

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 3

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Amy Cooper – Overcoming Trauma

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SPEAKERS

Kim Fauskee, Fear Me Out, Amy Cooper, Dr. Dana

Dr. Dana 00:11

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

Fear Me Out 00:30

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

Kim Fauskee 00:51

Hey folks, welcome to episode number three. On today's show, you'll hear not only from Dana and I, but a special in studio guest as well. As we continue our discussion on the importance of living a self Examined Life. Amy Cooper is a successful entrepreneur, business consultant and mother, through life's many trials and tribulations, has had the opportunity over the course of her life, to deeply explore her inner being and live an examined life. We hope you enjoy our conversation with Amy as much as we did. All right, Amy, welcome.

Amy Cooper 01:21

Thank you.

Kim Fauskee 01:23

So why don't you tell our listeners who is Amy Cooper?

Amy Cooper 01:26

Oh, my goodness. I mean, don't you have any more specific questions I could go on and on?

Kim Fauskee 01:30

Well, I can sit there and tell you my perception of Amy Cooper. But that's only my perception of Cooper. I'm more interested on who Amy Cooper is from Amy Cooper.

Amy Cooper 01:40

Okay, Amy Cooper from Amy Cooper. I was born and raised here in California. And I've lived in California my whole life, and originally from the Bay Area and then married a Santa barbarian and landed in Santa Barbara 27 years ago. And I'm an entrepreneur and a mom and a daughter and a friend. And yeah, there's a lot I could say about my professional or personal life. So

Kim Fauskee 02:07

job to you. Please continue?

Amy Cooper 02:11

Well, I will tell you that my first professional job, which really has probably tells you a lot about me was in San Francisco, I really wanted to work in public relations or advertising, but I hadn't graduated from college yet. So I had taken a year off school. And I was trying to get into that business to see if I liked it. But imagine I'm 20 years old, I have no experience. And I answer finally I just need to pay the rent. So I answer a random ad for a receptionist, and I'm interviewing and right away, they tell me it's a PR firm. So my eyes light up. But the interview person says, gosh, I have a really hard time keeping receptionists they all want to go into the business. So do you want to go into the business? And I said absolutely not. And so within six months, I was a junior associate there. But I was still answering the phones and then fax machines were huge back then. So I was in charge of the facts. And then I started writing press releases. And really writing is what got me advanced my career over and over and over again, there's always a need for great writing. And I happen to have that skill naturally. So worked in PR in San Francisco for many years and event planning and corporate communications. And that's been the foundation of my career. But that idea that, you know, I had the tenacity to be pursuing what I wanted to do, but I also had the realistic sense. Okay, now I just have to pay my rent. And then I got really lucky. So that sums up a lot of how my life has gone. And it was only with one white lie. It's only with one white lie. I think I did consult my dad before and said, Can I if they asked me that? What can I say? And he said make them glad they hired you? Which I did. It's good advice.

Kim Fauskee 03:44

Yeah. So tell us a little bit about your upbringing,

Amy Cooper 03:50

my upbringing, um, one sister, one brother, one father, one mother, and raised in the Bay Area. And another quirky thing about me was I was born with a strawberry mark like garbage F has on his head. But mine grew into a big, big lump on the side of my face. And apparently they wouldn't have been able to take it off until I was in high school at the time. That's what they told my parents. So that would have been a very different experience. But it turned out I lived in Palo Alto and Stanford Children's Hospital was there and at eight, eight years old, they said out you know what, we've figured out the technology to do the surgery. And they interviewed me at eight and to see if I could tolerate being awake for the surgery because if I was awake for the surgery, I wouldn't have to stay overnight. And the doctor came out and said, yeah, she's fine. She'll have no problem set. At eight I was already pretty built. Built in resilience and fearlessness. I was the third youngest. I'd already gotten bullied and pushed around by my older siblings. So I had that tenacity, I think at that age, so I remember that surgery. Yeah,

Kim Fauskee 04:56

you weren't raised in the we Think is the quintessential beaver Cleaver, Ozzie and Harriet family. However, though,

Amy Cooper 05:05

I mean a little bit, I think in the early years, I was we weren't, we were kind of that typical white bread, you know, Presbyterian ish, you know, went camping and California lifestyle. And then when I was nine years old, we moved to San Diego. And then shortly after that my parents' marriage fell apart. And that's when the whole dynamic changed, of course within the family. Because my dad was gone, and then my sister was

Kim Fauskee 05:32

gone. Was your dad out of the picture completely? Or?

Amy Cooper 05:35

No, he was not out of that he was there he was around, but it was, you know, in those days, I mean, you were just full custody with mom, there was no question that, you know, you might see dad for a little, you know, fun trip, to have dinner or something. But their custody was with mom. So I lived with my mom. Actually, I think I was about 12 When they got divorced. But I think the marriage was falling apart between 10 and 12. And my sister is eight years older than I am, she was already gone. And my brother was in high school and things went from this intact unit to really splintering by about age 10 or 11.

Kim Fauskee 06:04

In this may seem like an obvious question, but how did it affect you personally, parents divorcing, especially is your reaching teenage years.

Amy Cooper 06:12

It's a female. Of course, in hindsight, and with great exploration of self, that's a brutal time to have when you're just discovering your own sexuality or becoming a young woman, to have your dad cheating on your Mom, leave your mom, your mom's just gutted and devastating and telling you by the way, don't ever trust a man or you'll end up like this. And, and then also just in that phase, I was really planning to

be a professional dancer. So I've committed my life to dance. And I was dancing full time and getting offered scholarships. But I dropped out of dance right around 13, right after my dad moved out. And I realized now it was because I just didn't have the home stability to feel that I could be out there pursuing what I wanted to do. And so it changed how I felt about myself and how I felt about relationships and marriage. And certainly suddenly, it went from a family to a really broken and devastated mother figure and a father figure who's now in love with somebody else. And then my brother shortly thereafter, went away to college, he had been my main ally at that point. So I was left completely alone by 13.

Kim Fauskee 07:23

So so how do you deal with that you're going through puberty on your own? Do you have parents?

Amy Cooper 07:28

Well, she my mom was, you know, with my mom, as much as you know, she was devastated as she was discovering herself as a newborn feminist, right. So she was throwing me a period party with her closest women friends with pink roses. And, you know, there was a, there was some great little pieces there where I suddenly got a bunch of other kind of mom figures in the mix. Good for mom. Yeah. And so there was a lot of that. She was exploring what it meant, you know, she came from a 1950s housewife scenario. So she was starting to discover who she was. And I had the benefit of that. So there were some benefits during that time. And the other part of it is that as much as it was brutal to be on my own. Now, I'm looked to as someone to count on and rely on, and also someone to be celebrated. So I started to have a lot of confidence in what I had to say and what I thought, which has still driven me to this day. So when you have your own, your dad's gone, your brother and sister are gone. And your mom saying What should I do? What the more you're figuring that out? Yes, it's an incredible burden and stressful. On the other hand, you're building a lot of confidence in your decision making.

08:39

Did you ever feel like you had to become an adult before you're ready?

Amy Cooper 08:43

1,000% I did. Yeah, that was in percent I did. I'm sorry. Go ahead. I was gonna say I remember ever really vividly. Probably the most painful memory that I can see in my mind from that time is walking up the walkway towards my house after school, feeling so sick and so scared, knowing that my mom would be waiting for me to come home from school and waiting for me to meet her emotional needs or, you know, cheer her up or comfort her and feeling so trapped and panicked walking up those that walkway.

09:18

So how did you handle that over the long over the long period of time?

Amy Cooper 09:22

I was very stressed and very independent and didn't ask for help. Didn't really know I could ask for help. That's a definite continued character defect of mine. And I then relied a lot on my best best childhood friend who was like my family friend who I'm still very close with.

Dr. Dana 09:42

Yeah. Did you ever sort of feel hopeless and depressed and anxious as a result of all of that

Amy Cooper 09:48

I those feelings all came out later in life, especially after the birth of my daughter when all of that being relied upon and overwhelmed by someone else? All of it. was triggered again. I think at that time I didn't, I hate to say didn't get to I don't I didn't get to be sad or depressed stirs up feelings. It was all about her. Okay. And if I wasn't keeping her alive, then I had nothing. So I mean, I didn't even I remember even early in my marriage, I joined Al Anon family and friends of alcoholics has my all a lot of people in my family have addiction issues. And I remember them saying, Well, you know, first thing is to know what you need and say what you need. And I mean, I was in my 30s. And I was like, Oh, my goodness, I don't even know if I know what I truly feel or need at any given time. I'm so used to being responsive to someone else. Yeah, it's pretty overwhelming, extremely. But the birth of my daughter then triggered that in a much more profound way than it did when I was younger, because I had been carrying on to a certain degree and then couldn't carry on anymore after that.

10:53

So how old were you when you first decided you wanted to look at yourself and explore who you are, and deal with some of the trauma that you suffered?

Amy Cooper 11:01

Um, let's see. When I first I think, I think I went to Yeah, I, we, I briefly saw a therapist early on in my marriage when there were some issues going on. And I didn't find that really, that satisfying or helpful. And was struggling after the birth of my daughter and had really severe postpartum depression, but they were treating it more medically, you know, putting me on antidepressants and other, you know, watch your nutrition, and your thyroid is going up and down and things like that, but it wasn't more spiritual or psychological. And then my daughter was about two or so. And I was talking to my sister, who had been at that point in recovery for 20 plus years. And she said, you know, you should really consider going to a 12 step program for children of adult children of alcoholics, adult children of addiction and dysfunction. And she had suggested it before, and I not think it was relevant. I really laughingly thought I was the together one, you know, in the family. Look at me, I'm so competent. And at that point, she said something that changed everything for me. She said, You know, I said, Well, I don't know if that relates to me. And she said, What if it's just a new tool that you have in your toolbox, it's a new set of tools. And you've used all the tools that you have so far. So this is adding some new tools and and that really spoke to me. And so I went up because she was running a rehab center in Canada, where she lives. And they have a family program. And so I got to do the program for free. So it was an immersive week long program. And that's when my mind was blown about how much of what I thought to just be who I was, was actually just a reaction to my family system.

12:49

So that kind of opened you up to the notion that maybe there were things that needed to be addressed inside of you.

Amy Cooper 12:54

Yeah, yeah, that was it. I really saw the perfectionism and the controlling nature and the codependency and the hypervigilance and all of these things, I could see how they were created, and also start to say, is this really who I am? Or what pieces of these do I want to carry forward? Or what pieces could I change? So after a couple years, in AI Anon, that's when I started to do a lot more psychological, spiritual exploration of myself.

13:24

And did you do that by yourself? Or did you find someone to help you

Amy Cooper 13:28

I mean, an AI Anon, you have a great tribe of people. And you and I worked through that program and their steps. And then as my marriage fell apart, I mean, really, in part because I started to actually become present to what was going on in my marriage, which was not okay, and start to know, okay, this is not okay, and start to, whereas before, I thought maybe my marriage wasn't okay, because I didn't know how to ask for what I needed or wanted. Then when I was able to ask her what I needed or wanted, then it was, oh, it's not here. You know, as they say, in the program, it's going to the hardware store for a loaf of bread. There was no bread to be had in that marriage. So first, I had to get to the point where I could say, oh, I deserve to ask for things. I deserve to have some needs met. When the answer was a complete No. Then when I was about to leave, he said, I'll go to marriage therapy, but by then it was too late. So we did explore that. And from there, I continued on and then ended up getting a personal therapist, right when I left that marriage that was really, really profoundly impactful. Dr. Kimberly Taylor,

Kim Fauskee 14:31

one want to go back a little bit to your adolescence and live with a mom that had anxiety and other related issues, either before or after the divorce. Did you have any physical signs of depression or anxiety or anything that was affecting you physically?

Amy Cooper 14:54

Yeah, that's a great question. I think that's so interesting that how it shows up physically I did not then. But freshman year in college, when my mom was still relying on me calling me deeply disturbed or upset to want to talk on the phone for three hours at a time, while I'm in the dorm room, I started to have severe stomach issues, which of course, I didn't at the time was like, Oh, I just, you know, but now I see is just a strong anxiety response. So I struggled with stomach issues off and on. And that then continued on and, and now I have an autoimmune disorder. But I do think that the the stress to my nervous system and my physical being. I mean, it's I've been told I have PTSD from from all of that. So that does take a huge toll on your adrenals and cortisol and body. And I think that those those effects are now showing up now that I'm in my 50s, way more than they did before.

Kim Fauskee 15:54

Dana and I talk a lot about, it's our reaction to fear. It's our reaction to a lot of the psychological things and not not the actual. So yeah, so Right. And so we talked a lot about managing it through intuition and spirituality. Were you raised in a religious family? It all was.

Amy Cooper 16:14

I mean, as I said, we were like casual Presbyterians, you know, I mean, we were kind of went, but I mean, there was no real religion. But then when my mom got really into feminism, and all that sort of explore who she was, she had a more spiritual nature. And so I followed along with that a little bit. But I wouldn't say I had a real spiritual connection until I got into the 12 step program, and was quite a few years into that, where I started to feel that I could have, and really only in the past five years that I have a strong meditation practice that I have some feel like there's something bigger than me. I mean, of course, this is so classic. If you don't have parents you can depend on, it's very hard to get a sense of a any kind of spirituality, like, there's anyone out there, you're like, I'm on my own. I've been on my own. I've been on my own since the get go. And it's, it's a big concept to start to trust in something bigger than yourself. But I do feel like that's where the ease comes in. It's not all up to me. So my core sense is always going to be it's 100% up to me. And I have to bat battle with that, because that's so strongly ingrained from when I was little.

Kim Fauskee 17:16

And how about listening to your intuition: Was that something that you learned earlier or later?

Amy Cooper 17:21

Actually, I learned that early because I think when you're 13, and your mother's asking you to do things that you have no idea how to do, I got a really strong sense to my gut, which still has again, served me to this day that I have a strong intuition and a strong sense. I remember I was in my 20s, I was at a PR firm, not the first one, but one of the later ones I was at and my boss who was, you know, 20 years older than me said, I watched you make decisions. And you're so good at how you do that? You know, and I said, I still use this gut sense that I developed or maybe it's like street smarts or something.

17:52

Were you aware of it at the time? Or was it just an innate sort of a thing that you developed as a survival mechanism?

Amy Cooper 17:58

survival mechanism? For sure. But I knew I could count on it. I know, I can count on myself. Okay. And I can count on myself to make good decisions not 100% of the time, but I can I even I, it's so finely tuned. Now. I was just if I reach her phone to text, I'll get this. Nope. Or Yep. You know, I have a really strong strong gut instinct that probably was initially survival mechanism.

18:24

And one of the premises that Kim and I have developed is the notion that your intuition can be the voice of God inside of you. And that, the more you're connected to your intuition, the more your life will work the way you're describing it. Yeah, that you treat it as though it's a very sacred part of who you are. And that you do the best you can to trust it implicitly, and allow it to be one of the central ways that you live

your life. Yeah, it's certainly one of the best ways that we found for people to manage their fear in a graceful way, then you're not going up against your fear, you're just looking at your fear as a way of helping you understand that what you might be doing is uncomfortable. But if you're really connected to yourself, it makes it easier to figure out how you're going to deal with that discomfort. Yeah. Does that sound familiar to at

Amy Cooper 19:12

all? Yeah, very much. So. And that's, again, a 12 step principle of the alignment. And so the idea isn't this magical sky daddy, the idea is that there's an overall greater force of love and connection, and that you have that within yourself and that you can trust that and that you are asking for that level of guidance every day. And sometimes you're listening to it a little bit better than others. Sometimes it gets muffled by other things, but that when you try to align with that your life flows much more easily. And you also don't feel so gripped that's, that's when I know I'm out of connection with that. That sense, is when I have that sense of grip versus sense of I can trust what's going on and follow that flow.

19:52

What do you mean by grip?

Amy Cooper 19:53

So grip is is my feeling internally, it's like you think of clenching up, and it's the If I can't really listen to any information, including if it's coming from myself, because I'm in fear, or I'm, I'm too attached to the outcome. Okay, so one of the ways that disconnects me from that gut or intuition is to get either into ego or outcome, expectation, of course, fear as well. But fear, like, to your point, fear can serve a really good well, and I mean, fear false evidence appearing real, you know, however you want to think of it, it's really a neutral emotion, neutral emotion. And it could also be speaking of fear of intimacy, which is a different, different conversation. Fear can be from telling you the wrong message, the fear can be I'm trying to protect you from being seen. I'm trying to protect you from feeling vulnerable, when in fact, you should move towards that.

Kim Fauskee 20:53

That's generally your ego that's trying to override your intuition.

Amy Cooper 20:56

Yeah. Yeah. That's a good point.

21:00

Do you do anything to sort of enhance your intuition? Or did you just happen through desperation and the necessity of having to take care of your mom and keep her alive?

Amy Cooper 21:10

Yeah, I mean, I think that that formative experience, and then me launching into a professional career where often I was the only woman in the room where often I was younger than other people, you and then becoming, you know, getting married, having a baby, having your own business. And these are things you've never done before. So all every step of the way, I've learned to trust more and more on

my gut and my intuition. And in fact, when I had my own business for 10 years, people would say, Isn't that stressful? I find it 10 billion times more stressful to work for other people, and have them making decisions that I either agree with or don't, or that are changing all the time, or that don't make sense. When I was making my own decisions, hey, if I fail, I fail. But at least I made the best choice I could at the time, when I'm having to follow other people's decisions. And their and I feel like it's the wrong direction.

Kim Fauskee 22:04

It's a lot harder for me, that makes you the true entrepreneur.

Amy Cooper 22:07

Yeah. But I mean, you know, and that's as its downsides, too, right? I mean, then you're out there on your own. And there's a lot of

Kim Fauskee 22:15

burden on you carry all the risk and responsibility, right with that. But just

Amy Cooper 22:19

it's interesting now, as I'm saying it, because I hadn't thought of it this way before that, of course, I'm more comfortable with that model. Because that mirrors. Yeah, what I'm used to.

Kim Fauskee 22:27

So I'm kind of interested in how your mom get healthy?

Amy Cooper 22:31

Oh, yeah, I'm yeah, she's such a gem, you should interview her. She is just like your mom. She is so funny and smart. She got into a relationship after the marriage. That was that was really impactful, but also I think, would kind of emotionally brought her to her knees and she started to seek help. She was already interested in the psychological realm. She always read different books about that someone

Kim Fauskee 22:54

similar to your father know, exactly, yeah. Okay.

Amy Cooper 22:59

She's the original Cougar poor mom. I mean, she was 42. I think he was 20. Wow, they met in college because she went back to school to finish her degree. And they were together eight years. And yeah, really big love story. But but then it went into an addiction situation. And she decided, you know, for your mom and tell her about Bose kind of I don't know, I can't speak for him. And she decided to seek recovery. And that changed everything. Because, yeah, once she went into recovery, then she had a whole different way to look at herself in her life and principles. And she sponsors a lot of people and is really impactful in that realm. And she really became a whole different person. And then and it has made amends, and we've had all those conversations. I'm so lucky to have had that opportunity with her. And so now she's like my biggest champion and ally,

Kim Fauskee 23:50

did you ever come to a point prior to your mom, there over the relationship with your mom changing in a positive way? Do you ever come up to a point where you weren't sure whether you could have a relationship going forward with her?

Amy Cooper 24:03

No, I? I was too. No, absolutely not. I mean, I just would never have occurred to me. She got recovery way before I did and got into any therapy. So I mean, I was just devoted to her. So

24:20

was she able to take responsibility for what she was like?

Amy Cooper 24:23

Yeah, yeah, it's quite painful for her as you might imagine.

24:26

Imagine it sounds like she was in a really dark place.

Amy Cooper 24:29

She was she took advantage you know, you think back to her childhood and her mom was really abusive alcoholic who was you know, just horrific to her and then she, you know, married my father under very under duress, you know, accident pregnancy. He made it clear he didn't want to marry her because her love her self esteem was on the floor. So she was working with this. You know, I think of her almost like an orphan. I mean, she had her dad she was close with her dad, but she had no parent no mothering. So she had a mother list mother. Then is trying to mother in a difficult situation,

Kim Fauskee 25:04

and that without the skill or the tools to be able to do that no skill or tools,

Amy Cooper 25:07

and it hasn't been mothered, hasn't been loved or doesn't have the nurturing, doesn't have any nurturing, and then marry someone who doesn't really want to marry her. And then he ends up cheating on her leaving her and also she'd never worked. So suddenly, she's just left with no, you know, no has none of the framework that she was familiar with.

Kim Fauskee 25:29

How did your dad leaving affect you? We talked a lot about your mom, we haven't really talked about your dad. And we, you know, it's always better to have two parents around. Generally.

Amy Cooper 25:42

I mean, that was a huge hit. That was obviously a devastating blow. And I think I had to quickly focus on my mom, it's funny, I didn't think not funny. It was awful. He was already in love with someone else. He married that person who's now we have a close relationship. He's been married for over 30 years. She's lovely. He was an alcoholic at the time and an admitted alcoholic and has progressed down that

road. So he not only left, physically and left my mom and left me, I think that would be my biggest resentment that I've already worked through is that he left me holding the bag, so to speak. Not that he had an awareness of that. But that would be even more than leaving the marriage, it would be How could you leave your child to be dealing with this situation?

26:31

Has he ever answered to those issues? He doesn't.

Amy Cooper 26:33

He won't speak about anything emotionally. He doesn't really know us. And he's very walled off.

Kim Fauskee 26:41

So how did you come to grips with that? Then? If he didn't come out and admit, what do you guys for the fourth

Amy Cooper 26:48

step, baby, love the 12 steps for that the fourth step is huge. I mean, I just did another one, like a big in depth two page ad question thing on each resentment. And he was there for that. And I looked through all of that, and looked through my part in it and see that he, sadly, that is the best he could do. And he is still doing the best he can do. He's also got his own childhood wounds, and he's a active alcoholic. So he doesn't talk about hardware. Sure, no loaf of bread. I don't take it personally, because I've worked through it. But I don't have a dad, I don't feel that I have a dad.

Kim Fauskee 27:22

And I think that's an important piece when we do self examination. And in living this Examined Life, which we're talking about today, right? Because I got to a point in my adult life where I wasn't getting from my mother, what I hoped to get from my mother. And was it worth having a relationship with her going forward? If I wasn't going to get those things? Well, that's

Amy Cooper 27:47

yeah, that's a really good point, too, that my therapist made to me, which was your family's giving you love, including your dad. But it's in a way that isn't what you want or need. But in other words, you're saying I want apples and they're giving oranges now I wasn't seeing it at all. But once she gave that perspective, I would notice, you know, if I was around him, and he'd reach over and kind of tap my, my knee, I would just go, oh, he loves me. So I would, I would take his little tiny gestures and interpret that. But am I now around him? Do I call him? Do I go down there? No, because I don't want to put myself in that situation.

Kim Fauskee 28:21

So so for me the definition for me being able to continue to have relationships with my mother was that I felt it wasn't malicious. Right, that she didn't do the things that she did on purpose, right, potentially say the things that she said on purpose. That, like you said about your mom, not having a lot of tools in the toolbox didn't have you know, the the frame of mind from being raised by other parents, and just trying to do it on or on their own. That's how I realized that I was going to be okay with that relationship

so that she did the best she could with what she had. Right. And that's and it wasn't a justification. It was me actually coming to grips with Okay, she did the best that she could. I have this fantasy in my head about the mother that I wanted to have. Not going to have that much. Yeah.

Amy Cooper 29:17

See the grieving of that. I don't know how long that grieving goes on. But I still okay. I think it goes on forever. I agree. I'll have Father's Day and you'll see all the Facebook posts and I have friends whose dads are there, you know, champions and allies. It's painful. Yeah,

Kim Fauskee 29:33

yeah. My mother. You know, my mother passed away at the beginning of this year, and she would have had a birthday here in September. And somebody had asked me they said is it is the date of her death or her birthday going to be the most difficult. And I had never thought of either one. About that, but when her birthday came up. It was a sad day for me.

Amy Cooper 29:58

Yeah. Yeah. Then you really can never have, you know, maybe there's some hope while they're still alive. But once they're gone, you know, you'll never have never have that.

Kim Fauskee 30:05

Well, and I asked about the Father scenario because as you know, I had a very difficult upbringing, if any upbringing at all for with my father and that continued on till the day he died. Yeah. And somebody would always ask me, I've always get asked this question, were you able to, to talk your father in and have peace with it before he died? And I said, Well, the question you should be asking me is, did I actually even want to have that conversation? Right. And, and I didn't. Yeah.

30:42

You know, I hadn't experienced this once after my father died, I was in the Canadian Rockies, and I was with my wife on vacation. And I was looking at how beautiful everything was. And I just got the most overwhelming feeling that my father decided to come on up and take responsibility for his absence in my life. And it was an incredibly overwhelming feeling of sort of forgiveness on both of our parts. Because I know it was not the easiest kid. Growing up that I gave him a run for his money,

Amy Cooper 31:12

I find that hard to believe.

31:15

So I don't know I just had this. It was just such a peaceful, wonderful feeling to finally come to peace with him. Yeah, as a person. And it felt to me like he came to some peace with me. That's lovely. And it was a really, really lovely feeling. So I'm not 100% Convinced that even after the person dies, it's completely hopeless.

Amy Cooper 31:34

No, I love that. Yeah. And my dad, and I were very close. We were closer than he was with any I mean, it was my dad and I, he was closest to me versus my sister and brother, I think. And until I was about 10, or 11. So we had a really strong relationship at one point. And I know he loves me, in his heart. So yeah, maybe I'll have that opportunity.

31:56

Yeah, it was easier, easier for my dad to be emotionally present after Yes. And before the mind. It's just kind of an odd concept. And it sure felt genuine to me. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 32:07

So two of us in the room are divorced and one of us as a long term marriage as you're getting married and being married to the person you're married to, we tend to to fall back into what we're familiar with, right? These patterns, whether they're good, bad or indifferent for us, and whatever feels familiar to us, we fall into that. Was that your case?

Amy Cooper 32:32

Yes. But you know, if the tradition is you marry your dad, but I married my mom. So I married someone who had a lot of that kind of, you know, I'll talk about her when she was not well, that that more controlling, moody, manipulative, almost want to call it the dark feminine, but I hate to call a masculine or feminine. So I think it's interesting, because my dad, I was, you know, looked like Tom Selleck, and super attractive and masculine and could do anything and cheated on my mom a lot. Right? So I, you know, I went nowhere near the jocks and the alpha males. So I married someone who's, you know, clothing designer and all of these other more feminine traits. But then I was repeating a pattern to some degree of of the dysfunction with the relationship with my mom. So yeah, so I would say if if there was any repeating it wasn't me marrying my dad, it was more than the other was or marrying, not my dad, maybe that's another thing you do is you just try to do the opposite of what you do. The antithesis, like this guy won't cheat on me. Yeah.

Kim Fauskee 33:38

So So how long did it take you to kind of figure out you had married your mom?

Amy Cooper 33:44

Oh, gosh, I don't know.

Kim Fauskee 33:46

I mean, was there there , ya was there was loved each other. They got along really well. But was there one day? It's like, Oh, my God, I've married my mom. I don't know if I can do this any longer? Or was

Amy Cooper 33:56

because I don't think it was that. I wasn't that much like my mom. I mean, I just think more if you were gonna say did you repeat a pattern? I would say it was more in that. I would either say I did the antithesis of the dad or more in the direction of my mom. But no, I I just think that in hindsight, of course, what I brought in from all that family upbringing in the family system and trauma I had no idea was going was operating. So that's scary. Because it's like someone's driving the car and it's not you,

Kim Fauskee 34:23

right? Did you have a fantasy in your head? Because of coming from a broken home at a point did you have this fantasy in your head about who you're gonna marry and how that life was gonna go?

Amy Cooper 34:34

No, I didn't really think about getting married or having kids. I was more. I mean, I wanted to be in a monogamous loving partnership, but I wasn't ever really thinking about reforming the family unit.

Kim Fauskee 34:46

And that wasn't from the trauma from or was it just kind of

Amy Cooper 34:51

been? I mean, I certainly didn't have a high regard for marriage. You know, after what I'd seen it was pretty I'm not sure that I wanted to do that, and I was comfortable in my own independence and ability to work and provide for myself. So it was going to be only if I was really, really in a strong love partnership with aligned values. And that's how it was up until we were married, when he became a different person, but before that he was a really strong partner.

Kim Fauskee 35:23

And how was it becoming a mom for yourself after being a mom to your mom,

Amy Cooper 35:28

right. So if only I'd known that that bucket was so had run dry from being a mom to my mom, which as I said, I still was not consciously aware of, I really, really wanted to have a baby, and really wanted to have a girl actually read a book about how to have a boy or girl. And so I was very excited to be pregnant and had a great pregnancy. But as soon as I had the baby I had postpartum depression and all sorts of different I had a really difficult labor talk about the body by the way, before I go into the child have being a mom. I think it's interesting to trace back when I think now of having an autoimmune disease and, and how that functions basically autoimmune your body's attacking itself, right? It's basically getting its wires crossing 911 Something's wrong. So something's wrong. We're sending the troops. I was born and three months later had an inguinal hernia. So I had major surgery at three months old, that I had the surgery on my face at eight years old. Then I had that I was raped in freshman year in college, I was drugged and raped by a stranger, then which I don't have a memory of per se, but my body I'm sure does, then I have

Kim Fauskee 36:39

let's go back to that for just a second. I don't want to gloss over that. Okay. You don't have a memory of that. But you have a feeling of that.

Amy Cooper 36:45

I have I yeah, I was at a party and a freshman fraternity party, and I woke up with it happening. It was happening to me when I was woken up by someone I'd never seen before. Okay, so they'd given me something in the drink. Gotcha. And then I just got out of that room. Yeah. But, but I just think for my

body to register major surgery at three months old, where they're cutting you open, major surgery at eight years old, raped by a stranger, you know, 18, then a horrific birth, three day birth, water wouldn't burn, you know, wouldn't go into labor wouldn't go into contractions, but my water had broken while I was sleeping, you know, forced Pitocin labor, three hours of pushing. So I think my body had a lot of different things teed up, that it started to believe were unsafe things or unsafe, adding to my overall idea that the planet was a bit unsafe. So it started out with that really rough birth. And I do think that that played into postpartum depression and me not doing well, those first little while and then it triggered my past of being swamped by someone else's need, right? Yeah, yeah. I didn't know what happened. But it retriggered my whole childhood of feeling, I can't handle this, this is way more than I can handle. And then the sleep deprivation and postpartum everything, you know, coalesced into a big, big nightmare.

Kim Fauskee 38:10

So I call that the stacking effect. No, no number of things are stacking each other exactly like Jenga, just just make sure you pull the right. Yeah. So a lot of those things, at least for me, personally, caused me to start reexamining my life. Did that at that point? Cause you another point within your journey to kind of reexamine?

Amy Cooper 38:38

Yeah, I think if we talk about fear, I've gotten exponentially more fearful as I've gotten older. So I just was recently talking about this with someone. when I look now and say, Oh, that decision I would have, I would have told you that was the perfect person, anyone who met this person? Everyone who knew this person, everyone who knew us would say you are an ideal match, you're talking about your my husband, best friend, partner, lover, same values, everything turns out that was a complete facade.

39:15

So he wasn't really that person. And how long did it take before you discovered that?

Amy Cooper 39:19

The day we got married, he switched into the other person? Really?

39:23

Like what changed so drastically, but

Amy Cooper 39:25

he wouldn't. So about a week before the wedding, this is someone who pursued me, wanted to get engaged, wanted to buy a house together, wanted to get married was really pushing, you know, but I mean, we had a great sexual connection, emotional connection, mental connection, all the things. We moved here and bought a house. We were getting married a week before the wedding. He said I don't just very coldly. I don't think I want to marry you. Just like that. While we're in bed together. This was before the week. So people in town have a house together. How did you move forward to get married? Well, so I'm in shock. Yeah, so I can't I Remember climbing out of the bed crawling out? Like, I don't even know what you're talking about? What are you saying? He goes, Why would that bother? Why?

I'm just You're my best friend. Why can't I tell you that? Okay, so I'm in, I'm just spinning, I go to my trusted sources and they say, Oh, he's

Kim Fauskee 40:17

just cool. See. And meanwhile,

Amy Cooper 40:18

I'm trying to to. I have one week of this strange thing versus a year and a half of the person I knew. So what am I going to trust? The wedding was stressful. He was the night of the wedding, he was really cruel, and the honeymoon was not great. And we came home early. So now in that first year, I'm in complete shock and devastation. first of all, I've lost my person. I don't know who this person is. He would cry if I went near him. He told me he was about to kill himself. I was saying you need to get help. Now you need to go therapy. Now. He said, If you ever I'm going to go. But if you ever bring it up again, I'll never go.

Kim Fauskee 41:02

How long were you together before you got married? Almost two years. You saw none of that.

Amy Cooper 41:09

None of that. I mean, really, the people who have unpacked it since then I've said it because I was still I still to this, you know, even after I left him was like, I don't know what happened. They were like, no, he needed to marry me. He wanted to marry me to have a certain life that he wanted to have. That was not authentic to who he actually is, or what he's capable of in my judgment, and the universe and other people was so badly shattered by that relationship that I've never recovered.

41:35

You don't strike me as someone who would be easy to fool. You seem very much in touch with yourself and really connected to yourself.

Amy Cooper 41:42

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that that was what I remember going to therapy that first year and saying, I will pardon me is dying, I will never recover my faith in myself or the planet after this. Why I stayed. That's what I think about now. But you know, we owned a home, we were married, and he would just kind of like any abusive relationship. He would be that old person, every now and then just enough for me to go, oh, that stopped sleeping with me then. So stopped all physical and emotional intimacy from the day we got married.

42:17

And how long were you married to 10 years. So you were able to go a whole decade.

Amy Cooper 42:21

So what happened was, that first year I'm in I'm completely distraught, I decided to go and guess what the therapist who's a very old fashioned therapist who I shall not name basically makes it my problem.

42:33

Okay, which happens a lot, unfortunately.

Amy Cooper 42:38

And I'm thinking, I don't think it's my you know, but okay, um, that's the only thing I can try to change. So I'm trying to do what I can, then another year, and then I get pregnant. And then the baby's there. And I'm really focused on the baby. Plus, I'm in major distress and postpartum. So finally, the babies, you know, she was four. I'm not doing my math correctly. But yeah, she's about four. And now I've had a couple of years of AI Anon. And then I'm starting to say, Okay, no more of this relationship, which looked very perfect on the outside, as our marriage therapist at the time said, Amy, there's two types of people, people who care about how things look and people who care about how things are. And those two don't go together. When he asked my ex husband, what's your happiest moment of this marriage? He actually said a moment that was one of the most horrifying for me. So that's a perfect, you know, he said, Oh, at the Christmas party this year, we were dancing at our company party. And everyone was looking at us and admiring us or envying us. And I remember being on that dance floor being just so lonely and alone. So it took a lot of courage to leave that marriage and to be get divorced and have a splintered family. I really didn't want that for my daughter. So I stayed longer than I should have. But I remember really feeling like I'm going to show my daughter what love is and what a partnership in a marriage is and also I was literally physically dying. I was 113 pounds, my hair was falling out. It was a really untenable relationship to be in for a lot of reasons.

Kim Fauskee 44:13

So So you didn't listen to your intuition.

Amy Cooper 44:16

Well, no, this is what's crazy. My intuition was he was, I mean, the greatest acting job of all time. No, I was already married and we owned a home and all the things I think that's where my codep I think it's not just intuition, it's codependency. It's, I don't want to be divorced. It's I don't know where I would start over. It's I don't want to have a failed perfectionism. I don't. I never had a gut intuition . If I had been like, I want to leave, I would have left. Which I did. Once I had that gut like you've got to either go or you're you're going to die. So I

Kim Fauskee 44:53

was really the fear talking to ya at that point.

Amy Cooper 44:58

Well, I just think it's interesting. that I stayed that long, but as I said, really, really loved him and kept he kept kind of popping up as the other version every now and then. And I kept making accommodations as I did as a kid. Right? Well, it's not that bad people would say that he said in therapy, I don't cheat on you, and I make a ton of money. So if you want more than that, you should get out. I was like, oh, yeah, yeah, I'm getting out.

Kim Fauskee 45:21

So what was the ultimate breaking point for you?

Amy Cooper 45:25

Knowing that I was not able in that relationship to not only I wasn't receiving love and emotional and physical intimacy, but I wasn't able to give it

45:36

to you feel like you've been able to forgive yourself?

Amy Cooper 45:39

No, can you? I just wrote, I just wrote that on a sheet I did. I said, I cannot forgive myself for marrying him. I can't forgive myself for having a baby with him. Those are the two things that I No matter how much work I've done. As I said, it destroyed my trust in myself and in the universe. And God, I've even had to do a resentment on God the other day, because I was like, What the fuck. I mean, I, and I'm a good, you know, I get into that, too. I'm a good person, I was a great wife, I'm a great mom, I'm of service, I am charitable I, you know, and it's not like, then I get a unicorn in the backyard. But at least I don't get this horrific marriage situation, which I couldn't have seen coming. It's not like he was that person before. And I chose that is a completely radically different person. And then a child that ends up having a lot of issues, in part, of course, because of who her father is, and then a divorce and going back and forth and things that happened at that house when I wasn't there, which were really damaging to her. So then I get a child that has damage and issues. And so all of it when I look back, I don't you know, my sponsor and 12 Step said, Well, it's you, you can trust all of that, because that's how you got to where you are now. And I do not agree with that.

47:01

So you're not there yet.

Amy Cooper 47:02

I think that uh, why couldn't I have married someone great and been happily married? I don't think it's like, Oh, great. You know, you had to have that because now you're here. I think that was Traimit. That's like saying if you were in a horrific car, crash and lost a leg, I mean, that's how emotionally that feels. To me. I've never been the same

Kim Fauskee 47:20

been Dana and I talk a little bit about this and whether he agrees with me or not about predetermined destiny. Yeah. And it may be, it becomes just a justification in my own mind. But I think you had to go through that, right? Because you could have picked somebody else, hypothetically, and everything. But that wasn't Cooper's journey through life.

Amy Cooper 47:40

Maybe on my deathbed, I'll feel that way or in another 10 years or something, I still feel like it's incredibly unfair.

47:48

What about the notion that when you're, when you're growing up, you get a blueprint about what love should look like? And that, at least at the time that you were growing up, both of your parents were incredibly self focused. And that you're being a really sensitive person, you're going to figure out what they need in order for you to take care of them and to manage their pain. Yep. And to the degree that they have that pain, you're going to feel compelled to take care of it, as you did, especially after your death. And I don't think that that blueprint ever goes away until we understand how important it is. I guess how important it is to look at that and recognize that it's more than likely that this man represented that blueprint in a way that you weren't aware of at the time? Yeah, because that blueprint is not something that we are consciously aware of. Right, like the person driving the car. That's not you. Yeah. It certainly dictates the choices that we make, and the people that we bring into our lives. So I guess, the more that you understand, really that, and I'm not necessarily disagreeing with Kim, but the idea that you are living the blueprint that you were taught, and you're blaming yourself for that, which seems really quite sad to me,

Amy Cooper 49:06

Well, I guess I don't if I don't blame myself, this is a really good question. Because this goes to self exploration, if you're willing to do the work to look at yourself, and you're willing to see the things that are really difficult. Are you then blaming yourself or blaming God or the universe? Are you blaming someone else? Or are you not blaming anyone? I mean, so. So don't you feel like that's an important piece of self exploration is to know how you're gonna handle that

49:30

I do. And then what I try to help people understand is that we should blame people that do things on purpose to harm us. That's what jails are for. Right? When people do things on purpose,

Kim Fauskee 49:43

there has to be a knowledge of the victimization, right, right. In my

49:47

idea that to blame is, should be just in the category of the person that did it on purpose, and that the other part is holding the person accountable for their behavior, which is really Different than blame that the person is responsible, but they're not. They're not to be blamed because they didn't do it on purpose. And that what they owe you is restitution for the crimes that they've committed.

Amy Cooper 50:12

You know what it is because it just, I got teary. And that's how I know it's the truth is that if I forgive myself for that, then it's like, that's the ultimate acceptance that that's how things played out. Like, I think, and when I look at my resentments, that's, if I'm holding on to it, it's because I don't want to grieve the fact that I can't change it. And if I blame myself, I somehow feel that I can fix it, whether I fix it through future behaviors, or something else. But if I just say I forgive you, you did the best you could, then that's my story. I mean, my story is I married someone who ended up being a monster. And my story is I have a daughter that's really damaged. And my story is, I'm single and alone and you know, in the world, and maybe that's part of holding on to it, it's to feel that I if I, if I accept it, then I can't change it.

51:07

And I can totally appreciate why it's hard to come to terms with it. But I'm not necessarily talking about what happened on the outside. I'm not talking about your ex husband, your daughter or any of those people, I'm talking more about the way that you live in relationship to yourself. I'm not asking you to forgive anybody, other than yourself.

Amy Cooper 51:25

No, but I'm saying if I forgive myself, I have to accept that this is what happened.

51:31

Yes, that's true. But in order to be able to move on, I guess in a certain Yeah. Come into peace with yourself. Seems like a really important ingredient. And well, you

Amy Cooper 51:44

know, okay, here's another good question. If I'm not forgiving myself, what am I getting out of that?

51:49

You're getting a familiar feeling of not ever being good enough. And, and that same old feeling like no matter how hard you try, it's not going to be okay, because you're dealing it's like, it's that little girl wanting a little girl, you know, feeling so helpless and desperate and doing everything she can to try to make a situation better, that you have absolutely no ability to manage because you're a kid.

Kim Fauskee 52:13

Yeah. And because we don't want to face that reality, we're just going to fall back into our default, again, and that I think that's the point about self examination. I think you make a good point. Because it is really hard to do. I mean, you got emotional, just talking about trying to accept the reality of it. Right. And this is why most people won't peel off enough layers to get granular enough to make that change.

Amy Cooper 52:38

Well, because it's it's the feelings. You know, it's the feeling place. It's always avoiding the grief or pain. Yeah, but I think that that's the most important point. What you said is that it's the little girl feeling like she could have done it differently when, when you couldn't have Yeah,

52:57

Actually, you did a masterful job, but you still failed. Because there's no kid in the world that can live in an adult world and take care of really damaged parents, even though, man Do we ever try? Yeah, do we ever try. I remember when I was about 16, or 17. I was at the dinner table with my family, brother and sister and parents and I spent most of my teenage years under the influence of drugs, mostly marijuana. And I remember sitting at the table, and I was really, like, stoned out of my mind. And I'm watching my parents. And I thought I was thinking this to myself. These people hate each other. They can't stand the sight of each other. They should get a divorce. Unfortunately, because I was so high, I said it out loud. In front of my siblings and my parents. They looked at me like, What? And I thought to

myself, oh my god, I can't believe I started laughing because I thought it was hysterical. Yeah, nobody else nobody else.

Kim Fauskee 54:01

It was your true sorrow. Oh, that's funny.

54:03

It just I was just five years premature. Right. Right. Did get divorced. But it was about five years later. Yeah. And they looked at me with horror. Like, how would you say such a thing? Yeah, we love each other, even though they treat each other like absolute? You know, they hate each other.

Amy Cooper 54:17

Okay, but so you saw that model, and then you've been married a long time. So you didn't you didn't do the blueprint.

54:22

You know, the reason I believe, or at least one of the reasons why I've been married as long as I have is that first of all, I met my wife when I was only 20 years old. I was really young. And I fell so madly in love with this person that I could not believe there was such a creature on the face. And that she was interested in me. Yeah, right. That was the part that completely blew me away. And, you know, as our relationship progressed, we're very very different people. I'm a barbarian, and she's, you know, an angel in a lot of ways. But like all of us, you know, she has her issues and I am mine and I was doing a lot of therapy at the time. And she was not and you know, it got to the point where I sent her, you know, if this relationship is going to work, I'm not the only one that's got problems here. And I mean, no offense, but you got to get some help yourself. Because, you know, you look at me, like, I'm the guy that's got all the problems and your family is, you know, perfect, and I got some really bad news. It's not true. So luckily enough, she got into the therapy and found somebody that really helped her at that particular moment in time. And I really think that that's what made the difference, because we've been together for over 40 years and, and everybody says, they can't believe that she's still married to me. Nobody ever says it simply, I'm married to her. Because she's an angel. And I'm still a barbarian in some ways, but it really was self examination on both of our parts. That was the glue that,

Amy Cooper 55:45

well, that's when my daughter knows a little bit about my marriage story. And she's obviously had her own experience of her father being in this kind of Jekyll Hyde situation and, and she said, Oh, Mom, your story scares me because it's, it's like you didn't know and, and I said, it does not matter. Do you don't have to know everything. What you have to know is that your partner is willing to seek help, because trauma will happen, suffering will happen, additional things will happen, stuff will happen. If you have a partner who's willing to go and seek their own help when they need it. You're good counsel, because you're not going to just sit there and figure everything out with someone. But I ended up with someone who would not do any level of self exploration or he or

56:23

she also asked me what my requirements were to get married. And they weren't huge. The most important one was that I watched my father be serially unfaithful to my mom, the whole time, they were very even before I was born, I had an experience of, you know, feeling my mother's perceived self loathing as a result of being pregnant with me. And I said to my wife, you know, if you can promise me not that you may not meet somebody or be attracted to someone, but that you won't do anything without talking to me first. Because in my experience, betrayal is really almost impossible to heal. And I didn't want to have to go through that. And luckily enough, I was, you know, I chose someone who is not the kind of a person to begin with. But she was willing to make that commitment to me that no matter what took place in, you know, and it worked both ways, obviously, that if something came up, that there would be no action taken until we had a chance to talk about it. And that really made a big difference in reassuring me that I was making the right choice at the time. Yeah. Along with the fact that I told her I was a surfer, and then all of our vacations would be tropically oriented, like I'm in and that was a such a bad thing, either. So that worked out. Okay.

Kim Fauskee 57:32

So So Amy, in our last few minutes here, the conversation, one talk a little bit about you coming through the other other side of the marriage, still dealing with the aftereffect of that dealing with a daughter that has some mental health issues that that you needed to really be involved in and manage, and how you became a successful entrepreneur. After all of that,

Amy Cooper 57:59

after all of that, yeah, well, so I left she was five years old, and so should n't hit the fan at that point. And I think she was about nine when I decided to open my own business. And at that point, I had been a consultant and writing for different people and branding and marketing. But right before I opened plum goods, I had worked as a brand manager for another company. So I'd gone back into that full time, corporate life after being at home and working part time and working when I wanted to and working when she was at school and being a full time mom, I was only there six months, and I was looking around thinking if I'm going to work this hard to make someone else's company run well, I'm gonna do it for myself. And I just got a lot of encouragement actually, from my dad at that point, too, who'd had his own store when I was growing up. And he said, Go for it, you know, you're young enough, if you fail, now, you can start over. And my mom was a big supporter, too. So I started the business when Olivia was only nine.

Kim Fauskee 58:58

So as we end here, I usually ask Dana, what kind of the major takeaways from our discussion for the last hour that we have, but since you're now in the hot seat, and I did most of the talking, and then rather eloquently and and, and emotionally and, and vulnerable and the whole thing which we appreciate? Again, we're talking about living an examined life? What are your biggest takeaways from not only doing that immersing yourself into examining who Amy Cooper is, but what are your kind of takeaways now? Because I think it's a process that we it's a continual process, right? It's not that we sit there for a month, six months, six years. It kind of continues to morph into something else. So kind of what are your big takeaways right now? What is the Amy Cooper the future look like to you?

Amy Cooper 59:50

Well, I guess the thing that came to me when you first were talking is that I'm really proud that I broke or or shifted a lot of the generational systems and behaviors that were in place, so that my daughter actually is much, much farther along at 20 than I ever was in terms of self exploration, self awareness, and healing generational trauma. So I'm really proud of that. I think she has a much better shot than then someone who had never gotten that. And that is due to my own willingness. I think I'm very proud of myself for having a strong willingness, willingness to look at myself, look at my life, get better, not only for myself, but for my daughter and my whole family and friends system. So yeah, I guess my takeaway is, I'm, when I talk about myself in this perspective, I'm proud of how far I've come. And it used to drive me nuts when I first got into AI Anon, and I'd see people in there, and they were saying, Yeah, I'm gonna be coming here till I die. I've come here 20 years, and I'd be like, I thought you'd let's go, let's come here and check it off and be done with this. But now I say, I will be exploring myself, learning, growing healing, learning to forgive myself and others, trying to get that stronger sense of who I am and why I'm here, how I can be of service and give and receive love. Better than I ever have. I want to do that till my deathbed. So this conversation helps me to see, as I said, how far I've come. So gosh, Amy Cooper the future? Who knows? I mean, I could evolve into the next level spiritual being I don't know, that was

1:01:32

very well said. It was oh, yeah, you're gonna have to come back next time. I think I've been replaced.

Kim Fauskee 1:01:38

You may have thought, I mean, we may have a third co host. Comment, can you? Can you guys just be quiet and just have Amy? Amy, thank you so much. Oh, it's such a pleasure for be here.

Amy Cooper 1:01:49

Thank you for having me.

Kim Fauskee 1:01:50

So we appreciate me being our first guest here. It was quite a eye opening discussion with her. She brought up a number of good points in regards to self examination. And I think it's prudent for us to kind of go over a couple of those before we in this podcast. So Dana, what do you think, are probably the two biggest takeaways from our discussion with Amy?

1:02:17

Well, Kim, I think that's the one of the most important points that she made was that the first therapist that you went to see was someone that pathologized her and appeared to use the medical model of diagnosing her and then telling her that in green with her that there was something wrong with her, and that it was her fault that the marriage was failing. Now, I have to hand it to her for sort of recognize that that wasn't true number one, and that it was harmful to her actually, to be told those things and to be categorized in the way that she was categorized. So she then went about finding another therapist that she connected with, who apparently was quite lovely, and, and capable, and that it was a very much of a healing experience for her because that second therapist didn't pathologize her, but helped her understand, you know, the nature of her suffering, and why the marriage is not working out and how to be more true to herself, and, and really helped her get to a place where self discovery and and looking

at herself, it worked really well for her. So that's something that I think is really, really important. As I've talked about in earlier podcasts, I have a great objection to the medical model of therapy, where again, you go to see somebody and you're feeling bad about yourself. And that person agrees with you that there's something wrong with you. And I don't see how that's going to help. All it does is make you feel more ashamed of yourself and more inadequate. So, in seeking a therapist, I think it's a really good idea to get referrals from satisfied customers. Number one, somebody who's had a positive experience with that therapist and has been helped to feel better about themselves, rather than told that there's something dreadfully wrong with him that needs to be treated, and that somehow they're mentally ill because they're suffering. So that's something that I really want to stress to people is to be very selective when they're going about finding somebody to help them in their journey.

Kim Fauskee 1:04:16

In your experience, in your clinical practice, is it fairly common that you've seen where people do get kind of put in a box or kind of painted in that corner, and that they spend a significant amount of time they're being told they're the problem?

1:04:36

You know, Kim, it's an incredibly tragic experience that I have with people sometimes I think about this one fellow who came to see me a few years ago and he was sent to me by a psychiatrist who diagnosed him as being bipolar and suffering from a severe mental illness basically, and she was treating him with some pretty intense drugs and he walked in the door and sat down and I thought to myself with this person sure doesn't feel bipolar. To me, we had some discussions about his history. And it turns out that he was born very prematurely weighing about three pounds. And through the miracle of medical science, he was able to survive. But for the first three months of his life, he died almost every day and was resuscitated. Now, that's not a good way to start one's life, to have to experience that kind of trauma over and over and over again, when you're so vulnerable, and so little. And in my experience, he wasn't bipolar at all, he was really suffering from post traumatic stress, but it wasn't recognized because we don't necessarily look at premature babies who who are dying in the hospital daily, as someone that could actually be suffering terribly. We just look at them as miracles of survival.

Kim Fauskee 1:05:46

Right, because PTSD, I think, generally is thought of as warfare, or wounded soldiers and soldiers have been in combat, and so on and so forth, versus a serious traumatic event or a series of traumatic events, right. In your, again, going back to your clinical practice. And again, Amy brought up the subject of PTSD, I've been a sufferer of PTSD as well and had to understand that over a period of time, what's the percentage of patients that come in your door that have suffered some level of PTSD? And do they wreck it? And do they recognize it before they come in?

1:06:29

I would say that probably 70 to 75% of the people that come to see me come from traumatic backgrounds and could, you know, theoretically be diagnosed as having post traumatic stress. And I would say maybe half of the people that have come here, understand that what they have gone through has caused significant trauma in their lives. People rationalize incredible amounts of abuse, because

they just assume it's normal, because it happened in their family, and they didn't know any difference. And they were just assuming that most of the kids of neighborhood were going through the same things that they're going through. So I do spend a lot of time educating people and helping them understand that there is a reason for their symptoms. They don't occur in a vacuum.

Kim Fauskee 1:07:14

So when we talk about the the importance of self examination, PTSD would be one of those blocks that would prevent us probably from bettering ourselves, understanding ourselves.

1:07:30

Well, I think that, um, one of the most common reactions to being mistreated as a child, whether it's abuse or neglect, is to become self destructive, and and to become very self critical. And to look at yourself as causing the problem. I've rarely met a person who didn't believe that somehow they caused the abuse or did something to make it happen or was, or they deserved it or whatever. Because triblend really don't have the ability to understand that what they understand that what's happening to them makes them feel terrible. But oftentimes, they're told that That's their fault, or they ask for it, or they just make that assumption.

Kim Fauskee 1:08:06

Well, there's a lot of things that we need to talk about still on self examination that we'll get to in future episodes. But I think this was a good start, and hopefully that our audience continues to join us in future episodes. So thanks. Thank you.

Fear Me Out 1:08:25

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