two.

So here we go. The rosebushes are those ones, who have the flowers and the thorns—and these are the moms—let’s talk about the moms in these terms. These are the moms who are the go-getters / the moms who want to be productive. They want to put their roses out there; but at the same time, they can be a little prickly—they can speak the truth without thinking twice. Usually, they regret about stuff they did in the heat of the moment, that they wish they could undo and words they said they wish they could take back. This is the mom who will struggle when she experiences parenting as an interruption of her life, the way I already confessed I did. I have a lot of rosebush in me / a lot of ambition—a lot of, “Let’s get something done today.” So that’s the rosebush moms.

And then we have the palm tree moms. Now, I don’t know about you—here, in Arkansas, we don’t see that many palm trees—or I haven’t yet—but let’s say Florida and California palm trees. I associate them with vacation time—with the beach, and fun, and pink drinks with little umbrellas in them or something—I don’t know. That’s what these moms are like. They are the party moms—they are the ones who want to make it fun for the kids. It’s about their kids laughing, and having what they need, and being a little spoiled, perhaps. That’s the image of the palm tree.

And then we have the boxwood. Now, boxwoods are those shrubs that you can prune into any shape you like. They’re usually used to make these hedges. These moms are the ones who have the boundaries, you know, and the rules. Those are the moms who are going to read the book, you know, because “Maybe here is something that I can use!” They copy and paste from other people’s lives—they have their checklists / they want to do it the right way. They usually believe there’s one right way. Like these
perfectly-pruned trees, they try and portray this image of having it all together—that’s how they are perceived.

Then the fourth type of mom, the pine trees—the one I absolutely wish I had more of in my natural design—because like the feeling that comes over you when you step into a pine tree forest / that calm coolness, where you want to spread out a picnic blanket, and lean back, and just spend time—that’s what this mom emanates. This is the mom I have when I take my own profile—zero percent of mine! That's why God gave me a pine tree daughter first, to adjust my idea of what it is to be a functional human being.

Bob: So you’ve actually developed an assessment by which people can go online and determine which kind of mom they are? Is that right?

Hettie: Exactly; that’s right. It’s called the “Unnatural Mom Profile” or the “Parenting profile.” Dads can take it too—it’s not just moms—it’s for grandparents / or teachers—anybody disciplining, mentoring, and nurturing children.

Bob: And by the way, we have a link for that on our website at FamilyLifeToday.com as well.

How does having an understanding of who you are, as a mom, help you be a better mom?

Hettie: You know, when you take a flight, they always tell you, “If there’s a loss of cabin pressure, the oxygen mask will…”—that story. And then they tell you this important thing: “Put the mask over your own face first before you help the kids.” Understanding yourself is like that. A mom who is still struggling with herself, wondering: “Why can’t I do this? Why is this hard for me? Why do I not do this thing naturally?” This mom who is so busy with herself, wanting to change herself, cannot be a mom, who shows unconditional love to a child; because she will want to change the kids as well. She needs to make peace with how God has designed her.

So what this profile does—is it shows her: “These are the ways in which you reflect the heart of God. These are the natural, beautiful things that God has put into you and your natural design. These are the things you need to flourish as a mom.” Because if I know I need a little bit of time alone, or I know I need a challenge, I can build that into my family life. I don’t need to go out of the home to get that done—I can say: “Okay; so I didn’t know that ten minutes of this” or “…this particular activity can recharge me, as a mom.” This is what I want to do—I want to build my capacity.

The message is never, “This is who you are, and now everybody needs to give you what you need.” The message is: “This is who you are. Take responsibility. Make sure you don’t bleed yourself dry. Make sure there’s enough of what we call fertilizer in your
life, and limit the frostbite when you can.” Because we also list for every mom the things that tend to make her *unnatural*—the things that tend to make parenting really hard for her. Obviously, if this mom needs help and support, she can take this to her husband and to her support system and say, “These are the areas in which I would love for you to support me, because these are the things that are tough.”

**Dennis:** Speak to the husbands for a moment and what they can say, do, and what kind of attitude they can display toward their wife, who is a mom, who may be struggling with this thing called motherhood. Coach them a bit, if you would.

**Hettie:** I believe—in all relationships, Dennis, we’re supposed to hold up a gentle mirror that gives a slightly Photoshopped version of the person in front of us. What a dad can do is—he can look at the profile description of his wife, and notice the positive things about her, and hold that up to her.

We’re never going to use these tree types to attack one another—we’re not going to say, “You are being so boxwood right now.” Instead, we’re going to say: “Honey, your high standards have really served us today, because you did not give up until we got this house clean for our guests,” and “That is a beautiful thing about you that I like,”—that is what a husband can do. Instead of putting his finger on what is tough for his wife, hold up that mirror and say, “Who you are designed to be is beautiful.”

**Dennis:** I like the way you put that, because it’s a slightly Photoshopped mirror. [Laughter]

**Hettie:** Yes.

**Dennis:** You’re not interested in a magnifying glass mirror that magnifies everything, the strengths and the weaknesses. You’re talking about focusing on what she does well—

**Hettie:** Yes.

**Dennis:** —complimenting her, calling it out, reminding her of the truth. I think sometimes Barbara, as a mom, just needed me to come home and say: “You know what? I know today was really, really tough. Thank you for doing the main thing and fulfilling your calling as a wife and a mom.” Sometimes, it doesn’t have much of a payback on the spot.

**Hettie:** It’s true. This mirror does not need to be a mirror in which we say things that are not true; because this whole message of “You are the perfect mom,” is such a dangerous one; because it puts out the expectation that you need to be all of this. People will look at the four trees and go, “Oh, Jesus was all four.” Yes; He was all four,
but He needed to save the world. He needed to be everything to all people through all the ages. That is not the assignment of a mom.

I believe, in Christianity, one of the key principles is His body / this diversity that God has put together. He will not give a mom everything she needs to raise her kids—He just won’t! He will give her a husband, who does what she cannot do; and even they—as a couple—will not be everything those kids will always need. There will be other mentors, other spiritual examples, other family members, even siblings, who will need to complete the shaping of the education of those kids.

So it’s alright for me to say: “Lord, I am not really great at this particular area of mentoring my child. Please plug a godly woman…” or “…a godly man into that spot.” That dependence on the Lord to send the body to do this is something the Lord, I believe, wants us to embrace.

Bob: I want to read seven statements that you make in your book; because what you’re saying right here is that every mom feels the pressure to be super-mom, and no mom can be super-mom. But you also say in your book every mom must be supernatural mom.

Hettie: Yes.

Bob: Not super-mom, but supernatural mom. That begins when a mom has a relationship with Christ / when her life has been transformed by the gospel. But then you go on to say, “Here are the characteristics of a supernatural mom.” Dennis, I just think there are some moms who need to hear this today:

A supernatural mom knows that God writes the story—so she says: “Okay; my desire to control everything. I’m going to have to back off from that, because God’s in control.”

Number two: A supernatural mom realizes that the foremost agenda is God’s salvation demonstrated throughout the earth. She keeps in mind the big picture.

A supernatural mom is delighted to play a part in God’s story, no matter how hard.

And that’s particularly poignant from somebody who’s been through some of the things you’ve been through, that you’ve talked about today.

A supernatural mom knows that building her own bright future, while disregarding God, leads nowhere.
A supernatural mom knows she can’t fill burned-out lives with new hope, but she trusts that God can.

A supernatural mom knows she doesn’t give her children a place in the sun; God does.

And the last thing is:

A supernatural mom knows that her failures won’t stop God from keeping all the promises He made concerning her life and the lives of her children.

That’s good news; isn’t it?

**Hettie:** It’s very good news. It’s such a relief that how my kids will turn out is not fully dependent on me. I can make it so much harder for them to know and love the Lord / I can make it so much easier for them to know and love the Lord—but ultimately, God has their future firmly in His hand. Even my mistakes will work towards what He has for them.

**Dennis:** It is one of the most heavenly assignments God gives a human being—to be called mom. It’s an assignment to impact the generations that follow.

I want to give you one of the more interesting assignments you’ve ever been given; but before I give you that assignment, I want Bob to tell listeners how they can get a copy of your book. But before we’re done here, I have one last question for you and something I want you to do, that I think your mom is going to enjoy.

**Bob:** You can go to our website, which is FamilyLifeToday.com, to find out more about Hettie’s book, which is called *un*Natural Mom. I also mentioned some links we have there to the assessment that Hettie has developed to help you determine what is your parenting style, and to hear more about Hettie’s story and hear her husband with one of his worship songs. Again, the website’s FamilyLifeToday.com. If you’d like to order a copy of the book, you can order online or call 1-800-“F” as in family, “L” as in life, and then the word, “TODAY.” We’ll get the book sent to you.

Dennis—

**Dennis:** I’d like to use this portion of the broadcast just to say, “Thanks,” to our Legacy Partners for making this broadcast possible. Your donations keep us putting broadcasts like this on that remind moms how important they are. Hettie Brittz has done a great job the past couple of days of doing that.
Now here’s the assignment, Hettie. You’re not from here—so you’ve probably not listened to our broadcast nearly as much as some of our listeners have. You’re from South Africa.

**Bob:** Although it’s available online—you can download it.

**Dennis:** It is.

**Hettie:** It is.

**Bob:** You can download the *FamilyLife Today* app and get it on your phone.

**Dennis:** That’s right; you can get the app.

I want to ask you to seat your mom across the table here from you. I’d like you to fulfill the fifth commandment: “Honor your father and your mother, that it may go well with you.” I’d like you to give your mom a tribute, as we close this broadcast—for what she means to you today and what she did for you, as a young lady, growing up. Can you do that?

**Hettie:** I will need half an hour [Laughter] but I will be succinct.

Mom, I got to know the love and the care that is 24/7, 365 days of the year, by looking into your face. I knew I could trust the Lord to be always there for me because you were. I learned to write thank-you notes to acknowledge people/to pay attention to what people need; because you showed me how. I have made sacrifices for my kids, because every single one you have made for us was worth it.

I have learned to honor my husband, even in those days when I felt like a single mom; because you took care of the four of us many times without the support you probably deserved, but you *never* once said anything about that to us, as kids. You never once complained when Dad traveled, or worked hard, or came home late—you honored him.

You have prayed for me every day of my life, and you still do every day. It is a *big* part of why I get to live the life I live now—is on the wings of those prayers, Mom, and I know that. I want to give you the assurance, Mom—that every single dream you did not get the opportunity to fulfill in your lifetime, your children, your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren will; because of the
sacrifices you have made. My prayer is that God will put the credit of that on your account, Mom. I love you forever.


We are so happy to provide these transcripts to you. However, there is a cost to produce them for our website. If you’ve benefited from the broadcast transcripts, would you consider donating today to help defray the costs?

Copyright © 2017 FamilyLife. All rights reserved.

www.FamilyLife.com