

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 35

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Dr. Dana Saperstein - Rescue Fantasy

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 00:52

All right, Dana, finally, an episode where I'm deemed the expert in the subject matter we're going to speak about absolutely can. So as we continue our series on relationships, today, we're going to talk about rescue or fantasy. It may be self explanatory, but we'll spend the next hour not only talking about it, from a psychological perspective, but I'll be talking about it from a personal perspective, since I fell into doing that early on and continued to do it through most of my adult life. And, and hopefully, I've, I've kind of shed that ability to do that now. But I'm gonna defer to you for the, for the expert clinical definition of what the rescue fantasy is.

Dr. Dana 01:45

Well, you know, Kim, I think that you can either call it a rescue fantasy or rescue or fantasy. There, I think they're interchangeable. I, in my experience, it's the most common way that people approach relationships in our world, certainly in our society, and that is that we find wounded puppies and try to rehabilitate them, and then they will love us forever. I think that the Walt Disney Company is hugely responsible for bringing this very much into the public eye when they started making their cartoons with Cinderella and Snow White, Snow White and a damsel in distress damsel in distress, and this prince charming that will come and rescue you. And then you'd ride off into the sunset and live happily ever after. And the only thing that's changed now is that a fantasy is still ever present, except that now women are rescuing men. Because men are kind of helpless and imbeciles. So the women have to come and rescue them

Kim Fauskee 02:46

and every woman on this listening to this podcast shaking their head, yes,

Dr. Dana 02:49

yes, yes, that's true. So my experience is that the rescue fantasy is born out of people's empathic ability, right from the start of their lives. Like if I can use you as an example, if you don't mind, being an empath, somebody who's super sensitive, you were brought into the family that you were brought into, and you could feel how much pain was in that family. Maybe not necessarily consciously, but certainly on a level where it would create enough anxiety, so that you would begin to siphon off their pain in the hopes that things in the family would settle down a bit. And then you would be loved. Because it felt so unsafe to be in the midst of everything that you could feel that they weren't acknowledging. So oftentimes, what happens is that with somebody who's really sensitive, you come into a family as a little kid, and the house feels like it's burning on fire. And the people around you're acting like it's just a little warm in the room. And it's not that big of a deal. And so then you go into a frantic place of, of doing everything you can to take on the pain into your body, and incorporate into yourself believing and knowing that it's the only really way that you can feel safe. Now the problem is that it's never successful, because you're a kid, and you can't save your family from themselves. But boy, you don't even know what's going on. Right? But you do everything you can to use your empathic abilities to, to manage the pain. And so it creates a template for love in your life. And so when you begin to have romantic relationships, or sometimes even friend relationships, your natural impulse is to want to find somebody that needs to be rescued. Because that makes sense to you. And then you do everything you can to try to save that person from themselves. Unfortunately, oftentimes, the person that is being rescued feels like they're being controlled. And so it doesn't work very well because nobody wants to feel controlled. But you can't live with that person in their current state of disrepair. And so it becomes just a whole ball of conflict and the doesn't work very well.

Kim Fauskee 05:01

I think I had mentioned in previous podcasts that we've done well, we've touched a little bit on this or touched a little bit about my life. It was that I always felt that I had to be the Peacekeeper, yes. Right. It was kind of quelling all the fires, like I think you adequately stated for sure that I definitely internalized everybody else's pain. And so for me, not knowing what I was doing. And not knowing how to, to adequately deal with it was just try and keep the peace, try and keep the fires down to a minimum where I can kind of control them and that they, the loudness and and the chaos in my life would be at an what I consider an acceptable level where I wasn't having so much anxiety or, or fear at that point. In that, you know, continued on as I got older, because for me if I was able to do that gave me instant credibility and validity, at least in my mind.

06:05

Right? Well, I mean, it is a way of, of creating a magic way of easing pain. Because in my experience, when I work with couples, especially. Especially if it's the end of a marriage, or the end of a long term relationship, I always ask either one or both people who oversee, did you ever have any indication that the problems that ended up destroying the relationship were present ahead of time?

Kim Fauskee 06:37

And everybody answers No, right? No, I haven't said I was being facetious.

06:41

You know what, Kim, the most amazing thing is nobody has ever said, no. That's the question I get 100%. Yes, from everyone. So then my inclination is to say, well, you know, what were you thinking, and that's where the magic comes into the picture, I thought he would change, I thought you would change, I thought I could change her, I thought I could change him. I was lonely. I mean, I've heard every magical sort of idea that you could ever imagine about why somebody would justify getting into a situation where their intuition was telling them, that it was a big mistake, and that they shouldn't do it. But most people don't trust their intuition, as you and I have talked about numerous times. And so it's probably one of the easiest times in life that you can talk yourself out of what you know, either based on loneliness, or based on what makes sense to you in the name of love, which is, you know, what you were programmed to do, which is manage pain. And then there always is that fantasy when you're a little kid, that if you could just become a certain type of person, or just solve whatever the problem is, that your parents would finally love you and give you the kind of connection and, and love that you that your heart desires. So it comes out of a need for love. It's not a pathological construct, it's it comes out of desperation, more than anything else.

Kim Fauskee 08:05

Yeah, I mean, that's absolutely true. For me, I think I had this again, curated idea or curated fantasy, of finding love and what that would actually feel like, and I discounted the rest of it, right? I discounted who I was choosing as a partner. I was totally bought into, even if there were those red flags, will they change? Right? Right, they'll get to know me, she'll get to know me better, she'll, she'll love me more, because I'll do more than I have to do in this relationship right now. And I'll prove my worth. And that way, I'll get that love back. And you know, I followed that pattern, you know, for years. And like I said, before, I jumped through the hoops, you know, I kept jumping higher, I jumped higher with a bigger house, another kid, more income, you know, all of those things happened and nothing changed.

09:04

Well, but what was the reason why the relationship came to an end? What were you told at the end? I was told I wasn't enough. That's right, that no matter what you did, no matter how hard you tried, you were still responsible for why things were not okay. In the other person's life. Right? Is that a fair thing to say? Absolutely. Okay. So again, you find someone who has difficult time being responsible for themselves and is looking to be rescued when you try your hardest, but you can't fill the emptiness in the other person,

Kim Fauskee 09:33

right, which is, I want to for clarification purposes, exactly what my father told me, right, as well that I wasn't going to mount anything in life, right? And it wasn't worth it. Exactly. So those patterns are familiar and they continue, no matter how, no matter how painful they are to hear or no matter how painful they are to feel. It's familiar and it just continued with me.

09:58

Well, and I'm familiar with what you're talking about, because I feel like I was responsible for my mom's pain before I was even born, and that I did everything I could to siphon her pain into my body so that my father wouldn't leave her. And I think for most of my life, I've been able to recognize people's pain

really easily. And, you know, maybe try my best to take care of them. But I was for several, whatever odd reason I did didn't develop into a romantic fantasy for me, because the person that I married didn't need to be rescued. She wasn't somebody that was damaged, to the point where I felt like if I save this girl, she'll love me forever. I mean, we did have our problems at the beginning of our relationship. And I asked her, you know, if she would consider getting some therapy, so she would get to know her. So it gets to know ourselves better, but it was already in therapy. And I didn't want to be the only person that was in close responsible for all of the problems. So I got lucky in that regard, because it didn't become my template for

Kim Fauskee 11:06

whatever reason. So you didn't become the Disney movie that I did.

11:09

No. I will say, though, that I was lucky enough when I was doing my own therapy, to have somebody encourage me to become a psychologist, so that I could help people, but not at my own expense. Not not with a fantasy that, that I'm going to be the hero and that I'm going to take care of everybody, I'm going to make everybody's you know, and I'm going to take all their pain into my body, and they'll live happily ever after.

Kim Fauskee 11:33

Yeah, it's interesting. I didn't, it didn't have the hero concept, per se. For me, it was, again, going back to that's how I was going to find love. Right. And to me, that was going to be the pure love that I needed and wanted that I didn't get growing up.

11:53

But it also seemed to me that you had this notion that you weren't good enough. And this is how you can prove your value is by saving the other person. Absolutely.

Kim Fauskee 12:01

I think that I was always in helper professions. Right? was for that reason? Right? That was, you know, where my identity in life was going to come from? Yes. Now from taking on somebody else's pain to relieve that, you know, to relieve their pain. I'm at my expense.

12:25

Now, I will tell you that everybody I see professionally, is super sensitive, and very empathic, and really likes taking care of other people. So I don't want anybody to get the idea that the taking care of other people. So probably don't go in the health care profession, right? Because taking care of other people feels really good. It's how you do it, just like all the other stuff you and I've talked about, it's not the feelings themselves that are the issue. It's how you choose to express the need, or the feelings that you have. So if you have a really strong need to take care of people, which I know that you do, and you're really good at it, why not do it in a way like you and I are right now. Which is not at your expense. You're doing it at a place of fun, we're having fun, and kindness and a really deep desire to be as helpful as possible. But you're but you're not asking people to like, could you just give me your pain? And I'll manage it for you?

Kim Fauskee 13:20

I think hypothetically, I mean, obviously that's the way we would all want to relationships and how we would all want to live our lives. But I think if I think back on my relationships and being married, if I were to do that, I would be fearful that my partner would leave with you Yes. And so So I would choose not to do that just because of the fear of that person exiting my life,

13:49

and why would they leave you if you don't take on their pain?

Kim Fauskee 13:55

Bye, because, yeah,

13:59

I'm not saying that that's not valid. But I'm curious about well, how that got sort of instilled inside of you that, that if you don't do what you think you're supposed to, then you're not worthy of being loved and that people will abandon you because

Kim Fauskee 14:10

I didn't have anything else to offer. Okay,

14:13

so So taking their pain on was the only means of exchange that you felt brought value.

Kim Fauskee 14:19

Right. I know that sounds like a very morose thing to say but to offer but in my mind. I didn't have anything else to offer. Right? Because I was there to be the provider, the Savior, everything to my partner. And if I were to kind of not do that at the expense of myself, and kind of live this content and joyful life and not concentrate on that, that I didn't feel I had anything to offer and I was fearful my partner would leave.

14:55

You know, the sad part about what you just said is that the thing that you fear the most is what ends up happening. And as a result of the rescue fantasy, you'll end up being left because the person either gets tired of feeling controlled, or as soon as you start to acknowledge your own needs, they feel betrayed. And they, and then they feel like you're, you're, you're committing Mutiny on the relationship, because it's not about you, it's about them.

Kim Fauskee 15:21

Well, that's, you know, you know, the ladder happened for me, where I started feeling like, okay, everything I'm doing, everything I've done, is not helping this relationship, it's not evolving, it's the merry go round that you can never get off of. And at some point, you just hit the ceiling, and you get tired, you get tired of it, and you realize that your own needs aren't being met. And that, and I'm not trying to blame that on my ex wife. Because I was complicit in that as well. So when I finally got the balls are

standing up for myself, then the shit hit the roof. Right? Right, when I started not internalizing that pain as much anymore. Kind of also put a little bit more onus on my wife at that time in the relationship. Then she started seeing me in a different light, which wasn't complimentary at that time.

16:25

No. Well, she felt betrayed, I would imagine, right? That somehow you were giving up on taking care of her the way that she was hoping that you would?

Kim Fauskee 16:33

Absolutely, yeah. So you know, I've told people I said, you know, you, when you get into that kind of scenario, that person sees how high you can jump in, if you can jump in touch that ceiling more than you should be able to touch a ceiling that's two feet higher than that. And right, when you do that, and it's two feet higher than that, and then at some point, you've you've, you've hit the ceiling, you can't go any higher. And that's like, well, there's no need for you anymore.

17:03

You know, Kim, the other part of this, I think is really important to mention, is that when you are a rescuer, when you're someone who has that template inside of you, it's also a hiding place. Because all the focus is is on trying to save the other person, and trying to help them in whatever way you think is necessary. So you don't actually have to show up as anything other than a rescuer. So you don't have to let the person really know you very deeply inside, you don't have to test your value as a person, you're only testing your value as, as a rescuer, which is very small part of who you are as a person, and that most people have a really hard time kind of admitting to themselves that they've been hiding from intimacy and true closeness by living the rescue fantasy. Now these are not conscious things, by the way. But when I work with people when they start to understand that the rescue fantasy is a recipe for disaster, then the hardest work comes into the picture, which is how do I let people know me when I'm scared that they won't love me and that nobody has probably ever known me before? Because I've never shown anybody my underbelly and never really shown anybody how vulnerable I can be and, and how scared I get or how whatever, because I've been living the rescue fantasy my whole life.

Kim Fauskee 18:23

Well, and and I wasn't allowed to be vulnerable, right? Because I was called different from from early on. And, you know, boys don't cry. Boys aren't. You know, empathetic boys aren't emotional. You know, I couldn't show that side of them. Right. So I was an actor in my own life. Right? I played this character, I should say, play who I thought I was supposed to be or who I was told I was supposed to be for, for a lot of my life until it stopped working for me. And I had to sit there and realize, I can't go on like this anymore. I'm unhappy. I don't know who I am. I don't know which direction to go. This sucks.

19:12

Yeah. So the question I would have for you is, like most people who are not who are not narcissistic, in a personality disordered way, how hard is it to receive versus how hard or how easy is to give?

Kim Fauskee 19:30

Or giving you a super easy yes, I would do that 10 times over in a day and receiving myself Yes, never. Not so much. Now, I feel because I feel this an obligation and receiving that there's some level of quid pro quo or, or there's conditions upon the receiving and that that you know, I have great friends and other family members that you know, have done things for me and I've out of the goodness of their heart and that neuros Obviously, no conditions and no quid pro quos, or anything like that. And I still feel guilty receiving to this day,

20:10

right? I mean, I know you've talked about, I don't know if this is related, but you've talked about inheritance as a difficult issue for you, because

Kim Fauskee 20:19

We did talk about that. And like I said, in I think in that podcast that if Pablo Escobar showed up on my door with a boatload of money or a bag of money, I would have easily taken that versus, you know, money from my family, right? Because I felt that it didn't come with the same conditions.

20:38

Right? Right. So again, the true test of your ability to be connected is receiving, which I'm working on, rather than, I mean, giving comes easily to people that come from a place of love, which I know that you do, and I do also to the best of my ability. So I love taking care of people, it's my favorite thing to do. I'm hoping that my family and my friends and my, and the people that come to see me professionally can feel the generosity in my heart and wanting to help and take care of them and do the best I can. I don't do it at my own expense, because I learned that that is not the best way to help. But receiving is still difficult. Because then I have to face how I feel about myself deep down inside, do I deserve this? Does it feel safe, How comfortable is it, and so on and so forth. And so through a series of experiences in my own life, being physically having some really difficult physical situations where I was not able to take care of myself, while I was recovering, my family, my wife, and my children came to me and said, you know, what's your problem? You've taken such good care of us. Right? Why don't you let us take care of you. And I, you know, my response was, Well, I'm trying but it's, it's, it's not that easy to be, you know, to be to feel helpless, and to feel like I need to be taken care of makes you feel uncomfortable. And that, you know, they just rolled their eyes at me, like, you know, get over yourself, because it feels good for us to take care of you. And so I have extended that sort of notion, to people that have told me how hard it is to receive. And what I say to them is, maybe receiving is not about you. Maybe it would be good for you to remove yourself and your own feelings of discomfort. And recognize how good it feels for you to take care of that person. Why is it okay for you to deny them that same feeling in relationship to you. So stop being so self focused about receiving, and recognize that you're doing the other person a favor by letting them give to you? Even if you're uncomfortable? Because why would you want to deny somebody that you love the opportunity to to have that same feeling you have toward them? In the name of receiving something from them?

Kim Fauskee 22:57

No, I think you make an important point there right in in kind of flipping the perspective on how you look at that. Yeah. I was thinking while you're saying that, boy, I said that's so easier said than done, right? Because I have to now I have to make and I get that, right? Because I'm trying to operate from that

premise now, right? But I have to consciously think about that when somebody that's either a good friend or somebody that I'm in a relationship that wants to give out of the goodness of their heart, I have to consciously think that that's what they actually want to do. Yeah, with good intention,

23:37

you know, what I've learned to do is to say, thank you very much, I really appreciate it, no matter how uncomfortable I am, because I don't want it to be about me. I want it to be about the other person. And again, it's a way of taking care of the other person in a sort of funny way. Because I want them to feel good, like I do when I do something for them. So if I get my own awkward discomfort out of the way, then they get to feel good. Doing something nice for me.

Kim Fauskee 24:07

It's just so odd when you think about it, how we've been conditioned, or some of us have been conditioned that we were not able to receive and how that is a fairly significant affliction in our life. Right and holds us back from enjoying birthday parties. Yeah, enjoying relationships, enjoying anything that anybody gives us out of the goodness of their heart, and just sucks the joy

24:33

out of it. It's true, ya know? Well, and you know, for a slow learner, I tell you, well, and you also know from a business perspective, that there's so much fear and negativity and so little praise and accountability of credibility in a positive way.

Kim Fauskee 24:51

Yeah, there's a demarcation though especially for me in business and doing that is that there's not really intimacy involved in it. And I think when it has an intimate factor where it's, you know, a friend, you know, a loved one, a romantic relationship, something that makes it more difficult. We're in a business relationship, I was able to know business was just business. Okay. Right. So there wasn't that intimacy that evolved. For me. It's the intimate relationships in the friends and stuff like that, because I feel like that, you know, it's an obligation to them to treat me the way they do. You know, and again, I'm sounding like a broken record here. But, you know, I still feel that way. And again, going back to the analogy you use, I have to consciously think about that. And, you know, I celebrated a birthday a few months ago, and, my sister lovingly and out of the goodness of her heart, threw me a birthday party and had a lot of my close friends there. And it again, she did it, because she loves me with the goodness of her heart. And I had to sit there and be okay with that. Yes. And I had a great time, you know, to be conscious like, that people are showing up because they want to show up and be here. And my sister's doing this because she wants to do this live for me. But it was a little difficult for me.

26:26

Yeah. Did you trust that she was doing it out of the kindness of it? I

Kim Fauskee 26:29

never, I never doubted I never doubted that. But like you I don't want to be the center of attention. Right. I'd much rather be invited to your birthday party. Then you are coming to my birthday party.

Exactly. Right. Yes. Because, yeah, I just yeah, I'd rather not be on the radar. Right that way. And yeah. You know, and I make a big deal about people's birthdays. I think birthdays should be celebrated.

26:53

Right? Yes.

Kim Fauskee 26:56

Not mine. So you know, how screwed up is that?

26:59

Well, I mean, it makes sense if you think about it, because you like taking care of people. And so it feels good to do something nice for someone. But then when they return the favor, it's like, wait a minute,

Kim Fauskee 27:08

so we can just skip March 13. On the calendar, right? Well, what's your birthday? I don't remember how to care. Yeah, I don't know if sometime during the year, right? Well, and again,

27:19

bringing back the notion of the rescue fantasy, all of this comes in some ways out of that feeling like our job in life is to be invisible, and take care of other people and not have needs of our own. And make sure that we do everything we can to try to calm difficult situations or somehow diffuse people's pain, because then it's then the world can feel a little bit safer than it does. And I can't even tell you how many people I've met that struggle by being incredibly empathic, and nobody ever explaining to them why they chose and felt the need to manage pain at such an early age in their life, and how debilitating it ends up becoming. Because we just don't know these things in our world. And oftentimes, at least the people that I see have never been told how sensitive they are, and how much that changes the way that they connect with the world. And how, how much pain determines their behavior.

Kim Fauskee 28:19

You know, I just figured it was my lot in life. I mean, this is, whoever put me on this earth, this was my purpose here. And if I was uncomfortable or in pain, I was put here to take care of other people and internalize their pain. I mean, that's really what I thought, right? I mean, I don't know if I was trying to justify to myself the pain and the discomfort that I was feeling, or trying to make sense of it. But I really fought for a period of my life, that this was just my lot in life. And I was just going to have to suck it up and go with it and deal with it that this is how love goes. And this is how relationships go. And you know, you just pull up your bootstraps and hang in there.

29:04

So when pain comes your way now Have you changed your relationship to how you manage it?

Kim Fauskee 29:16

Yes, I have. Again, it goes back to the receiving piece again, that it has to be a conscious effort for me, okay, because the default is still easier to fall back into. Okay. But I've known through a number of instances recently in dealing with my ex wife and in dealing in relationships, that I'm far different than I

was five years ago, 10 years ago, in terms of understanding what's mine and understanding what is somebody else's and I'm turning in terms of emotions and pain and and things like that and not in not taking on other people's pain and not feeling that I have to save somebody anymore. Okay, that it's not my obligation to do it. I'm still the kind of person no matter where you've been in my life, that if you ask for help, I'm going to help. Okay, right. But I'm also not going to do it now at my own expense, where I used to feel obligated to do it, whether I wanted to do it, or I didn't want to do it take on that person's pain. Because again, I thought that was my purpose in life. But now I'm able to do it without taking on that other people's pain or emotion. Like I said, I'm at my own expense, and still be able to help them.

30:46

That's a pretty huge shift. I

Kim Fauskee 30:48

think it's a it's a huge shift. But again, it's not my default, right? I don't, you know, I don't go to it, I have to sit there and consciously while while it's happening, tell myself, okay, this is not about you. This is about the other person, I'm willing to be a good friend, a big confidant in and help you through this crisis, or this problem. But that's all it is.

31:15

Okay, so what does help look like, under these circumstances?

Kim Fauskee 31:19

The help that I offer, I think it was the help that I always offered, you know, somebody in terms of, of, you know, walking them off the ledge, or, you know, giving my perspective on on, you know, certain areas of their life that they're asking for opinions on to where I felt, in fact, I had a pretty, for the lack of a better term come to Jesus meeting with somebody close to me, within the last week, that two years ago, three years ago, I would have shied away from some of the things that I actually said in this conversation, because it was really tough love, and this person needed some tough love. Okay, right. I couldn't, I couldn't dance around the edges, because this person was repeating a very similar pattern that constantly holds this person back. And I thought, okay, if I'm going to have this discussion with this person, and this is about this person, it's not about me. I'm going to be brutally honest, without being malicious, or without being hurtful, even though probably some of it sounded hurtful. But when I ended that conversation, this person thanked me for actually being brutally honest and transparent about it. Instead of getting off the phone thinking that was an emotional hour or two, I felt like I had just worked out or something like that. I got off the phone and felt completely fine. You know, where I would have probably labored over it for a couple of days that conversation and stressed about it or internalized that person's energy, you know, would have taken a toll on me and as an empath. I'm really good at getting overwhelmed, right? And then like a turtle, I tuck my head back into my shell for a day or two, you know, because I have to kind of decompress. That didn't happen.

33:23

So, Kim, um,

Kim Fauskee 33:24

I mean, I don't know if that that makes sense.

33:26

Yes. But my, it makes me curious about the notion of, if you're not going to manage the pain, you're not going to take into your body, where's the pain gonna go on, how's that person going to be helped? Because you and I've had lots of conversations about this, right? That, that you know, that I invite the pain, at least on a professional level, I invite pain, to whatever degree a person can manage and still be upright. Because of the people that I have chosen to work with, some of the things that had happened to them are so far beyond description, in terms of, you know, sexual and other types of trauma, that it's a miracle the person is still alive. And the amount of pain that they carry is so debilitating in some ways, that my natural inclination, if I was a rescuer, would be to take it into my body and try to siphon it so that the person can survive and be okay,

Kim Fauskee 34:24

so, I'm gonna have to and I don't know if this is answering your question, but I'm gonna have to go back to what the premise of the show is about faith and intuition. Right? I've become such a believer in my intuition now and listening to my inner voice. Okay, and letting that be my navigator and the faith that I have not only in the universe, but the faith that I now have myself is that everything's gonna be okay.

34:54

Okay, but when you're in the field when you're with somebody who obviously doesn't feel Okay, and has not fully, you know, healed their trauma, I can't tell somebody like that, that everything's gonna be okay. Because because it's not it's not the, it's not okay to say that because I don't know if that's true or so

Kim Fauskee 35:13

and so I'm not, I didn't want to say that I've told the other person that's going to be okay. Because I agree with you. I don't know if it's going to be okay or not. I'm telling myself it's gonna be okay. Right. Okay. Because what am I trying to do? Yeah, what I'm trying to do is get this person to kind of believe in themselves, okay, a little bit more and help them here, you can give them kind of an idea of how I manage the situation myself. Okay. Right. I don't know if I'm answering that question. What you're actually looking for here exists that, again, I have this and it's, I just have this demarcation line now of where I'm not just taking on that other person's energy, okay, but still giving them the feedback, and the honesty that I think they need. So you

36:07

can be present to them, and you can be compassionate towards them. And show them what your version of love looks like, without managing something that doesn't belong

Kim Fauskee 36:17

to you, for the first time for the first time in my life. Yes. Okay.

36:20

So then the question becomes, if, if you don't take it on, Oh, how's that person going to be able to release it, because you're the you were the were the ingredient before that was sort of responsible for siphoning off the pain. So if you don't do that, where's it gonna go? How's that person gonna get relief from their pain?

Kim Fauskee 36:42

So I, this is, this is gonna sound a little harsh. But I don't think that's my responsibility anymore.

36:53

Well, I I'm not disagree with you. But it is important for people to feel hope that their pain can be released. And what I tell people all the time is my job is to introduce you to your pain in a way that you don't know it. So that you fully understand where it's coming from, and how it got there, and what it means and how it lives in your body, and so on and so forth. But my job is not to release the pain for you, it's to help you release the pain.

Kim Fauskee 37:23

Absolutely. Okay. And I think it's, you know, it's through a series of questions that you ask that person, right and, and then you're kind of gauging their reaction to it. And it's always, it's always a reaction to that emotion, right, it's not the emotion itself, and getting them to understand what, what they're reacting to,

37:43

yes, and also that it is possible to release the pain. Now, it also depends on the person's frame of reference, in terms of their spiritual life, because I think that's that, it's easier for people to heal trauma, if they have a spiritual connection of some sort. Because then their version of God or the universe or higher power, whatever you want to call it, can come into the picture. And, and, and can be really helpful in the releasing of that pain. Like if I work with somebody as an example, who has a really strong relationship with God, whatever their God might be. Oftentimes, when we're doing hypnosis and dealing with trauma, I asked them to bring if that say, it's Jesus, as an example, to bring that to bring Jesus into the equation in during the hypnotic process and allow themselves to be held by their version of God while they release the pain. And it's amazing how much pain a person can let go of if they feel like it's not going to hurt anybody, number one, to let it go. And number two, that's the most salient way to do it, is to allow it to be real, it's to allow yourself to let it go, knowing that it's not going to hurt anybody in the process.

Kim Fauskee 38:58

So what do you do if you're not religious, it

39:01

then oftentimes, depending on the situation, it's okay to give the person that hurt you back the pain, if it's not going to hurt them, because it's their pain that they gave you in the first place. So it's like giving that transfusion to somebody who's you're giving them back their blood, if that makes sense, right? Before surgery, oftentimes, you give blood in order that if you need blood, you can get your own blood back. And I know that's kind of a weird way to look at it. But if when you're being abused by somebody,

their energy goes into your bond, we're just gonna transfer that pain right back to you. Yes. And so I asked people to release the pain back to the person that hurt them. That's step one. Step two is to take back the essence of your innocence and purity that that person took away from you in trade for handing you their pain. And it's amazing what a difference it makes for people to give back the pain to the person that hurt them and take back the essence that was stolen from them, that the other person fed off in the name of abuse and whatever they do. It's because the trencher of that pain can be enormously relieving.

Kim Fauskee 40:06

So I don't know if that makes no, it makes total sense. But I, but I'm thinking that's a highly intellectual conversation that you would have to have with somebody, and I'm not so sure,

40:18

I don't have that conversation intellectually, I have a conversation with people when they're under hypnosis and are facing the person that has hurt them. So allowing themselves to feel the stuff they never felt before, and then sending it back toward the person that hurt them in the first place. Sometimes people feel a bit guilty about and I say to them, you don't need to feel bad if there's not going to hurt this person. You're just giving them back a load of crap that they put on top of you that you've been carrying your whole life thinking that it was you, that was the problem.

Kim Fauskee 40:49

So what about the person that's not doing hip now? Or doing psychotherapy, that is an empath, or highly sensitive person that takes on other people's emotions. And they're getting called by loved ones, friends, or whatever, to to render some advice, and they're taking in transferring all that energy into themselves, while trying to give sailing advice to somebody? How does how does one handle that, that isn't sitting under professional guidance at that point?

41:23

Well, my hope would be that if people listened to this conversation that you're having, and they're not doing therapy, or whatever, and they're empathic people, or just, you know, people that want to be helpful, that you don't need to take on the other person's pain in order to be held, to help them, you can be present to them, you can show them what it feels like to be loved. But you can also help them really release the pain by not taking it on. I know that sounds weird. But as soon as you start to take it on, the other person then becomes anxious, because you're showing them that you don't trust them to manage their own feelings.

Kim Fauskee 42:02

So I, to me, listen to that. It makes total sense, right. But it's kind of the antithesis going from one way to the other, where indifference lies in the middle. And I think, you know, some people default now to indifference. And so I'm not talking about indifference. I know, but I'm just saying that. I know you're not talking about indifference. But I think that if you go from one day, I'm internalizing somebody else's pain, then in the next day, I'm understanding that it isn't mine to take on. Right? That the middle ground initially for that is indifference.

Dr. Dana 42:40

They may interpret it that way, because they're used to you,

Kim Fauskee 42:44

which now comes off bad the person you're because they don't think you're taking them seriously. Or it's you know, right. It's not it's not a loving response from an indifferent standpoint, well, but

42:55

it also depends on the person because I'm not sure that everybody looks to to take their pain on when they're telling you how they're feeling.

Kim Fauskee 43:05

Yeah, I don't think that they're consciously doing that. I think it's, it's, yeah, it's the person on the receiving end that has to decipher that, yes.

43:13

And I won't say that everybody that gets abused, gets abused by sociopathic or narcissistic people. But I will tell you that the kind of abuse I'm talking about is it doesn't come from a normal person. It comes from a sociopath, a psychopath, or a narcissist, or someone who does not have the ability to take responsibility for themselves, and who offloads all of their poison on to everybody in their life in one way or another. So if those are the kind of people you have in your life, and you stop siphoning off their pain, of course, they're going to turn on you. And they're going to hate you for withdrawing their garbage can, that they want to put their garbage in. But those are people you probably shouldn't have a relationship with in the first place, because they're not safe to be connected to. Because generally speaking, if you're connected to someone, they don't have the idea that you should take their pain on and make it all better. What they want from you is to feel loved and connected to you. Because that's more healing than taking their pain into your body, in my opinion.

Kim Fauskee 44:18

So So would you, would it be correct to assume that if you're having a conversation with somebody and you're internalizing their pain to to have this kind of thought in your head that I don't own their pain?

44:33

Yeah, well, I think about your situation with your dad as an example. You're in my opinion, your dad was either a sociopath or a narcissist or both. And he took every ounce of his pain and projected it onto you and everybody else, right everybody else he could put it on. Right? And so in order for you to survive, you had to become his garbage can, right? Basically. And even then he still beat the crap out of you and tortured you. Because no matter how much pain you took, it was never enough to calm him to a place where he could function in any normal sort of way. Right? So you stopped doing that, and what's gonna happen is initially he's gonna get really mad at you. Right? Because he feels betrayed, that you're not willing to be a garbage can. But if you're insistent on not doing that, he's gonna go find somebody else, because there are plenty of people that have been abused, that are willing to be treated that way, because they don't know any different. I don't know if that makes sense. Oh, absolutely. I mean, I remember one of the very first people I ever worked with stated standing

Kim Fauskee 45:45

up to a bully, right? When you first stand up to a bully, and the bully goes, Oh, okay. They just go on to the next.

45:52

That's the right person. You know, Kim, I remember the one of the first people I ever worked with, and I was as green as you could ever be, as a therapist walked into the room that I was working in. And she had a bandage on her head and was asleep on her arm. And she obviously looked like she had to be not over or something horrible happened with a terrible accident. And so I, you know, obviously, how can you sit with somebody and not say, hey, well, what happened? And she said, Oh, my husband threw me through the plate glass window at our house. And I said, Well, what if she said, yeah, he didn't mean it. He's not a bad guy. He's already told me that he's really sorry. And that will never do it again. And they said, well, has any of this ever happened before? Yeah, he broke my nose once and he broke my other arm. And he doesn't mean it is actually a really good man. And he just kind of loses his temper every once in a while. But he's always really sorry afterwards. And I thought to myself, I think I just landed on another planet, because I was so not able to understand how this woman could possibly justify that kind of behavior. I just couldn't, I just couldn't, you know, so I said to her, Well, I know you're living at the shelter right now. What are you going to do when your time is over? He said, "What are you talking about? I'm going home. I said, you're going back to the man that did this to you? Yeah, of course. He's the father of my children. And he's not a bad guy. He didn't mean it. And I could see that she was very, very uncomfortable with the questions that I was asking her. And the reason that she was so uncomfortable was because I didn't understand. And she could tell I did not understand that her rescue Fantasy was so extreme. That could she could be used as a as a, as a punching bag. Right and almost be killed in order to keep her husband loving her. And I felt so badly afterwards, because I said, Well, you know, would you like to make another appointment? She said, No. And I thought to myself, afterwards, I thought, Jesus, Dana, you really messed up in this one big time. Because you were so busy with your own notions of how people should live and didn't really understand this person's reality, that of course, she wouldn't come back and see you. Because it didn't, you know, in my world, people don't beat the crap out of each other in the name of love. In her world, it was completely normal. So it really depends a lot on, you know, how you come into this world. Her parents beat the crap out of her. So why wouldn't her husband? That's love, if that makes sense.

Kim Fauskee 48:24

Makes it makes total sense, unfortunately.

48:27

Yeah. And it's really sad, because it's a rather extreme situation. But I learned a lot from that situation. Have you

Kim Fauskee 48:35

seen with any of the clients that you've worked with a successful transition from a rescue fantasy to a normal relationship ever tons?

48:46

Oh, absolutely. It happens all the time. Because I think once you realize that, that template that you've been living your whole life is an antiquated survival technique that you came up with as a child, and that you're really not endangered anymore. And you really don't need to live in the world, making sure that everybody around you is not going to hurt you. That's step one is to really understand that things have changed even though you haven't changed the way you look at things. And then if you can deal with the trauma that that created this insane, you know, insatiable desire to rescue people and, and to manage their pain and to let people be responsible for it, then those people no longer show up in your life in the form of romantic partners.

Kim Fauskee 49:34

So those are not I'm talking about also people that remained in a relationship with that person that they thought they were rescuing or wanted to rescue or so they were able to stay within that relationship. I get it from a standpoint that they've realized what they were doing and, and had more tools now in their toolbox to kind of avoid that in future relationships. But how about somebody that actually loves that person finally understands that what they've been doing in this relationship wants it to evolve in a different way. Is that possible? Because and I'm guessing if the other person on the receiving end of it isn't a narcissist, or a victim,

50:21

you just answered your own question, okay? If that's if they're married to somebody, or in a relationship with somebody who has a personality disorder, that relationship always comes to an end. If the person is not damaged that severely that they're trying to rescue, oftentimes, when the person that's the rescuer starts working on their stuff, it opens the door for the other person to start taking their own pain more seriously, and start working on their own stuff. And then people sort of grow together. But the saddest thing about being a therapist sometimes is that one person starts to really change and take really good care of themselves, and the other person is not interested or is too afraid. And it does mess up relationships. Sometimes I have to be really honest, I've had partners occasionally say to me, you know, you've ruined my life, my wife or my husband used to be so much easier to deal with. Now, all they do is challenge me and fight with me. And it's, you know, and they won't take my crap anymore. And they may not say it exactly like that. But that's really what they're saying. Because they enjoyed being in control and enjoyed running the show. And that's sad, but I'm not going to not work with somebody and not try to help them become stronger just because their partner doesn't like it. Because their partners are free to get the help they need also.

Kim Fauskee 51:38

So So what brings them in what brings them in to see you I mean is it is it to the point where the person would the rescue fantasy is kind of hit their limit and the relationship isn't working the way they thought and there, they thought they thrown in the kitchen sink in everything to it and their wit's end and the other person is not responding is that what brings them into you?

52:04

Sometimes it depends on the situation. Camino, most people when they're desperate. Sometimes they do really self destructive things in the name of that desperation, like having an affair or doing something.

Kim Fauskee 52:16

So there's symptoms and things that happen because of that behavior. And

52:20

it's very rare for somebody to people, for someone to come in and say to me, I have a rescue fantasy. I was

Kim Fauskee 52:26

watching a Disney movie, and I really related to that knight in shining armor. For some reason,

52:31

Usually, there's a symptom or symptoms, or the relationship starts to disintegrate, or the person is super lonely, or they start feeling tempted to go outside the marriage, but have enough either discipline or common sense to realize that just makes things so much worse. But, you know, nobody comes to see me because their life is going swimmingly, well, they come to see me because they're in pain. And generally speaking, they're referred by a satisfied customer. So they sort of have a general idea of what to expect, in terms of how I work.

Kim Fauskee 53:06

Any idea and the percentage of relationships that involve this scenario at all?

53:11

Rescue fantasy is my experience. Because we're not taught of Well, first of all, is men. Are we taught to be present to the women in our lives emotionally? Are we taught to fix their problem? Well, we're taught to fix the problems. Exactly. And so when a man isn't able to fix their wives, or husbands the case, right, if they can't fix the problem, they also start to feel really inadequate. And, like, they're not real man. And you know, my responses put you in charge of being Mr. Fixit, man, all that does is give the other person the message that they are not capable, capable of taking care of themselves. That's really disrespectful. And some men get it. And some men don't know what the hell to do with themselves, because they don't know what to be if they're not rescuing a woman, or at least trying to solve all the problems. And my response is, well, can't you just be present to her and let her know how much you care about her and how sad you are? That whatever it is that she's dealing with is, you know, overwhelming sometimes. And you know, a lot of people say to me, what could the zakah do? Because it's not part of the idea that you're going to fix the other person.

Kim Fauskee 54:20

So I'm also assuming that an equal percentage or even maybe a greater percentage of people in relationships, get into them, thinking that the other person is going to change?

54:30

Oh, absolutely. It is the most common sad situation that it's so easy to convince yourself that what's right in front of you is not there or is there but it's not but flexible and going to change just out of the goodness of your heart, if that makes sense. And it doesn't change.

Kim Fauskee 54:54

So again, going back to the premise of intuition and faith, we're talking about relationships. And we will be talking about relationships for the next number of podcasts. And we've talked about rescue fantasy, and we've talked about getting into relationships where we're hoping somebody would change or they're hoping we would change and, and we know what the divorce rate in the breakup rate is in this culture. Where's the hope for us that are either in relationships and want them to continue to, to evolve, or some of us that aren't in relationships, looking for the unicorn out there? That, you know, like we've talked about, you know, everybody think? Well, I already know this. They know inside, whether their conscience overrides their intuition. They know what they want in a relationship. I think everybody we're humans, we all know. So to a certain degree, but we let society let our conscience lead everything else. We let friends, we let parents chime in to tell us why we should think differently about it. Yes. Because

56:02

if you're lonely, your friends are going to be scared about your loneliness. So they're going to try to convince you to compromise. So they don't have to be scared about your loneliness. So

Kim Fauskee 56:11

how do you find a healthy relationship? Or how do you curate a healthy relationship?

56:17

Well, in my mind, use your intuition when you're getting involved in the first place. And if you get a feeling that there's something fundamentally not okay about the relationship, do not engage in some kind of magical solution. You got to talk to the person that you're in the relationship with and tell them what you're concerned about. And ask them whether they're aware of whatever it is that's getting in the way. And if you can't solve it yourself, get professional help, to resolve whatever the issues are. I think that if it was required to do premarital counseling, that half of the divorces wouldn't happen, because people will realize they're making a big mistake getting married to this person in the first place.

Kim Fauskee 56:57

So I talked to a number of friends and a number of acquaintances says, Oh, I can't mention that to my wife or my partner. Right? Because they're, I mean, they walk on eggshells, right. And I said, who was the basis of a relationship and said, so you have a crack foundation? How well is that house gonna stand up on that crack Foundation, if you can't talk to your own partner, about the things within your relationship? And most people tell me, they can't do it.

57:24

And I understand or won't do it? Well, I understand that they're afraid. And you and I, again, talk a lot about fear. And what are you going to do with your fear? Or you could just going to pull away from the thing that you're afraid of? Or are you going to find a way to have the courage to deal with it in a healthy way, so that you don't continue to screw up your life and your children and, and you know, your

relationship with your partner and everything, it's a matter of courage, and nobody gets a life without paying you and I know that exquisitely. And if you have this idea that you get into a relationship, and it doesn't require any work. And if there's a problem, that means that there's a problem with the relationship, what are the relationships are you in, where you don't have to work to make it work, when you go to work, you don't just sit there, you work really hard, or whatever it is that the problems are, that you're supposed to solve in your job. And you don't think there's something wrong because you have to solve problems. So why is the relationship supposed to just float along on its own, and you know, just low Ever After without any having to do any work to make it work? That's insane. Just put it on autopilot. Just like the car. Well, that's once again, the magical thinking that we have and so we live in a very disposable society. Right? When I was a little kid, there was a washer repairman and TV repairman. All kinds of repair people result in FIX IT people. Yeah, they don't, they don't exist anymore. Because everything is designed to be thrown away once it breaks or becomes obsolete. Yeah. And that's how we look at relationships now that you don't try to fix it, you throw it in the garbage can to find another person because you fantasize it is going to be better than the last one.

Kim Fauskee 58:56

And how does the grass greener? On the other side analogy work? Well, it works

58:59

for about six months, I will say that you get a good six months of distraction. And then once you wake up and realize that you're the same person you were, and you're with a different version of the same person, rinse it rinse and repeat. Yeah, exactly. Because evolution is always happening. And if you don't pay attention to what it is that is coming to you to help you heal, you're just going to repeat the same problem over and over and over again, that I can promise you, because that's what I see all the time. And it usually takes about two or three cycles before people take it seriously enough to realize that maybe the problem is not so external. Maybe it's how you feel about yourself. That's the real problem. And maybe the things that go wrong in your life have to do with you not taking proper care of yourself, and not being true to yourself and not really listening to what your insides are telling you. Because when people start to do that things change fundamentally in their lives.

Kim Fauskee 59:52

Yeah, there is a common denominator to all of our problems and it's usually yourself. Right. So I think yeah, I think this is a good place to end this discussion because I was going to actually lead us there to this this conscious introspection piece. But I think you summed it up appropriately by, you know, you have to look at yourself first before you look everywhere else.

1:00:12

I am the most biased person in the world in favor of people examining who they are, and where they come from, and what they need to do in order to feel a sense of well being, instead of using magic to solve their problems.

Kim Fauskee 1:00:25

Well, we're going to talk a lot more about relationships. We'll have a few more guests in as well. So this discussion to be continued. So thanks, Dana. Good information. Thanks, Jim.

Fear Me Out 1:00:38

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