

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 29

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Dana Saperstein - Is Love Enough

Kim Fauskee 00:00

So in this episode that you're about to listen to Dana and I are going to talk about that other four letter word, love, and His love enough to sustain a relationship. I think this is very important episode, like all the episodes that we do. But I think this is extremely important for those people that are in relationships, or contemplating getting into a relationship and falling in love with somebody in thinking that that might just be enough to sustain the relationship, not to give away the episode. But Dana, what are kind of some of the important things that we're going to talk about in this?

Dr. Dana 00:41

Well, Kim, I really believe that obviously, love is extremely important in a romantic relationship. But I asked people not to fall into the trap of believing that that's all this necessary, and that the relationship should sustain itself on its own. So part of what is in this episode are all the different aspects that I've learned over the course of my practice, and people's concepts about love and relationships. And so we hope you guys will really get a lot out of what's necessary to keep a long term relationship going,

Kim Fauskee 01:14

that's perfect. And you're gonna hear a little bit of some of the traps that I fell into, in that four letter word called love. So anyway, here's Dana and I's conversation about is love enough.

Dr. Dana 01:36

There are two basic motivating forces, fear and love. When we're afraid, we pull back from life. When we're in love, we open up to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement, and acceptance.

Fear Me Out 01:55

Coming to you from our studio in Santa Barbara, California. This is the fear me out podcast. We're not your typical Self Help Program. Our show takes a deep dive into those psychological issues that affect us on a daily basis. We hope to shift your perspective and have you experiencing emotions differently. Now, here are your hosts, Kim Fauskee. And Dr. Dana Saperstein.

Kim Fauskee 02:16

So in 1967, John Lennon said, All You Need Is Love. And then a couple decades later, Tina Turner said, What's Love Got to do with it? It's a second hand emotion. So whether you agree with one or the

other, or neither? This is going to be a discussion for you. Is love enough to sustain a relationship? And I know, I have an opinion about that. And I certainly know that Dr. Dana, who's sitting across from me has an opinion about that. So um, well, does this start with is love enough to sustain a relationship from day one through day whatever?

Dr. Dana 03:00

I would say the answer to that is absolutely not. I hate to be so well, I was gonna get that was gonna be my answer.

Kim Fauskee 03:08

I think that but I'm not the PhD in the room. Well, I

Dr. Dana 03:11

think that love is absolutely fundamentally necessary to begin the long term relationship with someone, I don't think we certainly don't fall in love with very many people on our lives in a romantic way. And I think it's a miracle when people actually do fall in love with each other. Because we don't choose the people we fall in love with. We choose the people that we spend time with. And then if it turns out to be that we fall in love with them, I look at that as being a miracle. So

Kim Fauskee 03:39

let's go back to the actual meaning of love, because I don't know if it has an objective meaning or it's subjective to whomever is feeling it. But if there's an objective criteria for actually being in love, what what is that criteria?

Dr. Dana 03:58

Well, I think that when you talk about being in love, you're talking about romantic love with romantic love versus just having children or romantic love towards your children and your friends.

Kim Fauskee 04:08

Let's hope not. Yeah,

Dr. Dana 04:10

I think that romantic love usually, in my experience, you can only be in love romantically with one person at a time. You can certainly be in lust with tons of people and be attracted to a lot of people

Kim Fauskee 04:22

when they talk about having feelings for somebody else. What does that mean?

Dr. Dana 04:27

Well, I think that's a little bit different from everybody, for everyone. But I think that how I would interpret that is that you have a strong draw toward someone that you're attracted to, and and you develop feelings toward that person based on what it's like to be with them.

Kim Fauskee 04:41

But that is not necessarily love, though. No, I

Dr. Dana 04:44

think I mean, I because you

Kim Fauskee 04:47

said that you can only be in love with one person at a time. And obviously, people have affairs, emotionally and physically out there. So they're obviously drawn to somebody else in that way or Have, ultimately, establish feelings for that other person. That's right. That's what I'm trying to ask here is they can't, if you can only be in love with one person, then if you have feelings for somebody else, those aren't necessarily feelings of love.

Dr. Dana 05:15

Well, they could have really strong feelings of infatuation and attraction. And it can turn into love if you don't, if you don't feel like you're in love with your partner anymore. Because I think that love is very much like the creation of a life, that it's a it's a, it's like a spark that ignites a connection between two people in a very powerful way, not just emotionally, but also spiritually.

Kim Fauskee 05:40

So bubble, we're also talking not only psychologically in that way, but we're also talking chemically. Yeah, physiologically,

Dr. Dana 05:48

absolutely. I think it's a full body experience to fall in love with someone. I can only say that when people stop being in love with each other in a romantic way, it can go one of two ways. The first way is that it can, I think that feeling like you're in love with somebody can be covered up by resentment. And get buried in the resentment of not feeling like you're being properly loved. Or the love dies, because you have not tended to it is an important way to keep it alive. And it's like a garden, if you don't water it, it's going to shrivel and die. And I don't know about you, but I don't I have not seen anybody come back to life after they're dead. And I think that's pretty much the same way it is with love. I've never seen people fall in love with each other, if that love dies.

Kim Fauskee 06:39

So this brings up another point about whether people can actually love unconditionally in a romantic way. Because, supposedly, if you if that hypothetically could happen, right? So no matter what happens to the relationship, if somebody steps out on you, somebody calls you fat, dumb and ugly. You may be mad at him, but that love doesn't go away. If it was unconditional, you still love that person, no matter, the act, the verbalization the attack or whatever, upon you, if hypothetically, it was unconditional,

Dr. Dana 07:19

well, but when you say they still love the person, are you in sort of indicating that they're still in love with a person because those two things are very different. You can love lots of people, your ability to love is broad, and you can love all kinds of people. But I'm not sure that you can be in love romantically with more than one person.

Kim Fauskee 07:39

I understand that. I'm just saying if your partner, your romantic partner, right? If again, using the hypothetical, if if you could love unconditionally, no matter what that partner did to you, okay, no matter how grievous it was, you would still love them. If if it was unconditional? Well, first

Dr. Dana 08:01

of all, I think that unconditional love, in my opinion, only applies to our relationship with our children. When I first laid on his on my daughter, the moment that she was born, and I and I held her in my arms, I had no idea that you could ever feel that intense feeling of love that I had when I first held my daughter in my arms, beyond anything I could ever imagine, it just completely blew my mind that I could love someone that I'd never met so intensely and so deeply. And it was completely unconditional. But I will say that

Kim Fauskee 08:37

I think most parents, if not all parents will agree including myself to

Dr. Dana 08:41

help. That's true. But when it comes to romantic love between adults, I don't think it's like that concept of happiness. So we talked about before, that there's no such thing as being a happy person, you can't be a feeling. And I think that the notion of unconditional love is another one of those concepts that end up making us feel inadequate, because I don't know anybody that loves a romantic partner unconditionally. We all have conditions. And to think that you're failing if you have conditions, in your relationship with the people that you are with the person that you have a romantic love for. That's just ridiculous. Who doesn't keep track of what comes in and goes out in the, in the course of their life? Find me one person and I you know, people say everybody keeps score. Yeah, I've, you know, people have said to me, Well, I don't and I said, Well, I'm really sorry, either you're delusional, or you're fooling yourself.

Kim Fauskee 09:43

It goes back to the same thing. When when somebody will say, Well, I don't judge. Well, of course you do. Every human judges. That's right. Right. Whether they verbalize it or not. It's a different thing

Dr. Dana 09:52

because we've been made feel ashamed of the fact that we judge the world and people around us and my ideas. Okay. Well, I'm probably the most judgmental person you've ever met them. Because I judge everything all the time I. It's how I stay safe.

Kim Fauskee 10:07

I was gonna say that's how we make sense of sense of things exactly.

Dr. Dana 10:09

But again, getting back to the notion of unconditional love, I think it's it. It's another one of those sort of magical thoughts that gets us into trouble. Because if it's really true that you fall in love with somebody

unconditionally, then the notion that you shouldn't have to work on your relationship applies, because you just unconditionally love that person. And it should last forever, regardless of how they treat you, or how you treat them or whatever it is, that's happening. And I think that's absurd. It I just don't think it works.

Kim Fauskee 10:42

So let's circle back to how we started this conversation. And both of us agree that love is not enough to sustain a relationship long term. Not at all. So why why is that? Because how many people walk into your practice? And ask you the question, is love enough?

Dr. Dana 11:01

Well, first of all, nobody's asked me that question directly, which I know when I said that, to surprise you greatly. Now, I will say that a lot of people believe that. If they have problems in the relationship, or it takes effort to sustain the love, they think that there's something wrong with a relationship. Because we've also been fed this notion that, once you fall in love with somebody, you should ride off into the sunset, and everything should just be fine forever. And if you run into problems, or whatever gets in the way of that, you know, powerful feeling of love, that must be the relationship has, is broken in some way or flawed in some fashion. And my response is, well, when you go to work, do you work? Or do you just sit there? And does the work take care of itself? Well, you know, people are gonna be like, well, what are you talking about, I work when I go to work. And my response is, you probably work harder at work than you do on your relationship. And I think that that's true for most people that they, they will way way way rather put effort into making money or, you know, doing their job well than they then they would making the effort to make the relationship of, of satisfying and keep that feeling of being in love going. But

Kim Fauskee 12:13

don't you think that's a symptom of intimacy, where you're trying to keep an arm's length away from the intimacy, but because it because in your work, there's generally not that intimacy, you have an arm's length, there. So work is easier, work is easy to jump into doesn't have the same emotion as your romantic partner does. So if I'm, if I'm having to tend to that relationship, it's now I have to become vulnerable. Now, I'm walking potentially on eggshells. Now I'm having to feel pain of having to feel sorrow. So, you know, like you had said, If you don't tend to a garden, what happens to it? Dies dies, right? But then there's like, going back to that question, I asked you that I was a bit surprised about that. Nobody's asked you that is love enough to sustain a relationship. But I also understand that what assuming something does to you?

Dr. Dana 13:07

Well, Korea's problem is

Kim Fauskee 13:08

somebody you know, I put all my effort into work. My wife, my husband, I know they love me. So that's, that's enough. As long as I know that they love me. Well, we

Dr. Dana 13:17

take the people that live in our house with us for granted sometimes, and really do believe that if we have to work on the relationship, that means that it's seriously flawed in some way. And, you know, it's a lovely fantasy to think it should take care of itself, but I don't know anything that takes care of itself. It's just not the way the world works. It's not the way human beings work. You know, anything that you want, it takes effort.

Kim Fauskee 13:44

So in thinking about, you know, is love enough? And I think maybe the popular opinion out there is probably not I'm thinking but again, going back to tending that garden again, and and, you know, talking about you know, working on compatibility, working on compassion, working on yourself, which you and I talk at nauseam about here, and it's gonna come up, I'm sorry, folks, but it's going to come up in every episode until, until you take working on yourself seriously. And then, you know, working, you know, to, to better your relationship as well.

Dr. Dana 14:27

Absolutely. I mean, it's so hard for me to imagine that, that anything is important and as meaningful as being in love with somebody and having them as your partner, that you shouldn't have to work on it to keep it moving along in a healthy way.

Kim Fauskee 14:45

I mean, it seems obvious, right? But people like you wouldn't have lines out the door of people in relationships that need to see you for some objectivity advice. and saving them or whatever. And divorce lawyers wouldn't have lines out the door either. If, if, in fact, people would take their relationship seriously, which apparently, half the people don't?

Dr. Dana 15:13

Well, you know, Kim, I'm smiling right now, because I'm thinking about what happened during COVID. As an example, a lot of divorces happened. And separations happened during COVID. Because people were forced to be together, that usually only saw each other in their marriage for maybe a couple hours in the evening, maybe half an hour, hour in the morning. And then they go to work, and they come home and have a few hours, and then maybe on the weekends, you know, some time together. But then all of a sudden, they were stuck with each other for hours and hours and hours. And a lot of people found out that they actually didn't like their partners very much. But only because they were forced to be with them more than they usually are. And that created more divorce and separation that you could ever imagine. And alcoholism and all kinds of other really serious problems. Because people that sort of lived relatively superficial lives on an emotional level, were forced to have to face the people that they in quotes loved, and figure out how to be connected to each other. So a lot of marriages failed, not necessarily because they were bad marriages, but because they're forced to be with each other too much.

Kim Fauskee 16:29

We haven't talked about this on the podcast before but emotional IQ. Right? And how much does from your perspective? How much does emotional IQ play into relationships and the health and sustainability of a relationship?

Dr. Dana 16:47

You know, Kim, it's probably a good idea for you to define what emotional IQ means to you before I answer that question, if that's okay.

Kim Fauskee 16:54

emotional IQ means, to me means number one, knowing yourself and knowing who you are. And then, to me, what if I had a partner who was also curious enough to know about them, their moods and emotions and was interested in that? Well, so from my aspect, knowing myself, knowing how I operate, knowing my moods, knowing, you know, my triggers, you know, knowing how to communicate in then being interested in somebody else? Well,

Dr. Dana 17:29

I mean, you're sort of preaching to the choir here as far as that goes, because when people come to see me for a relationship issues, my, one of my goals is to help them know themselves, and understand what they bring to the table that might be interfering with the harmony in the relationship, because, again, we've talked about this before, but you're not going to change the person that you're in a relationship with. And if that's the fantasy that you came into the relationship with, I would say good luck with that one, because you know, the other person is just going to feel controlled, and is going to resist, and you're going to feel like a failure, because you couldn't save them from themselves, and it's just going to be a disaster. So my idea is, you got to get to know yourself, you have to understand what you bring to the table, you have to understand what your strengths are, what your weaknesses are, what things scare you, and what your how that how you're reacting to that fear, which once again, gets back to the main premise of all of this, which is how do you manage your fear? Do become aggressive and reject whatever it is that scary you? Or do you stay in the vulnerable and do the best you can to share those feelings and help the people that you love understand that your reactions may be defensive. But that's because you're afraid it's not because you're trying to hurt the other person. So yeah, I mean, the more you know yourself, the more likely it is that you're going to be able to take responsibility for herself in a relationship with someone. And again, that brings up the concept of faithfulness. Because people always believe that when you're with somebody, and they're unfaithful to you, that it's their problem. If that makes sense, right? If you and I are in a relationship and you and you cheat on me in some way is because you're not being faithful to me. And on the surface. That's true. You are not being faithful to me, but I will guarantee you that most of the time, I won't say always but most of the time when that happens, is because I have shown you that I'm not faithful to myself, through the way I live with myself. And so you take my lead without me even knowing it, that I've made it theoretically possible for you not to be faithful to me, because I'm not faithful to myself. I don't tell you the truth about how I'm feeling. I don't share with you my my disappointments, my loneliness, my frustration, whatever it might be. I do the best I can to try to appease your whatever it might be or to try to win your love. And I'm being unfaithful to myself. lots of different ways. I mean, sometimes people are unfaithful with substances. They're unfaithful with how hard they work, which I know goes against the American way. But how many people, you know, work more than 40 hours a week. And they're not being faithful to themselves, they're not taking care of themselves say, they get so stressed at work, because of all the different requirements that by the time they get home, they got nothing left. It's kind of sad.

Kim Fauskee 20:25

Since COVID, I don't know how many people were actually working 40 hours a week anymore? Well, yes. But I will say that, that's why they're looking at each other at home now. Right. But still,

Dr. Dana 20:35

the idea that, that you don't take proper care of yourself, and that you assume that the person that you're in love relationship with should take proper care of you. It doesn't make sense, because you've not taught that person what your requirements are, by the way, that you live your life in the world. And it's, you know, usually we just define unfaithfulness as, you know, a sexual thing, but it implies a deep, emotional way. Because if you get a feeling that I don't take care of myself, why would you think that it's a requirement for you to take care of me, I'm just gonna, you're just going to take me for granted like I do myself. So that's where the emotional IQ sort of piece comes into the picture. Because without realizing that we teach everybody what our requirements are, whether we're aware of it or not. And so that's what I tried to help people understand is that it starts with your relationship with yourself. And that's why love is not enough, because I may love you and feel deeply connected to you. But if I don't treat myself with the same respect and, and requirements, that I have a view, then it's not going to be properly balanced. And you won't look at me the same way I love you. Because I'm not taking care of myself.

Kim Fauskee 21:51

You know, I hear this in I get this. But to me, I think, to the general population, that is something they don't understand.

Dr. Dana 22:03

Or we're not brought up to take responsibility for ourselves, in a small way, and in big ways, were brought up to look at the world as being the problem.

Kim Fauskee 22:14

Our current sometimes co hostess, Justine, when we were talking about this topic, said that she had either seen or read about a study of young people that were getting married. And they were asked to name things other than love that brought them together with their partner. And I don't believe that they were able to come up with four things.

Dr. Dana 22:39

Well, if you want to be really ridiculous about it, I was watching a video the other day. And the guy was interviewing young people about how many states there were in the United States. And I'm not kidding him.

Kim Fauskee 22:51

Nobody give me a flag. Let me count the stars real quick and answer

Dr. Dana 22:53

the question, somebody asked one person, how many eggs are in a dozen? And the person said, four, and then decide if you don't even know how many states there are in the country that you live in? And

how many eggs are in a dozen? Oh my god, how are you going to know who you are in any way shape or form? Because you don't even know what's happening around you, let alone what's happening inside of you. And I you know, I know that, you know, the stupid video was done to make fun of people, right? Man, it was certainly scary to watch.

Kim Fauskee 23:26

So we have some young people that listen to the program that, you know, maybe take note of this now that if they're in a romantic relationship now or have been in a romantic relationship, or maybe scratching their heads and thinking, Okay, I love my partner. But now I'm thinking God, is that enough?

Dr. Dana 23:46

Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news. But it's the beginning of a really lovely relationship, but it's not enough.

Kim Fauskee 23:53

So what are the some of the building blocks for somebody that's in a new relationship or has been in a relationship for some time that seems to be gaining steam to something long term that builds upon that love that you have for them?

Dr. Dana 24:09

Well, I think that curiosity is really important. And I'm not sure that you expected me to answer with that. With that description, no, but I liked the answer. Well, the more curious you can be about the person that you're in a relationship with, the more they're going to feel like they matter and that they have value.

Kim Fauskee 24:28

Yeah, what was curiosity was innate, though, but it's not as well, I

Dr. Dana 24:32

you know, that's hard for me to understand because I am such an insanely curious person. I'm sure I drive people crazy because I can't get enough information. I'm always reading always asking, always whatever, because my curiosity is insatiable. And I think that if you approach a relationship, number one by being really kind obviously and, and showing affection and all the stuff that sort of is a given that if you can help your partner really feel your curiosity about who they are, where they come from, what life has been like for them, what matters to them, so on and so forth. And really take a look at what and listen to what they're saying. I think that could probably prevent half the divorces that happened. Because we just assume that the people that we really like or and are attracted to see the world the way we do. And that's insane. Right? I mean, I can't even tell you how many times my wife has said to me, you know, Dana, not everybody sees the world the way you do. And then I can get all full of myself and say, Yeah, but they should have a podcast. And she rolls her eyes and thinks, yeah, good luck with that one. Because it's not true.

Kim Fauskee 25:43

So curiosity, obviously, is really important. And then we'll have an episode that plays on communication, obviously. And that's super important, right. And again, you know, I won't give away that episode. But I'll give away a little bit about it. But not walking on eggshells, and being vulnerable, and having those difficult conversations that you need to have, tell with your partner on occasion and telling the truth,

Dr. Dana 26:10

right, showing your people, showing your people, showing people your underside, the things that you feel bad about about yourself, and also not innate. But it's really important for people to understand the things that you don't believe about yourself that are lovable, because you're going to react to those not lovable feelings by either rejecting yourself or the other person. And it's going to create huge misunderstandings between the two of you. Because most of the time, we don't stay with a vulnerability, we turn it into aggression, and either aggress against the people that we want to feel close to, or constantly put ourselves down as a way of controlling the rejection, we reject ourselves before we get rejected by the people that we feel close to. So you know, that sabotages a lot of relationships.

Kim Fauskee 27:00

How about similar interests?

Dr. Dana 27:02

Well, I know, I think that's important, but not as completely important as you might think, because, again, I think it's really important when you're in a romantic relationship, to have other sources of connection with people in your life. Because a lot of times people think that once they fall in love with somebody, and they're in a committed relationship, they shouldn't need anybody else. And then we get to the dependency part of things. But I think it's insane to think that one person can meet all your needs. I just think that that's a setup for disaster or should meet all your needs, right? But that's the romantic thing that we're fed is that romantic fallacy, right? Just find one person, and that just seals the deal. And everything's fine. And I laugh, because, you know, when my wife before we got married, was deciding to move to Santa Barbara. She said, You know, you got requirements of me. And I said, yeah, the most, the most important thing for me when you move here is that you make friends as quickly as possible. Which is why I said, Yeah, because I'm gonna bore the crap out of you in no time, if I'm your only source of fulfillment, and company, and all that stuff. Because number one, if you find me in an opera, it's my mistake. If you find me at a ballet, you know, performance is only because I stumbled in there by accident, because there's just stuff that you love that I don't have any interest in at all. And I want to make sure that you have people in your life that you can enjoy the things that I don't bring to the table, and vice versa, because it just creates balance. And, you know, luckily she was agreeable to that idea. Because I see a lot of people who think that their partnership satisfy all their needs. And that's a setup for disaster.

Kim Fauskee 28:49

In my simple mind, I break it down to three funnels. It's his funnel, her funnel and that together funnel. Yeah, right that they should be flowing from all three of them. Right. And some are going to flow the same levels all the time. But the you have to all three have to constantly flow to make the relationship work.

Dr. Dana 29:07

Yeah. I mean, my wife has never been on a surfboard in her entire life. I don't hold that against her. I actually in a certain way, was really happy that you while you did meet her on a beach, though? Well, yeah, but I was really happy that she was interested because then I didn't have to worry about whether she was okay. While I was out surfing. Because when my son first started to learn how to surf, I had my eye on him the whole time. And it's not that I wasn't enjoying myself. But it wasn't the free experience that I'd had before. I had to worry about somebody that I loved, you know, getting hurt or whatever it was. So yeah, there's lots of stuff that we don't share in common. But that's what friends and other people in life are for.

Kim Fauskee 29:46

About the notion that similar stories bring people together. Whether you come from an abusive relationship, your partner comes from an abusive relationship. There's that common trauma Those generalities that tend to bring people together. And they and I, there's that notion of that shared experience that either brings it together or separates you, eventually. And I'm sure you've seen, I'm sure you've seen that with couples that have been here, or people that have been here to see you that they have similar stories. And that's what brought them together.

Dr. Dana 30:30

Yeah, sometimes, but I will say, again, my wife and I couldn't be more opposite or our childhoods, you know, to me, my childhood was a series of neglect and abuse. And hers was very ideal

Kim Fauskee 30:45

into siren in the background is getting my my finger.

Dr. Dana 30:50

Hers was very stable and very predictable. I was very much a barbarian. And she was very civilized. But that didn't seem to be a boring tree and fascinating for both of us. I think that it was that we needed to be the same. But you're right. You know, Kim, I know this is a bit off your question. But I think that fantasy gets a lot of people in trouble. Because I see a fair number of people who have a fantasy of what marriage and, and having a family is going to look like. So when they're young, they fall in love with someone, and they kind of overlook a lot of things about that person, because the person meets a lot of their surface needs and surface ideas about what they're looking for.

Kim Fauskee 31:35

Yeah, I have no idea what you're talking about, at all, completely foreign to me that concepts.

Dr. Dana 31:42

Go ahead. Explain yourself.

Kim Fauskee 31:46

Exactly. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

Dr. Dana 31:47

And I see a lot of people that get together, because they have the same fantasy. And then once they live together long enough and realize that, yeah, they may share the same fantasy, but they may not necessarily share the same ideas about life and the world and raising children and all kinds of different stuff like that. And so the fantasies there, there starts to be cracks in the relationship, because I don't think this is a person I married, or I can't believe that he or she would look at the world this way. Or, you know, they acted like they really cared about me. But once we seal the deal, you know, they went off to live their own life in a certain way. So I think that I asked people to be super careful about the fantasies that you go into a relationship with, because, you know, there's that saying Love is blind. And I think that there is a certain amount of truth to that, that we blind ourselves, once we find somebody that we're really attracted to and feel really drawn to. And so we don't pay enough attention to what could come up, and always does at a certain point, because we neglected to really pay attention to it. When we had the opportunity before we made a formal commitment to each other. Yeah,

Kim Fauskee 33:03

it's interesting when you say neglected, because if you do a post mortem, if your relationship breaks up, then you knew always looking back that those signs were

Dr. Dana 33:12

there. Oh, my God can that be the only question I got 100% answer to, as we've talked about, again, before, I say, Well, you know, did you notice this before you made a commitment? No, I did. But I thought with time, it would get better. I'm sure people have all kinds of magical thoughts about how things are going to change, oh, I'll change them or she'll change or they'll realize the error of their ways or you know, I was lonely, I got scared. I figured I would never meet anybody that might be as qualified to meet my fantasies as he or she, and all that other stuff. And it turns into a disaster.

Kim Fauskee 33:47

We'll also talk about you know, in life, depending on the benchmark you were raised with, with your parents were with your family, if, if they were a loving family, if they were abusive family, if your parents had a loving marriage, they had disdain for each other, but stayed together because of the kids. You know, whatever benchmark you're operating from, right. And I think there's a especially in your generation, my generation, in a couple of preceding generations there that that you followed this linear line, right that, you know, you grew up, you went to college, you got a job, you got married, you got a house, you had kids and and that's what that's what you did. There was no talk about discovering yourself or discovering your desires and wants and who you really were; you just kind of followed that path. And at some point, it either worked out for you or it didn't. Yeah, right. And I think, you know, from a female standpoint, I think it was the same thing. You know, they they, you know, did the same thing and got married, had babies and became mother Isn't and didn't really know themselves. Right. And then like you said, you know, there's the thing about the seven year itch of a marriage. And, and obviously, in some states, you know, 10 years or more is considered a long term marriage, which is kind of ironic that it's only 10 years in terms of the law of there, or, you know, the the people that stayed married and tell their kids either get out of high school or out of college and there, yeah, I'm done. I'm going on a different path. Now,

Dr. Dana 35:35

a lot of people do, stay together, you know, just to not upset the family. And I, you know, there, maybe that helps a little bit. But mostly what it teaches your kids is a loveless marriage looks like, right, so you're not really doing them a huge favor by staying together when you have disdain for your partner. And you're only staying together to keep your family from suffering, the loss of getting a divorce, which is a huge loss, and obviously quite painful. But it's really painful to watch your parents be miserable with each other too.

Kim Fauskee 36:08

So he brought up the word disdain or contempt for your partner there. And you and I've had a lot of conversations about disdain and contempt. That that is something when you reach that level is almost impossible, if not entirely possible to come back from.

Dr. Dana 36:27

Yeah, it's a deal killer. Because once you start to feel feelings of disdain, it means that you really don't love the person anymore. You're certainly not in love with them anymore, that's for sure.

Kim Fauskee 36:36

And so other things in Fidelity's financial problems, I'm trying to think of other things that are common in breaking up relationships or breaking up marriages there. Some of those are many of those things, there's potential to come back from your trust issues.

Dr. Dana 37:00

It's amazing to me that people do not necessarily talk about most of these things before they get married. They just assume that their partner is on the same page with them. It's,

Kim Fauskee 37:10

it's harder to adopt an animal than get a marriage license.

Dr. Dana 37:15

Well, I mean, I know lots of young people that don't share finances,

Kim Fauskee 37:22

that either keep them separately, or just somebody tends to them and the other person closes a blind eye to it,

Dr. Dana 37:28

know it, like they may have a joint account for the family to take care of those issues. And they have their separate accounts that they use for whatever the other stuff is. And what's

Kim Fauskee 37:40

the psychology behind that. I got one foot out.

Dr. Dana 37:44

That's what it seems like to me. But it's so much more common than i Then I realized that people don't share their finances, they don't just stick it in one big pot, because in my mind, you just put it all together. And again, when you said one person handles the finances, and the other person sits back that happens in your life. Oh, you know what, Kim, if you put me in charge of handling the finances, oh my God. Every time I make a deposit for my business, I get a note back from the bank that says, You think sometime in your life, you'll be able to learn how

Kim Fauskee 38:14

to add? Yeah, well, your life as your wife is very logical. So she's also

Dr. Dana 38:18

incredibly organized and all that stuff. And so, you know, I know this is an absolute, but I make the money and she manages it. And I don't think she gets hugely resentful, maybe when it's tax time. Because I don't keep good records or whatever. But generally speaking, it works pretty well. But I just feel like, you know, put it in a big pot and, and make that commitment. It's no different than any other part of the commitment that you make to somebody that you love, that you share everything. Now I get that if it's a second marriage, or one or whatever, or you come into assets that are, you know, inherited or whatever that you might want to have a prenup, but I'm not talking about how you get into the marriage. I'm talking about what happens once you're in

Kim Fauskee 39:00

it well, and then that's what I'm saying. We talked about disdain and contempt. And that's impossible to come back from right because the love is gone at that point. But what I'm talking about is when trust is broken, and that can be money that can be infidelity that can be, you know, parent, parenting behind your back or anything like that. There's a potential way of getting back from that, for some people,

Dr. Dana 39:24

some not the same part. But if it's just resentment, which is a bad thing, I'm not trying to minimize it. But people can heal resentment. But they cannot heal. Dead love, I guess for lack of a better way of putting it. Once it dies once you don't have any sort of romantic attachment to the person anymore. Man, I've rarely see that ever come back if ever because you've let it go too long and too far for it to be redeemed. And sometimes it's incredibly tragic because people still actually love each other. But it's more like roommates or siblings and they realize that the romantic part of the relationship is over. So they either have to live together without any sort of romantic attachment. Or they go their separate ways, which is really sad when you still love someone and respect them, but don't have that connection to them, because you've allowed it to die by not tending to it properly.

Kim Fauskee 40:17

So you become roommates. Yeah, in a way. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 40:21

You know, again, I just wish people would take seriously how precious it is to fall in love with somebody for real. And that it's, it truly is a miracle. It doesn't happen that many times in a lifetime, and that it should be something that you hold really sacred. So work on it and yourself at the same time.

Kim Fauskee 40:43

So this goes back to that premise of falling in love with that one person? Can you fall in love with them many more times? Or can you re fall in love with them again? If that makes sense to you?

Dr. Dana 40:56

I you know, I've heard that that's possible. You know,

Kim Fauskee 41:00

I've never seen as possible in the movies. Well,

Dr. Dana 41:02

you know, Kim, I'm not going to dismiss it. Because I can't believe that it's impossible, but I've never seen it. Because once you stop being in love with somebody, you've given up the gift that was given to you. you know, I think that when two people fall in love, it's something that's bigger than both of them. That is like the strands of DNA that wrap themselves around each other that creates life. It just makes something bigger than you when you have that connection with somebody. And if you let it die like you would a person, how many people come back to life again after they're dead.

Kim Fauskee 41:35

So if it was possible, though, if you were able to reform love with that part, I'm guessing it would probably come with more conditions than the original love.

Dr. Dana 41:47

I hope so because usually the conditions that you didn't have, or that you avoided are the things that over that sort of messed up the relationship in the first place. But but a lot of that has to do again, I know I'm repeating myself, but with with recognizing that the other person is not likely to change based on your efforts to change them, that we barely have enough control of our own behavior to change our behavior, let alone thinking that you can change somebody else. So it's a really good idea to be super clear about who you are. And what you're bringing into a relationship in terms of fantasy and an expectation is your expectations are going to have a huge role in how the relationship turns out.

Kim Fauskee 42:33

So we just did an episode a couple days ago with a dating coach, and we talked about clients coming to her with a checklist of attributes that they're looking for in a partner, good, bad, or indifferent. They think people going back to this, this fantasy of falling in love with somebody means that they have to have all these attributes, or maybe they have this habit. Well, maybe they're smokers. Maybe they're vapors, maybe they take THC to go to bed or something that isn't or drank and you don't drink. How about how hard is it to overlook some of those things that maybe you're not completely in tune with the other partner that way?

Dr. Dana 43:25

Well, it depends on how much you value the person that you're in love with. I mean, my wife and I had to do a lot of soul searching about getting married to each other because we don't share the same

sense of humor. And that's a fairly major, that's a big one. That's a huge one. She doesn't like being teased. She doesn't laugh at most of the things that I think are hysterical. Doesn't want to Southpark Yeah, not so much. And I'm, you know, on a good day, I'm about 18 years old, in terms of my sense of humor, and that's on a good maybe older than me that right? Usually it's even more adolescent than that. And at first, I was like, wow, she didn't think I'm funny at all. And it was really difficult, because I tried to joke with her and she looked at me like, you know, what was wrong with you? Because she wasn't brought up with that kind of humor. And then I thought to myself, well, we do laugh and we do have a lot of fun together. I'm just going to reserve those things for my friends, which I do. And luckily we had two kids and I was able to sort of steer them in my direction humor wise. So it became three against three against one in that department, but I do the best I can to take care of those needs for humor with my friends and with my kids, especially my son because it's satisfying enough to make that sacrifice. This is going to sound really well

Kim Fauskee 44:47

she married you and you married her still despite despite the humor

Dr. Dana 44:50

well, when we first got together. This is a really minor thing. I opened up the laundry needed to be put away. I opened up her underwear drawer to put her underwear in there, and everything was folded and so in its place. And I just remember, like, oh my god, I can't believe that this is so organized. Because if you opened up my side of that just throwing in, it was like, you know, Jack in the Box, you know, everything just pops up and flies up in the air because I didn't realize you're supposed to fold your underwear. And I was so stunned Oh, you

Kim Fauskee 45:24

know, OCV on your stuff, oh, my God, I

Dr. Dana 45:27

you know, to me, if you hang your clothes up on the floor, that's good enough. Now, I will say that out of respect, I learned how to fold her underwear. And I learned how to fold the towels and everything else her way. Because that was my way of showing her that I really respect her need for order. And I get to have one little corner of house that belongs to me that I can make a little bit of a mess in. And the rest of it. It's super organized and clean and, and her way because it matters so much more to her to have things that way. And I thought, Well, I'm gonna make a big deal about this. I don't really care. But I could have, I could have told her she was wrong and why she's so you know, anal about all this stuff. And I could have made a big deal about it. But I just thought, okay, so she likes it this way. Why am I going to make such a fuss about it? That's not what matters.

Kim Fauskee 46:18

I mean, that's why I brought it up, right? Because when we talk about this fantasy of how love is supposed to be or how our relationships supposed to be. We do we have these mental checklists in our heads, right? And so if, if one of them isn't checked off, that can just throw us completely off on that fantasy, right? Because now we're thinking God, how much in love? Am I really with this person?

Because they don't fold their laundry? Or they leave the wet towels on the floor. And boy, is that? Is that going to annoy me? Do I? Do I love the person enough to get over that annoyance?

Dr. Dana 46:54

I don't think you need to get over the annoyance. I think these things you can talk about and say, Look, this matters to me a lot. And if you would, please consider that it causes me pain if you do it this way. I'm gonna say sure. It's not a big deal to me. Um, you know, if it doesn't bother me, I'm not going to say well, it shouldn't bother you. Because that's so disrespectful. You know, it also depends on how extreme it is, like some people say, Well, my partner is super controlling. They want to control everything about me, that's a little bit different than somebody saying, Would you mind taking your shirt off? Right, because then the other person is coming from a place of fear and they want to control everything around them, things are feeling out of control. So it's a judgment thing. But if you go into a relationship, thinking that you're in a relationship with somebody that unconditionally loves you, man, are you in for a rude awakening? Because once the infatuation wears off a little bit, the other person is going to start looking at you sideways, like, Oh, God, I can't believe I am stuck with this person.

Kim Fauskee 47:55

Yeah, I'm gonna make the statement that everybody should keep repeating to themselves, reality always wins,

Dr. Dana 48:00

always wins. And I don't see as a look, you were given the ability to have a really rich fantasy life, to make your sex life better. And to be super creative. And any other use of fantasy should be like those stupid tags on furniture. It should be strictly prohibited by law. Right? Exactly. Then cut off and thrown in the garbage because your imagination is only going to harm you unless you use it for creativity and, and to make your sex life better. Because most of the time it causes damage otherwise.

Kim Fauskee 48:30

So you do have young people that are considering getting married that actually come into your practice and seek advice prior to their nuptials?

Dr. Dana 48:41

I would say yes, but not very, not not

Kim Fauskee 48:43

very doesn't happen very often. No,

Dr. Dana 48:45

you know,

Kim Fauskee 48:46

but that's okay. Because my question was when they come in, I'm kind of interested in what their standard questions are to you in what your standard advice back to them is, even though we've talked about 46 minutes of that advice already.

Dr. Dana 49:01

First of all, I don't know that anybody has standard questions, Kim, I know that it would seem logical they would. But most of the time, they don't. And it is really rare. People are usually very reactive. When it comes to emotional stuff. It's rare to meet somebody who's proactive, which would mean going to see a therapist or someone to talk about what your expectations of marriage are, and so on and so forth. Because we just make these assumptions based on our fantasy. And sometimes it's based on the reality of talking to the other person and you know, discussing these things, but I'm shocked at how many people don't talk about what their expectations are. And where it is a desire. Mostly because they're afraid they don't want to mess up the relationship or, or whatever it might be. So

Kim Fauskee 49:48

um, so do you pin them down and ask them what each one's expectations are?

Dr. Dana 49:52

Sure, it's a look, it's a really important thing to know what your partner expects from the marriage and from from USA person, and how your lives are going to move forward. And I am stunned how, how infrequently that is something that people talk about?

Kim Fauskee 50:10

Is it? Do you think that they go into these relationships, just assuming that the other person understands what their expectations are?

Dr. Dana 50:19

Yeah. Or though they'll change if I can present you with my logic, you're gonna see the world through my eyes.

Kim Fauskee 50:25

It's that it's that change thing again, right? That as long as you give me enough time, they'll change or I make more money, I give you a child, they'll change, you know,

Dr. Dana 50:33

I've had experience before, where as an example, somebody has been sexually traumatized as a kid. And they enter into a relationship as an adolescent with a huge aversion to sexual contact, to the point where if they can engage in sexual activity, they end up either sobbing or, or sometimes even having a panic attack after they have sex with their boyfriend or girlfriend. And I've had people say, I've said to people, Well, did you not think this might be a problem? If you guys get married, and always, they say, Well, I thought she would change, she would get used to it or thought he would change and that, and that they would get comfortable with me. And it only gets worse, if you don't deal with the trauma, it doesn't get better, it gets worse. And some people, like there's a couple of met ones were one of the partners didn't want to be sexual. It just wasn't a part of that person's orientation based on the trauma that they suffered. And the other person was hypersexual, and really wanted to, you know, have sex all the time. And just believe that it would work out. And the difference, so the one person had an affair shocker, you know, in order to get their needs met. And it was so damaging to both of them, because,

you know, there was such betrayal and disappointment and, and it was all based on fantasy that the person would change that they would just overcome there. You know, the person that was traumatized never said that they were, and the person that was being involved never asked, How come you get so uncomfortable? When we're sexual with each other? I just thought you never asked. It never occurred to you that this could be a sign of something, you know, big? And the answer was no, I just figured that comfort was part of the issue, and it just get better on its own. Now you shake your head and with

Kim Fauskee 52:35

Nanda saying, well, it's not enough. What's that was not enough? Well, it's another

Dr. Dana 52:39

example of it's, of course, it's not enough. I think these people actually really did and do love each other. But talk about an incompatibility that they just completely ignored altogether. Just pretending to like it wasn't part of the deal. And it just created a disaster in their marriage after 15 years or so. Because it didn't change. It got worse

Kim Fauskee 53:01

goes back to my EQ question that emotional intelligence Yeah, because once

Dr. Dana 53:05

I had kids, the, you know, the woman figured she'd never had to have sex again. That it was okay, you know, we did what we needed to do. And that part of the job's done well, and it's sad because so much hurt was created as a result of fantasy.

Kim Fauskee 53:21

Right, which I'm sure they carried on into subsequent relationships as well. Right? Well, they had heard I'm talking about

Dr. Dana 53:27

I think that these people found a way to stay together okay, but not without huge sacrifice.

Kim Fauskee 53:35

So I'm assuming that one or two or more people that have been listening to the the first 51 minutes of this podcast are having an ocean moment, right now it's possible that whether they've been in a relationship for three years or 30 years are realizing that maybe they haven't pulled the weeds or or watered the garden in quite a while. So we talked about a little bit and it's obviously not frequent, but people coming in seeking advice before they get married. And obviously, you fronting them with expectations and which is good food for thought for them, obviously, but so how about people that have been in relationships for some period of time now that that are realizing wow, I maybe assume that love was an offer. I was comfortable in this and my partner was comfortable in this but we surely haven't gone outside and and pulled the weeds or watered the garden in a long time. So how are they How did they get started in doing that? Maybe the relationship isn't at the precipice of of considering breaking up or divorce, but it surely going down that path if they don't do something? Well, I would say, federal rhetorical question.

Dr. Dana 54:54

Well, the longer you wait, the worse that's going to be. Me And I know that sounds like

Kim Fauskee 55:01

I failed, it goes back to the Buddha quote, you always think you have time

Dr. Dana 55:05

well, the sad thing is that the longer you wait, the worse it gets. So being proactive, if you can, is going to make a really big difference, because you're not waiting until it's gotten so bad that you start to really feel resentful towards your partner, or just start to get really scared that maybe you're gonna have to be lonely for the rest of your life, or that whatever the feelings come up, instead of just avoiding them or drinking them away, or smoking them away, or doing whatever you do working too hard, or whatever, to avoid having to face other things that you're not feeling 100% satisfied with, that you try and be as gentle as you can, but you got to talk about this stuff. And if you don't feel like you can do it safely find somebody to talk to talk to it about with, with that with help, whether it's clergy, or a therapist, or whatever it might be, you know, whatever it takes to feel safe enough to start telling the truth, in my opinion, is what's necessary. You got to tell the truth. You have to stop lying to yourself and the people that love you, and stop pretending like everything's okay. So it's not

Kim Fauskee 56:10

this is probably, you know, enough for another podcast. But why? Why are we so resistant in telling the truth? I mean, this come this is this comes out and everything we talk about on this podcast, but again, it is it is very common out there that I don't want to tell the truth.

Dr. Dana 56:32

I think that shame, feeling ashamed of yourself, feeling like people are going to look at you as being weak or pathetic if you show your vulnerability. Telling you the truth is really hard. Because you're opening yourself up to rejection and criticism. Sometimes people use your truth and they use it as a church, right? That does happen. So if you know your partner's vengeful, don't tell them the truth. Right. But that's a scary relationship, to be honest with anyone who's gonna say it sounds like a great relationship, right? But you'd be surprised at how many people when they get scared, go on the attack. So it's a defense mechanism, right? Yes. So I think it's really important to try to live a brave life. It's not a life without fear you and I know that fear is inherent to our existence, right? The secret, from our perspective is to treat your fair with respect, but don't allow it to stop you from moving forward. And the way that you do that is by being gentle, but firm, at the same time about your convictions and how you feel and what matters to you. And a lot of people say to me, Well, I'm confused. I'm not sure. And it's I have rarely met somebody who is truly confused. Yeah,

Kim Fauskee 57:49

I was gonna ask that question, right? Because it goes back to our premise about intuition, right? Yeah, maybe their conscience is confused. But their intuition surely is not

Dr. Dana 57:57

well, and it's easier for me to say you're confused, I don't know what to do, than to say to you, oh, my God, I know what to do. But I'm terrified. Right, I'm really scared to do what I know I need to do. And so most of the conversations I have with people that tell me they're confused, or to help them recognize that they already know, they're just too scared to admit it to themselves. And because of the implications of telling the truth. I was reading this article about intuition. I'm glad you brought it up. And there's a person that tries to help people really be seated in their intuition in a business world, because this guy believes that, that the best decisions are made on an intuitive level, no matter what the situation, whether it's romance or relationship with people that you care about, or even in your business, right. So he has this exercise he does with people where he has some flip a coin. And he said that as soon as you flip the coin, you know the truth of where which side you want it to land on?

Kim Fauskee 59:01

Oh, really? Yes. Because so you already know in your, in your mind, whether it's heads or tails, you've already called it in your head,

Dr. Dana 59:07

because you know, you do know what you want. But you're too afraid.

Kim Fauskee 59:11

So you flip the coin. It's a brilliant analogy.

Dr. Dana 59:13

Don't you think? It's amazing. I just thought, Oh, my God, this guy's brilliant. Because try it flip a coin and tell me that you don't have an idea about which side you want it to land. Wow. And so he doesn't care where the coin lands. He tells people don't even pay attention to where it lands, because you'll tell yourself what the truth is. As soon as the coin goes up in the air, you're giving yourself permission to connect with your intuition. It happens automatically. And I just thought it was brilliant. Right? It's a really good way for people to start being brave enough to listen, because you already know how you want it to land heads or tails. You just can't admit it to yourself until the stakes are so high that you're going to have to go with the heads or the or the tails.

Kim Fauskee 59:54

Well, what I appreciate about that is that you're giving people to be permission to be brave, right? It's not It's something that you have to work up to. Or spend time learning about. It just takes pulling your bootstraps up and and speaking your truth.

Dr. Dana 1:00:12

When I ask people all the time, what is the harm in saying to your partner, I am so scared to talk to you about this before they say anything. I'm just terrified to bring this up, because I'm so afraid you're gonna think I'm stupid, or you're gonna think I'm weak, or whatever it might be. But I have to talk to you about this. And I'm terrified. Could you be gentle with me when I bring this subject up, because I'm really scared about how you're going to react? If I tell you all right, excuse me, it's much more likely that you're going to be kind to me, than if I just come at you with whatever it is that I'm uncomfortable with.

Kim Fauskee 1:00:49

So I think it's also important to differentiate because people are thinking, Okay, I think I have it within me, I can be brave. But the other part, the other person that I'm going to talk to, I think it's going to go in one ear and out the other, or they're going to have a defensive response to it, I'm not going to get the response that I want to have. So now I'm thinking, well, maybe I don't want to have that conversation, even though I can, I can be brave to have it. But I don't anticipate I'm going to get the reaction that I want to have. Or to be able to speak my truth and have that person actively listen to it and whatever. And give some credible response back to it. So what do you say about that? Well,

Dr. Dana 1:01:36

of course, sometimes you're going to be met with resistance, and with a lack of understanding. If you let that stop you, then you're going to lose respect for the person you're in a relationship with, and you're gonna start to resent them,

Kim Fauskee 1:01:49

then the contempt and disdain beat start beginning Yeah,

Dr. Dana 1:01:52

because you're contributing to your own pain, by allowing the other person's reaction to stop you from telling you the truth. And if you keep trying, and you keep trying, and you keep trying, the person absolutely refuses to listen to you. If that's really going to give you an idea about who you're married to. And if that person won't come and get help with you, then I'm really sorry, but it makes it hopeless. So either you're gonna have to live with somebody who's not interested, really in you as a person, and what you have to say, or they'll take a chance and see if they can find a way to be able to hear you despite the fact that they don't want to, or they're scared about what you're saying. Because if you're constantly met with somebody who doesn't want to have anything to do with your truth, you're not married to the right person, I'm sorry. Either that or just accept the fact you're gonna be lonely for the rest of your life.

Kim Fauskee 1:02:43

Well, apologies to the John Lennon fans that think that all you need is love. It's a good, it's a good start, but it's not gonna get you there.

Dr. Dana 1:02:52

Well, it can, it can be the fuel, it's the

Kim Fauskee 1:02:55

fuel to get you there, but you're gonna have to speak your truth, you're gonna have to be brave, you're gonna have to have those conversations, you're gonna have to tend your garden, if you want that sustainable, long term, romantic, loving relationship.

Dr. Dana 1:03:10

Well, in order to tell you from my experience of being married for a million years, that I still really, really, really love my wife. And I, it seems like she really really loves me, at least that's what she tells me. And

the, I think that's one of the main reasons is that no matter how difficult things may have been, at certain moments, we never gave up. And always came back to try to resolve whatever it was that got in the way. And I think that that's really, really important for people to understand is that you don't get to have a life without pain. Nobody does. And if you think your relationship is going to be seamless without having to work on it, don't get married, or don't or don't have a long term relationship with someone, because that's not

Kim Fauskee 1:03:51

all. I'm going to leave our listeners with one last thought. Reality always wins. So if you don't remember anything from the last 60 minutes from this podcast, remember that reality always wins. You're here. Thanks, Dana.

Fear Me Out 1:04:06

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