

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 30

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Dr. Dana Saperstein – Exploring One’s Past

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

Hi, all right, fear me out. We're gonna continue on our series on relationships and what makes relationships work. And it'll just be Dana and I today. And I guess the first question I have for Dana, is what makes a healthy relationship work?

Dr. Dana 01:15

Well, Kim, I think that the first major ingredient and having a healthy relationship is having one with yourself. And knowing yourself as deeply as you are willing, and that the more connected you are to yourself, the more likely it is you're going to have healthy relationships with people in your life, especially a romantic partner.

Kim Fauskee 01:34

So we've talked about this probably on multiple podcasts, and including probably one on its own. But how do we get in touch with ourselves? How do we really know ourselves? Because I think it's very cliché today to say that, yeah, I know myself, I've done the work. I'm enlightened, and all those other buzzwords that are out there. But for those people that actually done the work, and observed other people out there to say they have done the work, they haven't done the work. And so peeling off a layer or two isn't really doing the work. So how do we know? How do we really know ourselves?

Dr. Dana 02:15

Well, I think that, to know yourself, number one, it takes making a decision, that is probably one of the most important things you can do in your life as an adult is do a deep dive into your psychology to know how the relationships you had growing up, and how your parents and all that stuff, how it contributed to you becoming the person that you are,

Kim Fauskee 02:43

and taking a look at patterns that have affected your life and your decision making?

Dr. Dana 02:47

Well, especially in the name of love, because we are all without realizing it. presented with a template by our family about what's required of us in order to be loved by them. And again, if you think about your own experience, as a child, you're required to not be the sensitive person that you are, to kind of stuff your feelings away and try to do the best you could to please your parents because you live in fear of violence and, and humiliation and shame. And that has a pretty powerful effect on again, how things move forward for you. In the name of love. You know, your first wife, second wife, both people that required from your perspective to be rescued from their pain and suffering. Is that fair to say? Absolutely. And how did that happen from your understanding of yourself now? Well, it

Kim Fauskee 03:44

happened because of the pattern that I experienced growing up of being a caretaker, wanting to make everything okay, taking on other people's emotions, taking on other people's pain. It was familiar for me, it was again, my form of validation and credibility and the way that I sawed off,

Dr. Dana 04:05

okay? And so what compelled you to take a look at yourself on as deep a level as you have, based on those experiences?

Kim Fauskee 04:17

And I think I've mentioned this before, if people have listened throughout the 30, or some odd episodes now. It was a feeling inside of me that anything that I tried anything that I did, whether that was making more money, whether that was having kids, whether that was getting a bigger house, whether that was making everything right for my wife and my life at that time, there was still this unsettled feeling within me. And even after getting divorced and working through that dynamic, there still was that unsettled feeling within me that I hated to use the term I was living a lie. It wasn't really I was living a lie, I was living how I knew. At that moment, the best that I could, it was that I wasn't being an actor in my life. At that time is the best way I can describe it. Right, I was conditioned to be somebody that I probably wasn't meant to be in that way, in terms of, of taking on again, people's emotions, and in trying to put out fires and taking on other people's energy and, and just trying to make it better. So it was that uncomfortable feeling that I still had, and a conscious decision that I finally had to make to say, I gotta figure out what that feeling Yes. And I got to live my life a little bit differently than I've been living it for this period of time.

Dr. Dana 06:01

So, um, you listen to that voice inside of you. I'm assuming that that voice was your intuition telling you that your recipe for love was based on false pretenses? Maybe it didn't come out exactly like that. But that's really what you're saying.

Kim Fauskee 06:18

Yeah, I think through a period of getting to understand myself, and really doing the work and getting through the grief, the sorrow, the pain, the unhappiness in achieving that clarity, that actually was my intuition, telling me how I need to be loved in the future.

Dr. Dana 06:44

So that voice must have been strong enough to get your attention, obviously. And then it takes courage to move forward. Most people have an easier time externalizing their problems and seeing the world as being the source of their discomfort and the things that don't go well? Well, I

Kim Fauskee 07:03

did. I certainly did that. Right. You know, it was so much easier to armchair quarterback and finger point and blame everything or everyone for what you're feeling. But I did come to the ultimate conclusion that there's a common denominator in all of your problems. And that to you, all right. And so it was how I was viewing not only my internal self, but it was also how I was viewing the external self as well. And looking in the mirror. It wasn't what I saw that was what I felt. And I didn't feel like I knew who I was, when I looked in the mirror. It was like, Boy, you've put on the charade. And have been a chameleon in so many situations, but you have no idea who you are.

Dr. Dana 07:59

Well, the result of that for a lot of people in my experience, Kim is that you can't ever trust the love that comes your way. Because on some very deep level, you know that it's not based on who you are. It's based on who you needed to become to survive. And so that is a recipe for disaster. Because if you can't trust the love that you're getting, do you ever feel secure in a relationship?

Kim Fauskee 08:23

Yeah, and I probably could have if, if my wife hadn't asked for divorce, I probably could have gone on for years. You know, just that same way thinking, Okay, this is my lot in life. I don't know what this uncomfortable feeling is, but you know, the way I know love and the way I know relationships, maybe this is as good as it gets. And I just gotta continue, you know, moving on the way I feel and the way I've been dealing with things. So I think not that getting a divorce or being divorced or, or being a single father is essentially a good thing. But it did finally allow me the ability to figure it out going forward.

Dr. Dana 09:17

You know, Kim, this brings up a concept that you and I have talked a lot about which is where your center is, as a person. When you're brought up the way that you were brought up in the way I was brought up our centers external, right, our orientation toward our relationships with other people comes in the feeling of anxiety that if we don't take care of them, then we're not going to be in a safe place.

Kim Fauskee 09:40

Well, I certainly saw other people and and saw other relationships, sought out other relationships, you know, especially with father figures or parental figures, because I saw something better out there, but I didn't really think that was for me.

Dr. Dana 10:00

Okay, so at some point, you switched the energy from being looking externally for the solution to what ails you to looking internally looking internally to figure out what you needed to heal, in order to be able to receive the kind of love that you are looking for. Fair to say,

Kim Fauskee 10:20

it's fair to say, because I'm a big believer that the answer is always within all of us, it just took help. Through psychotherapy and other people that had been through that process, to get me to really believe that the answer wasn't external, or somebody was going to provide me that answer. But somebody was going to help me figure it out. Because I had the answer with it.

Dr. Dana 10:49

So again, that brings up the concept of being centered within yourself. And again, I want to make sure that people understand that we're not talking about being self centered, which is obnoxious, and nobody likes a self centered person. So I don't want people to mistake the notion that if you're centered in yourself, that you're a self centered person, it just means that you're centered within yourself, and that you trust your intuition. And you feel a strong connection to your soul and who you are. And that you aren't sort of have a sacred relationship with what your intuition is. Trying to provide you whatever the information might

Kim Fauskee 11:23

be, maybe being self centered, at some point in my life would have been a good boundary actually. Not not to be self centered your whole life, but maybe it would have been a good boundary at some point. Well, I think that occasionally. But I'm so far away from being a self centered person that would be the antithesis of the iceberg, right?

Dr. Dana 11:42

Well, I think sometimes if you're centered in yourself, you do get a feeling like you, you have to have really strong boundaries in relationship to certain people, which could appear to look like being self centered. But it's only because your body's telling you that that's not somebody to trust. And that's not somebody that you should let into your life in any deep way.

Kim Fauskee 12:02

I think it's important that we reiterate when you talk about finding your center, that this isn't something that is really easily done. And it's not something that's done in a moment of time. But it's an evolution and a journey, and it takes accountability and responsibility to yourself to get there.

Dr. Dana 12:29

You're absolutely right about that. But one thing that I tell people that I think people find very reassuring is that you were born, centered within yourself. And everybody pretty much with the exception maybe of people that were you know, fetal alcohol, babies or some other situation that happens where you're kind of poisoned in the womb, and so you come out in a certain way that's not particularly healthy. But generally speaking, babies are very, very centered within themselves. They cry when they're hungry, when they need comfort, when you know, when they're tired, whatever, there's no hesitation in expressing your needs as a baby at all, for most people, and we're very slowly or sometimes quickly

shamed out of, of being centered within ourselves, or we just automatically start to focus on the pain of others. Because if you are with people who are in an enormous amount of pain, and they're pretending like everything's normal, it's going to create anxiety inside of you, because you can't tell what's real, or your body's telling you, which is you're in danger, or what the people around you are telling you, which is everything's fine. And what do you make such a big deal about? So oftentimes, we surrender to the reality of the people that bring us into the world, even though our bodies tell us otherwise.

Kim Fauskee 13:50

So our center it gets knocked off balance.

Dr. Dana 13:52

Absolutely. And it happens in the best intended parents. It's not always malicious. No, not at all. I mean, some of it is culturally dependent. I was watching a show the other night about Korean culture, there was a Korean family. And they were having a lot of trauma. But the young woman in the show was talking about the idea that if you're Korean, from her perspective, you don't deal with your feelings. You shut your feelings down, and you put them away because it's very much frowned upon in that culture, to consider how you feel. If your parents come from that place, and they're showing you that behavior and they're teaching you that that's the way to be. They don't do it out of maliciousness. They do it because that's what they were taught and, and that's how the society operates, even though it causes a lot of problems and, and you know, this young woman was talking about how she starts to burn up on the inside, because she was not designed to swallow her feelings and to push them away. And so they create a fire inside of her the crates that create a lot of problems. I know it was a TV show, but I think it was a fairly good read. presentation of what happens when you have to bend yourself into the shape of a pretzel in order to please the people that you want to feel loved by.

Kim Fauskee 15:08

So, so again, going back to how do we find that center?

Dr. Dana 15:14

Well, the good thing is that it's no matter what happens to it remains present inside your body, it may get pushed away, and you may forget where it is. But once you start to, once you make the decision, it's how you want to live your life, I think that there's a natural process that starts to happen, that, that that part of you starts to speak up again. And, again, a lot of times, we're stubborn, so we don't listen to the Whisper. And then it speaks up louder, and sometimes in the form of symptoms. And the symptoms only have to get as severe as your willingness to listen to what they're trying to tell you. So that's why when people come to see me and they feel pathologized by their symptoms, I tried to help them understand that, yeah, your symptoms are incredibly annoying, and they don't serve you very well. But they are a form of communication that are trying to help you understand what it is that you're not listening to inside your body. That's really different than wondering what's wrong with you, and trying to figure out some way of curing some pathology. It's just a different relationship toward yourself. It's one of compassion and, and seeking an understanding as opposed to hating yourself. And continuing with that feeling of self loathing.

Kim Fauskee 16:27

It's a constant journey. Right? Yeah. I mean, it's not something that, you know, we can sit here and easily tell you to do. I think there's, in fact, I'm reading a book right now, which has a very good context, based on Freud's ID and superego and ego, and really having this conscious observation, and letting go and in the book makes it sound so easy to let it go. And I think it misses on a lot of points of, of I think, people you and I were talking about this earlier, where I had mentioned that I think life has gotten really difficult or maybe too difficult for a lot of people where they've just kind of checked out in there. And I think you made the differentiation that people are just fearful. Right? And which is the premise of this podcast, right? Yes. And, and again, checking out just based on the fear and either surrendering to it, not wanting to deal with it, running away from it, instead of managing it.

Dr. Dana 17:37

You know, can it takes a certain devotion, I think, to be willing to feel what you need to feel in order to heal. Because, you know, you've been I've talked a lot about different kinds of therapy that are available, most of them are intellectually based, inside base, so the more you know about yourself, conceivably, the better things are gonna work out for you. What I see more than anything is that the more you know about yourself, but if you haven't dealt with the feelings associated with whatever it is you need to deal with, you just become an educated, miserable person. And so the idea is, yeah, we all want to know, we all know, nobody has a feeling that they don't try to explain in some way. But the key is to really learn how to tolerate the passion that your feelings will bring to you, if you choose to let them be the central part of your existence. And, yeah, it's a little bit scary. But, you know, maybe it's just because of the way that I'm designed that I really enjoy the feeling of intense emotion. I lost one of my animals recently, and I can't even tell you how devastating it was. And I cried for hours. And, you know, by the time I was done, I was destroyed. But at the same time, I felt like I honored this loving, you know, this animal that was so important to me and that I was able to really process the depth of my connection to him and how much I'm gonna miss them. And every time I look outside and see where he's buried, I just oh, it just gives me the feeling like, Oh, my portal guy or is he? You know, and I don't think that that makes me a pathetic person. But I will say that it makes me someone who is very much run by his emotions. And again, I don't want you to get the idea that I'm just encouraging people to express whatever they feel without using their brain to figure out you know, whether they should be expressing that feeling or not, because that's what I believe why we were given our intellect is to decide what to do about how we feel. Right? If I get stopped by the police, I'm not going to express my feelings. That would be really stupid. All that's going to do is increase the fine I get for telling the person that you know that they're an idiot for stopping being given me a ticket for speeding, you don't do that under those circumstances.

Kim Fauskee 19:56

So people now understand They have to know themselves. Yes. Which is the foundation of a healthy relationship, not only with yourself but with somebody else. Yes. So now we have listeners that are out there listening that are either in relationships that are either good relationships, or they may think are unhealthy, or they're thinking about leaving a partner, or they're out there dating or thinking, why can I? Why can't I ever find a partner? And so we're going to talk a little bit about not only healthy dependency, which you and I talked about in a previous episode, but actually how to have a good picker, when you're when you're actually looking for a mate. A long term partnership with somebody and how people can actually do that, I know that eventually we'll have a dating expert on hair. So

anybody that is single out there, that will be coming up in future episodes. But you know, the context of actually finding your person, I think, is easy for somebody like you. And I'm saying that only because of your story, and I'm sure you will tell your story again, of how you found your wife, and extremely difficult for somebody like me.

Dr. Dana 21:23

You know, Kim, I really believe it gets down to how you feel about yourself deep down inside, you know, you and I've talked a lot about the concept of manifesting your reality and, and part of that reality is finding a romantic partner.

Kim Fauskee 21:37

We should probably talk about manifesting first because that's another cliché term, I think that's thrown out there, in the media and on social media and in books, that all you have to do is have these positive thoughts about what you want in your life. And it magically happens, right, and you and I've talked about magical thinking, and that's magical thinking, right? Manifesting actually is a thing. But again, going back to how we started this episode about knowing yourself, and having a good understanding about yourself and having that mental clarity. That's what you can manifest from you cannot, you can't be clouded, or not know yourself and actually have healthy manifesting.

Dr. Dana 22:22

Well, that's, I mean, the simplest observation of that is people that win the lotto.

Kim Fauskee 22:27

Right, right and broke the next week. Well,

Dr. Dana 22:31

Within two years, 80% of the people that win enormous amounts of money are worse off than they were before they won the money. They've lost all their friends, they've lost all the money, their lives are completely destroyed, they lose, usually lose their family. And the reason that in my opinion that that happens is because they get a windfall that they don't deep down inside feel like they deserve. So they become very self destructive and careless. And I believe that's the same thing that happens in most of our relationships, that if you don't believe you deserve,

Kim Fauskee 23:01

clean love, you'll manifest the same thing back into your life over and over. That's right.

Dr. Dana 23:06

And you know, how many people do know, I know tons that, you know, they finally get the courage to leave a relationship. And they think that that's the answer, which a lot of times it is, but then they go find the same person in another body. And we scratch our heads and think, do they not notice that they just found the same person in a different body. But most people assume that all you gotta do is get rid of whatever it is, that's troublesome because the grass is greener on the other side. That's right. But if you don't change your template inside of you about what love is, and the kind of love that you feel like you deserve it, I mean, you're just going to repeat the same pattern over and over who you are. That's right,

is that all gets down to how you feel about yourself, right. And again, the rescue fantasy is really powerful for a lot of empathic people. Because you spend your life trying to rescue your fantasy or your family. And then you just bring that recipe into your love life when you get old enough to start having romantic relationships. And it does not change until you understand that that recipe is a recipe that's destined for disaster. Because I'll tell you again, I know I've said this before, but every single time I work with somebody whose relationship is either failing or has failed. I asked him the same question. Did you have any idea that this issue that broke your relationship up was a part of the picture? And I will tell you, Kim, nobody has ever said no.

Kim Fauskee 24:34

Yeah. And I mean, I mean, when you do a post mortem of a relationship, right, the red flags were always there.

Dr. Dana 24:40

Right. And so then the obvious question is, well, what were you thinking that you engaged in a relationship that you knew wasn't going to work in the first place? And as you know,

Kim Fauskee 24:52

What's the analogy I use? Right? It's like, so if you're going to build a home and you notice that the foundation that you just bought is cracked, would you still build that home? Because some, some people what, but a lot of people in relationships do right thinking that that it's only a crack, right? It's not gonna mean anything. But eventually that house is gonna fall down, right that cleric crack is gonna get bigger that crack is gonna go out and in multiple directions and eventually that foundation is going to fail.

Dr. Dana 25:22

Yes, and most people act like it's a giant surprise that that happened even though they knew ahead of time, because everybody says to me that they use magical thinking, in order to get past what their intuition is telling them, I thought he was would change, I thought you would change I was really scared to be alone. You know, I've heard every fantasy that you could imagine that a person would apply to a relationship that doesn't ever come true, oh, you know, we're going to have another kid, it's going to make the relationship better. I don't know about you. But having kids is not an easy thing. If anything, it's going to crack the relationship even further because of the stress and the exhaustion. But you know, people come up with all kinds of magical ways of externalizing their problems and figuring their if it's externalized. And the solution must be external. Also, instead of really understanding that what you bring to the table is a lack of loyalty towards yourself. And if you're not faithful to yourself, why should anyone be faithful to you, because you're setting the tone, whether you're aware of it or not. So if you're not true to yourself, you don't listen to yourself. And then you get really upset because your partner is not interested in listening to you. And, and, and being respectful and honorable in the relationship, you've already set the tone without even realizing that you've done it. Because you're not being true to yourself. And as you know, from your own experience, the more that you are willing to treat yourself with respect. And, and to stop sort of kidding yourself into thinking that I'll just find the right woman and everything's gonna be fine. And you know, started focusing on what you brought to the table, the more likely it is that things are going to work out for you in a positive way.

Kim Fauskee 27:03

That's the hope.

Dr. Dana 27:05

Well, I mean, I've seen it bear out more times than not. It just seems to work that way.

Kim Fauskee 27:14

All right, so now now that I know myself, and now that I know what I want how do I pick the right person?

Dr. Dana 27:26

Um, I, I think that if you're if you if you're really connected with yourself on a deep level, that you will get a feeling with whoever comes into your life, whether it's a romantic partner or friend, whether this is someone that feels safe to connect with. And usually, if you trust that, and you act accordingly, then people start coming into your life that treat you with respect because they get a feeling unconsciously that that's what you require, in order for them to have a relationship with you. If you go into a relationship with this idea that the rescue fantasy is the template for love, then people are going to be attracted to you because they know you're going to take care of them. And that you're going to do back flips and somersaults to try to make their life better, which never works because they end up feeling controlled, then you end up feeling dismissed. But it's a lovely fantasy.

Kim Fauskee 28:21

So now here lies the rub. Right? So now I've, I've known myself, right, I've manifested correctly the right person in my life right? Now that's an unfamiliar feeling to me. Yeah, right, because now this is authentic love or an authentic relationship. So now in my mind my ego wants to go to the self sabotage mode, because this can't possibly be a good thing for me. My heart has been broken before I can't take it anymore. So I want to make sure that I find fault in this relationship before this person finds fault in me, then it's their problem, not my problem. And so Vietnam move on to my dysfunctional relationship.

Dr. Dana 29:03

Well, if you know that about yourself, you can be mindful of the choices you're making in the name of fear,

Kim Fauskee 29:10

but but don't don't a lot of isn't that though. Pretty common thinking for something that you've done some work, and then the feeling is unfamiliar to you. And it's like all of a sudden, like you were saying the fear kind of comes back, but in a different way this time, right. So this can't be possibly good for me. So I'm gonna sabotage this relationship.

Dr. Dana 29:33

Well, and again, it gets down to your relationship with yourself and whether we respect your fear and listen to what he's trying to tell you. Or you just allow it to run your life. Because if you know that you're really afraid and you're starting to fantasize about ways to sabotage the relationship and you're aware

that you're doing it, you can stop and you can talk to your partner about it and and explain to your partner that is really scary for you to have a closer relationship with someone that you're not used to it. So you got to go slowly, and not push it too fast and too hard. And that and that it's out of respect to the other person that you're going slowly so that you can feel trusting and not feeling like you need to sabotage it because it feels too scary for you at this moment in your life, because the closer you get to a person in a slow way you can get used to it. And then to start to actually feel really good. Because it's satisfying a need that's never been satisfied before. And I think that that's what makes the difference. If you just give into the fear, and you start searching for imperfections, you're gonna find them because everybody's got them. And again, you know, I'm not trying to say that you got to find a perfect person who's got no problems. But

Kim Fauskee 30:44

Does that person exist?

Dr. Dana 30:46

I don't think so. But I think that there are certain issues that are big enough to really, you know, take men, I mean, take stock of and really decide whether this is something that magical thinking will cure.

Kim Fauskee 30:58

I told you my unicorn story, right? Where, a few weeks ago, I ran into this little girl that was dressed head to toe in unicorn attire. And I asked her, "Do you like unicorns? And she goes, yeah. And I said, Have you ever seen a unicorn? And she goes, yeah. And I said, Wow, I said, I've never seen a unicorn before. I said, could you tell me where they live? And she goes, No. And I said, why not? And she goes, I'm not kidding you. This is probably five or six she goes, because you don't believe it.

Dr. Dana 31:39

So she took care which had

Kim Fauskee 31:40

to be which at which this girl was obviously channeling as a metaphor to my view of relationships. Right, that we're out there looking, when you mentioned the perfect person, we're looking for that unicorn, right? Right, that person that matches us perfectly. And like you said, you know, whether the matches perfectly or not. Our conscious mind falls back into the familiar pattern of we got to start nitpicking this relationship because it can't be this good. Right? Right. And I hate to dwell on that thing. But I just see so many people, including myself, that do that, and now I kind of believe in manifesting. And, and, and again, you know, you know, the story that I had, in my mind, I always knew that I was going to meet somebody in a foreign country, I just didn't happen to know that she was going to be an American girl in a foreign country, that it was gonna be a foreign girl in a foreign country. And, yeah, that actually happened to me, right? So I have to kind of believe in this manifestation when I was clear, knowing who I was, and clear who I want to attract in my life. Out of nowhere, this person walks in this door into this rural area in Belize. And it's like, okay, this is weird. Right. And so now I have to be completely conscious all the time that I don't fall back into. Well, she's younger than me, she doesn't live in the same city as me. Whatever, you know, there could be a laundry list of other reasons that I could sit there and think, Well, it's not going to work out because of all these things instead of you

know, where I'm consciously thinking, well, not that it happened for a reason. But the universe conspired for this to happen. Because this is what I was thinking was going to happen. Right? So I have to play it out. Yes. It takes a lot of courage. It takes a lot of courage, right? Because it's easier to just say, Oh, it's not gonna work and just go on your merry way? Well, it has it has the equal percentage right of working as it does not work?

Dr. Dana 33:48

Well, I'm not sure that that's 100% true, because I do believe in destiny and fate.

Kim Fauskee 33:54

And maybe that's just my shield protecting myself like 5050 odds?

Dr. Dana 34:00

Well, I, I just don't think that the universe is that random. And that for the longest time, you've been looking for someone that you could really connect with and feel the kind of love that your heart has always desired. And it happened in the most unusual way. And I can't believe that's for no reason. It's just really hard for me to imagine that because that would just seem like, like, whatever your version of God is, is just toying with you and, and messing with you and, and that it's going to, you know, it's just going to end up hurting you.

Kim Fauskee 34:33

Well, I just can't believe I still unfortunately have a certain level of skepticism. But again, for the first time in my adult life of relationships, I'm just enjoying the moment, right? And, again, if it's meant to have wheels, a will have wheels, and if and if it's not, and it's not that that I'm going to be indifferent about it. I'm going to pursue them. Gonna do the things that I think that I need to do, to evolve this relationship to see if it does have a future to it. Or it was just another reminder to me, not a bad reminder. But another reminder that that there is somebody out there,

Dr. Dana 35:17

right? Well, and you've asked her many times, how come you got so lucky?

Kim Fauskee 35:21

You? I'm asking you, Dana Saperstein, how you got so lucky? Yeah. So I've asked you that,

Dr. Dana 35:26

and I didn't really understand fully until you and I had this conversation about why it happened the way that it did. And if I can just give a brief I've already talked about this before, but um, when I was 20, I was living in San Diego and my roommate and I decided that we wanted to move to Hawaii. I wanted to go surfing. He didn't even surf but he said, Yeah, that sounds like a great adventure. Right? So we had no idea anything about Hawaii, this was back in the Dark Ages. 1976. Right. And so we buy tickets to Maui, we didn't even know what Maui was, or what we were going to do once we got to the airport. So you know, we fly to Maui. We're standing at the airport, like idiots trying to figure out what to do. And some man walks up to us and says, Hey, what do you guys do, you know, what's the deal? I said, Well, we just arrived, we have no idea where to go or what to do. And he said, I'll throw your surfboard in my

truck, I'll take it to the, you know, other side of the island where most new people come. So he takes us to line and he deposits us at a little hotel, we check into the hotel, and we're just hanging out. And it's really beautiful. And we like okay, that was pretty sweet. So we wake up the next morning, and we're sitting in the swimming pool. And some man comes up to us and says, Hey, what are you guys doing? And we said, oh, we just moved here yesterday. And we're just hanging out trying to figure out, you know, how we're going to find a way to live and work. And he said, What do you guys do for a living? And both of us just happened to have a lot of experience as waiters. And he said, Oh, I'm opening up a restaurant next week. Would you like to be my waiters. And it turned out that he was going to be the manager of a really high end, Italian restaurant, he said, All you got to do is go to the tuxedo store and get some tuxedo pants and a ruffled shirt and a covered body. And you guys can be my waiters, I just thought, wow, this is pretty sweet. So you know, we do it. And then the next day, we figured, well, we got to find a place to live. So we're standing on the side of the highway, you're not allowed to stick out your thumb in Hawaii to. to hitch I hate to have to just standard like an idiot and people know what you're doing. So this woman stops her car and picks us up. And it turns out it was somebody from San Diego that had recently moved to Maui that we didn't even know move there. And she said, What are you guys doing here and we said, oh, we're just looking for a place to live. And she said, I'll come to my apartment, the one that stores going to be empty next week. And so she takes us to our apartment building. And we meet the people that are living there. And we rent the place and we buy their car. And so within two or three days, we're completely set up effortlessly. You know, to begin our life in Hawaii. That's more than a confluence of circumstances. I didn't know what at the time I just thought, well, Hawaii is a pretty amazing place. I should have came here earlier. So, you know, we started the restaurant, everything's going great. And somebody says, hey, there's a beach up north that you guys gotta check out. It's very remote. You got to climb down the cliff to get there. Nobody's ever there. The reef is still live and pristine and really lovely. So we started hanging out with that big hello. It's one bay below Hello Bay at a place called slaughterhouse. So one day, my friend and I and another friend are sitting, we arrived at the beach there. And there's three women sitting with each other in this beautiful cove. And we were the only people on the beach. Right? So I'm staring at one of these women. And I just cannot keep my eyes off of her. I thought she was the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my entire life. I was also kind of upset with myself because she looked like she was about 14 or 15 years old. So I kept saying Danny, you're such a perv. Stop staring at this girl. And super shy at that time. There's no way in the world I would have ever approached a woman under any circumstances. So I go out snorkeling. I found these beautiful shells. And I just you know walking out of the water I look up and there's this woman that had been staring at just sitting on the beach by herself right at the shoreline. So I don't know what possessed me Kim, but I sat down next to her and I started talking to her. I have never done anything like that in my entire life, super shy and and very certain that, you know, there was no, no problem pretty woman like me. So all of a sudden that was like fireworks shooting off. We were so drawn to each other. It was crazy. And you know, we sat and chatted for about half an hour and it turns out that she was six months older than me even though she looked years younger, and that she just finished nursing school and came to her while on vacation with her two sisters, and I said, Well, you know, some times my friends and I go dancing at this place down the road. And would you guys consider meeting us that night, she said, I don't know. You know, she didn't tell me at that time she had a boyfriend and that she was engaged or whatever the situation was. So I, you know, went back to school with my friends and said, Hey, we might have dates, and it just, so we go to this place, and we're hanging out. And we're there for two or three hours, and they don't show up. So we're just getting

up to leave, and they walk in the door. And so I started dancing with this woman. And we absolutely fell madly in love with each other at that moment, and spent the next two weeks inseparable. It was, you know, Hawaiian, how romantic it is, and how when you're 20, you know, what things are like, it was a most amazing experience. But her sisters were really worried because I had long hair and it was a pot smoker, and, and a hippie. So they called dad and said, Hey, our sisters lost her marbles. You know, she's hanging out with the surfer, dude, you better straighten her out in a big hurry. So he calls boyfriend, who ends up, you know, calling her and saying I'm coming to Hawaii and, and I thought that that was going to be the end of our relationship, because the person that I met was not somebody who would ever be unfaithful. And it was only because of how powerful our connection was that we were hanging out together. I get to make it along. So I'll make the long story shorter. Um, she ended up leaving Hawaii, I never thought I would see her again. But somehow she had my parents address. And a year or so later, she contacted them when we started hanging out again, and had been together ever since. I didn't realize the magic that took place that made life so effortless for me to meet her. And then when you and I were talking, I was thinking about what it was like when I was four years old. And I lived in Brazil. And this woman came into my life to take care of me. upon looking at her picture where after you and I talk, she looks exactly like my wife, same body, same everything. And she was the person in my early life that taught me what love felt like for the very, very first time. So you had that imprint. So I think that was an imprint inside of me. And I think I am without even realizing it. I was searching for that kind of Lana was a healthy imprint for you for me, because it was the first time I ever felt true love. Because my parents were so out to lunch and my mom was so vacant, when this woman came into our life, I was like a little duckling falling around everywhere she went, because she loved me. And I loved her. And we were inseparable for the time that I lived in Brazil, and I was so brokenhearted when we left her behind. And I think I spent the rest of my life trying to find her again. And I think I really did find her in my wife. Because when I look back, I realized it was that kind of love that she brought to the table. And it was so amazing to me to make that realization. So I think that that's why I got lucky. Because I had that experience, even though it was short lived, to know what true love felt like. And I think that my body, my soul was looking for that for the rest of my, for the rest of my life. And then it I just happened to be lucky enough to listen to the inspiration to move to Hawaii and to do what I did in order to find this woman.

Kim Fauskee 43:19

Like a true American love story. Well, movie of the week,

Dr. Dana 43:24

I know that it's difficult for us, because the term soulmate has been so overused. And and, you know, I

Kim Fauskee 43:32

as you know, I have a little bit of an issue with that. It's kind

Dr. Dana 43:36

of a it's kind of a, you know, it's been overused, that's for sure. But I really do believe that my soul was looking for that kind of love. And when it found that it recognized it because I was ready to marry this girl after I knew her for two weeks, and I was only 21 years old at the time.

Kim Fauskee 43:54

So I think it goes back to how we started this conversation about you know, people figuring out how to pick the right person in their life, their person, right. And going back to our premise on everything is intuition. Right, you have that feeling, right. It's when I met this girl in Belize it wasn't, you know, of course she was attractive and all that stuff. But it was a feeling that I got that I had to know this person,

Dr. Dana 44:23

right? Yes. And I'd had enough therapy at that point in my life. That I wasn't horribly self destructive when it came to my relationships with women. I may have been super shy and had only gone out with women that approached me and luckily I wasn't so unattractive that women wouldn't approach me. So when we got together, I never felt a need to sabotage it at all because I was in therapy and I was working really hard on knowing myself and actually when the two of us got together and really cemented our relationship. I insisted that I cheat, do some therapy in order to get to know myself, so that we could be connected to each other and in as healthy a way as possible. And it made a really big difference because in her family, you were not allowed to argue about anything, you had to pretend like everything was okay all the time. And there's no such thing as a relationship where everything is okay all the time. So she learned how to express her feelings, and especially her anger and disappointment. And you know, and then a while later I said to her, you know, I didn't expect you to get this good at it. Because she got really good at it.

Kim Fauskee 45:34

Maybe she should have been the therapist. That's right.

Dr. Dana 45:37

So again, you know, we've been together for a million years, and we still really love each other. But I really believe that, because I was searching for that kind of love again. That's what brought me to her.

Kim Fauskee 45:49

So I'm going to ask you a question that I asked you earlier that we've had a discussion on, that I was kind of searching in my own head for the answer for what is the interpretation of true love to you? Um,

Dr. Dana 46:04

Well, you know, it gets back to the conversation we had last time about dependency. I really feel like, for me, true love is feeling like my life is not complete without this other person in it. And that if something ever happened to her, I'm not sure how I would ever survive losing her. I know that I would ultimately choose to live. But I'm not sure. And sometimes I think about how I would ever live without her, because I am that connected to her. And I feel that I depend on her as my partner and my source of security and the mom of my kids, and she's just such a lovely person in those ways that I don't want to live my life without her. And I don't feel weakened by that. I actually feels strengthened by the fact that I have a partner in the world that I love that much, and who seems to tolerate me and, and love me and and so that's the healthy dependency piece. That's what it feels like to me. And again, I know it's not the way you're supposed to live in America. Right? You're supposed to be independent, not rely on anybody and just take care of yourself. Well, now it's called

Kim Fauskee 47:04

toxic independence. Right? Right. And I because we're because even married couples are living so independently now that it's caused the divorce rate, even skyrocket now,

Dr. Dana 47:13

right? Well, part of what happened during COVID is that a lot of marriages fell apart, because most marriages were based on because people had to look at each other. But most marriages are based on maybe a couple hours every evening, and maybe a little bit of time on the weekends where they hung out together. And that was okay, their relationships worked, and that it was enough intimacy to satisfy both partners, and neither one ever had to show up fully. And then all of a sudden, the next you know, these people are stuck with each other at home. And it ruins so many relationships that I don't think would have been ruined otherwise. Because, you know, either you start drinking really heavily. And you know, do whatever people do eat too much, and all that crap in order to numb themselves just tune out, right? Or you start to pay attention to the fact that you totally even knew your husband or wife. And that maybe now's the time to develop a greater sense of intimacy. But most people don't choose that path. And so all the divorce attorneys I know went from maybe getting two or three or four clients a month to like 10 a week, because so many marriages were falling apart because they needed to, because they were forced to spend time with each other

Kim Fauskee 48:21

you were you made an important differentiation to me off topic. But you said whence disdain enters the equation for the other person in your life? Yes, that's pretty much the catalyst for itself.

Dr. Dana 48:36

Well, there's a man who I can't think of his name right now who studies relationships and, and he watches people to see how they communicate with each other and then predicts whether the relationship is salvageable or not, and what the indications are of a, of a hopeless relationship. And in his research, he's found that as soon as the stain enters the picture, it is pretty much hopeless. It's hard to come back from disdaining your partner. And people get to that point where they just absolutely start to hate each other. And they can't even stand each other's presence because it just reminds them of their loneliness and their emptiness and all the stuff that they were hoping that the relationship would take care of. And it's really sad because you know, that stuff was always there. But they were able to sort of cover it up by being in a fantasy type relationship, either through rescue or who knows what. And then that starts to fall apart. And then you realize you don't even know the person or you don't really even like the person that you're married to. And it's quite sad. Because, you know, the divorce rates really high in this country.

Kim Fauskee 49:47

Yeah, I almost think now that people get into relationships, knowing that that probably could be the end result or may be the end result into it and Almost that gives them an out already.

Dr. Dana 50:04

It's just like that I

Kim Fauskee 50:06

don't really have to work on it that hard because if it gets really that hard and it gets painful, and I have to exert that much bandwidth, just easier to get divorced and move on, because the grass is greener on the other side, I don't really want to evolve the relationship, I really don't want to get to know me, and I surely don't want to get to know you more. So it's just easier to sign this piece of paper, pay some money and, and move on to the next relationship. Well,

Dr. Dana 50:33

you know, you remember when we were little kids, I know Moeller knew. But there used to be a wash, appliance repair people. And there used to be TV repair people, I

Kim Fauskee 50:41

remember the milkman coming into the house and putting in the refrigerator.

Dr. Dana 50:45

There used to be all kinds of people that could repair things when they broke and that we, we looked at stuff as being repairable, there's no such thing as a repair person anymore. If something breaks, you just throw it away and get another one. And I think that that concept has affected our relationships also that, that it's so much easier to throw it away than it is to repair it. And I think that's really tragic, because I think that a lot of relationships could be repaired, if people had the courage to take responsibility for themselves. So when I meet people, and I'm working with them, I always say to them, you know, you're you've become an expert, or your partner and all the things you don't like or like about him or her. But your expertise is only going to make things worse, because it just makes you really good at blaming the other person for the problems. What you need to do is become an expert on yourself, and recognize what you're doing or not doing that's messing up the relationship. So if you're willing to switch from blaming your partner, to taking responsibility for yourself, I may be able to help you solve your relationship but not otherwise.

Kim Fauskee 51:51

So we've thought about what it takes in yourself to develop that healthy relationship and then move on to a healthy loving relationship. We've talked about manifesting and clarity and trusting your intuition in terms of your picker and not your your Excel spreadsheet of everything you want and in a partner. So what makes a healthy relationship? What keeps a healthy relationship going? You've been married for some 40 odd years? Well, we'll have some future guests on the show that have been married, I think over 50 years. For somebody that was in a relationship for 11 years, which doesn't seem like a very long time, looking at people that have been married 20 years, 30 years, 40 years, 50 years? Is I can't fathom that. Right. I can't fathom how you keep how you keep that going. How does that love continue to continue to evolve? How do you continue to keep that relationship fresh? And I know there's the you know, the give and take factor, there's the constant communication factor, there's not walking on eggshells, and being transparent and vulnerable with your partner, but without vomiting on them in that way. But I'm kind of interested not only from my sampling from the listener's standpoint, that are, you know, trying to figure out, you know, if we're in a relationship, have found the right relationship, hope to find the right relationship. How do we keep the magic going? Well, is that the billion dollar a million dollars doesn't sound like a lot these days. So is that the billion dollar question now?

Dr. Dana 53:42

Well, I think it gets back to something we just started talking about a few minutes ago, which is the concept of your soul, leading you toward somebody that you're destined to be with. You can call that a soulmate, if you want to if you're willing to entertain that overused term. But I think that there is an internal recognition when you really fall in love with somebody that you respect very deeply. And that you feel like you don't want to live your life without taking responsibility for yourself. And whenever there's a problem, it's so much easier to blame your partner and so much easier to think that your partner is the one that's causing the problem. I think that what's kept my marriage, partly healthy in that way, is that anytime my wife and I have a disagreement, I remind myself that I am not the easiest person in the world to live with. So I may be right about whatever it is we're arguing about. But that's not the point. The point is on my being respectful. She agrees

Kim Fauskee 54:44

with you to on that premise. I know that

Dr. Dana 54:48

but but my idea is, you know, why don't you be grateful and gracious towards somebody who's willing to live with you and take such good care of you. And that yeah, Of course, you may be right about whatever the point is you're trying to make. But in order for you to be right, the other person has to be wrong. And I don't know about you, but nobody likes to feel wrong. It's humiliating. It feels shaming. And so I try my best not to.

Kim Fauskee 55:16

Well, it's like they say, in a successful negotiation, and I'm sorry, using a business analogy here. But it has to be a win win. Otherwise, it's not a successful negotiation. One, one can't take more than the other, or at least the other person can't think they got taken for right? That's right. There has to be this quid pro quo a little bit. Maybe somebody got a little bit more than the other. But it wasn't unfair,

Dr. Dana 55:40

right? Well, but the other part of it is that if you know yourself well, and one thing I know about myself is that when I get angry, my mind becomes crystal clear. And the angrier I get the clearer, my mind becomes, that is not the case for a lot of people, especially for someone like my wife, who when she gets angry, she gets so caught up in the feeling that her mind doesn't get clearer it gets sort of.

Kim Fauskee 56:10

So it's more rage full seeing red instead of Yeah. And

Dr. Dana 56:14

So when I think to myself, well, what must it be like to be with somebody whose mind gets crystal clear when they're pissed, instead of like me, who is like her, who, you know, has a really hard time staying present, intellectually, when they feel really angry. So that unfairness helps me back off a little bit, and realize that driving my point home, it's only going to make her feel bad. And how important really, is it that I be right? Even though, you know, we all like to feel right. And we all like to feel like, you know,

we're the, you know, the masters of our destiny and all that kind of went on principle. Yeah, I tried to step back from that notion and, and try to express myself in a kinder way than I would otherwise. And I think that makes a bit of a difference, that I try not to give up my kindness just because I'm really angry or feel outraged for some reason to realize that not everybody is like me, and I can't expect the world to revolve around me. In that way. Even though if you talk to my dad, he say that that's a revolt, who you know, revolves around, only us.

Kim Fauskee 57:22

So. So basically, taking the stance is not about me.

Dr. Dana 57:27

Well, it's not about me being right. If we have a disagreement, it's about both of us trying to figure out how to come up with a compromise that feels like you say, that feels fair. So again, I think that if we can recognize how grateful we shouldn't be to the people that are willing to live with us and put up with us, even though we might think we're easy to live with, nobody's easy to live with. We all have our peculiarities and our ways of being annoying to each other sometimes, and being loving to each other other times. And I just remind myself sometimes that, you know, you're lucky, you married up. And so take a step back from yourself, write to yourself, and do the best you can to, you know, make your point, but not drive it home in a way that humiliates the other person.

Kim Fauskee 58:14

So we're coming to the end of this hour long conversation, I think we've covered a lot about the foundations of a relationship and what you should and shouldn't be looking for in terms of those relationships and how they evolve or Devolve in that way. Well, can you kind of give us a couple quick key takeaways from this discussion? In terms of healthy dependence, healthy relationships, healthy partnerships?

Dr. Dana 58:47

Well, um, I know this is going to be maybe not the exact answer that you're looking for. But people have been trying to figure out love for a million years. You and I were talking earlier about Plato back in the, you know, grind many 1000s of years ago, was he around? He was BC, and that was not before COVID. That's right. And so, you know, his idea was that we were born complete men and women, and that somehow we displeased the gods. And so we got split in half the male and female sides and scattered around the globe, and that we spend our lives looking for our other half. And it made me not necessarily literally think that that's the case. But I really do believe that that if we listen to what we're feeling really, really deep down inside in a relationship to other people, we can know whether that person theoretically could be our other half. And that that's the person that tried to work out a relationship with but that's not based on rescuing the person that's not based on any fantasy other than Boy, I sure feel more complete having this person in my life. And I sure feel a sense of security, security and contentment that I don't feel without her. So I would ask people to look at it from that perspective, if they can. And it takes a lot of trust within yourself to come from that place. Or you have to really willing to listen to what your body's trying to tell you in a relationship, you know, to the person that you're giving your heart to. And I know that most people have the courage to do that, because of the fear factor that you and I talk about all the time. Right, if you feel like you're sabotaging a relationship that in

a way feels really good. It's because you're scared about goodness not because it's a problem. Right? Right. And then it's entirely likely that you're afraid of the goodness as you're afraid of whatever the problems might be, because it's terrifying to open your heart to someone and potentially lose that person.

Kim Fauskee 1:00:50

Well, I think I'll close by reiterating that healthy dependence, yes, creates greater independence. Absolutely. From there, so send, you're not fighting all the time, then you're not fighting all the time. So hopefully, our listeners got something out of this for this relationship episode. I know we talked about a lot of different things within a relationship. But I mean, we could have a show on its own just by relationships, and it's not going to end here. We got a little bit more work to do on relationships for more than the next thing. But thanks, Dana. Appreciate it.

Dr. Dana 1:01:21

Thank you, Kim.

Fear Me Out 1:01:25

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