

We Are Family Season 2, Episode 15: Lance Bass

Lance Bass:

Well, I am Lance Bass, and family to me means love. I've never felt so much love in my life.

Julia:

Hello, and welcome to *We Are Family*. I am your host, Julia Dennison, and I'm here with singer, actor, musician, dancer, and producer [Lance Bass](#). You will of course know him from NSYNC, and I have to say my teenage self right now is fangirling really hardcore, but he's now also a dad with his husband, Michael, to twins Violet and Alexander. Lance, welcome to the show.

Lance Bass:

Oh, I want to thank you so much for having me.

Julia:

We're going into the holidays and it's your first holiday season as a dad. How excited are you at your house right now?

Lance Bass:

It has been so incredible. I am the biggest holiday nut ever. From Halloween to Christmas, it is my season. Just to have kids, to be able to bring back this magic and joy of the holidays that you tend to lose, the older you get. It's so great to see this magic through their eyes. This season, it's going to be so incredible, and I'm really looking forward to when they turn 1 next year, because I think it's even going to be better because they'll be able to, I don't know, see what's going on around them.

Julia:

I love that. Are there any family traditions that you and Michael are hoping to start with them, I guess for the holidays or generally?

Lance Bass:

Yeah, we have so many traditions. There's so many traditions I did with my family growing up. My favorite is going around the rich neighborhoods and looking at all the decorations, and just dreaming that one day maybe I could put lights in my trees. That's always fun. It's something that we want to continue with the kids. This year we started a new tradition. Our friends had not been able to meet the kids just yet, so last weekend we threw our first annual charcuterie Christmas party. Everyone had to bring a charcuterie platter, and everyone voted for their favorite. Then we did a white elephant exchange using that, but it was so much fun that it's going to be our annual tradition.

Julia:

OK, what on the winning charcuterie board swung it?

Lance Bass:

OK. There was a clear winner, and it really was about the creativity this year, because the person who won brought a charcuterie plate in the shape of Rihanna.

Julia:

Stop.

Lance Bass:

Yes, it was a "charcuterie-Ri-Ri."

Julia:

OK, dead. I'm trying to picture the cheese and how that exactly would look visually.

Lance Bass:

Basically it's a picture of her, but it's her dress that is full of charcuterie goodies.

Julia:

Oh my goodness. Holy moly. I might have to do this charcuterie Christmas.

Lance Bass:

You can steal that.

Julia:

I'll steal that idea.

Lance Bass:

Of course.

Julia:

What were the holidays like for you as a kid? Do you have any big memories from Christmas with your folks?

Lance Bass:

Yeah. I mean, they were always just so magical. You know, Christmastime is always about the family. I got to grow up really close to my grandparents. That day was always so special, because you would start in the morning and open up your presents. You'd be up at the crack of dawn. My dad always would play the same Christmas mix every year. He loves his classic Christmas, like Dean Martin and all that, which I do, of course, to this day. Then, yeah, we'd pack up the car, we'd go see both sets of grandparents. It's a full, full day of eating so much food.

Julia:

Now, you were saying that you lucked out. Before we started recording, you were saying you lucked out because your twins have been very good. I'm knocking on all the wood in my

closet here in Queens where I'm recording this, but they sound like they've been really good. I do know that it can be tough juggling the holidays with family, extended family, and also having new babies. Do you have any tips for more harmonious family get-togethers, or are you preparing yourself for the family dynamic? Sometimes the pressures can be a little tough on that around the holidays too.

Lance Bass:

Yeah. I mean, it's definitely going to be trial-and-error this year. So far, our families have been out here quite a bit. Both of our parents, they were here right when we brought the kids home. They got to spend the first week with them, and they were here to really help us just in case we had some real colicky babies, but like you said, they've been really good, and it's been nice. His parents just left. They'll be coming back for Christmas, but it's nice because they just all want to help. I'm not one to ask for help too much, but it is so nice to know that your family's there to just pick up and change a diaper here or there, or let you get a little rest here and there. It's been really nice.

Julia:

It takes a village, and it feels like this holiday season, hopefully more families are able to actually be together in person like that. Because I feel like it makes a huge difference, especially when you're a parent and you have smaller kids.

Lance Bass:

Oh, yeah.

Julia:

Tell me, how big of a part does music play in your house? I'd imagine huge. Have you played your twins any NSYNC yet, and how have they responded? I know they're tiny.

Lance Bass:

They are tiny, but you can tell when someone loves music, and they both light up when I play music around them. I mean, when they were just a few hours old, I had to surround them with music, and I turned on my Apple Music and the first song that played was this Reba McEntire song called ["He Gets That From Me,"] talking about a son, and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, that's interesting. I haven't even heard this song before." That was their first song, was a Reba McEntire song. Then I surround them, of course, with lots of Christmas music right now. They have heard the NSYNC Christmas album. That is a must at the holidays.

Julia:

A must this holiday season.

Lance Bass:

Oh, it's a must. Oh, yes. They have a little "Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays," a little "Oh, Holy Night." Yeah, I think it's so important to surround your kids with really great music.

Julia:

Absolutely. Yes, they're still very little, but have you noticed any personality traits starting to emerge with them?

Lance Bass:

Two days in, I started noticing. I mean, it's crazy how you can see what they're probably going to be like when they're older. My girl, I mean, Violet, she is going to be one that's very vocal and kind of in charge. I mean, she kind of rules the roost here, and just you can tell she's just going to get her way. Then our son, Alexander, you can tell he's going to be a little pushover, just a little cutie, just a loving little thing. The dynamic's going to be really fun to see between those two, because it's almost like my husband. He has a twin sister, and it's pretty much the same dynamic. She was the one that was always in charge, and he was the one that just kind of goes with the flow.

Julia:

Isn't that wild how sometimes you forget that they are going to be their own little human beings with their own ways of doing things? Even though they're your family, they do their thing. You notice that early, which that's an exciting part of parenthood, I feel like. Tell me a little bit about your journey to having the twins, because it doesn't sound like it was the easiest. I know you tried nine times with surrogates before.

Lance Bass:

Yep. Well, it was nine donors, so we weren't pregnant nine times. We were only pregnant twice, but yeah. I mean, so many of our friends that have gone through this process, it's kind of the same story. The first time they tried, it just didn't work for some reason. We've been working on it for five years. The first time didn't work. Of course, to start the whole process again takes some time. Of course, during a pandemic, that doesn't help. Yeah, I mean, the second round was great. Everything ended up exactly how we wanted and prayed it would be, and here we are with two gorgeous, healthy children.

Julia:

That's wonderful. Yeah. Also, I went through a miscarriage before I had my daughter, and I feel like it's hard to know when you're going through it, because you just can't look into the future to know that it's going to have that happy ending. Then once you do have your kid or kids, then you kind of look back and you think, "Well, it sort of all had to happen, in a way, for me to become a parent to this child or to these children." It must have felt very tough, and it must have felt hard to hold onto that hope. How did you and Michael remain optimistic, or did you remain optimistic going through all that?

Lance Bass:

Yeah, we kind of went through different, I don't know, levels of optimism. There was definitely a time where I thought the universe was telling us, "You're not supposed to have kids," especially when we got to the ninth donor that just didn't work. We're like, "OK, when are we going to take the hint that maybe we're not meant to have kids?" There was just something in me that was like, "No, I just feel it, and we're going to try one more time." It really worked this time.

What was crazy was ... it was such kismet ... the moment that we got pregnant, because we were obviously at the doctor's office and we were able to watch them implant the embryos. At the exact second that they were conceived was when we landed on Mars, and it was the Perseverance rover. It was just so ... it was a sign. I was watching on TV. This happened and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, perseverance. Really, it took that."

Julia:

Oh, wow. Perseverance, and also the fact that you're such a big space fan. We know that. It's sort of like a perfect universe moment there. I love that.

Lance Bass:

Exactly. That was definitely the universe talking to me. "All right. I got it."

Julia:

Did that change your relationship at all with Michael, going through that together?

Lance Bass:

I mean, in a way it did. It definitely bonded us more. When you go through a lot of heartaches like that, it bonds you. It can probably push people away, but it really made us closer. It was just nice to have someone to be able to go through that with, and that can really understand and you can cry with, and just all the emotions come out. It really just made our relationship so much stronger.

Julia:

That's wonderful. Did you have a lot of support from your families as well?

Lance Bass:

Oh, yes. Our families have been so incredible. My sister—she wanted to have another kid. She has three kids that are almost out of high school, and she was really itching to have a newborn. I'm like, "Do not do this. I will have the kid for you to get your kid fix with. Don't start over and have another 18 years before you have another kid leave the house." She was very happy we had kids, because of that right there.

Julia:

That's good. Did you always want to be a dad, or how did you imagine life as a father would be? Does it feel very different now that you actually are one?

Lance Bass:

I always wanted to be a dad. I grew up in Mississippi, so family is your life. You don't really look outside your little town. It's all about, "OK, who am I going to marry? Do we want a family?" You just really dream about having those kids your whole entire life. Yeah, so now that we have them, it's a little later in life. I thought I'd have them way earlier, but now that they're here, it's just amazing to look back, because I had such great parents. I can't wait to instill the same morals that they put into me, and I learned so much from them. I had some really good idols to look up to.

Julia:

That's great. Your coming out was such an important moment for pop culture and the LGBTQ community, and obviously your own life. As a dad now, are you thinking ahead to those conversations with your kids when they get a little older about identity and sexuality and being your authentic, true self, and have you thought at all about how you might approach that?

Lance Bass:

I think it's going to be very natural, because I think it's so important to be very transparent and open about everything with your kids, especially when dealing with something like LGBTQ families. They need to know, and they need to know the truth. I think the earlier they can really understand that, the better, because kids, I mean, they only know what you tell them, right? If you don't make it a big deal, it's not a big deal to them.

I remember when I [came out, on the cover of *People* magazine](#), and my niece and nephews were really, really young and they didn't understand. They're like, "Well, but why? Why is that news?" I'm like, "Well, I'm so glad you don't think it's news, because that means this generation's going to be incredible." They thought that was so weird that people cared.

Of course, we have surrogacies, so we have a different egg donor, we have a different surrogate. I think it's really important for our kids to know exactly how they came to be. I want them to know their surrogate. I want them to know their egg donor. I just want all of us to be one big happy family, so that they can just live in their truth.

Julia:

[Tan France was on an earlier episode](#) and he's also a new father, and he was talking about how he's going to have to have books to show his son about straight relationships. It's like the opposite. It's like he's just going to grow up with his two dads and just, for him, like you say, that's just going to be life.

Lance Bass:

Exactly.

Julia:

Yeah. That's a big part of our mission here at *Parents*, is just showing the diversity of family life, and here on this podcast too, and just all the different ways that families can be families. It's so wonderful.

Lance Bass:

Yeah. Everyone's so unique. We've got to celebrate that.

Julia:

Absolutely. Now, your husband, Michael, has talked about how close he was to his sister growing up. Do you have high hopes for your twins to have a similar bond? You had a sister growing up too. What was your relationship like?

Lance Bass:

You know, it was great. It wasn't like my husband and his sister. When you're twins, I feel like it's so much better because you immediately have a best friend, and that is your best friend for life. That's how they are today. With my sister, she was three years older than me, so we were really close until we hit puberty. Then, of course, we fought like cats and dogs, and now we're very close again. I think those teenage years, we really did that whole brother-sister, didn't like each other for a while. Then of course when you grow up, you're like, "Oh my gosh, I didn't realize how much I love you." Yeah. I feel like she's my twin now. We have that relationship.

Julia:

We talk a lot on this podcast about parenting personalities. What do you feel like your parenting personality is? What kind of dad are you and is Michael different, and how are you going to work together? Is there a good cop, bad cop situation, or what's the dynamic there, do you think?

Lance Bass:

It'll be interesting to see how that plays out. I think now that I waited a little time and I'm an older dad, I don't worry as much. I feel like if I had kids like my friends did, when they were early twenties, that they were freaking out because they didn't know what they were doing. They didn't know what to expect. Now that I'm 42, I'm way more chill about the whole scenario. I think our kids feel that too, because they're very calm kids too. My husband's the same way. We're just very calm and chill. We don't let things bother us too much.

I think if I can tell the personalities now, I think my husband's going to be more of the pushover and they're going to get their way with him. Me, I'm going to be the fun, cool dad, but I'm also going to be the one to stick with the discipline, more than Michael, I think.

Julia:

I feel like with early babyhood, there are a lot of different products out there and a lot of different things to help you parent better. Is there anything that you swear by generally, whether it's swaddling or playing a certain kind of music? Is there anything that's making parenthood a little easier for you?

Lance Bass:

Oh, yes. There's so many great things that we have found. It's only been eight weeks, and we have some incredible ... and every baby's different, right, but what works for us, the Snoo has been incredible, especially with twins. Because when you can't get to both at the same time and they're screaming and they're hungry, at least one of them in the Snoo, it might put them back to sleep. That's been a lifesaver. The same thing with the Brezza, the Baby Brezza maker. The bottle maker's been so great. It gives you so much time back.

I think that, especially with twins, you have no time. Every hour, hour and a half, you're doing something with one of them. It doesn't stop. Any shortcuts like that with the Brezza or the Snoo is just great. We also swear by swaddling. I think we're complete expert swaddlers now. We even have competitions who can swaddle them the quickest, and I win, of course, but yeah. It's fun. I think it's fun.

Julia:

That's great. How do you handle feedings in the night? Do you tag-team? Do you do one night on, one night off? How do you balance it between the two of you?

Lance Bass:

Well, we're very lucky that most nights we have a night nurse, so she allows us to sleep, which I think is so important, because that sleep deprivation is ... whoo. That's something.

Julia:

Yeah. It's real.

Lance Bass:

It's real. We're very, very lucky to be able to have help on most nights. The nights that we don't have help, our schedule is ... my husband doesn't sleep very well. He has complete insomnia, so he'll take the night shift. He'll stay up with them 'til 6 in the morning. Then I take over from 6 in the morning on, and he gets to sleep at that time.

Julia:

Sounds like a good system. You're godfather to Joey Fatone's daughters, Briahna and Kloey, right? First of all, what's that role mean to you? Also, have you chosen godparents for your twins yet? Are you going to?

Lance Bass:

I think the godparents for us chose themselves. I'm a Baptist person, so we really don't do godparents, but I think it's fun because I'm a godparent to three kids, and it's amazing. I became a godparent to Briahna when I was really young, my early, early twenties. I didn't know what that even meant, or I didn't know how to be a dad figure at all. I wish I could go back and do the things I wish I would've done now, be a little more present and done all the godfathery things, but I just didn't know what I was doing. I've gotten better at it with my younger godchildren right now.

Yeah, our godmother is Lisa Vanderpump, she's just been so, so great and so excited for these kids. She's come over, already fed them, and she's just a really incredible fairy godmother.

Julia:

I love that. Between Joey and Lisa, and I'm sure you have a lot of friends who are parents, do you have any pieces of advice that they've given you that have stuck with you?

Lance Bass:

People are very scared to give advice these days.

Julia:

That's true.

Lance Bass:

A lot of people are like, "Ooh, unsolicited advice, don't want it," but me, I'm all open for it. I'm like, "Hey, give me every advice you can give me." Some people are very scared to do that. One of the best things that we've learned is really to take the time for yourself. You know, when you do have someone able to watch the kids for an hour, make it a spa time. Go in there and give yourself a facial, or get in a bubble bath. I think it's real important to give yourself you time every once in a while, so you can become just a fresher parent to be able to, I don't know, just have a little more energy for them.

Julia:

I think that's true. Sometimes people or parents will feel guilty about that time that they have away from their kids. I always agree and say that it makes you a better parent if you can actually have that downtime. Then you're not as frazzled when you are actually with your kids, so it's important.

Lance Bass:

Oh, yes.

Julia:

You've got to put your oxygen mask on first. That's what we always say here at *Parents*.

Lance Bass:

That's right.

Julia:

Lastly, what are your hopes and dreams for your family for the future? Would you ever want more kids? I know it's very early days into having twins, but what are looking forward to the future with your family? Do you have anything that you aspire towards?

Lance Bass:

I can't wait to be a helicopter parent. I'm already planning their lives. I'm just kidding. No, I definitely have always thought I wanted three or four, so I'm definitely wanting another one. My husband's like, "Can we just wait a little while and then decide?" I'm like, "Of course, but I'm really ready to go for the third one right now." My hopes and dreams for them is just to have a blessed life. I want them to be kind, and I want the world to be kind to them. I know they're in a special situation, kids to public figures, but also gay parents. I know it's going to be a struggle in some parts of their lives, but I hope that they become so strong that that just rolls off of them. Maybe they can teach this world something a little positive. I just pray for kind children.

Julia:

On that beautiful, lovely note, Lance, thank you so much for coming on *We Are Family*. It's just been such a pleasure to chat with you.

Lance Bass:

You too, Julia. Very nice to meet you.

Julia: Thanks so much for listening to my conversation with Lance Bass.

Next time you'll hear from the creator of some of the best loved kids TV shows around today including *Ridley Jones* and *Doc McStuffins*. Producer and writer Chris Nee talks about identity, parenthood, and found family.

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We Are Family is presented by me, Julia Dennison, and produced by Sam Walker. Editing is by Vincent Cacchione, and thanks also to the rest of our production team at Pod People, Rachel King, Matt Sav, and Danielle Roth.

We'll see you back here next week for more *We Are Family*!