

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 51

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Dr. Dana Saperstein – Hypnotherapy Self Exploration

Dr. Dana 00:11

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 00:30

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 00:52

Well, Dana and I were gonna do an episode about the holidays, but we realized that we couldn't say anything positive about it. So instead, we're actually going to talk about something very serious that both he and I have an affection for have experience in. And that would be psychotherapy and hypnotherapy. I don't even know which one we want to start with first, Dana. Well, I

Dr. Dana 01:19

mean, they're both obviously very much related. So either I mean, yeah, I'm happy to talk about my experience in therapy and how I got involved in hypnotherapy. If that might be useful.

Kim Fauskee 01:30

Oh, maybe I should add hypnotherapy or both of us should at hypnotherapy before we talked about the holidays. We were to change our opinion about the holidays during the winter months.

Dr. Dana 01:41

You know, I really, I love hypnotherapy, but I'm not sure that it would, you know, that is capable of that kind of a miracle. I

Kim Fauskee 01:48

don't think it's conversion therapy. It's making make you like Thanksgiving or Christmas. Sorry about that, for those people that are listening that actually love holidays. So we'll get off that topic right now. And, and talk about something more serious. But again, I think if the listeners have have listened to multiple episodes, or have listened to the 50 some odd and thank you if you have done that they've

probably heard bits and pieces, if not quite a bit about both of our journeys through therapy and not so much hypnotherapy, but at least therapy and you becoming a professional therapist and having therapy yourself and, and for me it was the saving grace is at least the start of the saving grace for me is when I started therapy at some point, I guess in my early 30s It was the thing that finally answered the question that was burning inside about who I am and what happened to me. And that eventually we'll get into hypnotherapy because that was the the next modality after I had gone through probably multiple years of talk therapy at that point getting to a place where I could have that catharsis there. So for those who haven't listened or or need an update, I think, Dana, you could probably start with, again, your therapy journey and how you became a psychologist.

Dr. Dana 03:23

You know, Kim, for me, it started when I was 17. I was a very heavy marijuana user at the time, I don't think I went to high school single day without being high from the moment I woke up till I went to sleep at night. And

Kim Fauskee 03:38

it was a it was a reason for that

Dr. Dana 03:40

I was underneath I'm sure very depressed and angry and unhappy person super shy. So I didn't really have the kind of relationships with women that I wanted to I was terrified of women and just felt really bad about myself. And I was really lucky in a certain way that my parents were quite liberal. So when therapy first started, they started going to therapy. And then one day, they approached me and said, you know, you seem like you're pretty miserable. There's a guy that we know that you could go and talk to and he might be able to help you and I thought well if it's necessarily not going to hurt

Kim Fauskee 04:12

now, did your parents go individually or did they go as a couple?

Dr. Dana 04:16

You know, I know they went individually. I'm not sure they went as a couple. I don't really know the answer to that question. All I know is that they encouraged me to do it and I just had the feeling that it was the right thing to do. So I went to meet this fellow and it was the beginning of probably 10 year. It really intense Odyssey. Yeah, yeah. Because I fell in love with him right from the beginning. It was such a relief to be able to talk to someone and actually have somebody listen and help me come to terms with so much of what happened to me and so much of what didn't happen for me. Now I

Kim Fauskee 04:54

know we've mentioned this before, but how lucky were you to find that person right off? Because I don't know how many people that began or initiate talk therapy, find that bond with the therapist right away. I don't know if that's common or not.

Dr. Dana 05:12

Well, you know, Kim, I'm not going to say that he was the most instrumental person I saw as a therapist when I moved to Santa Barbara. That's when I discovered my mentor and had the most intense therapy. So the first few years were with this fellow, and he helped me but he was not the saving grace, for lack of a better way of putting it, I really liked him. But he was nothing compared to the guy that I met when I came here. And I just got really lucky when I came here, because I was going to UCSB and I was taking a course on abnormal psychology from a visiting, or a lecturer, not somebody who was a professor. And I went to his office one day and said, Hey, I know you're a therapist in town, psychologists, can you give me some names of somebody who I might be able to see. So he gave me a couple of names. And it just so happened that the person that answered the phone ended up being the person that has probably spent the next close to a decade, seeing, and initially, probably for the first five or six years, it was twice a week really, really intensive therapy, there was also three or four years of doing group therapy, which was really helpful. And I really believed that this guy saved my life and then I got lucky enough that he took me under his wing as a professional and told me that he would help me become a psychologist or vice I wanted to so he served a dual role in my life.

Kim Fauskee 06:39

So so when you talk about that he saved your life? I mean, do you think that you were really headed down a path of complete destruction? At one point,

Dr. Dana 06:48

I would say so I was really depressed, really super shy, and didn't have very many close relationships. I have good friends, but he just helped me on the deepest of levels to really understand myself as a person. And he was just an amazingly capable guy. He was a substitute father, actually, in a lot of ways for me.

Kim Fauskee 07:13

So what we've talked about on this episode before is that and you've described how generally in psychology, you become pathologized. And that's how most therapists are taught about figuring out what's wrong with you instead of what happened to you. Yeah. And so you are lucky enough, again, to, like I said before, is to find that person that was explaining in wanting to go deeper about what happened to you and not try and diagnose you or pathologize you in that way.

Dr. Dana 07:43

Yeah, I got really lucky because he wasn't a, I guess, a traditional therapist in that way. In terms of, you know, diagnosis and treatment, planning, and all that stuff, that was not part of the deal.

Kim Fauskee 07:55

Every time when you say diagnosis and treatment plan, I get the smell of a doctor's office. You know, when when you were I don't know if they smell like this anymore, but when you were a kid, I remember this smell of alcohol, right rubs off. So when everybody brings up treatment plans and things like that, that's what I get in my head is it that says this, this very clean way of doing stuff, and that everybody kind of fits in that model.

Dr. Dana 08:23

Right? Now, this guy was incredibly well educated and very contemporary. In his approach. He studied a lot of hypnosis, but not in a traditional sense. It was more. At that time, there was a fellow named Ernest Rossi and another fellow named Milton Erickson that were the pioneers in the field of a different type of hypnosis. It wasn't direct, it was more subtle in terms of how they would talk to people and sort of help them go into a trance spontaneously and, and work from there. But um, I spent a lot of time with this man, I really, really loved him and felt incredibly supported by him. I was really sad when he decided to move away from Santa Barbara and retire. And then shortly thereafter, he actually passed away from cancer.

Kim Fauskee 09:15

That's why people moved to Santa Barbara to retire. Not a way to retire,

Dr. Dana 09:19

for whatever reason he moved to Seattle. I'm not sure exactly why. But that was his path. But the therapy was really, really helpful.

Kim Fauskee 09:29

And so let me ask you when you decided to become a psychologist yourself. I'm sure that he in his approach was ingrained in the back of your head about how you wanted to treat patients. Right? Yes. In that in seeing therapy more as an art instead of a diagnostic tool?

Dr. Dana 09:56

Yeah, yeah. Yes. Most definitely. He was not true. Additional in, like I said before, in, you know, diagnosis and treatment.

Kim Fauskee 10:05

And did you continue in talk therapy, once you entered your psychology program

Dr. Dana 10:13

with him, as he was also on my distortion committee, and he was part of the educational institution that I got my advanced degree from. But before I graduated, he actually had moved away and, and I would see him occasionally when he would come to town or every once awhile on the phone. But that was pretty much the end of formal therapy. For me, I felt like, I pretty much got to a place where I really knew myself and felt relatively comfortable. Until, as I've talked about on the podcast before when I got into my mid 30s, and started having nightmares and then discovered that I was molested. That was something that actually, as I've said before, never came up in the therapy that I did with this fellow that was the only disappointment I had looking back was that he never asked me, it never occurred to him. And it certainly never occurred to me that that was something that I had experienced as a child, I had all kinds of other traumas that I had to deal with. But that was just know, part of the the dialogue. I always wondered looking back whether something like that might have happened to him when he was a kid. And that that's why he never approached me.

Kim Fauskee 11:23

And he shied away from it because yeah, because just too close to him. You I

Dr. Dana 11:28

mean, generally speaking, I would have imagined that, that would be a question that was worthy of consideration, although, again, we're going back to the early 80s. And therapy was still, you know, advancing from its beginnings. And I don't know that we really understood sexual abuse as being as common as we do now.

Kim Fauskee 11:53

I mean, you make an interesting point there, because you talk about the 80s. And when therapy was just advancing, so I mean, it's still in its infancy, right. I mean, it's not something, you know, we think about great philosophers out there, read about great philosophers that have these ideas about life and how to live your life and everything. But, but again, people sitting down in a therapists office is a relatively new thing. Right.

Dr. Dana 12:19

You know, the other thing about this fellow Kim is that he had a great sense of humor. And that's really important to me, because therapy is obviously really serious business, but being able to break it up with a laugh, you know, in the course of the session, or more than once, you know, would ease the tension and to make it easier actually, to go to those really painful places.

Kim Fauskee 12:42

Well, you and I've talked about that before, I think it's, it's a very intimate relationship between the therapist and the patient, or the therapist and the client. And to build that bridge or build that bond, I think that you have to have something that isn't so sterile, right? Right. And so there's that trust factor that gets built between the therapist and the client at that point. So you're you feel more comfortable with becoming vulnerable and willing and wanting to talk about your ills.

Dr. Dana 13:15

Yeah, I loved my visit with him. And I just felt that it had helped me enormously. And it also helped me find my career path, which is, again, a miraculous thing unto itself.

Kim Fauskee 13:27

And so I think most listeners know that you're, I'm going to call you an expert in hypnotherapy in terms of doing hypnotherapy with your patients. Did you have experience with hypnotherapy or hypnosis prior to you doing it with your clients?

Dr. Dana 13:45

I did. There was a fella by the name of Ernest Rossi, who was fairly famous in the field of hypnosis. He wrote a bunch of books and was very well known, again in the mid 80s or so.

Kim Fauskee 14:01

Okay, so let me clarify because I think I don't want the listeners to think when they think about hypnosis, that you're going to the county fair, and that you're going up on stage and somebody is telling

you that you're in a deep sleep and hitting you on the forehead now bark like a dog, right? That it's just hyper hyper state of focus for a period of time.

Dr. Dana 14:22

Well, my my understanding what the conclusions I've come to about hypnosis is that number one, hypnosis is all hypnosis is self hypnosis. That you that I aid the person in hypnotizing themselves, so there's no loss of control. There's no amnesia. There's none of what it is that you typically might see on a stage presentation or in the movies or, you know, on television, it's not like that. I've never used a watch and swung it in front of somebody's face to get them to go into a trance or any of that. No stupid human tricks. No, I think that most people spend a great deal of their life in a trance state is a very naturally occurring state of mind that people go into when they're trying to cope with something that is beyond their ability to cope with. Oftentimes we call it depersonalization or, you know, a person being checked out, or whatever you might want to call it. But, but I think it's a naturally occurring state of mind that you go into when you're being traumatized. It's a way of protecting yourself from losing your mind. And the more trauma you suffer, the more adept you become at altering your consciousness. And I think that the reason that hypnosis is effective is because you're deliberately recreating the electrical and chemical state that you're in, when you're being traumatized. But instead of just doing it spontaneously to cope, and to manage, well, the horrible things are happening to you or, and again, not happening for you that I develop all kinds of different techniques to help people release the intense emotion that's associated with trauma, because when you're going through trauma, you don't feel anything other than terror and frozenness. And so the all the feelings of shame, and an anger and sadness, and all those other feelings, just get buried inside your body. And the reason hypnosis works so well is because you get direct access to all of the things that you need to come to terms with on an emotional level. And then again, I've developed some techniques to help you release that energy associated with those feelings. And so people often feel much lighter and, and more comfortable, the more hypnosis that they do. Now, I learned a lot about this from this fellow in Los Angeles named Ernest Rossi, he wrote a bunch of books, and my dad was always a very overweight guy, and struggled his whole life to come to terms with his addiction to food. And so I, you know, said to my dad, one day, you know, there's a guy that lives near you that you might want to go see, I know, you've never tried hypnosis before. Why don't you go and, you know, look this guy up and start to see him. So he started seeing Dr. Rossi and then he called me after a few months, he said, You gotta come check this out. This guy's amazing. This is nothing I've ever experienced before in my life, because my dad really loved therapy when he started doing it also. So he said to me, you if you come to LA every other week, I'll take care of the expenses for you. So I spent a year driving down to Malibu with this guy and learning hypnosis from him. So that was my introduction to it, he helped me really understand what hypnosis was all about, and actually how simple it is in a certain way, and how effective it can be. So that's how I came to start practicing as I realized that it shortens the time that a person needs, you know, to be in therapy, talk therapy, can be helpful, but it's not even close to what hypnotherapy can do for you. It does take a certain amount of tolerance, you know, to be able to handle the intense emotion, I caution people that if they start doing hypnosis, they're going to likely go through a period of a month or two or sometimes longer, where they feel very tender hearted, not anxious, necessarily, but really, like, deeply connected to the grief and the, and the sadness of their and the intensity of shame of their trauma. So it's a shortcut, but it's also quite intense. It can be quite intense, as you know, from your

own experience. It really helps you connect very deeply with what's happening inside your body. And I think it even affects you on a kind of a soul level.

Kim Fauskee 18:49

What patients or clients that you work with, what type of symptoms or background or pathology to use that term. Do you typically use hypnosis with?

Dr. Dana 19:06

I would say, I mean, it's really useful for anxiety and depression and all kinds of stuff. Because generally speaking underneath those symptoms, there is reason for those symptoms. You know, my first way of kind of working with someone is to try to figure out if there is a medical component to the person suffering from a brain chemistry perspective. So that's a, that's a separate way of, you know, treating certain types of depression and anxiety. But a lot of times depression and anxiety come out of trauma. Many, many people come to see me with sexual trauma, physical trauma, certainly emotional trauma. Sometimes religious trauma, people get abused and obviously in religious situations, some so it works really well for, you know, sometimes it actually really helps people in that The end of a relationship disconnecting from from their partner in a certain way.

Kim Fauskee 20:07

And this is this is a question that may not have an answer to it. But is there a typical amount or typical number of sessions that the person would go through? Before they would see some type of improvement?

Dr. Dana 20:24

Usually, right from the beginning, when you do hypnosis, you start to feel subtle shifts in the way that you've experienced the world. Um, so it's cumulative. In my experience, some people, they'd like it so much they do it almost every time they come here for, you know, as much as a year or two. Depending on how severe the trauma is, some people just do it once or twice, once or twice, and they feel like they've gotten what they've needed to. So it really depends on the nature of the person and what it is that they desire. I will say to you, though, and this is really important, I do not use hypnosis for habit control. There's a whole separate division of hypnosis that has to do with smoking cessation, and weight loss, and all kinds of, you know, breaking habits help helping people break habits,

Kim Fauskee 21:17

would addiction be in that category as well? Or?

Dr. Dana 21:19

I would say? I would say yes, and no, because I think a lot of times, the reason people become addicted is because there's underlying pain and suffering that they've been medicating with whatever substance they become addicted to. But I'm not a habit control person, I get calls from people like, can you help me stop smoking, or lose weight or whatever, and I don't get involved in that type of hypnosis. Not that I don't believe that it could be useful, because people do say it is. But it's just not my not my specialty.

Kim Fauskee 21:52

So I wouldn't be sitting here today doing a podcast with you, if I hadn't gone to therapy and in subsequent modalities for a decade plus, right. After that, I have a kind of shiver, where I tried to think of the right words to just sit there and think if I had stepped into a therapist's office in my 30s, where I would be who I would be if I'd still be here, right at that point, because I didn't know who I was. Or at least I thought I knew what I was, I had this curated life in my head that I thought was going down this typical linear path was the right way to do it, I was trying to keep my head under the radar and stay out of the way have any more subsequent abuse or further abuse and, and probably was like a deer in the headlights. When I started therapy, and I remember, I don't even know how well I know why I started, I know that a couple of friends had recommended it. I'm probably pretty high on the skeptic scale. So I wasn't sure how that was going to work. You know, for me, and you know, like you I was lucky enough to find that person. And, and I only know that now because I've seen other therapists, and I've saw other therapists when I was married and things like that. So I know how other therapists operate. And then there's some other really good therapists out there. But the therapist that I started with originally, and became my therapist for 20, some odd years, hit a write off with that person in, it was interesting, because five or six years into it, people would say, Why do you still go to therapy? And the answer was, Well, I'm not so sure that there's more tools to put in my toolbox, because I'm pretty aware of who I am, what had happened to me and how I want to live my life. But now it's the accountability of actually using those tools. And I think when I would go back in, it kept thinking of my therapist, I'm thinking God, I sound like a broken record. I've been here for all the time, and they keep bringing the same issue or the same issues back up. And I keep thinking that I'm being smarter now that I've had, whatever, five years, seven years, 10 years of therapy, and I start telling my story, and then he knows me better than I know myself and right between the eyes. I got I get hit with. You're right. I didn't do that. And I knew that I didn't do that. Right. So it became an accountability thing for me, after I had kind of gone through those steps and I thank you I don't remember how long into my talk therapy journey, I began hypnosis probably within two or three years, and I did the group therapy thing as well, which I think was was hugely helpful. I, we talked about this on a couple of podcasts or it will come up in some subsequent podcasts, when we talk about the finding yourself from within, about, you know, there's no cookie cutter methodology out there. And some people need, you know, multiple healers, to, you know, on their journey to get to the place where they want to get to, and some people are lucky enough to either do hypnosis or have talk therapy and be able to get around that corner. And for me, I think it was the multiple modalities, right? It was the talk therapy, to really understood what had happened to me to understand, who I really am and where I want to journey in life. And I think getting around of a group of people that that had similar experiences and similar traumas, or maybe even some dissimilar ones, but there was the ability to hear everybody else's story in in to figure out oh, man, I'm not alone. You know, I'm not this anomaly, that I'm the only person that this happened to and and there's a room full of five other people here that are struggling just like I am. And I think the ability not only to have that be led by a therapist, but to have I think it's like a it's like having a relationship right that not everybody's on the same level. At the same time. Somebody has to be somebody's cheerleader occasionally, right. And have five other cheerleaders when you're down, or you're being a cheerleader, when somebody else's down was was extremely helpful to me at that point, but like we were talking about before, we decided not to do a podcast on the holidays and do this podcast on which is more important about therapy and in hypnotherapy. Think the talk therapy got me to a place because you hear people where I've talked to friends who say, Well, yeah, I've you know, I've done talk therapy, but it only got me so far. And I

understand that. Right? It's, you know, you can talk for years and talk about the same thing and be on that merry go round. But at some point, you know, there has to be some other catharsis that has to happen. And I think again, when hypnotherapy was described to me, and recommended to me, I was, again, high on the skeptic scale, I'm thinking because I thought, just like I had mentioned before, like hypnotizing somebody, I'm going to bark like a dog. And I'm going to be in this trance on a couch. And obviously, you know, this whole thing. And that's why I wanted to bring it up, because you eloquently stated, really what happens there. And it's really self hypnosis, you know, this kind of Guided Self Hypnosis. And that's exactly what it was. And I think even after the first session that I had it, I became a believer in it. And I think a lot of the things that you had said in describing it were definitely my experience. I certainly couldn't have gotten around the corner further without hypnotherapy because it was going back and kind of reliving, for lack of a better term, the trauma and the incident that happened to me. And when I talk about catharsis, it really was, and I don't want to use the word like an exorcism, or something like that. But it was like, being able to reach down your throat with your hand and pull that blockage out to me. And I remember it was leaving those sessions. I was just mentally wiped out from it. But it was the mentally wiped out thing that was actually in a good way. And it is like, you were talking about feeling vulnerable for the first couple of months and doing it and I think, for me, I don't know if you agree with that, but for me, doing it consistently helped. It wasn't like I did it one time, and then I didn't do it for six months. I mean, it would be you know, consistently for a couple of months, you know, and then maybe take a break and then go back to go back to it again. But I think the consistency really helped me. And again, you know, we had an episodes on you know, my experience with psychedelics and talking about psychedelics and things like that i without doing the talk therapy without doing the hypnotherapy and without being where I am today. I don't I don't think those things would have helped me in that way. So I mean, I give credit to all of those modalities to get me where I am now. And I think that's

Dr. Dana 30:08

really well second, does take a combination of n plus, you've also mentioned that you use medication for a while in order to treat the brain chemistry issue to

Kim Fauskee 30:18

you. I mean, you did bring that up, right? So it's multi dimensional, right, as people have heard before I am a suffer or depression. I don't know if I mean, it does go away, right? I don't know if it's like, if you're an alcoholic, you're always an alcoholic. If you're a depressed person, you're always depressed person. I don't know if those go hand in hand together. But yeah, I've been medicated significantly for three periods of my life. And yeah, it helped for me, right, it helped the physiological aspect of things and get my brain chemistry back to where I can, you know, actually function and figure things out that way. But again, I you know, I am sitting here as somebody that's experienced dozens of hours of hypnotherapy or dozens of sessions of hypnotherapy. And, you know, I want to give it my full endorsement, because again, I'm going to reiterate, I would not be that person, I wouldn't have found that person within fully without it. I agree with you. And I don't know if that's your experience with most clients that you work with?

Dr. Dana 31:27

Well, I'd love to describe to you some of the really fascinating experiences into our audience that I've had. And I think it will illustrate how hypnosis can be such a crucial part of the therapy experience. The other day, when I was thinking about doing this podcast, I flashed on when, probably at least a decade ago, maybe longer. I got a call from a mom. And she wanted me to meet her 216 year old twin daughters. And the reason that they wanted to come to therapy is because the Lakers were having a very bad season. And both of these girls were like diehard Laker fans, and they were just rough, they couldn't function because of the Lakers.

Kim Fauskee 32:20

Because LeBron couldn't get around the corner. That's right.

Dr. Dana 32:22

So, you know, I understand that people's symptoms are a form of communication, right? So the first time I met the three of them, the mom was sitting in the middle of the couch, and each daughter was sitting on either side of her. And I was super curious. You know, it's not often they beat six year old, young women that are, you know, little pressed about the Lakers, you know, deliver and die for the Lakers. So you know, I'm chatting with both of them. And, and they're describing to me what a hard time they're having because the Lakers are losing and they're having a bad season, and so on and so forth. And so I said to the mom, is there anything in your daughter's backgrounds that might be sort of responsible for the hard times that they're having? And as soon as I asked the mom that question, both of the 16 year olds went into a major spontaneous trance, and they conked out onto their mother's side. They went so deep into hypnosis, just in my asking that question. Interesting. Yeah, it was so fascinating. I've never had this happen before that people would spontaneously go into such a deep trance that they just conked out. Each, you know, had rested on the mothers. That's what you're talking about when you check out right now. Right? But so they went into a very deep trance of the mom then began to describe the fact that when they were eight, I think, maybe eight or nine. They were living in a house in Los Angeles and the father was bipolar. And a very, very unstable guy. Super brilliant. He was professor at one of the major colleges down there. And actually, this took place in Berkeley, Los Angeles. Anyway,

Kim Fauskee 34:17

there was a major college. Let's say there's a major college there. Yes, yeah.

Dr. Dana 34:20

He was a professor at Berkeley. But he was also bipolar. And when he went into a manic phase, he would drink excessively to the point where he would lose control of himself. So the mom, when the were like eight years old, threw them out of the house, and said, you know, we can't live like this because you lose your mind and then you become really hard to deal with. So one night, the father breaks into the house, one of the twins wakes up and here's the father and mother struggling in the bedroom. She walks into the bedroom, the father's got an axe, and he's trying to kill them on so the daughter stands between them Both her parents while the father's trying to get past her to kill her mother. And, and then one of the other siblings woke up there was four altogether and call the police. So the police come into the house, they kill the father in front of the eight year old daughter because he wouldn't put the axe down. Right. So this one twin sees her father being killed in the bedroom. And then

the whole family is awake at this point. And it's just a shitstorm, basically. Right. So after all of this happened, obviously, it was an incredibly traumatic situation for these two young women. And their older sister and younger brother, the younger brother, actually, shortly thereafter, tried to kill himself by jumping off a bridge. So the trauma in this family was so extreme. And then they moved to Santa Barbara to just get away from where all of this happened. And they never dealt with it. They talked about it a bit, but they never got. They never got the help they needed as kids. And so for whatever strange reason, all of the feelings associated with all this showed up in Laker land. It was just so bizarre, because once we started to talk about what really happened, you know, both young women came to understand that they were suffering from post traumatic stress because of all this horrible stuff that happened. And I did a lot of hypnosis with both of the twins, especially the one that watched her father being killed. And it was quite miraculous for them being so young, they were still teenagers. And they were pretty much able to come to terms with the trauma that they suffered and go on to live. Very productive, productive lives. I still actually every once in a while, get a note from one of the girls just show me pictures of her husband, her family and, and, and all of that in here. This has got to be at least 15 years later.

Kim Fauskee 36:57

So for eight years, they had blocked out that evening. I don't

Dr. Dana 37:01

know that they completely blocked it out. But they did. I'm not sure they understood how much it was affecting them. Because if you don't, if you push your feelings down, they don't go away. They come out what I call sideways, and create symptoms that are often mysterious.

Kim Fauskee 37:17

So their mother wasn't sophisticated enough. Well, she was sophisticated

Dr. Dana 37:21

enough to bring them here. She knew that there was a problem, okay, that she could not console her daughter's in the face of that.

Kim Fauskee 37:28

It just seems so obvious that if your husband or the father is trying to kill you with an axe, the cops will shoot him to death. That that's not not something normal that happens in everybody's life. And they probably need help from it. Well, I

Dr. Dana 37:46

don't think that she was opposed to it. I think that like most parents, you just kind of hope that it didn't affect you. Yeah. And it happened so long ago. And they did okay. afterwards. It's not like they developed symptoms right away. Okay. You know, it was delayed post traumatic stress. He's. So I mean, the positive part of the story

Kim Fauskee 38:05

was the Lakers weren't doing well in it. Yeah, it can't fester out.

Dr. Dana 38:09

And their bodies communicated to me the degree of trauma that they were suffering by going into a trance spontaneously, as we were talking about the source of the trauma, because when I talk to people, it's pretty telling. Yeah, I mean, it's usually not that dramatic, but I watch people's breathing patterns. People hold their breath, when they start to talk about trauma. They often go into a trance without even realizing they're doing it. It's very apparent to me what state of consciousness a person is in when I'm having a conversation with them. And I see people hold their breath all the time. And I say to people, you know, you're holding your breath right now. And all sudden they take a breath and realize that they've been trying to get themselves to be very, very still, which is their body's way of communicating to me that trauma is there and effective. So that's one example. Another example, but subtle signs that you pick up on, right. Another example, which is a little bit different, was when a woman came to see me because she was probably in her mid to late 30s. She went to her hairdresser. And she was having her hair washed in the basin, which is usually a really pleasant experience. People love getting their hair washed. And you know, because you're so relaxed and it feels good to have your hair and head massage, right? So she's having this happen and all of a sudden she looks up and she sees people hovering over the person that's, you know, doing the shampoo thing, hovering over her. And she absolutely went into a full panic attack, to the point where she got up out of the chair, you know, threw off the towel and ran outside of the salon and she couldn't go back in. She was hyperventilating. And then after that she would be crying in the grocery store everywhere she went. She couldn't contain herself. She just completely kind of melted down as a result of having her hair washed at the hairdryer. History. And luckily she got referred to me and I started chatting with her and asked her, you know, why do you think that this happened and you know what kind of, because in my mind when something like that happens, it's usually a reenactment of some kind of trauma. So, this was not something that she had forgotten. But when she was an infant, her parents went out and left her brother and sister to take care of her, and the brother and sister were playing outside, believing that she was asleep in her crib. Well, this was the first time she was able to flip herself over, you know, in infancy that she flipped herself over to the point where her face was smothered by the blanket. And so when the kids came in to check on her, she was purple and almost dead. So they call the paramedics and, you know, they were able to revive her. But what got stimulated was that when they flipped her over, and she finally opened her eyes, she looked up, and she had all kinds of people staring down at her, and had almost died. And so being in that shampoo bowl, woke her up to remember what that was like to almost die as an infant. Now, she knew this happened because her family had described it, but she didn't ever experience it in any way. So again, we did some hypnosis, and this was relatively short term, she only needed to do three or four visits. And she got to the point where she was able to remember almost dying and remember all the different experiences, she had been revived. And she was fine after that. So for whatever odd reason, her mind just decided to wake her up to her trauma at the hair salon.

Kim Fauskee 41:36

Now, I was going to ask you that question of why, why then, I did it because it was a very similar, probably feeling and look that obviously she didn't remember from being an infant. But it's interesting to me, of why your body at that time decides that now's the time.

Dr. Dana 41:57

35 years later. Well, just like when I started to have nightmares about being molested, it happened 30 At least 30 years after, it was my daughter becoming four years old. And me seeing her body and remembering what my body was like as a four year old stimulated the the unconscious memories of what happened to me. So one more example, if you don't mind. Sure, this is a very striking example. A man was driving his he was in his 80s and driving his Volkswagen van on the freeway late at night. And somebody cut them off and the van flipped upside down. And it ended up in the bushes where nobody could see him upside down in his van. And he was hanging from the seatbelt and couldn't get himself out. He was and he hung there for four days before they found him almost dead. And as and when the paramedics were there, and they were trying to get him extract them from the van. He kept saying it over and over again. How are my guys? How are my guys? And that paramedics were really confusing because they had no idea what he was talking about. Who are his guys, he was in the van by himself. You know, they looked everywhere, thinking that maybe there were other people that were, you know, in the accident and it turned out that he was by himself in the van back in World War Two. And his experience in World War Two was that he was the guy in the bombers that flew from England to Germany in the ball turret you know in the glass turret and right underneath the blind, those bombs were not the safest place to see no go.

Kim Fauskee 43:39

She would especially begin shot at

Dr. Dana 43:42

right. So the sad thing about this situation was that they rushed those bombers to production before they were properly tested. So most of the time that they would go to Germany, and they would bomb Germany and get back to England, the landing gear would not go down and these airplanes. So they crash landed almost every single time they came back to England. And so he would scurry out of the turret up into their plane and after the first couple of times and just hold on. But he said that half the people in the plane would die from the plane crash. And so he said he stopped introducing himself to his fellow, you know, people on the plane, they wouldn't come back from the journey. Yeah, knowing that most of them were going to die when they returned from, you know, bombing. And there was nothing they could do because the planes couldn't be reengineered, and they just knew that there was this problem. So he said he probably went on 30 or more bombing runs, never actually got hurt himself. But he was so frozen in post traumatic stress that he came home to the United States after the war became a raging alcoholic which you can probably imagine why and spent his whole life just ignoring what took place and drinking himself. You Just sleep every night, for whatever reason hanging upside down in the van re acquainted him with all of his post traumatic stress from World War Two. And this was gotta be at least 60 years after the war, that that post traumatic stress lived inside his body and then just woke up when he was on the freeway upside down. So the reason I mentioned all of this is because trauma never goes away until you deal with it.

Kim Fauskee 45:27

So so he sought out help after this.

Dr. Dana 45:32

Well, he was walking around with a gun everywhere he went because he was so freaked out. So he got arrested actually for walking or even not allowed to have a gun in Santa Barbara. Right, right. So luckily, they were able to get him to see me. And I'd never met this guy before. But I said to him, you know, you tell me why all this is happening. And he described the story. And I said, Well, you've got posttraumatic stress leftover from World War Two. And if we do some hypnosis, I can help you come to terms with, you know why you're feeling the need to carry on weapon with you everywhere you go. And he'd never talked to anybody about what happened in the war is ever in his life. And it was such a relief to him to be able to describe this horrible experience he had over and over again, and to grieve the loss of his friends. And come to terms with that, that within, you know, three or four months of doing hypnosis, he was back to his usual cranky old self,

Kim Fauskee 46:32

but not been drinking, I

Dr. Dana 46:34

hope. I'm not sure about that part, because he didn't really want to deal with that. He was really worried about, you know, getting arrested again. And he couldn't put his gun down. So after we dealt with a war stuff, he didn't really want to do any more therapy after that. So I'm not sure about the alcohol part. But I do know that the post traumatic war stuff got resolved for him. So those are kind of examples of how hypnosis can be really helpful in the most random of situations that, you know, just come to haunt people when they've been traumatized.

Kim Fauskee 47:14

Do you see people coming back? Maybe they've taken a break for a year of hypnosis or have taken even a longer break and coming back and doing more.

Dr. Dana 47:26

There's a fellow actually I'm seeing right now who I met him in junior high. When he was 14. He's 39 Now, and he just reacquainted himself with me, maybe a year ago. He has his own family now. And he decided to call me and get back in touch with me because being a father of little kids, was reminding them of the horrible experiences he had with stepfathers that tortured him when he was a little kid. So I do see people that come back sometimes, you know, within a year or two other times, you know, I'm seeing this guy for 1520 years. Yeah, it just depends on the person and what their life experiences. Yeah, I

Kim Fauskee 48:06

asked the question, because obviously, we did some series on the use of psychedelics. And again, it's relatively new, at least in this generation, the use of them isn't relatively new, but the use of them now, in this generation is relatively new. And I think the jury's still out. Again, like we talked about, Is it it a one and done thing? Or is it like we had some gas on that? They do microdosing. And that could continue on for years, or for somebody's rest of your life. And so I guess I asked the question. And again, we talked about, there isn't a cookie cutter methodology for everybody? Everybody's different, right? So like you said, that maybe a couple people have gotten through or resolved their issue within three or four sessions. Like me, I had multiple dozens of sessions to get myself around the corner. But I

also haven't done hypnotherapy in a number of years now. And the question is, is it in me and I'm not asking for the proof. But I'm asking you and your professional opinion, is it something that maybe you should continue on with in your healing journey?

Dr. Dana 49:23

I think if you find yourself stuck at any point in your life, no matter how much therapy you've had, if you feel like you're kind of stuck in a certain place, and that what it is that your heart desires is not coming your way, then it's certainly not going to hurt to do a session or two of hypnosis to see whether there's something that's emerged at this point in your life that might be getting in your way. So that's how I would answer that question is that if you're a seeker and you're somebody who is constantly looking to evolve and get to a higher place, when you when you get stuck, you know that there's something that is troublesome to you And that is worthy of, of taking a look at it from my perspective.

Kim Fauskee 50:07

Have you recommended hypnotherapy to clients that chose not to do it? And why did they choose not to do it?

Dr. Dana 50:16

If you are, well, I shouldn't say this was such black and white in black and

Kim Fauskee 50:23

white turn with such conviction.

Dr. Dana 50:24

Yeah. The people that have resisted the most are born again, Christian people that believe that the devil is always present trying to take you down. Oh, interest. So from their perspective, going into hypnosis is an invitation for the devil to come and toy with you in a very dangerous way. So I have worked with some, you know, evangelical Christians that are terrified of the concept of, of opening themselves up to the devil, even though I reassure them that it's not going to happen, you know, I just do the best I can. There are some people who just can't go there. But that's a very small proportion of the population,

Kim Fauskee 51:08

they don't want to relive the trauma or relive that experience in their mind. Or

Dr. Dana 51:15

they just are not able to allow themselves to relax enough to go into the space that they need to. So usually we try it two or three times, it doesn't work. And then we just go about therapy and in the more traditional way, but I'll say to Kim that that happens in maybe, I don't know, 1015 people out of hundreds, if not 1000s of people I've seen over the course of time, so the percentage is really low, it's very, very low. Once I educate people to understand that it's not what they believe it is because you know, when I have a new client, I say hypnosis, I, you know, I can see sphincters because it's been so negatively portrayed. And nobody wants to give up control. So when I explained to people that it's not a loss of control at all, but they're completely in control, and there's, they're going to remember

everything, and they can open their eyes at any moment. And that, you know, I don't have any control at all, I'm just there to provide my guidance, that you're not going to go home barking like a dog Exactly. As much as that would be fun. You know, I teach people every once in a while, you know, if you find yourself walking around the house after today, you know, quacking like a duck or whatever. It's because it's not my fault. It's because I called your husband or wife and told them that, you know, what the induction was, or whatever. And, you know, most people laugh in those situations. So I find that most people are pretty receptive. The worst thing that has ever happened, was at one time, I was going to do some hypnosis with a woman for the very first time. And as soon as she closed her eyes, she had a panic attack. So we didn't even get to start doing the hypnosis. And in the midst of that panic attack, she was flooded with memories of being sexually abused as a kid. Wow. And she had no idea that this had happened when she was a

Kim Fauskee 53:06

little girl. So it actually worked. But not in the way he wanted it to. Yeah, worked

Dr. Dana 53:10

without hypnosis, she was so ready to allow this information to come forward. That just the mere idea of allowing it to come forward, brought it all forward. So once she was able to kind of catch her breath and come back to in quotes, you know, her normal state, you know, it was quite productive the therapy from there because we knew where we needed to go in terms of the healing process. So that was pretty unusual,

Kim Fauskee 53:41

though. So I don't want to misquote you, but you I think you said that all hypnosis is self hypnosis. So if that statement is actually true. Can you do hypnosis on yourself without it being guided by a professional?

Dr. Dana 53:56

I would say yes, from my own experience, I do hypnosis a lot by myself. I don't usually do it to heal. I do it for inspiration on a creative level. Because it's not just a tool for healing. It's also a tool to help you connect deeply with yourself. So I've come up with inventions and ideas for you know, book and all kinds of different stuff using hypnosis. I'm not sure it's the best idea in the world to try to be your own therapist. using hypnosis, it can help a bit, but but, you know, if you think about it, all the horrible things that have taken place in your life, have been at the hands of another person. So I sort of have this notion that the corrective way of helping someone is by being present to them in a loving way to help them heal.

Kim Fauskee 54:54

Yeah, to me, I use the analogy. It's like going on WebMD and self diagnosing yourself,

Dr. Dana 54:58

right. I mean, I know you can do it but it's better to kind of share it with another person that's there to help you feel safe to deal with whatever comes up.

Kim Fauskee 55:07

When can ask the right questions. Yeah. So as well, right and kind of guide you, guide you through the process and support you because again, you know, I talked about it being very cathartic, but it but you know, I remember crying uncontrollably, right? In it and having you know, muscle tremors and like leaving, you know, like completely, mentally wiped out. So, you know, again, it'd be like doing a psychedelic journey, sitting in your living room on your own, which I, which I wouldn't do, because of the whole control issue and running petrified of that, that I would need somebody like, like I did to talk me through the experience. And the same thing. With hypnotherapy. I couldn't, there's just no way I could have done it myself. And I agree with you that, you know, and I don't want to get confused with meditation, I don't want to get confused with with manifestation and all the other terms out there that people use to bring things into their life, right? That it should be with a train, in my opinion, it should be with a trained professional,

Dr. Dana 56:16

I agree with you. I think that trauma is not something to mess around with. It's really important to make sure that you trust the person that you're asking to help you and that I don't think anybody as a therapist can take you any further than they've gotten themselves. And that's a really important thing to know, we've mentioned that before. But if I hadn't dealt with all of the different forms of trauma that I suffered, including abandonment and deprivation, I wouldn't be able to unconsciously avoid those issues with the people that I work with. So I was really lucky that I had really qualified people who helped me get to a place where I don't feel like I'm walking around loaded up with psychological issues and trauma. I'm not sure that I would be the best person to work with people who have had physical, ongoing issues, because I have so many. But that's a different podcast, so

Kim Fauskee 57:16

you can empathize with them. I

Dr. Dana 57:17

guess I can empathize with them. But you know, I'd like to mention something I think we talked about in a different episode. But there was a man who went to Africa to study trauma with animals. And he was filming cheetah and their prey. I think they're in Palos or whatever

Kim Fauskee 57:38

they are. They were in Palos. Yeah, I think you're right.

Dr. Dana 57:41

So he was filming cheetahs hunting, and they're pretty intense. I'm sure we've seen those horrible National Geographic shows that you turn off right, the survival of the fittest Exactly. Well, part of what he noticed was that occasionally, they would be racing across the prairie 100 miles an hour. And then all of a sudden the Impaler would fall over and appear to be dead. And cheetahs only eat live kill. They won't do anything. They don't kill themselves because they're not designed to be scavengers. So the cheetahs stops like cats doing the start, batting the Impaler around thinking, man. I want to eat you, but they won't eat something that looks like it's dead. So what ends up happening is a cheetah walks away. And then the Impala slowly starts to tremble back to life again. And after two or three minutes, the

follow you know trembles back to life, looks around and goes Holy crap. I can't believe I'm alive and just wanders away without any ill effects.

Kim Fauskee 58:43

I want that fight and flight mechanism, right? I gotta shake it off and being

Dr. Dana 58:47

Alright, well, and that's what mammals have the capacity to do. The problem is that if they're not allowed to deal with this guy, he messes with the impalas, his trembling back to life. And he brought them back to life before they had a chance to fully go through their process. Yeah, their process. And those impalas were what we would call completely neurotic, unable to function animals. They were hyper vigilant, they couldn't sit still, they were all over the place. And they died very quickly because they were so unable to cope. They were really traumatized by the lack of their nervous system being able to discharge the trauma. So I thought that was really brilliant of this guy to figure out that even other mammals need to release trauma in order to be able to survive. Whatever it is that they face in the course of their lives. He actually messed with a polar bear that was drugged and tagged and didn't let it tremble back to life again. And even though the bears are obviously more apex predators, yeah, much more. You know, they can also be consumed and the polar bear that he messed with couldn't function in the sea. With the impulse when he messed with it. So we need to discharge trauma from our nervous system in order to function. Now human beings, we tremble when we're afraid. But because we have a more developed cortex, trembling is not enough for human beings to be able to discharge trauma, we also have to process it on an emotional level. And that's why I think hypnosis is so effective, because you can't fully process trauma just by talking about it. That's why psychedelics are really popular and all kinds of other modalities are being experimented with, because normal therapy doesn't help enough to discharge the emotion associated with watching your best friend, get shot, and die or whatever the whatever you experienced in a warzone, or when you know, whatever the situation might be, that the emotion associated with those experiences has to be brought up and the person has to discharge it in some fashion.

Kim Fauskee 1:01:05

It's too bad, we just can't shake it off. It wouldn't. It would be really nice.

Dr. Dana 1:01:09

Yeah, except that we would have to give up our cortex in order to be able to do that.

Kim Fauskee 1:01:13

So I mean, I think that was a really good point that you brought up in the last minute or two of the conversation, I do want to re-emphasize that, you know, we're talking about finding yourself for more than, and again, I don't want to use myself as the benchmark. But without what we just talked about today, with the multiple modalities that I've used, especially in talk therapy. And in hypnotherapy, I wouldn't have got there, I wouldn't have been able to find myself from within, because I think that that energy, and that trauma would have blocked that from coming out, I would not be sitting here again, like I've said today, multiple times on this podcast, that being the person that I am, without going through that, because that allowed me finally to have the clarity. And again, like, like you said, is that that my

nervous system settled down enough? To where I could take that deep breath, and think, okay, I'm okay. And be able to really understand myself and really find out who I am.

Dr. Dana 1:02:24

You know, Kim, that's why you are one of my heroes, because you chose consciously, to do everything that was necessary to find a place of healing for yourself, no matter how uncomfortable it got you hung in there, despite the misery and the in tears, and I mean, I've watched it all every day, how hard it is for people to, you know, tolerate that process. But there is hope, you know, at the end of that journey, in a way, because the kind of relief is so profound when you release the emotion attached to trauma. And I'm not sure why it's such a mystery in the scientific world that people say they don't know why hypnosis works. I think it's really simple. It's just the deliberate recreation of the electrical chemical state that you are in when you're experiencing the trauma. Except you're not doing it just to survive, you're doing it to release the energy of the trauma.

Kim Fauskee 1:03:24

And I really do feel sad for those people that go through life suffering, from what happened to them, and not being able to really find out who they are in, find the beauty in that happiness and being content in life. It does. I mean, that troubles me because what, what a beautiful thing, when you really become comfortable with who you are in where you are.

Dr. Dana 1:03:53

Right? Well, and the other thing that saddens me is that hypnosis got a really bad name in the 90s. Because people were talking about false memories. All right, yes, that's right stuff. So a therapist stopped getting trained in hypnosis and people let it go. I didn't because I don't believe in that false memory stuff. I know that that came about in legal situations where there were custody issues. But in my situation, people don't make up drama under hypnosis. Why would you? It's like, it's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Kim Fauskee 1:04:30

Like, they say, you can't make that shit up. Right? Exactly. You know, you couldn't curate that story.

Dr. Dana 1:04:35

So I just find it to be something that helps enormously.

Kim Fauskee 1:04:40

Well, we're gonna have a few more discussions on finding yourself within with some pretty fascinating guests coming up. So this was a good way for us to start this discussion. And then our audience gets to hear from some other people that not only use these modalities, but use some other modalities to get where they are Today So, hope you continue listening and in. Thanks, Dana, for being here. Thank you, Kim.

Fear Me Out 1:05:08

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