

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 14

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Pausha Foley - Fear of War

Kim Fauskee 00:00

On today's episode, we take a peek behind the Iron Curtain. Pasha grew up in Poland during the Cold War. Her experiences of life under tyranny and the constant threat of war are vastly different than what has been portrayed through film in the media here in the West. Even today, with the recent invasion of the Ukraine, feelings and emotions that haven't been felt in some 32 years, are again in the forefront of her mind. So I hope you'll join us as we discuss the fear of war.

Dr. Dana 00:39

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

Fear Me Out 00:58

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

Kim Fauskee 01:18

All right, Pasha. Welcome. I know, I promised you a different episode than what we're going to talk about today. But we'll have you back. Because fortunately, or unfortunately, the subject matter we're going to speak about today is pretty apparent and on the forefront of most people in the world's minds right now.

Pausha Foley 01:38

So you are going to talk about love. And here we are talking about war.

Kim Fauskee 01:42

Exactly. So as I said in the intro, you grew up in Poland, during the Cold War. So this is kind of right in your wheelhouse. What's happening in Ukraine right now. So can you give us a little bit of background on Pasha fully with your American last name now, but you know, whereabouts in Poland you grew up and during that time, and what you understood of Westerners growing up,

Pausha Foley 02:16

Oh, you are so stupid. All Westerners. I mean, there was the rotten imperialist West that was going to destroy itself in its rotten, immoral, all kinds of perversion, but also very, very stupid. That was the going story about America and everybody, west of the Iron Curtain.

Kim Fauskee 02:42

How young does that indoctrination to the west begin

Pausha Foley 02:46

contested, right? Because it's reality. So I was born in 1975, that was 30 years after the war. It was sort of at the tail end of the Soviet Empire and the communist. We weren't invaded, we were occupied. But Poland was in the same situation that Belarus is right now, which the government was essentially a puppet government. And it was completely controlled by Moscow. So essentially, Poland was essentially occupied in fact, even though technically it was an independent country. So it was communism that was already kind of falling apart and crashing. So it wasn't as oppressive and as deep as I've heard it started, it would be like 10 years ago, or 20 years ago, but it was still Soviet occupation all the way. And we believed everything we were taught. It was a Russian reality. My grade school was named after Lenin. And we had school celebrations where we were praising Lenin for what a wonderful man he wasn't. He loved children. I remember that about Lenin, and that Russia was the Great Mother, Russia and our greatest friend and ally and protector and that the West was a bit wrong and full of spice. And it wasn't, it wasn't recognized as propaganda. It was just That's how it is.

Dr. Dana 04:20

And so everybody believed that. Of course. Yeah.

Pausha Foley 04:24

It was the truth. It wasn't a story. It was life.

Kim Fauskee 04:27

Were your parents around during World War Two were the young children back

Pausha Foley 04:32

then. Or my father was born in 45. So just as the war ended, and my mother's war in the 1950 Okay, so almost Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 04:43

I think what a lot of people probably don't realize it that Poland as a country is cease to exist numerous times and in the history of the world.

Pausha Foley 04:52

Yeah. I mean, it's, it's been worse all the time. I bet that's Europe, right? There's always been worse. It's just one word. after another in World War Two was just so bad, just so completely horrendous that it really shook everybody up, I think. And as a result, we had the European Union and NATO and all the structures that were put in place specifically, so that this would not happen yet again. But yeah, there was always war. And that's just as much as the rotten West imperialist, stupid Americans were simply

reality. So what's the war? You know, I grew up 30 years after the war was over. But life did not move on. The country did not move on. And the war was, in a center of everybody's experience, like a point of reference for life was the war. It was always all about the war, or TV shows were about the war and movies were about the war. And everybody would always say before the war, after the war, during the wars, like, we started counting days from the word not from the coming of Christ. It's all live revolved around it. When I was in school, in grade school, and the last grade at 14, the entire year of literature class would be devoted to studying the world, the war literature, we would read all the memoirs, and we would read all the records and all the books about prisoners in a war and we had to go to Auschwitz, it was mandatory trip to Auschwitz at 14. And then in high school, we did it all over again, it was a whole year of just war stories about war, and again, to Auschwitz, just to make sure that it you could not forget, you could not move on. It's it was just such a deep trauma, that the word was just there it was, it was kind of like being a family with somebody. Having an alcoholic and a family of a person that has substance abuse or some mental illness, the whole family starts revolving around that person, the whole system starts building around this person that was at war in Europe. That's what happened. The whole life revolved around it. You know, when I was in my bedroom, the window came out on the wall. It was an inside courtyard. And there were bullets in that wall from the war. And they never fixed it. No, no, it was just everywhere. Every freaking corner, there was a plaque saying this many people died here. And many people died here. And that was the actions which never forget, never forget. But literally never, ever, ever forget.

Kim Fauskee 07:41

What was your what were your parents? Were your parents? Did they have a similar experience? As you?

Pausha Foley 07:47

How do I know I don't talk to my parents.

Kim Fauskee 07:52

Did you? I mean, did you guys ever talk about growing up though. Or it was just the norm. And

Pausha Foley 07:59

it was just, it was just life. Again, it was just life. It was almost like the war story was just incorporated into life. As I told you, when I was a child, my favorite TV show was about four soldiers who are riding a tank during the war. That was a child that we played, that we played the TV show on breaks in school. That's the Dutch were our games, right? It was just a war that became almost just a part of life. And this was in what period of time, it was 1975 when I was born. So that was pretty much all the way throughout the lasting of the Soviet occupation. So things started changing. When they're unstable, it happened, and then Russians would draw. I was 14. So that was 19. What 1989 I

Kim Fauskee 08:59

think the wonderful war actually ended at night. And

Pausha Foley 09:03

then Poland became a democracy. And we actually had an election in violence. I was elected the president. And then we shifted Poland towards free market capitalism. The borders were opened during my childhood, the borders were closed. No one could leave the country couldn't

Dr. Dana 09:21

leave the country. We till you were still teenagers. Yeah,

Pausha Foley 09:25

I mean, you could but you had to apply for a passport for the specific trip. And then you had to bring the passport back once you returned. So you could only leave it was approved?

Kim Fauskee 09:36

Because you lived in a police state. The actual police held your passport.

Pausha Foley 09:40

Yeah, not you. Yeah. Yeah. We couldn't, you know, the media. There was no free media. I mean, it was everything that's happening in Russia right now. We where they stopped information from penetrating so that we wouldn't know what's happening so that we wouldn't know what the West is really like. All we knew is what they told us. So there it was, the Iron Curtain was really iron, nothing was penetrating through it.

Dr. Dana 10:09

Did you feel the difference when everything changed? Yes. So you felt a difference

Pausha Foley 10:14

I did. I was 14. And then it took a while. Obviously, it wasn't an overnight change. But the government shifted in a different direction, the borders were open, and the West came in. McDonald's showed up in my city when I was 16. So two years later, and they were more channels on TV, suddenly, we had German channels, and

Kim Fauskee 10:40

McDonald's would have been the olive branch.

Pausha Foley 10:43

Right. And then there was a gap. Burger King, Burger King also showed up across the street from McDonald's actually, now that I remember it. And Fink's shifted very quickly, at that point, it during the war, and when I was growing up, during my childhood, when the war was so prominent in everybody's life, the only there was a very strong current of fighting of rebellion. That's what Solidarity was all about fighting for the freedom of the country. And I grew up on those stories of the heroes who fought for Polish independence. And not only in literature, but also in music. My father was involved with a solidarity printing press, which, of course, was completely illegal. And he could get into huge trouble over this. But there were several singers in Poland, who were forbidden and banned, because their songs were politically charged as he would get recordings, and then he would give me those recordings, and I would listen to them. And I would, it was all about liberating the country. And it was

just such a strong ideology that just kind of dissipated when the country became open. And then there was McDonald's, and there was nothing to liberate. And then suddenly, everybody wants to make money. So how did you, it was such a whiplash,

Dr. Dana 12:11

I was gonna say, I mean, if you're brought up to believe that Americans are really stupid, and that we're really sort of almost evil in a certain way. And then all of a sudden, your country's full of Western people, how do you come to terms with what you've been indoctrinated with? It was difficult, I can imagine,

Pausha Foley 12:30

It was difficult. I mean, you know, for a wider life cannot keep just going just on a pure momentum. So I had my idea of how my life was going to go. And you know, I went to college like I was going through, and I was studying psychology and not economics and not marketing. But I would look back at people who are only two, three years younger than me, and they were all about no money business. That was very bizarre. I had trouble understanding that. And it started getting strange. And then even my friends from college started looking into you know, I want to do this internship or get this certificate, because maybe I can open my own business and make some money. I had I, that wasn't me at all.

Kim Fauskee 13:18

So the flip the switch flipped back quickly,

Pausha Foley 13:21

very, very, very quickly. I think that you know, at heart, Polish people are very mentally aligned with Americans, which kept us in existence, even though there was over 100 years, when there was no Poland. Poland was divided among the neighboring countries. And yet, we would never give up. Never give up. Never surrender. Right? Poland never disappeared. The Polish language never disappeared, even though they tried to make it disappear. And during World War Two, Poland, who was under very heavy occupation, German occupation, where it wasn't Poland, according to the Nazis, it was Germany. There was an underground country, there were underground organizations for everything. It was the most robust and complex under grants organization in the world ever created. People were finishing high school, people are going or going to universities, they were theaters, there was culture, there was like business was happening, all in hiding. So that's the pulse, never give up and never surrender. So I think that for that reason, we embraced the Western idea that yes, let's build something. Let's make some money. Let's do things. Let's create things because Paul scan it, I find that it's very similar to the American approach to life, which is we just want to do things. And we can so let's do them. So it it fits very well.

Kim Fauskee 15:00

Did you live growing up? Did you live in fear of constant occupation by Russia or being incarcerated? Yeah, so my Yeah,

Pausha Foley 15:08

when I was little when the, when I was six, Russia, essentially, that to us what they did to Ukraine, they put their army on the border. And they threatened to invade, because Solidarity was getting out of hand. And they said that unless the Polish government puts it down, they will invade and they will put it down. So the Polish government announced martial law, and essentially started the war on the Protestants on the workers who are protesting. And I was six years old. So I remember that. And I remember putting together the word war, which is in a Polish name for martial law, it literally translates to a state of war. With war, which I knew very well, I knew everything about war, because I watched the TV shows and everything. So I knew what war looks like. And I was terrified. And I remember the notion I had as a child, that war was like a big monster that lived far, far away. And it was coming, unavoidably coming, that it wasn't a question of, if it was always only a question of when. And I remember the feeling of dread. That one day it will come, it will come and it will eat me and it will destroy me. And that sense of dread persisted. It never went away.

Dr. Dana 16:30

How did you handle that? How did you handle that sort of ongoing feeling of, of concern?

Pausha Foley 16:38

I shut down a lot. You just muted everything and stop thinking and feeling.

Dr. Dana 16:45

Did anybody in your family know that you were struggling with this idea?

Pausha Foley 16:51

My family was very dysfunctional. So now, but that's

Dr. Dana 16:57

yeah. So that wasn't part of what they could offer you was comfort or there

Kim Fauskee 17:01

was no comfort. She was supposed to be a hearty pole.

Pausha Foley 17:03

There was no comfort. My favorite you could ever have issues. My parents, the whole thing was just a mess. For many reasons, but also, you know, consider that my father was born in a country that was leveled by the strike and I mean level, like, cities were piles of rubble, there was nothing, you know, he's the way he grew up. could not have been easy. And my mother grew up similarly, life was just so hard. And you know, when I was very young, it wasn't just the oppression, it wasn't just the threat of pangs and shoulders, which came in as the martial law was announced, soldiers came on the streets and started patrolling. So there was a very heavy military presence. And they were really killing people. But also, it was hunger. And it was provision and you know, my parents had to spend all night in line to start to get some meat, maybe in the morning if they were lucky. Everything was rationed. food was rationed. shoes were Russian cigarettes were rationed. Vodka was rationed. It was a very, very hard life. That doesn't make for caring families. You know, it's when it's about better survival than people just

need to survive. No one pays attention to feelings. So it is the heart that just suck it up. And you deal and because you have to live.

Dr. Dana 18:39

So when an event takes place, like has happened recently with Russia invading Ukraine, does it bring back all kinds of feelings for you personally,

Pausha Foley 18:49

immediately? It it all comes back. It's it's my six year old fear that the monster right just came back.

Dr. Dana 18:57

And how are you coping with the feelings being triggered?

Pausha Foley 19:03

Well, on Thursday, Christopher was walking by me and was telling me that I'm safe every five minutes. I did not believe him because it didn't feel like it. And Christopher is your husband, Christopher. It's my husband that keeps telling me that I'm safe. And that day was hard. Because I really felt six years old. I really felt like a little child and I just wanted to grab a Teddy and go to bed and hide under blankets. Over the next few days, I started distinguishing between the childhood trauma and the realities. So the hold of it lessened to some extent. I am limited. The time I spent reading the news and watching what happens I now I only scratched the headlines, basically just to be updated on the essentials and I don't allow myself to go into the story. I try to keep myself Here in Santa Barbara, in America, not at war, where I'm safe, right? And when nothing is happening, and that that works, not 100%. But enough.

Dr. Dana 20:13

So do you have a wish for Americans to know? What's really happening compared to what they're being told what we're all being told?

Pausha Foley 20:24

See? I don't know. There are tools out there to I don't know what to call it on one hand, yes, because it is terrible what's happening. And there is the need that people to recognize horror when a horror happens. And there are good reasons for people to recognize it. One reason would be so that they make sure not to create it themselves. Also, that they can help and resolve it. On the other hand, though, there is really nothing Americans can do other than send money at this point. And, again, there's the question: do you need to know that they really need to know because this really is a different world. And here, this has never happened before. This is a different reality, we exist inside of here. And naturally, Americans, that's the only reality they know. And it's not wrong, that that's the case. And I don't know that it needs to be different. Even while, you know, I just want to scream about my pain and be heard. But on the other hand, it really isn't your problem. Right now, at least,

Dr. Dana 21:47

I mean, it is far away. So it's easy for us to kind of distance ourselves from it. But there's a similarity that, at least the people that I see are talking about, which is that the last president we had is as close to being Putin as you could ever seen in the United States. And the United States could be, you know,

could have become exactly what Russia is, if the election turned out differently last time, because, you know, I'm Trump's a moron. And he's, he's a dangerous, really, really evil person, just like Putin, right. And there's nothing to stop somebody like that from achieving their goals if they have the position of power.

Pausha Foley 22:30

True. But then again, you know, Kim, and Christopher and I were having coffee last Sunday. And of course, all we talked was the water. Because there was nothing else to talk about.

Kim Fauskee 22:42

I think you asked, we took COVID off the table?

Pausha Foley 22:44

Yes. You asked if like what else is happening? And nothing else is happening. This is happening. But then I looked at people walking by? And I thought, do they have an idea? Do they know? Anything? Do they even realize this is happening around? And I thought how wonderful if they don't? You know how wonderful that there really is a place in a world where people don't have to worry about those things. Right? How wonderful that you guys never know that never will know that and never have known that. And you can really live without this burden and this terror and this dread and this trauma. I mean, isn't that the dream of peace? That's how it's going to be for everybody. So isn't it wonderful that here in America, it's true, that people really don't even realize what war is. And, you know, that's a heartbreaking aspect of the situation is that that's what the European Union was supposed to be. We were hoping that that's what would happen for all of us after the World War Two was over. And here we are back again. Right?

Kim Fauskee 23:54

Well, this is the important differentiation between fantasy and reality, right, that we were talking about, is that what's been portrayed to us is just basically a snapshot in Yeah, you know, in the media and movies and so on and so forth. It was really glorified. And what you're here to tell us because you've actually been through it and race through it is war is actually hell.

Pausha Foley 24:19

It is. What the way that 's happening in Russia right now is, it quickly becomes what Poland used to be during my childhood. They are shouting about introducing martial law, so that they can control their protests, just like in Poland. They are talking about closing the borders to stop people from leaving. They are basically did away with all independent media by now they shut down Facebook and Twitter. Putin just signed a law yesterday saying that anybody who gives any information contradicting their operations can be put to jail for up to 50 yours.

Kim Fauskee 25:01

The sanctions even make it to jail

Pausha Foley 25:04

if they ever make it to jail. And 15 years means Sorry, no one will ever see you again. The sanctions are already causing economic hardship for those people that have food prices going up, the western goods are quickly disappearing, and no one will do business with them now. So I look at this, and I, it's heartbreaking. It's absolutely heartbreaking because I've lived in that reality. And I would not wish it on anybody at this point, maybe Putin himself, if we could just put him into that world and say you just lived here on your own? Didn't, that might be a good idea. But what's happening there is just heartbreaking.

Dr. Dana 25:48

What do you think your family in Poland have to say to have you spoken with them?

Pausha Foley 25:52

No, I haven't heard from them. And I assume that's a good sign. If something was really happening, then I think I'd heard from them. But the situation in Poland right now is that there is a NATO army stationed on our eastern border, which happens to be the burden with Ukraine. And they are fighter jets flying over police cities right now. And on the other side of the border, there is war. And I don't think anybody feel safe in Poland.

Kim Fauskee 26:23

And that's why I was going to ask you, if you've heard from friends, let alone family. If they actually feel that Russian occupation could be a real thing for them. Again,

Pausha Foley 26:34

it is a real thing. I mean, just consider that situation. There is also talk about Belarus, joining in actively sending their army. And there is talk about inserting their army, specifically the Polish border to stop the refugees from escaping Ukraine, to increase the havoc and the terror and the fear. So if you have a border, and you have panicked refugees, and on one side of them, they are NATO troops. And on the other side of them, they are Belarusian troops. That's a freaking disaster waiting to happen. And it's gonna happen in Poland. Right? If this spreads, if the spirits into even when Biden keeps saying that, that we are going to fight from every inch of NATO soil? Well, that is a Polish soul. And it is a war. In Poland. It's very likely. I mean, the Polish president spoke to Biden, I think yesterday or the other day, when Biden reassured him, I'm making quotation marks here that NATO will immediately respond. As soon as Poland gets attacked in any way, NATO is there to protect us, which is not reassuring, because first Poland will be attacked. And NATO will be protecting Poland on Polish soil, which again, was not reassuring at all. So this is not at all an unlikely scenario. This is not in the realm of conspiracy theories. This is I mean, Biden just had the conversation about just that with the Polish president and the Polish president reassured Paul that, you know, we are okay, but we are not okay. And for that matter, if this happens, then Europe is not okay. Because now we have world war three, literally not metaphorically. And then, you know, possibly even Americans won't be okay. To some extent, if it comes to that, and it very well may. So it is very alarming. Not at all reassuring. And that comes from Polish media, from Polish newspapers, people talk about it, people are considering those scenarios. Those are very real questions that people are asking. Know what's going to happen next. Where will the putting stop? Will he stop? No one knows. And he keeps threatening, right? He's pulled out the nuclear threat last Sunday.

Dr. Dana 29:01

Well, the scary thing is that it has happened before. And so you can't if you're in Poland, you can't just say well, there's not going to happen because it's never happened. Absolutely happens on a fairly Yeah.

Pausha Foley 29:12

Yeah. That's that's that. For me, it is in the realm of possibility. For me it's reality, land invasions, troops, walking into your country, killing everybody, burning and pillaging. That's how war looks like. That's when somebody says war. That's what I see. What happens in Ukraine right now on the ground. That's war. So I can very easily imagine it happening in Poland. Anytime. For Americans, as you say War is a TV show. Really exciting movie about troops, killing other soldiers, but not just destroying life.

Kim Fauskee 29:54

So how are the Polish people going to deal with this?

Pausha Foley 29:59

They will Right, what will they do? They will do what the Ukrainian state, whether it's can you do?

Kim Fauskee 30:06

It is again the threat, whether it's imminent or not, on Polen. Net, now you're going back again 30 years, and rehashing younger kids now having this realization that the parents had 30 years ago, 50 years ago, so on and so forth. I'm trying to get his half, how do you live day to day with that knowledge,

Pausha Foley 30:29

but see that knowledge never goes away. It's just reality. So that's

Kim Fauskee 30:34

always been that continued to still be the reality, even after the Iron Curtain fell in 1989. In Poland, there was still in the back of your mind, being a Polish person, we still could happen again. To us.

Pausha Foley 30:48

It is I think it's more general, and more fundamental is how you relate to life. You know, I observe Christopher, my husband over the last 20 years, how he carries himself in life and how I do. And granted, he's a citizen here, this is his home, and I'm a guest as an immigrant. But I think it really goes deeper than that. He has a sense of ownership. He owns himself, and this is his life. And if he speaks to authorities, it is from that sense of ownership. He's so confident about, he's in charge, right here, his country. He does what he wants the way he wants it, and show he has to take into consideration laws and other people but he, this is his, and he feels safe and confident. To live here. I don't have that sense of confidence and safety at all, ever. I don't even know how to feel safe. You know, Christopher keeps telling me that I'm safe. I'm safe. I'm safe. I'm not sure what that means. Really. There is no feeling corresponding with those words. I only know how to be scared how to dread disaster coming. But that's all I've ever known. So that's like, I don't deal with it. That's just life. You know, I see the police. I'm afraid of them just like any black person in America, because in my reality, police also could just take you and disappear you no one would ever hear from you again. There was no rights. You

didn't have any rights. There were no phone calls. There were no phones. Like when I was growing up, there were no phones, we didn't have phones. I sororities have in my reality power over you, where they can detain you, they can screw you over, they can get you killed, even if they want to. Because that was the reality that I grew up in therefore in my mind, that it states it never goes away. So I can intellectually understand that that's not how it is. Even in Poland. It's not how it is and hasn't been for many years. But my daddy and my brain are wired to, to react that way. So that's just the reality for me.

Kim Fauskee 33:10

So as you know, Dan, and I talk about the management of fear, not overcoming fear, but how you manage your fear. So how do you again, like you said, you live in that constant state of fear? Yeah. So how do you you manage it in some way, though.

Pausha Foley 33:28

I accept it. That is my way I am present to it. And I accept it, that that's my reality. I don't try to make it go away. I don't try to fight it. I don't try to contradict it. I mean, I essentially live with it, like I would do with chronic injury, if my back was injured, and I would be in pain for the rest of my life. And that's just it. So it's the same way I have a chronic pain or fear injury, I've just learned to be with

Kim Fauskee 34:05

and I find you. I've known you for a while. I find you be a very intuitive person. And so I'm guessing that you do listen to your inner voice.

Pausha Foley 34:15

Well, that's what I do. That's what I meant by accepting it. I'm with it. I'm not trying to I'm not trying to make myself unconscious of it. I am aware of it, which does make me more aware of myself I suppose. As a consequence,

Kim Fauskee 34:32

does your intuition tell you that everything's gonna be okay or that you have any level of faith that life is going to be fine and

Pausha Foley 34:41

there is no such thing as okay. I mean, what does that even mean that everything is going to be okay. That's why I brought it up. See, the thing is that fear is a part of my life which I accept. The dread of disaster is a part of my life, which I accept that For I except that it's a part of my life. Therefore, I do not have an idea that one day, there will be nothing to be afraid of. Because there is always something to be afraid of, because that's just life. And we will all face disasters sooner or later and we'll have to deal with it. And you know, again, before the World War Two, there was always worse. wars were so common, right? In Europe, there was always one war or another. I think I told you this that my nephew who is 20 Right now they're about, he's the first generation of Paul's who did not experience war or occupation, personally, in something like 400 years. 400 500 years. Wow. So like, what does okay? Even mean? That's like, that's life. That's reality. It's always been a reality. And I expect it will continue to be a reality. Which might be a good reason for Americans to understand what the war is, right? Because we try it, we really hoped that there would be no more war. Never again, was it like a mantra

spoken in Europe, then work? Here we are. Right. And that's, you know, that's it is the dream got broken. It's already broken when some EU official in Brussels said a few days ago that the EU is going to buy arms for Ukraine. And he said, We are breaking a taboo. Because we were never ever going to go to war again. This was a taboo. And it really was, this is the reason why Putin will send you to jail for 15 years, if you call what happens in Ukraine a war because it cannot be called war. Because Russians don't work don't want war, any more than anybody else in Europe. They went through war as well. They know what the war is, for they call it an occupation, or they call it a special mill military operation. Ration right now. I don't know if you're getting this information. They have no idea what's happening. And there is there a bizarre situation where people from Kyiv will speak to their parents or relatives who are in Russia telling them this is what's happening. And the relatives from Russia are saying no, no, it's not true. This isn't happening. Nothing is happening. You are crazy. I don't I this is all propaganda. I don't believe any of this. They know nothing. They hear nothing. They see nothing. They all the information they are getting is that nothing's happening much.

Kim Fauskee 37:39

Yeah, I did see some media. Again, whether believable or not it looked believable. Yeah. There were some Russian soldiers who surrendered. And they got on. The Ukrainian people gave them cell phones, they call their parents and their parents didn't know where they were. And they said we're in the Ukraine, doing a military exercise was supposed to be a military exercise. Exactly. Exactly. So then we realized, we're at war. And we said, we're not having any part of this. Yeah.

Pausha Foley 38:11

This is what is happening in Russia right now. With Putin shutting down, all the independent media, shutting down Facebook, shutting down Twitter, he wants to completely cut off people from all sources of information so that all they know is what he tells them. And he tells them that everything is fine. There is no war. He can't use that word, war, because everybody in Europe will still lose their minds.

Kim Fauskee 38:39

That's a dirty word.

Pausha Foley 38:40

It's a very dirty word. It's like the N word in America. Everybody freaks out. And yet, as the official said, in Brussels, we are breaking the taboo, and we are buying arms. Germany is now spending 2% of their GDP on arming themselves and it is not freaking good news. Not I mean, not because it's Germany, but because it's bad. This was not supposed to happen ever again. And here we are.

Kim Fauskee 39:11

That's why the tea in NATO stands for treaty. Right? Yeah. Yeah. Which may be an oxymoron, though, at this point.

Pausha Foley 39:19

So I don't have any hopes . I try not to think about it. Because to be perfectly honest, every scenario I can run in my mind of where this can go, isn't pretty. I mean, the best thing I can think of would be for Russians to revolt. Russian people to overthrow the government.

Dr. Dana 39:41

If they don't know what's happening, what would they revolt against because they're kept in the dark about how exactly they know how awful the situation is. So why would they revolve? No reason

Pausha Foley 39:51

without, unless, of course, you know, you have to remember that back in Poland. It was not just oppression, it was also hunger. You know, that's why they. That's why solidarity happened because the workers weren't getting paid for months they were starving. Right? So it might get to it in Russia as well. When people are hungry enough,

Dr. Dana 40:09

the currency has been devaluated, to the point where it has very little value. And as you say, the Western products are not going in. Yeah. So it could cause some pretty serious problems. That would be undeniable. It could be who knows what kind of tail they would spin about why it's happening,

Pausha Foley 40:26

and what kind of tools they will use to suppress an opposition. They were shooting at Polish people, we've heard ammunition during the protests. They will do it in Russia, no doubt, why shouldn't they?

Dr. Dana 40:43

So part of the philosophy that Kim and I are trying to help people start to think about is the idea that you can't get rid of the fear that that's not. It's not human to not have fear, yeah. But it's trying to tap into your resourcefulness and recognizing the person that you are and how capable they are. And the fact that you have a lot going for you and that you're really good at surviving, and that you're really good at taking care of yourself and all that sometimes that can help the fear not go away, but can help you feel a little less overcome by, yeah, all of that. Yeah. Plus, the sharing of the fear with somebody that you love, as you've you know, as you know, can make a bit of a difference. I'm sure that, you know, Christopher can tell you that everything is going to be okay. But he can tell you that he'll always be there. Yeah, and this will do everything he can to help you feel safe, which can make a bit of a difference. But the idea is not that the fear is ever going to go away. I don't think it's how you learn how to come to terms within it sounds like you found a way to at least manage it.

Pausha Foley 41:48

Yeah, I feel like I grew up, I sort of grew up around it.

Dr. Dana 41:53

But it's going to certainly affect your nervous system and your development, if it's part of the reality that you're surrounded by, from the time that you're a tiny little kid.

Pausha Foley 42:01

But I think I did exactly what you're saying, I've developed other parts of myself so that I can contain it. I can keep myself in balance,

Dr. Dana 42:11

does your art help you sort of come to terms with the things that are overwhelming to them in your eye, I've looked at your work a lot. And it's really compelling and quite beautiful. And I'm just wondering how you as an artist, whether that helps you sort of cope with things that are overwhelming in life?

Pausha Foley 42:32

It it does, it's very comforting. It really is, it's it is something like it's, I can become so involved in it, that I don't think about anything else. And that brings relief and in the rest. So there is that, but also, that's part of the growing pressure, you know, growing pressure, as an artist and as a person and becoming aware of myself, all of that allows me to grow other parts of myself so that the elements that are unstable, can be contained and balanced. So it's not so it's not just releasing a pressure in a moment, but also to be more aware of myself to be more expressed as myself to be more, you know, real as myself so I feel more grounded, and more solid as me.

Dr. Dana 43:29

Well, I want our listeners to know that the artwork that we use for our podcasts that you actually created for us. Because I can't tell you how many compliments that I've gotten from people who say, Oh, who did that? Who did that? That is so amazing.

Kim Fauskee 43:45

A woman from behind the Iron Curtain? Yes,

Pausha Foley 43:48

I'm very glad

Dr. Dana 43:49

people find it very whimsical and really very pleasing.

Pausha Foley 43:54

You know, I had a friend. She's deceased now and she passed away a few years ago. I used it when I lived in Warsaw for a few months. I met her and we befriended each other. She was in her 80s back then. And as a young she was an artist and sculptor. And as a young girl, she grew up during the war. She was born before the war and during the war, she was 18 and she was a career in the underground Polish army and she was captured and sent to a concentration camp right at the very beginning of war. And she essentially spent the Cold War six years in Robins brick in German company in Germany. And then after a war, she walked back to Poland, and she enrolled in the Art Academy and became a sculptor and she found out that she wants to be an artist in the camp because she started making drawings for other prisoners or she would make little sculptures from to the brush handles or brush can was whatever was available to her. And she found her passion for it. And she was an amazing sculptor, who created amazingly beautiful things. She would sculpt and jars and berets and albatrosses and not at all images of horror and pain, which is what you would really expect the given experience and what many other artists that after the war that was their way of dealing with their trauma was to put it out into their artwork, and the artwork can be so horrendous, that it's impossible to even look at it. That's not what she did. It was as though she went in the other direction. And she decided there is so much pain

and so much trauma, and there is also so much love and so much beauty and by God, she's going to create more love and beauty. And she did. And she actually told me once and I think that this was the most amazing, and the most absurd thing any human has ever said, in the history of humanity. She said, I feel that I cannot really complain about spending six years in a concentration camp, because that's what I found my art. Can you imagine?

Kim Fauskee 46:19

That's quite an epiphany.

Pausha Foley 46:20

Can you imagine a human who says that she doesn't feel that she can complain about being in a concentration camp. I mean, if ever there was a valid reason to complain, it and she, but she felt her art.

Dr. Dana 46:36

That's what I was asking. Because I'm just wondering if, if it provides you with a certain amount of comfort. It does in the midst of everything in life, not just the fact that there's a war now. But that's

Pausha Foley 46:47

and I'm not, I'm not so sure I haven't had that experience. But I do sometimes when things get very heated in America, it happens often. And I get involved in current affairs and feel agitated and very upset, I will draw it out, I will make a drawing. And that will be my way of getting the feelings out of me and onto paper. And that really does help. And I did think of there are many artists who are very politically engaged and their art is a very direct reflection and commentary on what's happening. And I consider that but I realized that if that my art is about that, then I will be constantly exposed to it in my life and in my art all the time. 24/7 Because I will be thinking about it all the time. And I don't want to think about it all the time. The whole point of getting it out of my system is that so that it's out and done. Right not so that I keep spinning. So, so yes, it brings comfort, and it is a way of getting out all the traumatic upset. And it is also a way of again, affirming some another part of life. Instead of focusing on the fear on whatever trauma triggered. There is more to life than that there is more to passionate than that. And growing that helps. Growing all the other parts of me helps to keep everything balanced and stable.

Kim Fauskee 48:26

Did your formal training as a psychologist help you either understand or compartmentalize some of the feelings that you had growing up?

Pausha Foley 48:33

I'm sure it must have my sense of mice of what I've gained in the university when I studied psychology is that it was a deeper understanding of how humans function and how I function how minds function so that I actually know what happens when things happen in my head. I'm aware of what's what I'm aware of the mechanisms. So that makes it easier for me to be able to deal with it, no doubt than it is for somebody who has no idea what's happening. So yeah, I'm sure he did.

Kim Fauskee 49:07

Yeah, it's one of those things is knowing better than not knowing

Pausha Foley 49:11

yourself. Always. Yes. Others. Sometimes Sometimes not. But yourself. Absolutely. I mean, you already are whatever you are, that I didn't see any benefit in being blind to yourself, because you are. Right. It's it's better to know because, you know, I could repress my trauma. Theoretically, technically, I could try to suppress my fear. A lot of us do that. But it would still be there and it would still have an impact on my life in indirect ways. I don't find that beneficial, because my life would be controlled by it to a much greater extent than it is now when I can see it. And it's in my sight, I keep an eye on it, I can see what it motivates me, what motivates my choices when it motivates my actions, and I can intervene? If I were unconscious, I could not intervene. Right, it would be all on autopilot. And I don't think that would be a good life. I think that the life that my trauma would design for me, that would not be alive that I wants to live.

Kim Fauskee 50:24

So you just hit on what Dana and I have also been talking about in the last couple of weeks is our premise on self culture or conscious introspection. Right, really, really, under really digging down through the layers and understanding who you are, and why you feel the way you do.

Pausha Foley 50:44

I think that there is a difference between obsessing about yourself, and really being with yourself. Right? Absolutely. And I think that it's the being versus thinking, because understanding my fear, seeing my fear is not an intellectual exercise. It is not missing. Oh, well, I know because I've analyzed my past, and I've read those books. So I know everything about my fear. When it hits me, it hits me in my body, and I feel it. And I'm with it, there isn't really nothing to talk about. When that happens. There is almost no thought that happens, right? It's just the sensations of it. The pain happens in my belly, the dread happens in my belly, it is a physical experience. It's not an intellectual discourse, on you know, analyzing which childhood occurrence led to whatever a fight with Christopher 20 years later. It's it's a presence. It's being with your service, not understanding, it's being aware of yourself.

Kim Fauskee 51:50

No, I think, I think when you're talking about the physical feeling of it is very important. Because somebody asked me the other day, they said, How do you not fall back into these old familiar patterns that don't work for you anymore? And I said, it takes conscious effort number one, but number two is my body now tells me okay, you're you're trying to outsmart me again, it's not going to happen anymore. Because it now starts coming out in physical symptoms for me in those feelings. So I know that I'm trying to cheat myself. Yeah. And I stopped doing it.

Pausha Foley 52:29

And in fact, I observed that when I become triggered by something or other life, and I become agitated, I start thinking about it, and I start talking a lot. And this thinking and talking, I can call it introspection, it's not introspection, it's nice. It's a white noise that is designed to stop me from feeling. It means I don't want to feel something. So I'm not being present. And being the opposite. I'm present. I'm trying to go

unconscious. So a lot of what people understand by introspection really isn't, it's another way of disconnecting from what's really happening, I think. And that that kind of escapism, of course, doesn't lead to anything.

Dr. Dana 53:13

I think they were came in I mean, when we talk about introspection is not the intellectual understanding, but more the feeling of being connected to how you feel deep down inside, that type of introspection, where you're paying attention to how you're feeling, and not necessarily having to say anything, like you say, but, but allowing yourself to be really present to whatever the feelings are inside your body that are dictating your reality. at any particular moment.

Pausha Foley 53:43

I think the more the better. Yeah, so we better

Kim Fauskee 53:49

hope people are listening, because that's exactly what we're trying to get through to people right now. Yeah, on that.

Dr. Dana 53:56

It takes a lot of courage, though.

Pausha Foley 53:58

It does. It does you as I keep telling Christopher, you have to allow the pain to hurt you. You have to be okay with the pain hurting you. Yeah. But on the other hand, it's almost the alternative? It's almost as though you don't have any other choice because the pain is there helping you all this time. There is no way to escape it. It will always be there. You can pretend. But it still hurts. Just 13 different ways.

Dr. Dana 54:26

I think therein lies why people use so many different substances to make themselves numb.

Pausha Foley 54:31

But that also hurts you know?

Dr. Dana 54:33

Yeah. Tell us in a different way

Pausha Foley 54:34

in a different way. Yeah. So it's, that's reality. That's how it is just what else can we do? But believe it? I mean, we already are with it. Anyway, it's not even a choice. Right?

Dr. Dana 54:47

Do you wish that you could practice psychology in the United States?

Pausha Foley 54:52

No, I prefer to be an artist. You will prefer to be an artist. Okay. I did. You could be both Ah, not really, because I can be an artist full time. If I can then practice, then you know, something would take the first place. But I consider that when I came here, I mean, I would have to get, you know, all the I would have to go to college and get my diploma validated and all that stuff. But I, it didn't feel like something that I really want to come into my life though it felt very interesting. I really did enjoy my studies a lot. It's definitely helpful to me, to my marriage, probably greatly helpful. But I art is something that I want to be not just, you know, doing weekends as a hobby. Yeah, yeah.

Kim Fauskee 55:47

So we're coming up on our hour long discussion here. What do you want our listeners to know, with regards to the people that are having to live under occupation right now? Either know, or understand.

Pausha Foley 56:07

See, that's that's the thing. There is almost no. Can we have another five hours?

Kim Fauskee 56:19

I'm sure there's no word sentence, or paragraph that probably partly sums it up a bit, maybe? Maybe let me rephrase it by saying, Is there a way that we can help?

Pausha Foley 56:32

I would like everybody to know, I think that this is a tragedy. What's happening right now. All of it is a tragedy. It is a tragedy, what Putin is doing to Russia right now to his own people. It is a tragedy, what happens in Ukraine, it is going to be, it already is a fragile tragedy, what happened to the European Union, that the taboo was broken, it is a frigging tragedy, and more tragedies are possibly coming. I don't see any winners here. I think we've all just lost, and we've lost a lot. I think that we, America still has its dream of peace, but more by the virtue of being so isolated, so far away from anybody who could innovate, that it's gonna it's the geography that keeps us safe here, right, more than anything else. But in Europe, we tried, we really tried to create a community of different cultures, different countries, different traditions, living together without fighting. And this is now in danger. And that's terrible. So maybe it would be good to keep that in mind. That this really is a tragic event. In addition to all the conversations that are happening in America, about who's guilty, whose fault it is, is it Biden, is it Trump, are Republicans? Is it because Democrats, you know, are American racists, or they did it to other countries? So whatever. This really was humans trying to find a way and it wasn't a perfect way. And yes, it did not include all the countries in the world. But it was a beginning of something. A beginning of a dream of peace. And that dream is under a huge attack right now. And I just wish that people gave thought to that. And the ramification of that. I'm hoping that if they consider it. Well, I don't know. I don't know what could happen if people consider it. But you know, at least it's good to know that the dream of peace is falling apart as it's falling apart, right? It's better than not now. And then one day be shocked when Russia nukes or takes us out at Caja when we are having Sunday morning coffee. This is what's happening right now that the word piece is going to pieces potentially, it's threatened. It this is I think, something to think of.

Kim Fauskee 59:17

Well, we certainly appreciate your insight. Because you're the perfect person to actually talk about this that has gone through this experience, and has a basis of reality of what actually is happening and what potentially or may actually happen. And I promise next time that you sit in that seat, we will talk about love and relationships, but again, thanks for being here. Thank you.

Pausha Foley 59:44

You're welcome. Thank you.

Fear Me Out 59:47

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