

Ep #10 Repressed Memories



Full Episode Transcript

Welcome to the stay or go podcast where we're changing the dialogue around divorce so that no woman ever stays in her marriage out of fear. Get ready to dispel myths, learn life changing tools, and build a solid foundation in yourself from which to make your decision. And now your host, me, Britta Jo.

Welcome back. Y'all. All right. So, this episode is going to be different than the episodes I've been doing up until now. Kind of unexpectedly this week, I just had a lot of interest in going back and researching repressed memories. And then another one of my clients ended up talking about it as well.

This week. And I could just feel like, okay, this is something I always knew. I wanted to talk about on the podcast. Over the last year, I was like, definitely at some point, want to share my

story. Because I think story is incredibly powerful for making us feel less alone. For, I know when I hear someone's story that I resonate with, or they've gone through something similarly. I in turn. Don't feel. You know, So different.

It's like, oh, somebody else gets me out there in the world. So that's, that's one of the big reasons why I want to share it. Also.

I'm realizing why the interest in the repressed memories is coming up is because. I've been heavily researching complex PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. Thanks to an amazing book that a client of mine mentioned probably about six or seven months ago. And at the time, you know, I kind of read through it pulled a few things, but. Hadn't really accepted that I'm pretty positive.

I definitely have CPTSD. You know, beyond getting like an actual diagnosis. I am, I just, everything resonates with me about this. And in realizing that. Noticing how many of my clients have similar. Struggles that can be really helpfully explained and then managed and healed through addressing CPTSD. So I will be probably in the next episode, discussing CPTSD.

And I'm so excited for that because. It has been really lifelike, so life-changing for me. And actually, I'm like, Ooh, I'm taking a moment to like fill the joy of. How much understanding this crucial piece for me has been in the last month, how much it's radically changing my relationships with my children. I'm dating someone at the moment, and I've gone into this relationship, understanding this about myself for the first time in my life, and being able to communicate it openly. And how much that is dramatically changing.

The way that relationship is developing. So, in my intense excitement to share this with you. I knew that this would be incomplete without taking time to talk about. The repressed memories aspect for me. And really my journey kind of over the last couple of years with all of this. So, this episode, Is going to be that it's going to be me sharing my experience with my own repressed memories reemerging in the last couple of years.

And then a huge piece of it's going to be. Talking about.

The cultural Blind spot. I think we have around. Childhood sexual abuse around incest. Which at this point I do want to pause for those of you listening. And I do want to just give, you know, a. I don't want to call it a trigger warning, but I want to encourage you to, if you're going to listen to this episode, to stay very in touch with your body while you're listening. And also too, if at any point it's feeling like too much or you're feeling overwhelmed or you're having something activating. You can pause.

You can also turn it off.

I'm definitely, you know, heads up. I'm going to be talking about some really difficult things and. I think it's important that we have open dialogues and, and like I said, share our stories around these things. Because having these things happen to me. And not really having a framework of.

Of knowing people who this has happened to, or even feeling like there's a dialogue in the greater culture of like, yeah, this happens and. It's not your fault.

And here are ways that we can support you. I think we still have in the U.S. I know we do a huge culture that just kind of shames victims and hides their stories. And we've made strides in the last decade, but there's still so much further to go. , I. I want you to keep that in mind.

I want you to notice if there are things coming up for you. Giving yourself that space and, um, yeah taking a break, if you need to, while listening to this episode. So. Um, with that side. Back to what I was mentioning earlier. I do want to open up this conversation and really bring to the forefront.

How passionate I am about remedying this narrative. Around repressed memories. Which has I'll get into it later in the episode was created by this foundation. The false. False memory syndrome foundation. I swear. Netflix needs to do a documentary on them on this whole story. It is so crazy, but because of them, when I first had my, my initial repressed memory return. And I started Googling to like, is this a real thing?

Can this actually be real? There was so much.

So many articles out there that really discounted my experience. And that was very disorienting. It was really painful. I remember feeling like I kind of had to defend myself to myself, like, is this real? And. It's already so difficult to deal with. What's coming up in that memory, that then to add on the layer of having to doubt yourself while you're doing that makes it like twice as difficult. And actually I'm the client this week. That brought up repressed memories. You know, she said she'd been Googling, and I asked her, so what was your take?

And she said, well, actually I got really discouraged. I feel like it's, you know, it seems like science is inconclusive and they can be real or not. And I was like, oh my God. It's been. Probably a year and a half to two years since I went and searched the web and that shit is still out there. Convincing people. That their experience is not real.

So I want this episode to I hope to add my voice to what I'm realizing are so many people who have experienced. A repressed memories, resurfacing. And really expose that. The main cultural narrative behind those being false. Was made up by a bunch of people who didn't want their children's abuse to come to light. And when you go read the articles and you dig in, it's just like, wow.

Okay. I want to start my journey.

Really by talking about how, when I was younger, growing up, um, I think I was probably.

Actually, it might've been more when I was like in college that I remember hearing that one out of every three. One out of every three women has experienced either physical or sexual violence. And kind of thinking to myself like, oh, that's, that's not me. I mean, this is how little I had. Any access to this memory?

I actually thought of myself as like, I've never had anything like that happen to me. And. The first kind of.

Experience I had or knowledge, I learned about this idea that you could have memories, that traumatic things that happened to you in childhood. That your brain. Locks away from you so that you can't access them, or you don't. Fully understand what they are. Was meeting a friend in my ward here in my, um, Mormon ward. And she was telling me about this story she'd heard in college, she was talking to somebody, and they were talking about a girl who had been molested by. Like her brother's friend or something, or her friend's brother. And as she's standing there listening to the story. She's experiencing this kind of like out of body disassociating. Kind of feeling and she starting to think to herself.

Wait a second. I think I, I think I know someone too, that this happened to. And as she's listening to the story, she's trying to think like, who is it? Who is this person that I know this happened to. And then there's like this moment where all of a sudden. It, I almost see it as like, you know, you're, you're watching like two different frames. And then all the sudden they merge, and you realize they're the same. And. In that instance, she was like, oh my God. It's me. And she had this memory. Come back of being. Molested she'd stayed over at a friend's. A good friend of hers house and her friend's older brother had molested her. And what also blew me away from this story is. As she'd unpacked this out, she's she'd figured it out and like realized what it was.

She'd actually confronted, reached out and confronted this man. And he had admitted that it had happened. And apologized to her, but it was a moment for me. I remember it believing a deep impression on me. Like, whoa, I had no idea that this could happen. And that she had actually reached out and had someone who confirmed that it really had happened. Was deeply impactful for me. And then on top of that, Um, Just to kind of. Provide a little bit of framework of how much I've seen this now that I am more open about my own experiences. I recently had a client who just reached out.

I worked with her a couple of years ago and told me. That she had a repressed memory resurface of being touched by her brother when she was younger. A friend of mine who's in therapy has had memories of sexual abuse. By. A parent resurface. And then also in this book that I'm going to recommend.

I really

I'll recommend it in another episode. It's a book that I'm reading right now that I really like, but it's in, um, Martha Beck's book, the way of integrity. She addresses this as well. I read her book, leaving the saints when I was leaving Mormonism and she deeply goes into. Her experience with. The same. The same thing, like living this life. And probably in her, like, I would say late thirties. Having, um, she actually had. Bleeding internal bleeding that came up and went in to go get it checked.

She had all this like internal scarring that they couldn't explain. And. Through that happening in her body, going through that, she had this memory come back of abuse by her father, which. Hi, I've you have any interest in yeah. In that story, Martha Beck's leaving. The saints book is incredible for just how much a culture, how far a culture and people within that culture will go to silence your voice. And to not look at your abuse so that they don't have to admit that there are problems within the system. She has such a like Testament and example to me of bravely owning. Your story and. Not, it was a journey for her too.

It was very scary, very difficult for her, but ultimately she eventually. Came forward. And yeah. Unfortunately lost a lot of her. A lot of her family and her connections. Because. They. They can't live in a world where that's true and I see that over and over. Um, another one of my clients. Was telling me the other day about how in her family, there's a cousin that's come forward and said, You know, Grandfather. Molested me did things to me, and it is heavily denied and shamed.

And like, please don't talk about this. It didn't happen to you by her own family members. So I think that's why too. I want to share my story so badly because I want to say like, I believe you to all of us. That don't feel believed. Who, the only other person that was in that room is the abuser. And if we were ever to confront them, they would lie to us.

And if any, you know, if, if you've gone through that, you know, how deeply that hurts. To believe, not to believe, but to know that someone who has done something to you when you were a child would lie to your face in adulthood about it yet. I see it happen over and over. And over again. So. Jumping into my story.

That was kind of giving you a little bit of like context of, I do see this often in friends, in clients around me. Also to give a caveat like. I hope this inspires those of us listening. To when you have a cousin or a sister or somebody that comes forward and says, this happened to me. We don't just immediately dismiss it out of our discomfort at having to realize the person. We thought. You know, in the instance of like a grandparent, oh, the grandpa thought was a good grandpa. May not be the person I thought he was. So. Instead of shaming that person to try and keep your story realizing.

Whoa. You can really not know people and my story. Showed me that so powerfully. So in my instance, I'm in February of 2021. My mother was in the final months of her battle with cancer. She ended up telling my sister I think, in, in what I would consider like a.

Feeling guilty. Worried that she was leaving kind of deathbed moment that she had caught my father molesting our younger sister. And. When she called me that night to tell me. It was absolutely shocking, you know? This is what I'm talking about when.

When we think we know somebody and then somebody else comes forward with information that we're not prepared for. And thank God, my sister and I had gone through our own therapy. Really woken up to the narcissistic abuse in our family by this point. And we were not interested in covering up or hiding this as so many families do to preserve our family's image or to. Protect our father. It was like, no, what matters most is our younger sister.

And. We ha we have to. Take care of this. Through the next events that came out of that conversation. Which I'm not going to go into. Massive detail around just because it would take so long. I mean, there were just so many pieces to this, but. What I want to focus on is that

ultimately, my dad was removed from our family, thankfully by law enforcement. And. That set off a chain reaction kind of event with my sister and her husband stepping up and taking on. My siblings who at this point, you know, within a month or month and a half to two months were orphaned as my dad. Um, as my dad was removed from our family and my mom passed away.

And so, over that next year, as I am watching. My dad's interactions with my siblings. Who are now taking care of his children. I began to realize how little I truly knew. This person.

And I, I'm going to get a little bit emotional because it's. It's a very disorienting. Two. Live your whole life with a parent. And think you. And I'm putting it in air quotes, know them. And then to experience. Something like this, right. Just to complete. Exposing of this side to someone that you did not know existed, you then get to see who this person is through. Their approach to the whole situation.

And it was hugely disillusioning. It was very shocked at how my dad handled a lot of things that to me, just. Seemed. So out of character for who I had thought he was. And I realized now that's because I had to, as a child project, a kinder, more loving idea on him. Then I think. You know, we, we see everybody through filters and that year was really the year of those filters being pulled away for me. And eventually I got to the point where in October of 2021 I decided to call him and just confront him and say, I'm really disappointed with how you're handling this.

And I would think you'd be more remorseful and like helpful. And in that moment, I also confronted him about a memory that I had. So. Jumping back to February of 2021. As this all came out. A memory that had been, I would say very, very darkly in the back of my mind, like rarely had I ever thought about this memory. I think it's a good indicator of how much your mind can take stuff that you don't. Want to know or look at and just tuck it back away. But when all this came out, I had had this memory. Resurface from when I was probably 11 or 12, that had always, whenever I thought about it, I just felt like what was that?

Like? It was weird and it felt really uncomfortable. There wasn't anything that I could really point to as like, oh, that was wrong, but it was still like, weird enough that when all this came out and that memory came back up to the surface for me. Thankfully, my mom hadn't passed away yet and I did confront her.

I did come to her and say, Hey, I have a memory. This is what happened because she was a part of that memory. Did it really happen? Is it true? And she confirmed it was. Now at that time, you would think that might be like this, like, oh my God. Wide opening. Oh, something's happened to me, but even then I had no idea. That I had these deeper memories, I just assumed.

Okay. That was the one time that that happened.

That's it kind of thing. So when I confront my dad in October, though, and I bring up this memory during like a heated moment in the conversation, I'll never forget because. He I actually thank God had recorded the conversation because I wanted to make sure I could remember sometimes when I get into. You know, as a result of my childhood my CPTSD, sometimes when I get activated in conversations and I get dysregulated, I really struggle remembering what's happening in the conversation.

What the other person is saying. Which is a mechanism of my brain developed in childhood to help me forget abuse. But in this instance I had it recording. And when I confronted him about this memory, he said, it was that one time. And it never happened ever again. And it didn't happen for a long time before that. And in the moment, I remember not even being able to like process it in the moment it was after I went back and listened to the message that I heard, that piece of it didn't happen for a long time before that. And I remember thinking. What on earth? Is he talking about. So that was in October of 2021. I obviously, experiencing a lot of disillusionment around my dad.

But ultimately still no real inclination, like deep down inside me of like something happened to me that was never a piece that really came up for me.

I didn't even have a thought of like, maybe something happened to me. I just was like, okay, that's weird that he would say that I have no memory of anything.

And then in February of 2022, Is when the memory resurfaced. And, um, I do want to provide some more details about this memory. I'm not going to go into the specific memory, but I am going to go into what it was like having it come up because. I think there needs to be. I want there to be more dialogue and more openness around this experience so that when people have these experiences, they don't discount them. So for me I had just barely fallen asleep. And so I wasn't fully asleep.

It was almost like an in-between state. And I, what I remember most was that it was very vivid and real. Like it was not like a dream. It really felt like I was there in that space again, when the memory came back, and what stood out to me and helped me realize, like, this is not a dream. This is a memory. Was that the emotions attached to it? were so intense. I remember waking up and unlike when you wake up from a nightmare, this was, this was an emotion. That I had never. It's the weirdest sensation. Let me describe it this way.

It's an emotion. That I had never experienced. Fully like all at once, right up in my face in my body. And yet. Had been in the background of my life. The entire time.

So when it came to the forefront, it was just this huge, like connecting of neurons in my brain of like, oh, My God, there it is. There is this.

Scary feeling that has always been in the background of my life. That I never even looked out like have never even known it was there, but once I felt it full on, it was like, oh my God, it's been there all along. I've just never, I mean, imagine having this thing with you, your whole life, like always right behind you, but you never get a chance to like turn and fully look it in the face.

So, you always know it's there. Some part of you knows it's there, but you've never looked at it. And this is the moment where I turned around and I looked at it straight in the face and it was the feeling was.

I mean, thank God I was who I was at that moment, because I think it would have like annihilated me.

It was so. Intense because it was this devastating realization. That in this moment of this abuse happening with my father. I could feel like the shattering in my brain as a little child of realizing. I am utterly unsafe and alone in life.

Because up until that point, I know I had already felt unsafe around my mother because the narcissistic abuse had already been, you know, heavily a part of my life up until that age. Uh, but I'd really up until then. I know I had a lot of like, felt very safe and loved by my dad. And so to have the one person that I felt was a place of refuge, then abuse me. That feeling is.

If I hadn't experienced it myself, I, I. There's no way to describe it. It's it's pretty unimaginable. And this realization that the people who should love and protect me. Who I depend on everything for it, because this happened, you know, when I was like four or five years old, I have no ability to take care of myself.

I'm completely dependent on them. That those very people would hurt and abuse me for their own needs to be met.

And in experiencing that moment. That feeling that memory coming back, I finally understood like, oh my God. Of course. I could not live with this memory. It would have that feeling as a child probably would have to live with it every day to that full extent of seeing it would have destroyed my psyche so much.

I don't know if I would have survived. Like I had to completely seal it off. Like this did not happen. And I remember, you know, waking up, writing it down, crying. I think I might've even called my best friend at the time. It was a total shock, like I said, I did not. No, that that was in there. And, naively, I did think I could kind of handle it on my own coming off of it. But within a month, my mental health, you know, because I consider myself like I've done quite a bit of self-work.

I, I. I am a coach I'm big into taking care of my mental health and big into if I'm going to do this for my clients, I take it very seriously doing it for myself as well. But within a month, my mental health was plummeting. Aggressively. And I knew like, okay, I need professional help. And this is where I really want to recommend. Absolutely.

If you have a repressed memory, come back it's so important. And we'll talk about this more extensively next. Episode when we go into C PTSD. To have a compassionate witness. To help you process it. And for me, that was my therapist, Andrea Andy's here in Rockwall. She's amazing. If you live in Texas or in California, she practices. In both states and, um, we ended up

doing brainspotting together, which was instrumental because. It's a somatic approach to therapy without always having to talk.

And that was. Hugely helpful. One of the things I also, of course, during that month, when I'm struggling with this memory, I go and I start researching repressed memory. And like I said earlier, in the episode. I was. Discouraged to start reading lots of articles. That seemed to say it's pretty likely that it's a false memory. We make up things. And then I found this documentary on Netflix. Which I will offer is very, very intense. So, you know, Watch at your own discretion, but it's called the keepers. And it is about a woman who has repressed memories of her sexual abuse by a priest at her Catholic girls school. Come back.

And for me it was.

It was so helpful to see another person's journey with repressed memories and

it's a tough one because she, she's an example of how the legal system did not. Believe her. And I think just of how much. Pushback. There is in our culture on believing people. Who have memories like this, because if you've never. And I know because I didn't. Prior to this. I had never had this experience so I can see how, if you've never had a repressed memory or a surface. You may naively think, how could you forget that?

Like that sounds so the most traumatic feeling you've ever had. How could you just block that out and forget it? And the reality is I can't tell you how my brain did that. But I can confirm that it did. And what's so wild is. I think to my story and I'm like, oh my God here, my dad is like,

He is currently, in the judicial system, awaiting trial. For having done. This to my younger sister, and yet I'm still struggling. Believing I might. Be correct in my memory I realized in that instance, like I was even one of the lucky ones that had like something in my external reality that would be like, yeah, this person. Is. Who your brain and your memory is telling you he is. So many of the people I meet that have repressed memories. They may live in worlds where they come forward and say, this happened. And just like my friend with her cousin. Everybody in the family is like, no, it didn't please stop talking.

We don't want to hear that. So, I watched this documentary, the keepers I found this article. That was incredible. And I have not been able to find that exact article since then. I have searched high and low, but I did find a couple of other amazing articles. That I am linking in the show notes that talk all about. This organization. Called the false memory syndrome foundation. And, um, there's one, especially. Called the memory war.

I highly recommend if you are interested in, you know, what I'm talking about today, going and reading that because it provides this incredible beautifully written article by this woman who researched this for over a year and research specifically. The What would I say, like the incident that was the inception of all of this, which was this woman. Who later on in life, how to repressed memory resurface ended up confronting her parents and her parents approach to it. Was to deny it and go found this foundation to try and help. Parents. Whose children were

coming to them later on in life. Saying that they'd had memories, resurface of childhood abuse. Now why this is such a big deal. And in the YouTube videos, I'm linking as well.

You can learn more about this is because. So, I think she says in like 1990 or 1991, I can't remember the exact year. Public opinion in support of victims, stories like believing the victim. Of people coming forward, talking about childhood abuse was like 80%.

Within three years. That completely flipped. And public belief shifted towards believing that the memories that they were recounting were false. And this foundation spent the next, they just barely, I'm so happy to say dissolved in 2019. Thank God. Especially after you read. If you read these articles, you'll understand why I'm so happy to hear that. But prior to that, they actively in multiple court cases and throughout, throughout our culture proliferated, this idea. Of false memory syndrome. Which by the way is completely made up. It is not even a scientific thing.

And yet somehow, and this is just, I mean, this is the power of the culture. This is the power of media. This is the power of words. It was an idea that people latched onto. And since then, you know, multiple people, I, I. Read about it being used in the Harvey Weinstein case. And. This excuse of like, oh, this person only remembered this later on in life.

Therefore, it must be false. Or, This idea that I think many of us have of like, how could a parent, right? How could a parent do that to their own child? Surely. Surely, no parent would lie to their child's face about something as big as this happening with them coming forward. And I just have to say.

Having watched. My own mother and father tried to hide this when it all came out, because although my mom had told my sister. She did not think it was going to leave our family. She thought it would just be handled within the family unit. And when they learned that we were not going to sweep this under the rug. I once again. More disillusionment around realizing, oh my God. My parents. will go to. Extreme lengths to hide the things they have done. Even if it means hurting their own children. And ultimately, you know, where I landed.

So, over that year, you don't have that repressed memory come up in February of 2021. Sorry, 2022. I started working with my therapist that entire year was spent. Feeling all of this. Just terrifying emotion. It was like all of this emotion. I had locked away for my life up until that point, but much of it from my childhood. And ultimately realizing as I pieced together, different parts of the story, different interactions with my parents, that. I now. Strongly believe that my mother knew all along. I believe my mother knew about my abuse when I was young and she wanted to hide it. And so I have no doubt that parents can literally lie to their own children about sexual abuse. That they perpetrated on them. Just to keep their own stories about who they are about. Whether they're a good person or not. And in the article about the people who founded the false memory syndrome foundation.

One of the things I found the most fascinating is that. The person who pushed that the most who pushed, silencing her daughter's voice. Was the mother. She is the one who founded the whole foundation and ran it and pushed it. And actually reading that article, I was really. I felt very

validated because they talk a lot about the dynamic. Between. Her parents and the way her mother behaved.

And a lot of that really resonated with me around my mom. And actually, having this, this memory come back in this feeling. Put together a lot of pieces for me in my parents' relationship in the way they behaved. So it, it was very eye-opening for me. And actually looking back My family story makes more sense now. Then it did without this piece. So going back, there was this article. Um, about the rise and fall of this entity, the false memory syndrome foundation, and actually back then two years ago. I don't remember reading about the fall of it.

I just remember reading, oh my God. This was created by parents of a child who accused the dad of sexual abuse. And. I was blown away actually that I had to I had to really dig to find that article back then. Like looking up false memory, a lot of the stuff or repressed memories. A lot of the stuff that came up was not in favor of that.

It's only been, as I've learned the name of the. Foundation and actually looked it up specifically that I've found articles exposing it. And.

I think. What I, one of the things I'm hoping most with this episode is that. If nothing else, even if you don't have repressed memories, you walk away from this realizing. What utter bullshit. I think it is that we. Out of the gate, most of the time with people who are bringing up trauma that they had as children, that they have not remembered until now that we just at first glance, dismiss them as not real. And I hope that this will cause many of us to pause and go.

Maybe I don't.

Maybe, I don't know all that's going on here. And maybe this cousin, who's saying something about my grandpa. Maybe she's not crazy. Maybe there actually is something here. If we dig deeper.

So later on in that same year. I would have a second repressed memory resurface. And along with this one, I wanted to explain a little bit about how this one was different in that it was triggered. By an experience I was having with my partner at the time. And my romantic partner and. For me, it was very tough in the moment when it came up, because I'd never had a memory up until then.

Right. My memory had happened when I was like alone or when I was.

Like half asleep. This was, I was fully awake and it was just the way he had touched me in a very specific way. That flashed me back into. The memory. And I would say the gift of the second repressed memory is that it was even more confirmation that I was correct. That these things really had happened to me. Especially because the second memory involved my father, but it also involved another relative. That I had not thought about for years. But whom had lived next door to my family at this time when I was, four or five. And it was really like, In that moment, too, that all of these questions. That they'd never really been conscious.

They'd been like subconscious questions of like, why do I feel weird about this? Or. They once again, made sense. I had always had this uncomfortable feeling about that home that we'd lived in at this time. I have very limited memories of that time in that home. Most of my memories come purely from like photos that I've seen versus actual. Physical, like I'm you. I remember this happening. And I had never understood why this other person that was involved had disappeared from our family's life.

So suddenly. Another thing that made more sense. As I started piecing together it's such a. This is why it's so nice to have a professional to help you because it's so disorienting to have to go back, look back over your entire life. And. Figure out the story again, like you've told your story, like who you are, who your family is, what the dynamics are your whole life and all of a sudden, all of that. Is changing. But so many things made sense. I realized now, Knowing that my mom knew about my abuse, that she thought she could cover it up and control it. Within the family. And now made sense why the relationship with my mom was so in mashed in all controlling and it left barely any room for connection with my dad while I was growing up. And in fact it wasn't until the last year of her cancer that I'd even started to have.

What I felt like was a genuine relationship with my dad, which. Made that, especially devastating when all of this came out because I had already. I'd known about my mother's narcissism. I'd been trying to process grieve that realize that relationship was never going to be what I wanted and release it so that I could be healthy in my own life. And as you know, from some of my other episodes where I, I talked about how her getting cancer was like a complicated. A mix of emotions for me. I had ultimately moved into a space of okay, the narcissist in my life is going to leave and I would finally get to have a parent.

I could feel safe and close with. And then to have all of that explode only to realize like, oh my God, my dad. His ex exploiting my, my sister while my mother is ill. And then ultimately, the cascade from there into my own. Memory's coming up. When I've shared this with people close to me I tend to get this. Like, oh my God, this is, this is a lot. And.

It is, I think anybody who's experienced sexual abuse from a family member, someone that you trusted, I mean, sexual abuse in general. From anybody is horrific. And to have it. Come from. Someone that in our culture, we make it seem like in our families, you should be safe and your parents love you.

It's, it's really, really devastating.

And, and this is where I'm gonna, you know, leave us with this segue into the episode. That's going to come next week about CPTSD.

Yes, it is devastating. Yes, my family completely imploding and all of this coming out and all of the, I mean, The choices. My parents made that just wrecked their children's lives. As far as what a normal life would look like, right. That has been completely destroyed.

And yet.

I am so. Grateful for the devastation of all of that, because in having all of that blow up and going on this journey of. Finally seeing that, right. That feeling that had always been behind me my whole life, that I've had to live with every single second minute, hour of my life. Even if I can't look at it, it's still there.

Getting to finally look at that as scary. And as. Imploding as that was.

It has given me. The power. Given me the power back to say. I believe myself. To own my truth. And to rewrite my story from that framework. And that was something that. That Andrea, my therapist really worked with me on that year. Was.

Believing myself was giving my inner child. What she never had her whole life, which was an adult, which is the adult me now, that says, I believe you. If you tell me this happened to you, this happened to you. And I am here for you. And I will protect you and I will keep you safe going forward. I've got you. And I'm really.

I'm so proud of myself and so grateful that through that experience. Um, At the end of 2022. So, in September of that year, because of all the work I did going. You know, with Andrea going into those. Scary places feeling those feelings. Reclaiming my relationship with myself. And owning what happened to me. I was able to at my father's trial in September. Along with, um, three of my siblings and my brother-in-law. I was able to testify against my dad. And.

To get to stand in a room.

I mean, it was, I'm not gonna. I'm not going to pretend like it wasn't terrifying and like very difficult. And my nervous system was very like, it was in one of the most intense experiences of my life. Um,

And thankfully I had people who deeply loved me. I'm thinking specifically I had a partner at the time who had gone through that whole. You're with me and I really couldn't have done it without him who had loved me and processed with me and been a safe place where, you know, like I said earlier, when that memory had come up and he was right there, I'd been able to stop him and say, this is what's happening.

And he was able to hold me. Um, and I'll talk about that a little bit in the CPTSD episode next month, that. It matters so much, having people who can be compassionate witnesses as you go through your trauma, as you process your pain. Because of his love because of my therapist, because of friends who knew what I was going through and were incredibly supportive as well.

And just. Helping me process and feeling loved and safe.

That moment of standing up in that room. In front of my dad in front of other people that were there that didn't know my side of the story.

And to get to stand up and speak my truth aloud. And. Strongly advocate in front of the judge for my dad receiving the maximum sentence so that my family and my sister could have what we

deserve, which is the space. And the time to heal. Knowing that he is. Far far away from all of us.

It was one of the defining moments of my life. It's definitely something that I know, one day when I'm old and on my death bed. I will look back at that moment and I will be like, I fucking showed up. I showed up for myself. I showed up for my little sister and I showed up for. My siblings who were having to take care.

Of those siblings. Yeah. I. I can't say enough how much. Yes, it was devastating. But it. Has been one of the defining moments of my life. That I am most proud of. And, um, it really makes me think of. The book I'd mentioned earlier by Martha Beck, the way of integrity of living. a life where our external is in integrity with our internal.

And that was one of the biggest moments for me.

Instead of, worrying, like I had my whole life about my parents' feelings and not disappointing them and taking care of them. I. Took care of me and, um, yeah, I'm happy to. Share that. The judge. She was incredible. She heard. Both sides. And at the end she gave my dad 15 years, and it was. I know so many of us will never get that.

We'll never get an external validation of what we've been through, but for me, For my siblings that were. Impacted by this for my sister. It was. An absolutely. Incredible moment. That we had worked. So hard for it and been through so much to get to. And that sounds crazy right. The moment when my dad went to prison was this, you would think that would be the worst moment ever, but. Once again, going back to last week's episode, it's all about the story that you tell. And I will forever advocate for telling stories. That.

Bring you into greater authenticity, integrity with your inner self that celebrate the things you've been through. And, um, yeah. Make you into more of yourself.

So. Whew. With this episode. Completed. I feel like I've just ran a marathon. I know this may, I may have sounded very composed, but this, this was something that was really.

An effort for me to be brave enough to share it to Speak my truth. But I feel so relieved and happy now at the end that I have, and I'm really grateful that I have this platform to be able to share it with all of you. But with this. Completed, um, I'm excited. That feels like. This weight has been lifted because now we get to move into. Continuing to talk about how I'm healing from this, what it looks like to live with CPTSD every day of my life. How I've come into much greater compassion for myself. Instead of this, like, oh yeah.

I went through that and it's fine. And I'm fine. And. This last month of really owning and telling myself like, okay, I have C PTSD. Has actually been really liberating because then when I have, which I'm going to teach you about next week. Emotional flashbacks or really aggressive inner critic or just other symptoms that come up with it. I in that moment know, oh yeah, that's not. That's not a problem with me.

That is. A direct effect of the trauma I experienced in childhood. And now I'm an adult and I have resources and I can take care of and heal, and it will never go away. The emotional flashbacks will probably always be something I'll have, but as I learned to catch them, to notice them and to respond to them with kindness, instead of, you know, Attacking myself.

They get easier. And, um, I'm really excited to share that with you guys next week to share what CPTs D is, what your symptoms look like. And to really raise awareness around it, because I think there may be quite a few of us who experienced. You know, and it does not have to just be sexual abuse in childhood. He talks about emotional and verbal abuse in childhood as well can cause C PTSD in adulthood. Thank you for being here on this journey with me.

Thank you for hearing my voice and. I just want to leave this with reminding all of you to go gently. Be gentle with each other. Be gentle with yourselves. Remember that I love you. If you have experienced your own childhood abuse. Know that you are not alone. I actually think there's way more of us out there than we even realize.

And I hope that through. Sharing my story, more of us realize that. And we come together, and we find communities where this is. Not hidden away and shamed and not talk, not talked about, but something that is supported. And, um,

Yeah, that there is extra love given to us instead of less. Till next week.