

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 72

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Trauma - Pixie Saavedra, Dr. Dana Saperstein & Justine Hamilton

Dr. Dana 00:00

Welcome to the Fear Me Out podcast. On this episode, Justine Hamilton and I conclude our interview with Pixie. Her story is quite compelling. The second episode has a lot to do with how she recovered from drug addiction and alcohol abuse and found her way into the restaurant business and developed a relationship with a man who became her husband, and the father of her son. So hope you enjoy this episode. Thanks for listening. There are two basic motivating forces fear and love. When we're afraid, we pull back from life. When we're in love, we open up to all that life has to offer with passion, excitement, and acceptance.

Fear Me Out 01:00

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 Dr. Dana Saperstein

Pixie Saavedra 01:22

Oh, like I was like, This is what happened. You know, like, I hit her, but I did not do that, like this picture that I'm looking at, like, there's no way you know, I'm tough, tough, but I'm not that tough. You know, I feel like so I when it came to sentencing, my lawyer got the charges down to a misdemeanor assault with, quote, unquote, time served for the time I've done in county jail. You know, because they give you credit at time and a half. So like, he was like, they were like, you basically done like a year, you know, so like they did it was a year sentence for that washed. And then they go Alright, so and I was like, Cool. So like, in my mind, I'm like, I get to go home. Right? My parents are like, yes, you know, my grandfather's there. He's like, okay, you know, your grandfather's showed up, he showed up to be a part of the circus, but like, it wasn't really you know what I mean, at that point, like, we had a really interesting relationship. But it was more like out of obligation, my mom and supporting the situation. So anyway, like, he was still completely ashamed of me. And I was an absolute embarrassment to the family. And I just compounded that horribly by this incident. So. So yeah, I was super excited, because I'm like, Cool, I'm going home, you know, time served, like I win. And then they're like, Alright, so we're gonna go ahead and ship you back to LA County, and you'll come back in a month for another hearing for the probation violation. I was like, shit. So even though I had beaten the assault charge still violated my probation. Right? Okay. So I was like, Oh, well, that's how that works. So then I went back to jail, and waited for my next court date, and then came back for sentencing. And they told me, they were

like, so for the, for the sentencing for the probation violation, you have to go back to the original judge. Right. That's how it works. Well, that judge, not like me, will just say that because he felt like I got away even said this in open court that he felt like I got away with something. Because of me, my parents are helping me. You know, and so he told me in court the first time I guess I left that out the first time when I got sent us, and I gotta go home on house arrest when I was 19. He said, If I see you in this courtroom again, I'm going to make an example of you. Oh, cool. And he said my problem in court. So then here I am now two years later, and he's like, Oh, hello. And I was like, Oh, shit. You know, so he said, you know, how are you doing? I was like, yeah, not great. I've been better, you know? So yeah, he tells me, he's all you know, I told you, I saw you again. I said, I remember. He's like, alright, so you know, considering everything that's happened here. And, you know, you got your free little Soulcharge to see and blah, blah, blah. He goes, I got three choices. Settle. This is crazy. He's like, you have three choices here. You know, there's a low term, 16 months. It's midterm. It's been two years. There's three. There's a high term, it's three years for a probation violation, because I feel like being fair today, and I hereby sentence you to two years in the State Penitentiary.

Dr. Dana 04:24

Oh my god.

Pixie Saaverdra 04:25

I just was like, You gotta be kidding me two years in prison. Wow. So that was like a gut check. Right? I was like, holy smokes, I'm going to prison. I look over at my parents. My mom was crying. My grandpa looks pissed. And I just looked back at the judge and like in a movie, like two tears, one on each side and I was like, I'm going to prison. So they have me all in my shackles, my ankles and my hands. And a whole bit, went back to the cell. And I just started bawling. I was like, This is crazy. So it was in that moment where I actually found some real humility. And I thought, You know what? I didn't do what they're saying I did. But I also didn't really do anything, right, either. I haven't been making good choices. I haven't been putting myself in good situations, like, I'm just gonna do my time, shut my mouth. And who cares? You know what I mean? Like, I might not be here for the right reason, but I'm here for some reason. And I'm just gonna go ahead and take it, you know,

Dr. Dana 05:35

to feel like that was the beginning of a change in your life.

Pixie Saaverdra 05:38

I do. I really do. Yeah, it was like, the first moment where like, what was definitely the first moment where I had taken, like, full accountability for making poor choices.

Dr. Dana 05:52

And you were 2221 21. Yeah.

Pixie Saaverdra 05:55

Where I wasn't completely, like indignant. You know, like, I was just like, at that moment, I was humbled, and I was like, dang, you're going to prison? That's a big deal. Like, this is not okay.

Dr. Dana 06:07

You weren't terrified by what could potentially happen. I don't think I got to terrified

Pixie Saaverdra 06:11

until I don't know if I ever got terrified Actually, no, no. No terrified.

Dr. Dana 06:17

So did you end up serving that time? Yeah, you did?

Pixie Saaverdra 06:21

Yeah. California institution for women in Corona. Wow. So I got shipped to prison. And again, like, like I said, at the time, like the prisons were really full, like the jails and the prisons were really full. This was like, 2002.

Dr. Dana 06:35

If I can interrupt just for a second. When I first met you an hour or so ago, this is a woman I would see at the restaurant. Never in my life who I imagined this, I was going to hear this story from this woman who always had a big smile on her face and was super friendly. And very engaging. This was a tough life.

Pixie Saaverdra 06:56

Yeah. Yeah. The 20s were crazy.

Dr. Dana 06:59

Wow. Okay, I'm sorry. Go ahead. Yeah. Well, I'm just kind of I mean, again, it's one series of really sad, tragic experiences after another. How can you be the person that you are now considering everything that you've been through?

Pixie Saaverdra 07:14

Sweetly worded question, first of all, thank you are to prison, back to jail, and then to prison. And like I said, just those experiences, like the things that you sort of endure, like, it will be graphic, you know, but like, the things that you endure through, like, I mean, just the, I mean, it's it's abuse, you know, by the hands of correctional officers and other things. And then of course, your, your, what's the word I'm looking for? You know, the other people that are there with you, right, so like, you know, anyway, you got a whole host of

Dr. Dana 07:45

how did you survive all that stuff?

Pixie Saaverdra 07:47

Um, I just, yeah, survived is the word you know what I mean, you just sort of do I think it's like, it's, it's like, the best way I can think of to say it is you just adapt to your surroundings. You know,

Dr. Dana 08:01

How did you not get post-traumatic stress?

Pixie Saaverdra 08:04

I don't know. I don't know. Well, maybe it was my ability to compartmentalize and, you know, maybe I don't know, did you serve the full two years? No, I wasn't nine or up to a year. Yeah. So since it was a probation violation, not like a felony charge that I actually went to halftime.

Justine Hamilton 08:24

So when you were in there, I know. I know. I know. You've survived by just compartmentalizing and doing what you had to do. But what was going on inside of your heart or your head? Were you so sad? Were you so angry? Or were you like, Okay, I am going to change once I get out of here. Like how did the inside of you feel?

Pixie Saaverdra 08:45

think all those things, you know, like, I was sad. I felt horrible for hurting my parents. That was probably one of the most prevalent feelings because again, this recurring theme in my life is like I have never gone without feeling except when I was on meth for three months nonstop. Never was there a point in all my antics where I didn't think about the pain I was causing my parents

Dr. Dana 09:08

or whatever to grandpa was part of your concern at

Pixie Saaverdra 09:11

that point. No, no, at that point. I was just mad at the old bugger. Well, he

Dr. Dana 09:15

was so mean to us pretty mean to me.

Pixie Saaverdra 09:17

Yeah. And then, you know, when I really reflected, I was like, he's kind of always been like that. He's kind of always been a conditional love guy. Being really frank, a narcissist. You know, like, he just he was like, if you didn't do things the way he thought you should do things, then you weren't okay. In his book. You know, like if you weren't, he had to give a little back color. He had this. This expectation of me. I realized, like later, I was a pretty smart kid. I was a pretty good kid. Had a good sense of humor. I was, you know, social, like I said I was a good runner. I ran track and then I played soccer for 10 years. My grandpa had this My vision of the success that I would see in life, right like the, that I would be, he used to tell people that I was going to be a professional. Who did he used to say he used to say I was gonna be a reporter because I was really good at writing and, you know, and he knew I was going to be an athlete through life and all these things, right? Like, he just really believed, like, all these things were gonna happen for me, and when they didn't, when 19 I got arrested and high on meth. And, you know, for a police officer, that's quite the

Dr. Dana 10:30

was gonna say, That's not his idea of a good, good kid. And there was

Pixie Saaverdra 10:33

no coming back from that with him, you know, and so it just continued really, until he died a few years ago. Like where he was just, yeah, Madami Did you ever confront him? Yeah. Didn't go well. didn't go well.

Dr. Dana 10:49

I was wrong. I was wrong. So you just didn't go well, with a narcissist, that's

Pixie Saaverdra 10:53

for sure. I learned that and I learned that lesson a few times my life with different people. And I'll actually circle back to that. So I will. Yeah, I'll circle back to that. So my show I went to prison, I got a funny story about when I first hit. So they take you in and they take you in what they call receiving, right, and you sit in receiving until they have a bed for you in the yard. So I was in reception for a little while. It's like the dead of summer and corona smelled like shit. And I was like, really, it's just a bad scene, you know, so hot, no fans, no air conditioner, nothing like that. And then just the smell shit everywhere. And then they finally transferred me to the yard. And when I hit the yard, again, because of the fullness of the jails, they just put me in the first bed that opened up. And the bed was in this unit called Miller. They name them like last names like they're all out employee names for people that donated money to the prison or whatever I imagine. I don't know. I don't know that side of it. But the philanthropy side. But so they put me in this unit called Miller that I found out on my second day there was actually nicknamed killer Miller, because that's where all of the people that were in there for murder and other Sikhs lived. Wow. So they put me in the wrong place wasn't supposed to be. It's all the murders. You did all the murders. And so I was in there with. I don't know. I mean, everybody is familiar with the Charlie Manson murders. So I was there with Susan Atkins, and Patricia crane Winkle. And yeah, Leslie Van Halen was in a different unit. But anyway, so I was there with them. made friends with Susan Atkins, and we hung out. Shall we meet? She made a bracelet that I still have. Anyway, were you petrified? Not really? Not really, at that point, it was just acceptance. Right? At that point. I was just like, well, here I am. You know, and so you just sort of fall in line. You tell them what you were in for? And what was their reaction. So that was when I realized I was in the wrong place. Right. So they put me in, they put me in this cell with this woman named pops. And pops was there for killing her son in law, and didn't mind telling the story a lot. And so once she told me that story, and then I'm like, Wow, that's pretty serious. And she's like, Well, I've been in here for like, 30 years already. And I'm like, wow, that's a long time. I'm like, so this is home, you know, and I'm talking to her. And she's like, Yeah, she's like, I mean, all of us. For all of us. It's home. And I'm like, what you mean, all of you. She's all everyone that lives in here. She's like, what's your, what's your term look like? She's thinking I'm at the beginning of some life term. You know? And I was like, what? Like, hopefully only like a year, you only mean like, and she's like, Oh, you're in the wrong place, honey. And I was like, Oh, I understand. She's all this is killer Miller. I was like, killer. Miller was on the phone with my mom that night. Again, poor mom. And I'm like, I'm in this unit called killer Miller. What the hell? She's like, what she like freaked out, right? She calls the jail who does that? Right. She calls like she's calling the principal's. She calls the jail to talk to the ward and she's like, I need to speak to the morning. She calls the jail and she's like, You need to get her out of there right now. She's in the wrong place. Oh, my mom calling the jail to try and get me moved. And he's like, laughing I ended up getting assigned. So like, you get assigned a job and I got assigned

actually to be because you have to have like a routine. Anyway, so I got assigned. You go to classes and you have a job and you have meal times and you have exercise time and there's all these things are part of your schedule. And so I got a summer job assignment to be the warden's janitor, and I'm pretty sure he did that on purpose after my mom called me like he's like who is this? Or mommy called? Right? So like I met this guy and we ended up having lots of laughs together he was cool like we you know whatever. And you're with this killer Miller Yeah, they retired and got me moved. Yeah, he got me moved to a unit called Barnum Burg, which was for drug offenders. So yeah, so then I was on it. Wow. Yeah.

Justine Hamilton 14:57

And was it the longest year of your life? Probably,

Pixie Saaverdra 15:01

yeah, I read a lot of books, I slept a lot less as much as they would let me they don't let you sleep very much. Did you feel safe? Yeah, it's fine. It did. It's a lot more comfortable than county jail. Oh, yeah.

Dr. Dana 15:15

You didn't get assaulted or any of that sort of stuff? No. Well,

Pixie Saaverdra 15:19

no, not in prison. So, what's. So what's interesting is that, like, once you get to prison, it's like, people are there for a long stay, right? So whether it's a year or whether it's 30 years, or 50 years or whatever, at that point, they're trying to create a, like a comfortable home environment, you're, you've now officially kicked the drugs, whatever you're coming off of, you know, like, that's gone, you're sober, right? Like it or not, you're sober for the most part. And I'm not saying you can't get drugs in prison, you absolutely can't, usually from the cops, but you know, you can, you can do whatever you want in there, for the most part, to be honest, it's kind of the Wild West, like, there's all kinds of stuff that goes on that you're not supposed to be doing in prison, but for the most part, people are setting up like a home life, you know, so like, people have their boyfriend or girlfriend, they have their mom and dad, they have their siblings, they have their like, you create a whole family, you create a whole, you know, your cell is your home, you make it real nice. It's like, you know, so at that point, when you get to prison, and especially with women, women have an innate need to like create home where they are, right. So women's prison is a lot different than men's prison, where there's not as much politics and women's prison. You know what I mean? We don't have as much of the like race, you know, racially motivated crimes or anything like that. There's not as much gang active. By the time we get to prison. There's like this level, like I said, there's this level of like, just wanting to create a safe space. So honestly, County Jail is a nightmare, especially LA county jail. I don't know. I don't know. I haven't been any other county jails. But I imagine LA County is probably pretty high on the list of danger. But um, yeah, and I know that, you know, based on the kind of people I was hanging out with for years they call Samburu County Jail in San Bernardino Camp Snoopy. So I imagine it's a lot different. So yeah, jail, or you know, prison is a lot different. You sort of, you know, you make friends, you make a family, you make a life, sort of chill out.

Justine Hamilton 17:12

And you did that you found your people there, kind of Yeah, keep in touch with anyone?

Pixie Saaverdra 17:17

No, not really. I did for a little while afterwards. I actually had a girlfriend when I was in prison.

Dr. Dana 17:24

How do you not feel incredibly sad when you talk about all this stuff? It's so sad. I mean, you don't seem like the kind of person that would end up in this kind of a situation. It just seems so sad to me. I mean, maybe it's just my complete ignorance of, you know, what makes the world work in that world. Because, luckily, so far, I've not been to jail. And I hope for you that hopefully, it'll never happen. But you know, all we ever see is what's in the movies. And until it's very sensationalized. Yeah, and I appreciate that, you know, it's all done for dramatic, of course, but at the same time, you just don't know, man, it's hard for me to imagine how you would be able to cope in an environment like that and not be really sad. And

Pixie Saaverdra 18:10

hearing you say that, and if I'm looking if I'm stepping outside of myself, and like, look, I think, and this might sound kind of cheesy, but I think it's just the nature of being a survivor, at this point in my life,

Dr. Dana 18:22

because you started your life. I mean, most people that end up the way that you ended up have started their life right from the beginning, with horrible abuse of all different kinds. So your situation is incredibly unusual compared to most people that I've had conversations with because I work with tons of people that have have post traumatic stress and all that sort of thing. And, and it's you become so destructive, self destructive, so early in your life, when you're when your abuse starts right from the beginning. But you know, it sounds like you had a good decade maybe or close to that before I can refer you your

Pixie Saaverdra 18:57

life really is in decades to what Justin said at the beginning. Like it really is like there was the first 10 years it was pretty much sunshine and roses and it's

Dr. Dana 19:04

your first experience in jail was in Utah, even though you weren't in jail.

Pixie Saaverdra 19:11

Yeah, yes. Yes. I

Dr. Dana 19:13

hear you being discriminated against and being ostracized and made to feel bad about yourself and and it just it just twisted your life in such a sad tragic way.

Pixie Saaverdra 19:23

Yeah, and I think I think since you brought that up if I'm putting it all together for me, what's likely is that as a result of that being such a dramatic difference from who I was just prior Yeah, and like how my life

was just prior Yeah, it was just all too much you know, and like I didn't and yeah, I guess that was like the start of my life right like for this portion right? It was like starting life all over like okay, here's my major trauma. I don't know if you know some of it and I won't go too far down this rabbit hole but I think all So some of it like now that I've haven't even got to the part where I meet my biological family, but now that I know my biological family, yeah, some of that stuff's it's a nature. It's, it's, it's in there, it's part of my makeup.

Dr. Dana 20:12

But what about the degree of sensitivity that you go through life with because you strictly as a really sensitive person, like more than most. And so whatever happens is going to affect you more strongly than it would most people. And those are genetic things that nobody has any control over is how deeply they feel their feelings, and how strongly things affect them. And I just wonder if you've ever thought about the fact that so much of this has to do with being an innately really sensitive person. So trauma is going to affect you more than it would most.

Pixie Saaverdra 20:45

I haven't ever thought about that. But it makes sense. What I have thought a lot about and I have a lot of theories around is, and I use the word allowance. You've probably even heard me say it, but like his perspective, and perception, and like how everybody's is different, right? And like we say, like, like that trauma for one person. Like, I hate to be so crass, but like that, like a bad hair day for one person could be equivalent to getting raped. Well, yeah. Right. Like there's this perception or persona based on and our perception is only based on our personal experience, right? So like how we see things is only based on the things that we've personally been through. And I think for me, like, I just continue to go through, like weirder and weirder, so my perception or my perspective continues to evolve. And my, you know, I have an enormous amount of understanding and empathy for other people. Okay. And so I think my ability to be empathetic and understanding and like, look at the world through other people's eyes, and not just my own, affords me the ability to, like, not be as deeply affected. Like, I think to what you're saying, like, like, like, it's all just kind of okay, because it all just kind of is what it is, you know what I mean? Like, I don't know how to say that. Like, if I'm saying that, right, like it all just like things?

Dr. Dana 22:12

Well, you have to look at it this way, otherwise, you would not have survived? Maybe? That's just my perception.

Justine Hamilton 22:19

I mean, it's just, it's Mike, my main question is, and it's because I know you a little bit, but it's just like, but what about you? You know, I mean, you have been through things that people can't even fathom for decades of your life. And you can sit in here and tell your story, and, you know, joke about it to, you know, to make sure that it works. Okay. But I know you enough to know how kind and generous and empathetic and good you are. But I want to make sure I don't know, my question is, are you taking care of yourself? And have you sort of dealt with all the stuff that has happened to you? And you know, you're going through life. And you know, you've had this last decade where you really are doing, you've met your husband, and you're, you know, you've created your own family, and everything is so much

better than it was? But it's just like, what about this person that has had 20 years of really shitty shitty things happen to them? Are you taking care of you?

Pixie Saaverdra 23:32

I don't know the answer to that question.

Dr. Dana 23:34

That's a really good question. Yes. A tough one to answer. I

Pixie Saaverdra 23:36

don't know the answer to that question. You know, and I don't know, I don't know if that's, I feel like it might even be subjective. You know, like to, like subjective, like, like, again, to perspective, right? Like, am I taking care of myself? I think so. A lot of healing work. And I've done a lot of, you know, looking at the whys and looking at the you know, how to feel joy, how to have joy in my life, how to make people around me happy so that I can I think bring joy to other people brings me joy. You know, so taking care of me a little bit is taking care of others.

Justine Hamilton 24:14

Have you just bawled your head off?

Pixie Saaverdra 24:18

In moments? There's been times yeah, there's been times. Yeah. Jail. Or in you know, I think. So going further along the path, right. So like, getting out of prison, like I tell 1000 funny stories about prison and in 1000 terrible stories about prison. But after, but that was really honestly a small part of my life, you know, and, I mean, in the grand scheme was, you know, a little over a year of 40 years, right. And only a small portion of the beginning of the second decade, right. So, get out of prison. You would think at that point, I would get my shit together. I didn't actually started using cocaine for the first time and drinking again, after I was out for like a year before I started doing that. But then immediately because I'm an overachiever, I started selling cocaine. So then became a drug dealer. On top of being a drug dealer. I started my own business doing concerts, so putting on concerts, and I would like, also selling drugs was like making money. So I did that for a long time. Never got in trouble for that. And then,

Justine Hamilton 25:29

What were you thinking about why you're doing that? Are you having fun? Or were you just like, I'm not gonna get caught?

Pixie Saaverdra 25:36

Or I didn't think so. I was invincible at that time. For some reason. I have no idea why cuz I was on felony probation. There's no, there's completely reckless. There's no reason why I should have thought that I was going to be okay. Like, no reason, then got sober, went to rehab in Florida.

Justine Hamilton 25:51

And where did that how did that happen?

Pixie Saaverdra 25:53

I had a breaking point. I was laying in bed and I was super high. And I was looking at the ceiling and it was spinning. And I'd probably been up for a couple days probably. And I felt like crap. And I was staring at the ceiling. And I thought about my parents.

Dr. Dana 26:06

So you went to rehab and got clean. I

Pixie Saaverdra 26:09

went to rehab and got clean. But then I relapsed in Miami. Oh, okay. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 26:14

So you mentioned that you met your biological family, and then things even changed more? Is there more to say before you get to that?

Pixie Saaverdra 26:22

Actually, there's so there's like, so I'll fast forward a little bit. So I did, I did that. God went to rehab with the intention of getting sober. Now we're probably around 2008. So I went, I went, you know, I did all my, my band stuff. And my, you know, I was booking bands and selling coke and partying and doing my thing, having a good time, I thought, you know, to me, it was a good time. And then made my decision that I was going to quit doing all that I'm going to start my life over again, I had a few times where that came up for me, you know, like, this isn't right, this isn't what I want. It's not true to who I am, etc, you know, quit doing the bad stuff and went to Florida to get clean. Two and a half months into a three month stay at rehab, I relapsed on crack, smoke crack for the first time in Miami. After doing that, I was actually again sexually assaulted, this time worse, because nobody had money for the drugs that we did. So that went that landed on me. And then we had to crawl back to the rehab in the morning and beg to be let back in to which we were denied. And we're kicked out with all of our stuff in garbage bags on the street. And I was afraid to tell my parents, because I failed. I failed rehab. So I proceeded to be homeless for a few days before I collected enough to call my parents and tell them what had happened. So that they could get me a plane ticket and bring me home to Los Angeles to Los Angeles, at which point I started using again. And this time though, like it got darker, right? Because this time, it wasn't like fun anymore. Now I had a problem. Now there's something wrong with me again, and I'm feeling like a complete failure and like, Oh, I'm just worthless. Like, I can't do nothing, right? I can't even do rehab, right? You know what I mean? Like my grandmother paid \$17,000 for me to go to rehab in Miami and I screwed up, you know, and my parents were mad at me. And so I started doing drugs again, pretty quickly. I met a guy and I thought he was a good guy, whatever. But like we were partying, drinking a lot, whatever. And then that enters the next phase of life where like, it was just a different kind of partying but like him and I were completely toxic together was an abusive relationship. Not physically at first, but it became that we were together for four years. I have stepchildren out of that relationship that I still call me Mama. Those are my babies. My first babies. But that was a really horrible situation. That was the new chapter was being a biker lady. So now I was dating a biker. I was in that lifestyle. And it's a whole different thing than I'd ever experienced before. Just a totally new weird chapter. Actually. A lot of it wasn't really that bad. But you know, I mean, I'm actually made a lot of good friends that I'm still friends with today out of that.

Justine Hamilton 29:48

Is there still a lot of drugs during this time to with this,

Pixie Saaverdra 29:52

so not more than I knew. So I was I was I was doing coke at that point, but like only on a very, very much a party level, like, if that makes sense to you guys like, just like on weekends like at the bar, like if someone had some I would do it, you know what I mean? Maybe once in a while we would buy a bag. But to be honest, we didn't really have that much money. So it was mostly just drinking. But we were super toxic together. Like I mean, the both very passionate people. I am not licensed to diagnose a person. But if I was I would say that he's borderline personality disorder with narcissistic tendencies, obviously. And I was absolutely toxic myself. And so there's, you know, there's I don't play the blame game with relationships, there's always everybody puts in what they put in, right, and like, I don't hate him. Not mad. But we weren't good for each other

Justine Hamilton 30:54

at all. And you were drawn to that sort of SLA.

Pixie Saaverdra 30:57

Absolutely. Yeah. And what I figured out so this is where this is where the leaf started to turn, I will fast forward through the entire four years of that effed up relationship, because it's not really something we need to talk about here. But at the end of it. We got into a fight. The first really, there had been hitting before but not like, I wouldn't have called it like, it's hard to talk about because it's like, I don't know how to categorize it, like abuse is abuse, right. But like, I threw it back a lot of times, you know what I mean? He hit me, I hit him. This was the first time we're like, you know, he's over me. Just punching. And I'm on my back, like, helpless, like, I can't move. And it had never quite been like that. Right? Where I was like, Oh, shit, like, this dude might kill me. Like, I'm like, like, he's like, really. And I know he was drunk. I'm not trying to nail Him to the cross here. You know what I mean? Like, I realized, like, we were both in a bad place. He was doing a lot more drugs than I was aware of at the time. I found out later, you know, blah, blah, blah. Again, no blame game here. Just a lot of unhealthy toxic stuff going on. And but I was scared. Right? For maybe one of you asked me at one point, for maybe one of the first times in my life, I was scared of what was happening in my life. Right? Like, I was like, Oh, shit, like, this is dangerous games. Right? Like this is not like, Oh, we got this fight. And we're so passionate. This is what we do. We fight and we, you know, whatever. This was like,

Dr. Dana 32:32

it's amazing what you can normalized. Oh, 100%. Yeah.

Pixie Saaverdra 32:35

You know, I mean, yeah. But like, this was next level, this was like, this dude is bigger than me. He's stronger than me. He's very angry right now. I definitely push some buttons, and whatever, whatever. Like he could possibly get me in this moment. You know, and whether that's true or not, I don't really know if like, that's where we were headed. But like, I felt that way in my mind at the moment, right? Because it's a stop. And I remember, I started screaming. And weirdly, there were some I love yous

exchanged. And he started crying and got up and walked away. And I got up. And I was like, you know, at that point, I was angry again. And like, you know, so mad, and like, he slept on the couch kind of thing, you know. And then in the morning, this is the part that's like, this was a true first turning point, was after that night, and after that fight, and I looked in the mirror, and I had a giant black eye. And I looked in the mirror, and I said, You are not this person. This is not who you are. This is not who you want to be, like, Where does this road go? You know, like, where, like everything that you're doing in your life, everything you have done in your life, like, what are you doing? Where are you going? What is the point? Are you happy? Are you even okay? You know, and so I had that conversation with myself in the mirror, and went about normal NIS with him that day, and other days. And then, few days later, I was sitting at a bar, and I was talking to a friend of mine, and this is another important point of the story was, she's looking at me, and I didn't normally wear makeup. I don't and you can see right now I don't like I'm not really a makeup person. But I was wearing makeup because I had this giant shiner, right? And so she's looking at me and she's kind of staring at me, and I'm like, what, what is your problem? You know? And she goes, You're not fooling anyone, you know? Like, I don't know what you're talking about. She's like, I'm gonna give you a piece of advice. Take it or not. So whatever. She said, Tell somebody who loves you. Because as soon as you tell someone that loves you, you can't take it back. So I went home I thought about that a lot. Like, for some reason that was really impactful to me, you know? And the next day I called my parents. I said, I gotta tell you the truth about something, Can you meet me for lunch? And I was really even scared to meet up with my own parents, because at that point in this relationship, like I was barely had a relationship with them anymore. Like, this was like, I was alienated from, you know what I mean? Like the whole, I had become separated from my family, I had become separate, you know, all these things. Friends, like, mostly, you know, we became an island, right? Like, we were on our own little we were in our little biker love affair Wonderland, you know, and like, be Knight Rider style. So we, yeah, we were very secluded. So I called my parents and I said, I need to talk to you, I need to tell you the truth about something. And they were like, of course, they're very interested. So we met up for lunch, and I said, he hit me. I've hit him, too. You know, I'm not innocent in any of this. But it's bad. It's real bad, toxic relationship. I need to get out. I need to get away from this. I need to I've been using drugs again, they're like, oh, go, you know, I've been using drugs. Again, I'm drinking too much. Probably, you know, I'm in this at this point, horribly abusive relationship. Again, not one sided, but like, this is not it's not healthy. And it's not okay. And it needs to stop. And I don't want to live like this anymore. And I broke down and I and they sort of what can we do? What do you need us to do? I said, well, I need your help selling the house I'm living in because we were we had bought the house together. Me and my parents had bought this place together. Rancho Cucamonga saying you don't need your help selling the house, he can't know we're selling it. He's not gonna not gonna, it's not gonna be that easy to leave. Right? Like, he's not going to accept that I just want to break, like, oh, just don't just relate to, you know, like, it wasn't that it didn't feel that easy at the time. Now, whether it could have been or not, I don't know. But at the time, it certainly didn't feel that way. Like it felt like I had to do this, you know, in a way that was even uncomfortable for me kind of sneaky. You know, like, okay, you know, to get away from him, because I was scared. I was scared at that point, that if I did anything that he didn't like, that he would hurt me more, you know, and that, like, all these bad things could possibly happen. Right? Where are you ready? Kind of. You know, it's like I had had that realization that like, it was necessary. But also, I was still in love with him. And also, I enjoyed our life on some level, like, not completely, but like, a lot of times, you know, like, I love my kids. I didn't want to leave my kids, that's for sure. You know, that was the hardest thing I've ever done,

you know, and I like I still, I'm very grateful that my younger kids have the kind of mother that has allowed me to stay in their life and to continue having relationships. She's one of my best friends today. I'm very lucky. She's actually the godmother and my son. One of the governors my son, but she anyway, so yeah, it was it was already. Not really probably, you know what I mean? But I knew what had to happen. If I was going to mind you at this point in time, I'm 30 years old. So here we go on another decade, like this is literally like, this is how my life seems to go, you know? And so, I'm 30 years old, and I'm like, no, like, this isn't my life anymore. It can't be like this. It can't be older. You know, like I so I did that started working with my parents to sell the house. My parents did most of the work on that.

Justine Hamilton 38:26

And you were still living there faking it? Yeah, everything.

Pixie Saaverdra 38:30

Yeah. I mean, in hindsight, who I am today and who I want to be always is like, I should have been more honest, like about it like, but I was scared. I was so scared. You know that about how angry he would be. And whether that's true or not, I don't know. Like, you know what I mean? Like, it was a toxic, tumultuous, crazy relationship. And there was drugs and alcohol and I felt I did what I thought was the what I needed to do for myself. So anyway, I Yeah, that's what happened. I told them, you know what, we have to move. My parents are still in the house. And, you know, we'll started looking for places together, you know, and I slowly started, like, taking stuff over to my parents house because I was like, Oh, well, we're gonna need to store stuff in my parents house. You know, stuff like that. So I started slowly getting my things over to my parents house, and he knew we were selling the house, but he thought we were moving together. So we started looking at apartments and truly, sincerely, I wanted to help him land somewhere good. Because I was still love him. And I wanted him to be okay. Like, I didn't want to, you know what I mean? Like, I didn't want him to not be okay. But I knew that we couldn't be together anymore. I knew that you know. So yeah, so essentially, like I knew I needed to, to exit this situation and start my life over and so that's what I did. I, I left. I moved back in with my parents and lived on their office floor for Couple months while I tried to figure out my next move, and then I decided that based on the circumstances around what was going on, there was still, you know, a level of contact that I was uncomfortable with. And so I needed to get pretty far away from where I was at. And so I started moving to LA. And so I got a job. I mean, I guess we already lived in LA County, but to like, actually move to Los Angeles. So Hollywood, where I went, I got a job back in restaurants, you know, working really at first, just as a waitress, because I was like, just trying to get my foot back in the door, you know, and I was like, okay, like, I just need a job where I can make some quick cash and, and get my life back together. You know, and I don't, at that point, I was, like, completely humbled completely starting over completely, just like, I don't even know, like, what I'm gonna do, like, what does life look like from here? You know, I'm 30 years old at that point, you know, when you're 30, you feel like, you're old and you're like, I've wasted my whole life, and I'm not gonna have any chance to get married and have children. It's I'm so old, you know. And so I thought I was just like, you know, okay, what am I going to do? You know, so the first couple years were kind of struggled, it was like, you know, I was still drinking. I'm still using once in a while, but not really that much. But still, once in a while, I was like, No, I hadn't really shaken that completely. You know, I still like to party, I guess. But I wasn't doing it on like a level that was problematic, if you will, like, I wasn't like, not to the point, at least, the drugs, the

drinking got to a point where it was out of control. And about two years into my healing journey, if you will, or my starting over, I realized that drugs were, or excuse me that alcohol was a major problem in my life. And that even though I maybe didn't identify as an alcoholic at the time, that I was a problem drinker. And that, like when I drank, I made horrible choices and didn't you know, so I decided to quit drinking in 2015. And I've been sober since. And so that was a big deal. March 2015, I got completely sober. And around that time, again, I was working in restaurants, and I had been promoted into management and it the places where I was at, and I was feeling really good about that. And I was like, Yeah, this is probably the path. You know, like, I love this industry. Like, I love hospitality. I love making people happy. I love serving, like, on any level, whether it's serving food, or like, just service, like I love service, and I love people, and I love helping. And I like making people happy. And I you know, so anyway, that felt good to me, you know, so I just kept on that. And I just kept getting promoted and getting promoted. And, and that was great. And few people were seeing me and I was starting to feel valued. And, you know, I was, once I got sober. I had been dating somebody for a short period of time. And it was, it was something that happened with him. And I, that sort of spurred me to, I said, you know, I can't drink anymore. And I don't care if you still do, but I can't, you know, and he was like, Well, for me, it's overall gets sober. And I felt like he was just doing it for me. And ultimately, that relationship didn't work out. And then I was managing a restaurant up in North Hollywood. And I met my now husband, and he was recovering alcoholic, he'd been sober for about a year, I at the time, I've been sober for maybe six months. And he absolutely inspired me. And I just thought he was the most incredible human I've ever met. And it just really, we started as friends. But I just knowing a little bit about his story, I just absolutely couldn't believe where he was at, when I met him, you know, like he was doing as well as he was for everything he had been through. You know, he had a very difficult life and to be where he was was just incredible, you know, and so he inspired me and I, I just wanted to know Him more and more. And as you know, being friends, and then we kind of started dating, and then it really wasn't our time, but so then we separated for about six months. And then ultimately, I took a job managing a restaurant in Santa Barbara, and he ended up following me about six months later. And through all that, you know, meeting him and watching him, you know, do his programming and working the 12 steps. And, you know, before I hadn't really ever taken a look at that program, like it wasn't like to me I was like, Well, I'm not really an alcoholic. I'm just a problem drinker. And I you know, and I still don't know that I completely identify as an alcoholic, but what I do know is that there's a lot of value in the program of AAA and the 12 steps, and I think that people should do The 12 steps even if you don't drink, like I just think like, it's such an amazing process. And at one point, when we were breaking up for the six months that we broke up for he goes, you know, you should really take a look at Al Anon. And I was like, I don't even know what that is. And that's crazy. And I don't need to go to meetings. And I don't, you know, he's like, I think that you're codependent. And you should probably take a look at that, you know, he's, I'm not trying to take your inventory, as they say, in program, but he's like, You should probably take a look at that. When I went to Al Anon, and I started working the steps simply because I thought it was something that would impress him that I was doing, you know, which is often people's motivation for starting these things. I realized how badly I needed it, the process, I found a sponsor that complimented me while she was very quiet, sweet, very loud, and social and outgoing. And she was just very kind and quiet and sweet. And she took me through the steps. And what I uncovered was just phenomenal. And that was to take it all the way back to when I was 19 years old. And the turning point in my life where, you know, my unhealthy relationships started, the men that I choose to chose to love. And the situations that I chose to put myself in. What I realized

was that I was dating my grandfather, really, and that I was trying to get him to love me. And then as soon as I got that person to love me, that very strong, usually narcissistic, very, you know, somewhat abusive, you know, whatever character and they were all very different in different way. I mean, you know, and some of them weren't, there were outliers, so you know what I mean, but for the most part, I had a pretty good pattern going. And what I realized was, yeah, that it was him over and over again, and that what I was trying to do was, earn his love. And then as soon as I did, I would leave and do it all over again. And I did that over and over again for 10 years. And when I met my, my husband, and like I said, like, you know, is I at that point in my life, like, I had decided, and I resolved that like, okay, you know, I'm on this journey. I was taking everything out of my life that I felt wasn't healthy, like, even down to, like, I became a vegan, like, I was literally like, no cigarettes, no, like, one thing at a time, over the course of years, like, I was like, this doesn't make me feel good, that doesn't make me feel good. I'm doing, like everything that you could imagine that I could kick out of my life that wasn't making me feel good. I was kicking it, you know, and people, like, I was just like, I didn't care, like, you're all go, everything's going, you know, anything that's not good for me goes. But yeah, I finally got to the point where, you know, through watching my husband and being inspired by his strength, and, you know, the, the mutual respect that our relationship was built on was just, it felt good. You know, like, wow, like, you know, they our ability to communicate with each other and talk about what we really wanted and needed the ability to be honest, not just truthful. Because there's a big difference. He taught me that taught me the difference, you know, like that, like, let's talk about what you really want, what you really need, not just, you know, what's true, but like, what, like you, like, who are you? What do you want? Where do you want to go? And so I was, I was very honest with him, you know, well, I want to get married, and I want to have a baby and I want it, you know, all these things that I thought were totally lost for me. And he's like, we can have that, you know, if, if, if you can be honest, and I can be honest, and we can talk about all these things that we want and that we need, we can have all those things, you know, as long as it's always honest. So that's what it is I live in I live in this complete place of honesty now. And that's, like the, the the understanding that I found about my grandfather was huge. It allowed me to come back to my husband in a way that was healthy. Once I understood that about myself, and I, I think just this constant. Now I'm kind of rambling, but like this constant, like, evolution of like, understand, like, seeking to understand myself better. And like why I do the things I do and and being honest, you know, with myself and with others has allowed me to finally find joy and peace and yeah, I met you know, the biological parents I met when I was I think in a good place. I was clean and sober. And I was 34 years old. So about six years ago and I found my birth mother and you know if I'm being honest that was tough. She's, you know, the, she was not in a good place. That's a whole other story somewhat not my story to tell, but also like, you know, just so it'd be a whole nother podcast. But yeah, meeting her and then finding out about my conception that was hard. You know how that happened, you know, and then making the decision, even with that knowledge to seek out and meet my birth father. I've had the opportunity to have good relationships with the two of them for the last six and five years respectively. And then, actually, two days ago, my biological father was found dead in his truck. I spent Easter cleaning out said truck to prepare it to be sold.

Dr. Dana 50:54

Was that heartbreaking for you?

Pixie Saaverdra 50:57

It was, it was because I think if I'm winding back to some level of point, because I feel like I've just been rambling for two hours. But if I'm him telling you this crazy story, that's my life, like his life was sad, for sure. I got the opportunity to be a part of his life and to be he called me as angel for the last five years. And that was an absolute honor. Wow. Really. Because he was a good man with a lot of bad habits, made a lot of poor choices, hurt people. But he had actually had an article, you know, yeah. And it just is like this perfect illustration of like, how what we think we understand about people, or what we think that we know about people can be completely wrong, you know, because it really is all based on perception, and perspective. And the

Dr. Dana 52:00

same could have been severed it with people who you with a time that you are, that you've lost control yourself, they would not have known that you have this sweet, loving side to you. Yeah. Sounds like you had a lot in common with your stepmother, your biological father, in some ways.

Pixie Saaverdra 52:17

We actually had a weird amount in common. Yeah, and watching the last five years of his life, although painful, was also like I said, my honor, it was it was my honor to, to be able to have a relationship with him at all. And to know Him in a way that I think a lot of people didn't, and to look beyond everything that he was doing, like his choices, and just see the human, you know, like, and yeah, he was in a lot of pain. But through all that, like he always was giving to others. And it was always smiling. And, yeah, I don't know.

Dr. Dana 53:07

So now you're married and have a child, boy or girl, boy, and how old the see two and a half? How sweet? Are you enjoying being a mom,

Pixie Saaverdra 53:16

I love being a mom. It's the greatest joy in my life,

Dr. Dana 53:19

and do appreciate your husband as a dad. He's the best dad I've ever seen. That's amazing. After all of that, been your only hold you say for 40. You've had like 10 lifetimes full of experiences in 40 years. I know you are measured by decades. But I don't know anybody who's had that kind of stuff happen in the first 40 years of life. It's really remarkable. Very inspiring. And also to witness you've been through a lot,

Pixie Saaverdra 53:48

I guess. So when I talk about it. It's a lot weirder to tell you. I don't really think about it that way. But when you say it all out. And

Dr. Dana 53:55

that's remark I mean, a lot of people that have you know had post traumatic stress and oh my goodness.

Justine Hamilton 54:02

The fact of where you are now and what you've come out the other side and you know, you've you're still the same person you always been this sweet, kind, very loving giving person and you know, you just gotten a couple of scraps.

Dr. Dana 54:21

So what if you were going to talk to the audience and listen to this podcast? What kinds of advice would you give them based on the struggles and things that you've been through in the course of your life?

Pixie Saaverdra 54:38

It's a big question. Um,

Dr. Dana 54:41

well, your your five minutes as

Pixie Saaverdra 54:44

I just told the two hour stories. Like, this wasn't even conversational. I need therapy. I was just talking for two hours. Well, I think I needed to unload. Maybe I needed to I needed to unpack all that. Thanks for waiting me.

Dr. Dana 54:58

That's what this room was for. I

Pixie Saaverdra 55:02

don't even know what it all means. I just unpacked it. Here you go. Be honest, I like I think the most, the most piece that I've had in my life was when I realized the difference between truth and honesty. I learned how to communicate clearly, with others, like, those are my like, the most important values that I can think of in like building quality relationships and, and, and having a level of peace where I don't feel struggle or stress anymore in relationships with no if that makes sense. But you know, what I've learned is that, like, life's too short to and honest, and you know, like Justin said, I haven't really told this much of my story before I've given people little snippets. Yeah, you know, like, oh, this crazy story, or this funny story, or oh, this just happened last week. And people were like, Oh, shit, you know, but like, when you tell it all, and like, there's two hour chunk, like, yeah, there's a lot. You're right. It's a lot. I never really thought about like that, you know, but it's, yeah, I don't know. Character building, I guess. But yeah. The clear, clearly stating, you know, honesty? I don't know, communicate. I don't know, I don't know what to say. Let's okay. I know what the result of all this is, I guess. Yeah. Just be authentic. You know?

Dr. Dana 56:20

Well, it's an incredibly inspiring story, because you found your way back to a sweet life. And, man, most people don't

Justine Hamilton 56:27

know not after all that. I mean, 123, you just kept getting hit, and you pulled through? Yeah, and it doesn't even seem like people that do a lot of drugs or alcohol. It seems like when they do get sober still in the back of their mind, a lot of people it's just like, they're still that need, but they're like, I can't do that. Doesn't seem like you have that. You're done

Dr. Dana 56:54
with all of that stuff.

Pixie Saaverdra 56:56
I don't want to I don't want to relive any of those rights. My life. You know, no,

Dr. Dana 57:00
I don't think going back to prison wouldn't be very fun. No, no.

Pixie Saaverdra 57:06
I think I'm done with the biker thing. I think I'm done with it. The gang member thing. I think I'm done with the prison. And

Dr. Dana 57:13
I hope I get to know you when your son is like 1560s.

Justine Hamilton 57:18
Dana will tell him everything. Yes.

Dr. Dana 57:20
He starts asking questions. i Hey, Mom, tell me a bit about your life. And you're like, What do I do? Having listened to the podcast, my husband

Pixie Saaverdra 57:27
and I joke all the time, we're like, let this kid try something you're gonna get away with?

Dr. Dana 57:32
No, I have not even lived close to the life you have. But when my kids were teenagers, my wife grew up in such a like, conservative, uneventful. And I used to think my kids are such amateurs. I wasn't afraid of much of anything they did, because I thought Oh, you guys are amateurs compared to me. So it'll make it easier for you to raise a teenager that's

Pixie Saaverdra 57:56
really hard pressed to come up with something that I wouldn't ask for sure.

Dr. Dana 58:00
Well, thank you so much for coming on my podcast and you are the first person that we've interviewed. That will have two episodes. No, well, because we put each episode out for an hour. Maybe we need

Pixie Saaverdra 58:11

to do a series so I can get therapy. Yeah.

Dr. Dana 58:15

That's right. Some of this crap. Absolutely. Well, thanks again. I really appreciate that. And thank you, Justin, for bringing your friend. Yes.

Justine Hamilton 58:24

Yeah. Yep. Thank you. Thank you, Pixie.

Fear Me Out 58:30

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