

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 47

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Patrick Woods - Trauma

Kim Fauskee 00:00

So we're lucky to have a guest today that was willing to come in here, a friend of the podcast, and talk about his experience with parental alienation, and how that affected his adolescence in life and how it actually caused him to actually thrive. Now in his later teen years, parental alienation, again, is child abuse. It's an important topic that Dana and I in and at that time, Christy Miller, who was our guest, on, had a discussion a few weeks ago and talked about the signs, the symptoms, and the after effect of living with a parent or parents that practice parental alienation. So Patrick is a very well spoken young man. He speaks eloquently about his experience. He's very transparent. He's very vulnerable, and he's very raw about it. Dana, what are some of the things that the listeners should get out of this episode?

Dr. Dana 01:14

Well, first of all, I really appreciate how brave Patrick is he reached out to me after he listened to our podcast about parent alienation. He said, I really want to help my peers, I really want to help people that have gone through what I've gone through. And I think I'm the perfect person to talk about it. And after you and I interviewed him, I absolutely agree that he describes it incredibly eloquently. He's very psychologically sophisticated person for being 19 years old. And I think that he'll be of great service to people his age, and of any age really, but especially young people who might blame themselves for the problems that they experienced in relationship to their parents under these circumstances.

Kim Fauskee 02:01

And again, I want to remind our listeners, this is a very sensitive subject, probably not wanting to be listened to in front of children or in a public venue. There's not a lot of anonymity in here. And again, there's some very raw detail, including some suicidal issues and things like that. So again, like Dana said, Patrick is very eloquent and very psychologically sophisticated. So I hope you enjoy our conversation with Patrick woods.

Dr. Dana 02:45

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 03:04

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 Foskey. And Dr. Dana Saperstein.

Kim Fauskee 03:25

A couple of weeks ago, we released an episode on parental alienation. And we had a friend of the podcast, reach out to us, Patrick Woods, and talk to us about coming on to our podcast and actually speak about being a victim of parental alienation. So we wholeheartedly agreed to have Patrick on and So Patrick, welcome to the ferreting out podcast,

Patrick Woods 03:56

glad to be here should be fun.

Dr. Dana 03:58

You know, Patrick, I just want to tell you how proud I am of you for stepping up and being willing, especially Patrick's 19 years old, being willing to talk about your life and how this issue has affected you. Because it takes a lot of courage, especially for someone your age to step forward and want to help your peers.

Patrick Woods 04:17

Yeah, um, I definitely do find that most of the people that I talked to that deal with this are significantly older than me. And I do feel like that's kind of a good thing that I'm dealing with it now. But yeah, I feel like there are definitely other kids that go through what I go through at this age, and then they don't deal with it until they're in their 40s. And then they don't know why they were the way that they were. So if I can sort of shine a light on that and help a few kids. That'd be great.

Dr. Dana 04:42

Would you mind starting at the beginning of you know your parents separation at all and how it affected you and move forward from there.

Kim Fauskee 04:52

I do want to say one one thing before Patrick gets started is in our pre conversation Patrick brought up something I think is very important. Is when he listened to this episode and again, the episode was, we had Christy Miller, who's another therapist on that we used a bunch of clinical terms and talked about parental alienation from a clinical standpoint. And so Patrick is going to talk about from a victimization standpoint. And I think he brought up a good point is if his friends or peers had actually listened to the podcast, they may not have understood or took into the gravity of what actually happened. So I think that's why it's important that Patrick's here that somebody listening has gone through this and probably can resonate with this story. So with that being said, Patrick, you're on.

Patrick Woods 05:45

So I think the I mean, I think it really always starts with some form of a really traumatic parental thing. Mine happened to be divorce. And my parents divorced wasn't a pretty divorce. And being the oldest, I remember the most of it. So I remember quite a few nights like being up against my door. So how old were you when this happened? I had to have been five years old, okay. Remembering like the first

fights and just seeing like my mom cry, and just not really understanding being a kid, like you sort of expect your parents to love each other. So seeing them fight like that is super confusing. And you feel at times, like it could be your fault. Like you aren't a good enough kid. I had that thought out of my head by the time I was seven. But then after that, you sort of start to pit your parents against each other in the sense of like, okay, well, now I've got my dad's house, and I've got my mom's house. And at the time, I didn't necessarily see them as equal in their parenting styles, but I still love them equally. And I still sort of felt loved equally from them. Now, at the time, I didn't necessarily know what love was, or what it felt like to be loved. Because as a seven year old, if someone gives you a Nerf gun, you think they love you. So my dad would give me plenty of gifts, he take me tons of places like golf and stuff, Disney World, stuff like that. And that was enough at the time to feel loved.

Kim Fauskee 07:16

And you had your mom and dad had joint custody of you and your siblings at that point,

Patrick Woods 07:20

we were going week to week, and now it actually became a argumentative topic between me and my dad, because I was tired of going week to week where you get into a flow with one parenting style. And then you've got to jump and go to the complete other style.

Dr. Dana 07:34

What were the differences that you noticed that were difficult for you.

Patrick Woods 07:37

So the biggest one was probably going from being a very tight knit close family at my mom's house where I had my brother, my sister, and both of my step brothers, and then my mom and now Dad, all together and like we do a family dinner, we'd watch a movie or something. And then yeah, you could go do your own thing. At my dad's house, it was very much like I was just left on my own. Like there, I remember times where I was probably anywhere from 12 to 14 being left for days and on end without seeing anyone and just being sort of left to the kitchen and video games. And that is definitely where it started to affect me where you're at a house where you're supposed to be feeling like you're being taken care of. But then at that age, you're taking care of yourself. And that's where you're like, what's wrong with myself? Like, why isn't my dad caring about me?

Kim Fauskee 08:31

So was your dad actually at home but not at home? Or did he actually just leave you on your own?

Patrick Woods 08:38

There would be both actually there would be times where he would go on business trips at times. And I like there would just be no one there other than a nanny for a few days, or Yeah, he would be there at the house. But like he wasn't presently there. My mom brought this up a few times where you could feel super alone with him in the same room with him. And that was definitely the case. So I definitely relied on video games to sort of take my mind off of stuff and make connections with other people so that I wouldn't feel as lonely.

Kim Fauskee 09:13

And what's the age difference between you and your siblings? You said you were the oldest. So

Patrick Woods 09:17

my sister is currently a junior at DEP. She is 16. And then my youngest brother is a freshman at DEP and he is 14.

Kim Fauskee 09:27

So it was a few years spread between.

Patrick Woods 09:29

It's funny. It's freshman year seems to be about the year where you're like, ah, something wrong with my dad. It's what I like that's around the year that I discovered it. And then I got over it around sophomore year that's around when I moved out. And then my sister started getting depressed around sophomore or freshman year, and she figured out that her dad was messed up. She left sophomore year. Now my brother who's a freshman is starting to go through a lot of really difficult challenges and problems like in school and he He doesn't necessarily know why. So we're trying to sort of help him understand, but he's still at the age where he needs to sort of come to that conclusion.

Kim Fauskee 10:09

It's an interesting time in a in a boy or girl's life, right? Because it's it's a transition time, you know, going to high school. Puberty is either is either just hit or is about to hit. And so you know, just trying to find your way in life without parental issues. Yeah, is still is difficult on its own. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 10:31

So Patrick, you said that maybe 13, or 14 was when you started to really think about things in a different way. Is that fair to say? Yeah, it was around that age. Yeah. And what is it that you started to understand, and start to feel the point

Patrick Woods 10:47

at that point you, I think puberty definitely starts to take effect. And in that sense, I like to bring up that you start to feel like a more romantic connection to someone other than your parents and your siblings. So then you start to understand what it's like to love someone else other than like family, and then what it's like to be loved from someone other than family. So then you can sort of compare those. And around that time, I was having crushes on girls and girls had crushes on me, so I knew what that was like. And I could sort of compare that to my dad. But the feelings were nowhere as powerful. Whereas I could compare that with like, my mom, and the feelings were as powerful. But obviously, there was like a loving family relationship versus like a romantic one. Whereas I felt like there really wasn't even a loving family relationship with my dad, compared to like a crush that I had on a girl switch around that time really confused me.

Dr. Dana 11:42

So what is it that you did feel in relationship to your dad,

Patrick Woods 11:46

I felt almost like a puppet in his eyes. Like in a sort of sense that I was in his eyes, I was a miniature him or like a little him. So that if I ever made a mistake, it was really like, I felt like he saw it as a mistake on himself. And like, he wouldn't talk to me for days. That was one of his things was

Dr. Dana 12:09

like, what kind of mistake are we talking about?

Patrick Woods 12:11

Like, let's say like, let's say a mistake that like you would typically ground your kid for for like a week, you know, like, you take his Xbox, maybe his phone. You're mad at him. But like, that doesn't stop you from giving him a hug. At the end of the day. He just wouldn't talk to me and he ignored me. I'd still have my Xbox. I'd still have my phone, but he just ignored me.

Dr. Dana 12:32

So he got iced out.

Patrick Woods 12:33

I did. And that is obviously a much, much more devastating tactic for a 13 year old.

Dr. Dana 12:40

So as a 13 year old, did you assume that you deserved it? And that that,

Patrick Woods 12:45

then yes, I felt like I obviously had done something to deserve it. But I felt like that was it was definitely messed up.

Dr. Dana 12:52

Okay, so you did have an awareness, but you weren't 100%?

Patrick Woods 12:56

Sure. But like, in a sense, I had sort of become used to it. So I sort of felt that it was normal. Now, if I had like, talk to a friend, like, does your dad not talk to you for a few days, if you mess up? They probably would have looked at me like I was a little crazy. And I would have been like, Oh, it's a good thing to know. Right?

Dr. Dana 13:15

Well, I remember once, you mentioned to me that you were playing soccer and you scored a really good goal. And you came expecting your dad to be really proud of you and really happy with your accomplishment. And what happened

Patrick Woods 13:27

he critiqued me on how I could have scored the goal better.

Dr. Dana 13:33

Which, I'm sorry to laugh, but that's, yeah, that's nuts. No, I

Patrick Woods 13:36

mean, I laugh at it now.

Dr. Dana 13:38

I'm sure you didn't laugh at it at the time. No, at the time. No, I

Patrick Woods 13:41

was I was really hurt. And I was really confused. I was like, I just like did what the epitome of soccer is trying to do score a goal and I didn't do it well enough, like so. Yeah, there were there were plenty of times like that, especially in sports. I definitely feel like that was a projection of my dad. My dad is not in good shape, as you know. And I feel like he wanted to play sports as a kid, but it was a little on the unathletic side and clumsy. So he really wanted me to be like his version of his athlete. Which is why I think he pressured me so hard into playing sports all the time.

Dr. Dana 14:22

And what was his relationship like with your mom, in your eyes, and how did he talk to you about it or not talk to pre divorce

Patrick Woods 14:30

or after they got to. So after they got divorced. My dad very much saw my mom as an enemy, in a sense. He saw her trying to control me and my siblings and put us up against him.

Dr. Dana 14:50

So his idea was that she was alienating you guys. Yes.

Patrick Woods 14:57

And that

Dr. Dana 14:58

how do you express So to remember,

Patrick Woods 15:02

I remember him telling me that like the therapists, I was going to a therapist named Beth. I don't remember her last name. But I remember my dad telling me that like my mom taking me to see her was like her trying to like, convince me that he was the bad guy. And it was sort of just these like mental hoops that we he would have you jump through to like, make you see that it was the world against him.

Dr. Dana 15:34

Okay, so he really, truly believed that he was being the victim in this. Yeah.

Patrick Woods 15:39

And then when you're a kid, and you know, it's your dad, you're very much like, well, if my dad's saying that, like, then he must be the victim.

Dr. Dana 15:46

Okay. So how did you end up feeling when he presented himself in that way,

Patrick Woods 15:52

I feel really confused and really hurt because my mom would also never do anything like that. Like, she would very much say, like, I had my personal relationship with your dad. But I don't know, like what your relationship is like with him. And I'm not going to like stand in that or get in the way of that.

Dr. Dana 16:09

So she was in favor of you having whatever relationship with him that you want it

Patrick Woods 16:12

whatever I wanted to do, whether it was a weekend, a week, or just living at her house, and which is what I do now, she even was like, if you want to live at your dad's house, like go for it, if that's what you want to do, like do it.

Kim Fauskee 16:26

Were your siblings treated the same way as you from which parent from your father

Patrick Woods 16:32

doesn't know. So I was definitely treated as the golden child. When I did make a mistake, I was definitely punished but way less so than my brother and sister would be I remember getting into somewhat of a like physical fight with my sister in the pool, when I was probably 10 years old, making her like seven or eight. And I remember she, she kicked me in the balls. And I like pushed her. And then like, I think I like kicked her underwater in the leg. And we both like went to our dad, and he made her apologize to me and I like got away scot free. And I was like, I ended up apologizing to her, like on my own and just saying like, I shouldn't have done what I did. Like, I'm sorry. But like, he didn't make me do that he only made my sister apologize to me.

Dr. Dana 17:27

So he favored you, but also was quite critical of you when you made any sort of yes, very much so. So emotionally, how did you start to feel at that point?

Patrick Woods 17:36

At that point? It it was it was sort of confusing, because I didn't understand why he was treating me better. And then I'd go over to my mom's house and a few days and we were all equal there. So my brain was constantly going from like, we're all equal to then like being put on a pedestal and not knowing why

Dr. Dana 17:57

being put on a pedestal but also being abandoned at the same time. Yeah,

Patrick Woods 18:01

it's it's this really weird concept really crazy. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 18:03

I mean, how does one come to terms with that? I really didn't. So what happened,

Patrick Woods 18:09

I became extremely depressed. I stopped going out, I really stopped talking to friends. I ended up losing a lot of weight because I stopped eating a lot. And at my dad's house, I was probably playing close to 72 hours worth of video games in a week. Cool, like 72 hours straight of like, if you were just not get up. That was my total time and a week of playing video games.

Kim Fauskee 18:34

Did you feel any amount of pressure to please him? There

Patrick Woods 18:38

was a sort of pressure in but not to please him more to not screw up. And it was stay off the radar. Yes. Because if you screw it up, there's the chance that then he was gonna get mad at you. It wasn't like if I did good, then he wouldn't necessarily praise me. If anything, he had more to critique me on. So if I could just sort of stay under the radar then nothing ever got brought up.

Dr. Dana 19:04

And How bad did the depression get?

Patrick Woods 19:06

The Depression got really bad at one point, I ended up getting suicidal

Kim Fauskee 19:11

in your in high school at this point. Yes.

Patrick Woods 19:14

I was probably in my sophomore year of high school when I like first, like had suicidal thoughts. And that really, that really like sucks to think back on. Like, no kid should have to go through that, especially when it's, you know, problems that originate with their parents. Especially really just one parent.

Dr. Dana 19:39

So when you went to your mom's the suicidal feelings would go away, or no,

Patrick Woods 19:44

they would almost get hidden but they wouldn't go away.

Kim Fauskee 19:49

So can you describe when you talk about feeling depressed having pseudo suicidal thoughts? Can you kind of describe what you're actually feeling and thinking at that time?

Patrick Woods 19:58

So at that time and I'll do my best. So you feel very alone. Like you could have friends texting you and you know, asking you things and stuff, but you still feel very alone, you feel like everything isn't genuine. And you don't want to talk about your problems anyway. So if people ask you, if you're doing okay, you still give them the yam funge. Tired. And that also further puts you into this feeling of more alone, because then you're not talking to the people that care about you.

Dr. Dana 20:36

Anybody know that you were having suicidal thoughts?

Patrick Woods 20:39

None of my close friends, I did eventually end up telling my parents after a little while, your parents been my mom and stepdad. I don't think my dad ever really knew until a while after. I think it was really after the fact that I do go to child court when I wanted to leave his house that that got brought up to him, I think, but I'm not 100%. Sure.

Kim Fauskee 21:06

So how long had that that period of depression gone on for he was at six months, a year,

Patrick Woods 21:12

probably a year to two years.

Dr. Dana 21:16

That's a long time as young person.

Patrick Woods 21:19

And you say what sucks is that because you're so young, and that's such a two years when you're 16 is such a big portion of your life, like that's an eighth of your life. That that becomes somewhat not reasonable, but livable, because that's what you've been doing. So that sort of become comfortable. In a sense. It just seems normal almost. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 21:43

Did you? And I know Dana asked you this this question, but was there anybody and I'm talking from your friend circle, that you can confide in, that offered you some level of support or some level of understanding

Patrick Woods 21:54

somewhat so you can talk to people. But what's tough is that if you don't have a friend that has gone somewhat through what you don't understand it, they can't understand. It's mean, even trying to talk to a friend, if you're just going through, you know, a divorce, trying to talk to a friend whose parents are

aren't like, it's tough for them to even understand. So trying to talk to a friend like Why doesn't my dad love me that it's just not gonna happen? Yeah,

Kim Fauskee 22:21

and coming from a depressed person as well. So everything that you experienced, even in your adolescence, as an adult, depressed person, you feel that exactly the same way.

Dr. Dana 22:35

So you told your mom and your stepdad how far into being suicidal? Did you tell them?

Patrick Woods 22:40

I got pretty into depth? I don't think I ever I think I told them, like the three times that I was closest I told them about that. But I didn't tell them like the extent to which I was like thinking about it.

Dr. Dana 22:59

Did you feel like you needed to protect them? Very much. So yeah. And why did that feel so important to you?

Patrick Woods 23:06

Because those were the people that actually loved me. Okay. So those were the people that I felt like I needed to protect, because they were the people that actually did love me,

Dr. Dana 23:14

were you afraid they'd be disappointed in you? Or

Patrick Woods 23:17

somewhat, it was more the fact that I didn't want to have to see or deal with their reaction.

Dr. Dana 23:24

Okay. I want to explain to everybody if it's okay, that Patrick is an extremely sensitive person by nature very much of an empath, and part of what happens when you're really empathic person is a you believe that you're in charge of managing everybody's pain around you. So what you're describing right now makes a great deal of sense based on just the fact that you're a very empathetic, sensitive person. And so naturally, what you want to do is protect the people that you love from your pain, because you've been spending your whole life doing that,

Patrick Woods 23:54

anyway. And even trying to protect them from their own pain, right. Something that I've been trying to deal with recently is not take on other people's problems, right.

Kim Fauskee 24:01

So when you talk about having suicidal thoughts, how close did you actually get? I mean, did you actually have a plan?

Patrick Woods 24:09

There were two times where I was sitting in a bathtub holding a knife.

Dr. Dana 24:15

Okay, so you got that extreme? Yeah.

Patrick Woods 24:18

That was and then like, it was like catching a glimpse of myself, like in the reflection, and I was just like, Alright, I need to like, stop.

Dr. Dana 24:26

So you were able, obviously, yeah. And so eventually, I mean, how did it end up happening that your, your mom and stepdad kind of did everything they could to start to protect me,

Patrick Woods 24:41

I ended up I don't actually remember the exact situation. But I remember getting into trouble for something with my parents. And I remember like them wondering why I did what I did. And I remember just breaking down in front of them. And they didn't really know it was happening and I didn't want to talk to them. So I got up and left the room and I grabbed a notebook. And I think I just wrote for like a few pages of just what was going on what I was going through. And then I came back into the room and handed it to them. And they read it. And they gave me like giant hugs. And we talked about it for hours, probably.

Dr. Dana 25:20

What was the what were what they tried to do to help you?

Patrick Woods 25:24

They, I mean, immediately, they introduced me to you. That was the first one. The second one was they immediately started getting more involved in myself, because I was definitely trying to space myself out from them. And so that they couldn't necessarily figure out that I was hurting

Kim Fauskee 25:44

it again, I want to for clarification purposes. This is your mom and stepdad you're talking about as a unit right now.

Patrick Woods 25:51

It's so tough have called my stepdad, my dad for so long now, cuz that's how I see him. And now legally, he is my dad. So can you explain that? So a month ago, I had my stepdad Bradley, legally adopt me. So he is now my legal guardian, but not blood related. So Right. From now on, I will refer to my biological father's Mike. That's his name.

Kim Fauskee 26:19

So let me ask you a question here. And it may be difficult for you to talk about this. But does does your biological father at that point have to terminate his parental rights to you for that to happen?

Patrick Woods 26:29

Not because I was a legal adult? If I were if I were 16, then yes.

Kim Fauskee 26:34

Okay. And so did you have a conversation about this with your biological dad,

Patrick Woods 26:41

I didn't know. I didn't necessarily want to. And I sort of in the last year, I've definitely put a lot of my problems about him behind me. So it was sort of something and I feel like he didn't necessarily deserve to know. I did have to put an ad in the newspaper. So he probably saw it there. And then I do remember hearing that my step siblings, mom had talked to my dad about that, or Mike about that, that you had had been adopted. But I remember I watched my brother play a football game at DPW recently, and Mike was there and I walked right past him and didn't say anything to me. So I

Dr. Dana 27:26

just ignored you completely.

Kim Fauskee 27:27

So when was the last time you've actually had a conversation or had contact with your biological father. So it just eroded over time to the point. There's not had any contact with him.

Patrick Woods 27:40

It just it's, it's to the point where I know he's not good for me.

Kim Fauskee 27:47

Was there an actual breaking point or a straw that broke the camel's back or an epiphany, you had at some point that said, like, you've just had mentioned that he's not good for me. So at some point, you came to that realization. And in Dana and have I had these conversations before about when parents are abusive, and determining whether you can actually have a relationship with a parent or not.

Patrick Woods 28:14

And I did talk to Dana, about that when I was still sort of trying to decide whether or not I wanted a relationship with Him. And it was tough, because I would get really mentally healthy. And then I would go spend a few days over there. And then I would come back, and my parents would even see a difference in me just from like, 48 hours at his house. That was probably the first time where they brought that up to me. And I like sort of took a look back at the week that had previously happened and was like, wow, I spent a lot more time in my room at their house from like, just spending a weekend at Mike's house. So

Kim Fauskee 28:51

it wasn't a matter of just just the inner physical energy of being in his house versus some level of manipulation or there was definitely a strong level of manipulate. Okay, that was continuing to occur. Yeah. Okay.

Patrick Woods 29:07

Like my brother's continuing to deal with this today, like he

Kim Fauskee 29:12

in your siblings still have the relationship? Yeah.

Patrick Woods 29:16

Brody, my youngest sibling is the only one that still has somewhat a relationship with Mike. He goes every other weekend over there, okay. But he texted Mike and said, like, Hey, I, like I've got a lot of homework to do. Like, I don't think it's going to be a good weekend for me to come over. And Mike was just like, No, that's not happening. Like, I'll be there to pick you up at three. And as you know, a 13 year old you're like, uh, right, okay. And then so he had to, like, my mom had to step in and like, draft him a message and was like, here's what like, if you're okay to send this like, you need to stick up for yourself,

Kim Fauskee 29:57

or good for your mom. Yeah, but you shouldn't

Patrick Woods 29:59

have to do You that shouldn't be like, I'm picking you up like, yeah, no, you don't have a say, Yeah. And that's very much what I felt like your life is very much at that house, it's very much under his control.

Dr. Dana 30:10

So where did you then find the courage to slowly start to separate from your dad and spend less time there?

Patrick Woods 30:16

I think the courage really comes from myself, and then sort of seeing that the damage that it's causing to myself, and that because that damage is caused to myself, the damage it causes to those around me. Okay. Which is sort of tough to explain.

Dr. Dana 30:36

But you did start to fill up pretty profoundly. Yes. And was your was your dad talking shit about your mom during that period of time? during those periods of time? Yeah. And how would he refer to her to you?

Patrick Woods 30:49

It was never like a derogatory term, but it was just your mother.

Dr. Dana 30:52

Okay. And your mother, what?

Patrick Woods 30:55

Like your mother, like, isn't responding me. Like, I remember my dad saying that, like, your mother just uses me for my money. Like, that's the only reason that I have to pay her every week. Just like very slick stuff like that, where like, you're like, there could be reason behind that. But like,

Dr. Dana 31:20

what should that have to do with you? And yeah,

Patrick Woods 31:22

like, why am I getting put in the middle of your relationship? Right? And that, looking back at it, now, it was to try and separate me from my mom.

Dr. Dana 31:30

Okay. So you found the courage to slowly spend less and less time. And then

Patrick Woods 31:38

my mental health got a lot better. And then I wanted to still try and keep a relationship with my dad, I didn't want to necessarily just give up on it completely. So I would try and do I remember trying to go over there for like, a week at a time during the summer and spend a week over there. And that one, okay. And then I spent probably a total of like three more weekends over there and sort of just decided that it wasn't going to work

Dr. Dana 32:06

on how did he respond to your absence?

Patrick Woods 32:11

Key claim that like he really missed me. But in a very much like, not an I miss you, but like, more like missing an object. Like missing missing a thing, like

Dr. Dana 32:28

so you didn't feel like a person to him? Yeah,

Patrick Woods 32:30

like it was very much like I'm missing having my car. Like,

Dr. Dana 32:34

because when you were there, it felt more like an objectified connection. And that

Patrick Woods 32:39

was very much like sort of what he presented to me when he was trying to get me to come back over. And that was sort of my last straw, I think.

Kim Fauskee 32:46

So your feeling was it was a veiled comment, it didn't really have any substance behind us.

Patrick Woods 32:51

And that's sort of most of the things that he say, sort of feel like that if you look into it.

Kim Fauskee 32:57

I want to circle back to something that you said about you're feeling better. And I'm mentally I'm assuming, right? Yeah. And so how were you feeling better? And what did you do to feel better mentally,

Patrick Woods 33:10

I was only staying at my mom and dad's house. So I was in a much better environment. To begin with. I was seeing a therapist regularly. My parents were making sure that I wasn't spending long periods of time just isolated in my room. And then I was also forcing myself to try and do something active every day, whether it was surfing, go to the gym, go for a run, whatever it was just trying to do something active. And all of those things seemed to help. And then when I would go back over to his house, I would fall out of that routine, and thus my mental health would worsen.

Kim Fauskee 33:49

So it when you're with your mom and your stepdad, you're taking responsibility for mental health,

Patrick Woods 33:55

and they were sort of helping me to keep myself in check.

Kim Fauskee 34:01

They were your accountability, and cheerleaders and doing that. So they still are and then when you went to your dad's house, it just kind of fell off the

Patrick Woods 34:09

off. Yeah, it was very much just like, I'm going to keep parenting you like I did when you were here. So then it was like, Okay, well,

Kim Fauskee 34:15

and he was aware at that point of your struggles. Yes.

Patrick Woods 34:19

He should have been anyway.

Dr. Dana 34:22

Did you tell him or are you as

Patrick Woods 34:24

I mean, I had told him for and then he got to read some notes that I had written to him during child definitely should have done in did

Kim Fauskee 34:34

again, hate to circle back but for clarification, when you were sitting in the bathtub two times with a knife who ultimately knew about that? Did both sets of parents know about that? Ever?

Patrick Woods 34:49

I think my mom knew. I don't think my dad did but he didn't know that I was suicidal. Okay, I don't think he knew the extent to which though,

Kim Fauskee 34:58

okay, because I think that's a big point because if a parent understands, even if it isn't as graphic, as you just said, that your kid is suicidal, yeah, that should raise a multitude of red flags.

Patrick Woods 35:10

And what's, what took me a long time to get over was the fact that he still hasn't apologized for making me feel like that. I still have not gotten like, I'm sorry. Like, it was like, sorry, you felt like that?

Kim Fauskee 35:22

Are you expecting that?

Patrick Woods 35:24

Not anymore? No, I did for a long time, but not anymore.

Kim Fauskee 35:27

Why? Why are you not expecting that anymore,

Patrick Woods 35:30

I see him in a very different light I, like I very much see, like he's not capable of giving me that. And that's how I sort of have to look at it a lot of times is just that he's not capable of that. And that did take me a little while to understand is that people's brains like that simply function different.

Kim Fauskee 35:53

You know, you're not the typical 19 year old, and how you think you have a very advanced perspective, in terms of, of how you've learned to understand, you know, where your dad's coming from, and how you're dealing with it. I mean, by then, you're here, you're around the corner, you're getting around the corner already on this. That's the goal.

Dr. Dana 36:17

Well, and some of it, you know, comes down to your mom and your stepdad being emotionally sophisticated people. Oh, yeah, for sure. So they know a

Kim Fauskee 36:25

lot about well, we all we don't heal by ourselves.

Dr. Dana 36:28

Yeah. So they know a lot about their own psychology and are certainly advocates of, you know, being present emotionally.

Patrick Woods 36:36

Yeah, they definitely are. And they definitely help a lot.

Dr. Dana 36:40

But, but you are an unusual person for 19 kids, right about that, for sure.

Kim Fauskee 36:46

So how is it affected? I mean, you were talking earlier, about, you know, having crushes on girls, and vice versa. How has it affected your relationships that you've potentially or or have had in your young life so far,

Patrick Woods 37:01

so I'm still sort of battling this today is self image and self confidence. That one just went like straight to the garbage, when when you feel really depressed, and you just feel like garbage, then you're going to sort of see yourself like that, and then nothing else matters. Exactly. So then, you know, obviously, you're not caring about your appearance, you're not really caring what others are thinking about you. Because you don't care what you think about yourself, really. So then, you know, the first person that shows slight interest in you, you immediately sort of go after them because they showed interest in you. And that's so far and in between when you're deal feeling like that, that it's like, crack almost. So you very much chase that.

Dr. Dana 37:51

Or you're talking about in girlfriends.

Patrick Woods 37:55

But you're in a relationship. Now I am now and I am in a very happy relationship.

Dr. Dana 38:00

So do you feel like it's of a different quality than the ones that you have? I

Patrick Woods 38:03

do? Yeah. The ones that I would have before I could like, sort of point out red flags in them. But then I'd very much ignore them in the hopes of a relationship. Just because having that connection with another person was more important than whether the relationship was going to be beneficial or toxic.

Dr. Dana 38:24

Did you feel like you have to manage their pain also?

Patrick Woods 38:26

Yes, I still I still feel like that with some of my relationships. And I'm trying to do a lot better at not doing that.

Kim Fauskee 38:33

And do you feel that you attracted those like people that you have this familiarity, that you're used to whether it was

Patrick Woods 38:41

to some extent, yeah. My parents do tell me that. I do attract people, not in a sense that I'm an attractive person, but like, people just want to talk to me and become friends with me. I can see that. So I do sort of understand where I'm like, I would make sense that I could attract someone that would need help, especially if my personality is I want to help so it would definitely make sense.

Kim Fauskee 39:10

So So Patrick knows about the rescuer fantasy. At his young age.

Patrick Woods 39:15

I do. Yes. Okay.

Dr. Dana 39:17

It would be really wise to listen to the podcast on the rescue rescue fantasy, you might see yourself a little bit in there right now.

Kim Fauskee 39:24

I mean, that's, again, Dana and I've talked about this a couple of times on the podcast, but that, you know, that's the trap that US impasse in HSPs tend to fall into Yeah, right, that you were the knight in shining armor, then wants to solve somebody's issue, because, you know, that's empathy, right? Yeah.

Patrick Woods 39:44

And it becomes I mean, it doesn't even become someone for me. It became like solving everyone's issues. Like I just start talking to someone at a party and they like, give me a problem and I'd sit there for 30 minutes talking to them about it. I can't even tell you the guy's name, but I'm trying to To hear fixing problems. I'm sorry laugh. No. And that's that's just a regular occurrence for me is just like talking to people about their problems. I feel your pain on that one. Yeah. And the problem becomes trying not to take their pain on. Not I've been slowly getting better at.

Kim Fauskee 40:18

I was gonna say, if you can figure that out at your age, then you and I should have a discussion, because I'm still trying to figure that out. It's tough. Yeah. So I want to go back to your siblings, right. And again, they, they have a different relationship with your biological father, than you did. And you were kind of put on that pedestal and manipulated and abused, and so on and so forth. And you said that they're both having some level of issue now at their age, and they still have the relationship with your biological father.

Patrick Woods 40:53

So my sister does not anymore. She is also a highly sensitive person. And she went down the same road that I went down

Kim Fauskee 41:00

in, Does she understand that? That she's an HSP? And an empath? Oh,

Patrick Woods 41:05

we did a little family group, book club, where we read understanding the highly sensitive persons that Elaine

Kim Fauskee 41:12

Aaron's book, yes, okay. Yeah, I think it's written about us, by the way

Patrick Woods 41:16

it is. And my sister falls right under that category, and she refuses to believe it. She had a tough time reading that book. But I mean, it really opened my eyes to a lot of things and help me understand. I'm having my girlfriend read it right now.

Kim Fauskee 41:35

That will be helpful. Yeah,

Patrick Woods 41:37

I mean, my, my dad read it. And he's not a highly sensitive person. But he's like, if it helps me form a better relationship and understanding with you guys, like, I'm gonna totally do it. So my sister very much went down the same road that I did. But my dad is also a little bit of a misogynist. So my sister never really got the respect that I did, she always sort of got treated like shit. So she was able to understand I think a little bit quicker than I was that he was a shitty person. And I think that was mostly due to the fact that I still sort of saw him as my dad. But now the tough thing is that now that we're both gone, my brother is now on that pedestal. So he is, he currently is actually dealing with some school problems. He got. He's been, according to the dean. He's like the sort of leader of the rowdy kids. Somebody asked to be someone has to be. And he's very charismatic. So it didn't surprise me. But then he was in a group chat, I guess, with all the engineering kids like him and three of his friends were using some very vulgar language, and got called into the office and everything. And then few bullying, things got called into play, and Brody just broke down, not really knowing why he was doing these things. And they broke it down to him. When he was at Mike's house, like even though he was only there, twice a month, he was spending close to 40 hours with Mike versus a single week at his mom and dad's house, he was maybe seeing them five hours a week. So you know, 20 hours versus 40. Like he's seeing him double the amount of time even though it's only in a weekend. So but in that time, he was getting treated like a king like he was eating out for every meal, or like, Mike's wife, Susan was making them a meal. They were going shopping every day, they were like doing some sort of fun thing. Like he was getting treated like you go to Disneyland dad experiences Very much so. And then, you know, his actions at school start to sort of show that like, Oh, I'm like, on the shit like it like and then that sort of starts to show but he doesn't know why yet. And that's what's going to be challenging for him, for

sure. And he isn't a highly sensitive person. So there is a good chance that he would be able to maintain a relationship with my dad, as long as he can understand that my dad's broken.

Dr. Dana 44:21

Do you talk much to brother about this?

Patrick Woods 44:22

I do. Yeah. I've been trying to talk to him a lot more. I didn't a few years ago, just because he was still younger and wouldn't really understand it. But yeah, now that he's older, I've definitely started talking to him a lot more receptive to you. He is yeah, he very much I think appreciates the conversations we have. Oh, that's good. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 44:46

Good for both your sister and your brother to have an older sibling to kind of, you know,

Patrick Woods 44:51

yeah, and I know, I know. He really misses me since I'm moved out now. So yeah, I try and at least going to the house once a week. Hidden, but I've tried to text with him at least once every few days and just see how he's doing.

Dr. Dana 45:06

So what else that you haven't mentioned yet that you would like your peers to understand about the stuff that you've gone through and parent alienation and and all,

Patrick Woods 45:16

you're not alone, that's probably the biggest one. Your friends do care about you. And that talking does help. That's probably the biggest one, I didn't talk for a very long time about any of my problems. And it feels easier at the time to do that. Just because then you're not bringing up any of the emotions and bringing up emotion is not fun, pretty much ever. So dealing with those hard to face facts that you've got to deal with isn't fun, but you've got to do it in order to heal yourself. And I think a lot of people would rather just keep it inside and let that slowly build until they just explode. And exploding isn't a good thing to do.

Dr. Dana 46:02

No, are getting into trouble. Yes.

Kim Fauskee 46:05

So if a parent is listening to this podcast right now, from your standpoint, what are some of the warning signs that they should be looking for?

Patrick Woods 46:16

Virtualization is probably the biggest one. Like, yeah, they could be eating dinner with you. But then if they're going straight back into their room, coming home from school and going into their room, or like they're essentially just living in their room, that's probably a pretty good sign that something's not right.

If they used to talk to you a lot about what was going on in their personal life, and then that stops, that's typically a pretty good sign. And then even like, my parents said that they could see it in my mood, obviously, I thought I was doing a good job hiding it, but you could you probably know your kid pretty well. So you could probably see that their mood is changing. I don't think my outfits or anything really changed. But I do know that some people that go through depression tend to sort of change styles, and they'll start wearing a lot like more loose fitting clothing. And sort of just like really know how to put it I guess bag here clothing, just like not really taking as much care in your appearance, sweatpants, hoodies stuff like that, you know,

Kim Fauskee 47:24

stuff you can hide in? Yes,

Patrick Woods 47:26

very much. So stuff that you feel comfortable in. I wasn't eating, but I do know that that can go either way. Some people use food as a comfort item and could just over indulge in food. I really just never felt hungry. So I just kind of stopped eating.

Kim Fauskee 47:44

Was the video game playing an addiction to you? Or was it just trying to treat a symptom?

Patrick Woods 47:51

It was death. I think it was both. I mean, video games are addictive in a sense. But when I was playing video games, I was playing with other people like I was I actually have friends that live up in Washington that I've never met in real life. But I've known for five years now. I still talk to those friends, I'm still in group chats with them, I still get birthday wishes from them, I still wish them happy birthday. I've had FaceTime calls, but I've never met these people in real life. They were some of my closest friends through those times. And the only way that I could connect with them was hopping onto a video game. So they were gamers like you Yes. But you know, they're also a teenager. So like, we can bond over stupid stuff that's happening. And it's a it's a peer group it is. And it becomes a friend group. And especially when you feel like you don't necessarily have anyone in real life to be able to escape to that and then feel like okay, I have people here also, then that also, I think sort of solidifies the sort of addiction to video games, if that's also where you're getting your, like social health from? Yeah, I think I think having friends on that, for sure would increase the addiction, if that's where you're really only going for a sort of social output.

Dr. Dana 49:16

Did you talk to them about the way you were feeling?

Patrick Woods 49:19

I did actually, they were actually some of my first friends to know. Oh. And that was sort of because I was like, they can't really tell anyone that I know like in person, right. But they were super supportive. They like did a really like they were super nice about it. They were super helping. And I should have seen that as more like my friends here would do the same thing. But you still feel like you don't want to talk about it. Like it's still something you feel you need to hide.

Dr. Dana 49:50

Because it's embarrassing.

Patrick Woods 49:51

It's embarrassing. And it's also I mean, it goes back to that feelings thing. You don't want to deal with feelings and those are the feelings that are causing the most issue. So if you can sort of hide those from people, then they're never going to get brought up.

Kim Fauskee 50:06

And probably not knowing how to deal with those feelings either. Right?

Patrick Woods 50:10

Yeah. And that's also another thing is at that age, I had no idea what I was doing. So when those feelings would come up, they just come up and there was nowhere I could put them or deal with them.

Kim Fauskee 50:21

At what age did your stepfather now father come into your life?

Patrick Woods 50:29

Seven, eight, is pretty young.

Kim Fauskee 50:33

Okay. And was he an influential person in your life right away?

Patrick Woods 50:39

Not right away. But pretty quick after him and my mom started dating.

Kim Fauskee 50:46

Okay. The reason I'm asking that question is, from my own experience, I was looking for different role models, though, that was different from my father. And so I was seeking out that from either friends of mine that I thought had a better relationship with their father, sports coaches that actually took an interest in me. So that, for me was extremely helpful that I knew that other people, other fathers, other older male role models actually existed out there that actually saw me for who I wanted to be seen as, and took an interest in me and and so I continually sought that out. And so I was thinking about, you know, how positively you speak about your, your now father about that. And maybe it was a godsend that he came into your life and kind of probably a little bit changed the trajectory of the way that you could have gone with 100%. And we wouldn't be sitting here today having this conversation.

Patrick Woods 51:52

I definitely think so. He's definitely had a huge impact on my life. I mean, one of the reasons I even started surfing was because of him. And that is like what I based my entire personality off of now. My mom has told me like, yeah, you definitely have pretty shit luck when it comes to the dad department.

But God definitely blessed you and he came into your life. And that I think, definitely does really make up for it. If somebody

Kim Fauskee 52:23

once told me you can't choose your parents. Yeah. He did. But no, he did. Well. You gotta say he got a second chance, at least for I

Patrick Woods 52:33

didn't get a pre awesome second chance. Yeah. Yeah. And that's what's I think, a bit of a bummer for a lot of kids that they don't get that second chance.

Kim Fauskee 52:44

And obviously, you have this close relationship with your with your now Father. Otherwise, obviously, you wouldn't have gone through all what you had to go through to to have him become legally your father. Do you? Do your siblings have a similar little relationship with him?

Patrick Woods 53:03

My sister does for sure. I'm not quite too sure with Brody. And I think that's I think he definitely sees him as a dad. But I don't know if he would necessarily ever become adopted by Bradley. And I think that's more as of right now. I mean, I could be totally wrong. But I think right now, he's way too scared of Mike to ever do something like that. And I mean, at the time, if you told me about doing something like that, I would have thought you were crazy. So you know, in five years, who knows what he's doing. But I think there's a high likelihood that my sister could do the same thing. She very much feels that Radley is her dad. I had a card one day that I that I had written and it was something along the lines of like, anyone can be a father, but it takes someone special to actually be a dad. And that's sort of resonated with me in the sense of my dad did a pretty piss poor job. And then I had someone else come into my life and actually be a dad to me. And it completely changed my life.

Kim Fauskee 54:16

So why was it important for you to be formally adopted by him?

Patrick Woods 54:23

It wasn't necessarily important, I guess in the sense of more it was like, finally getting Mike out of my life. I guess it was more of like a symbolic thing for me. I already saw him as my dad, but I guess now it was now it's like it's on paper

Kim Fauskee 54:42

like so it was like closing the door on that chapter of your life or opening a new one? Yeah.

Dr. Dana 54:47

So when you think about your dad now, how do you feel? Do you are you still really resentful toward him? Do you feel like you've come to peace and

Patrick Woods 54:54

I feel like I've definitely come to all way more peace with it. Just looking at the whole situation I just sort of feel sad. And not necessarily, like, sad in the moment. I'm a little sad for what happened. And I'm sad for him. So you pity him?

Dr. Dana 55:14

Yeah. Well, because he's missing out on a really lovely young man.

Patrick Woods 55:18

I don't necessarily see it that way. But I see it more in the sense that he's just missing out on a lot of really awesome aspects of life.

Dr. Dana 55:27

So it doesn't it's not even that poor from

Patrick Woods 55:29

from a dad's perspective. Yes. From your perspective. Yeah. So

Kim Fauskee 55:32

so he's remarried. You were saying, right, yes. And do you have any relationship with his new wife at all? Or do you not want

Patrick Woods 55:40

to have a whole weird can of worms? He actually, that's good. We got eight more minutes. So he actually married my fifth grade teacher.

Kim Fauskee 55:49

Okay. Small town we live in? Yeah.

Patrick Woods 55:53

Well, I had her for like two weeks, and then I switched classes. But then in that amount of time, we were like going back and forth to try and get us ready for junior high. My sister actually had her for the entire year in sixth grade. And that's actually when my dad and her met. That's when they started dating also, which made that really awkward.

Kim Fauskee 56:12

It's very awkward. It's like fishing off the company peers.

Patrick Woods 56:18

So that's actually how they ended up meeting. And then I like sort of knew her and had a relationship with her. which then makes it a little weird to when I had like, first met her because I'm like, You're like my teacher. But now like, I can just call you by your first name.

Kim Fauskee 56:37

Yeah, it's always it's always weird for kids to see their teachers out in public. Oh, yeah. Not let alone your your father being married to them. It's like, really? You're a real? You're a real person or one of your father's bedroom. Oh, yeah. Even more people. We're awkward. Yeah, sure.

Patrick Woods 56:57

And it's, it's also a really strange we've all sort of brought up this but um, he very much married his mom.

Kim Fauskee 57:07

If a piece of people listen to this podcast enough, they know how that happened. Yeah.

Patrick Woods 57:11

So he married Susan Wilson. Susan's probably six foot maybe six one. She's a tall lady. Mike's mom, six foot. Both very athletic build. Both were elementary school teachers. Wow. And both idolized Mike.

Kim Fauskee 57:35

Wow. Yeah, you're right. Yeah.

Patrick Woods 57:37

It's crazy.

Kim Fauskee 57:38

You hit the trifecta.

Patrick Woods 57:39

He did like he married his mom. Wow. It's like a wild like first piece that together and I was just like, oh, wow, you're like really messed up.

Dr. Dana 57:51

Oh, man, we are you worried about the way that her kids are being?

Kim Fauskee 57:56

Oh, she brought kids into that relationship?

Patrick Woods 58:00

Somewhat, but like I met them a few times. And they were just like little little shits. There I don't know necessarily what their situation with their dad is like, but I don't think they're parented very much at all. And then Mike does not parent them at all. Oh, okay. Pretty much leaves that straight to Susan. Okay. But I mean, I don't really know how that relationship is gonna work out for those two kids. So.

Dr. Dana 58:34

So what about your life moving forward? Patrick? Do you feel like you've sort of healed a lot of what it is that created though that depression and suicidal feelings very much. So yeah. Those are feelings that are no part of your life anymore?

Patrick Woods 58:50

Not anymore. No. I do I still sort of deal with feelings of depression and sadness, but nothing that has to deal with what I went through.

Dr. Dana 59:03

Okay. Well, nobody gets a life without pain.

Patrick Woods 59:07

Exactly. That's for sure. Yeah, I'm

Kim Fauskee 59:10

trying to do tick tock and Instagram these days.

Dr. Dana 59:13

Yeah, we're in and 500 self help books. Right. Exactly.

Patrick Woods 59:20

Yeah, I mean, everyone's gonna go through pain. I definitely feel like I have closed the chapter on our close the page on that chapter of pain, though.

Dr. Dana 59:31

You have Yes. Yeah. Okay. That's pretty amazing. Don't you think for somebody who's 19 years old to get to that kind of, well, I was

Kim Fauskee 59:38

sitting here having a little bit of envy, but that's not it's not the right fit. It's not the right thing to have here. It's just I am sitting here and probably the listeners has listened for the last I was sitting here amazed again, bringing up that he's 19 years old with this perspective. And granted, he was smart enough and was led to help but but again, have to Ain't on your life when you're 18. Yeah, I didn't have Dana in my life when I was 18. But, you know, again, you know, there are some God sends in life and for whatever reason you were led down that right path toward figuring it out what you were experiencing what you were feeling in there. But But again, you're a very bright young man, thank you to be able to really conceptualize it. Because I think that's, that's the hard part, right? You can sit here and get that expertise and understand, you know, you can kind of understand it and go, Okay, that makes sense to me, but really to conceptualize it, and to be where you are. And this is all recent stuff. People spent a lifetime. Yeah, getting there. And again, to rehash a point that we bring up on the show a lot is that there is no finish line. There is no no, that the healing process is a journey. But man, you are in that race, way down the road already. So continue doing what you're doing. And, and there's great things ahead for you hope and sell.

Dr. Dana 1:01:11

We just got a new psychological term that's invented. It's called Patrick env.

Kim Fauskee 1:01:15

Your Patrick env. Right. I know it sounded bad. Oh, so I was sitting there thinking in my head. Should I even say that or not? Because it kind of Degrassi dresses from what you were saying, but I was feeling like God, I wish I was 19 again, and I was where he was, I think you've got a copyright that term, Patrick and Patrick, and we'll give Patrick full credit. Patrick, anything else before and again, want to thank you for being here and being vulnerable and transparent and talking about your experience? Because it's, it's not easy. It's not easy, you know, to talk about, you know, the experiences that you've had in life and, and in, you know, some of it, you know, was it's heartbreaking to hear,

Patrick Woods 1:01:57

yeah, it's definitely been a hard thing to go through. But if I can talk about it, and help other people that are going through what I went through, I know that stuff's hard. So

Kim Fauskee 1:02:09

I'm sure I'm sure you will, and I'm sure that I again, you'll have great things at you. So help. So thanks for being here.

Patrick Woods 1:02:17

Thank you for having me on.

Dr. Dana 1:02:18

We really appreciate it.

Fear Me Out 1:02:21

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