

Fear Me Out Podcast

Episode 12

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Dana Saperstein - Self-Help

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 00:55

Here we are again, on this episode, Dana and I discussed the difference between self help and self culture. While one can become toxic, the other can produce lifetime results that can lead to a life of greater fulfillment, and self actualization, which according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is the highest level of psychological development. So please join us in the next hour as we discuss the importance of self culture. So I'm going to start off by saying that whatever gets you up in the morning, it makes you a semi productive, and semi content person in the morning, I'm all behind. But I want to see a raise of hands right now of how many of you have one or more self help books in your home? Don't worry, nobody's watching, nobody can see you. But I can see the hands rising right now. And then, let me see a show of hands of how many people will use yellow markers, and pens, to underline passages in the self help books. So today, we're going to talk a little bit about the concept of self help versus self culture. Self culture is a term that I think was came about in the 1840s by an author named Margaret Fuller, if I remember my history, well, and it's a term that talks about the development of one's mind or capabilities through one's own efforts. So it's a concept that Dan and I have been discussing. And in talking about, especially since Self Help is a an \$11 billion business in the United States, it grows exponentially every year. Six out of 10 Americans utilize some form of self help, augmentation in their lives. And sometimes it can create a toxic environment for those that become addicted to it. So anyway, that's what we're going to start today. And so Dana, talk about a little bit about your knowledge of self help industry.

Dr. Dana 03:22

Well, my experience as a psychologist is that probably most of the people that have come to see me over the course of 30, some odd years have, you know, delved into whatever it is that they feel has contributed to their suffering. There's tons and tons of books about affirmations, there's tons of books about depression, there's tons of books about just about any topic that you can imagine. Now, I think that some of them can be useful for informational purposes. But that's really different than being useful for healing purposes. And I think we all need to start off by getting an education about what it is that you know, could be ailing us. But the problem is that most of the self help books have a cookbook approach. And they, you know, prescribe certain things to do or not to do, and those things are supposedly enough to, you know, heal your pain and make your life more complete and more satisfying.

Kim Fauskee 04:27

And that's why I call Self Help Help Yourself, right. Because it's a smorgasbord of information. So pick a little here, pick a little there. Right? Right and without, you know, having the nuance for yourself. It's looking to me, it's looking externally for the answer.

Dr. Dana 04:46

Well, and I think that that's the probably the most dangerous, insidious part of self help industry is that it teaches people to look to the outside to solve their problems, it kind of conditions you that if you do certain exercises or you try to change this or do that, that is going to have a lasting profound effect on the way that you feel about yourself. Now I will, if I can be sarcastic for a moment, say that the self, that self help books are extremely useful for the writer of the book, because they produce an enormous amount of income. And so the you know, self help books do serve a really wonderful purpose for people that are successful in that industry,

Kim Fauskee 05:31

hence, why it's an \$11 billion industry that grows exponentially every year, right. And the United States being the major mass consumer of self help in the world,

Dr. Dana 05:41

right. Now, I'm not going to tell you that I haven't suggested reading material for some of my clients who have said to me, Well, are there books that I could read about what you and I have talked about. And as a supplement, sometimes to, like, say, working on trauma, as example, I've said to people, you know, there's an endless number of articles on the internet as an example, that really describe what post traumatic stress is, and, and how it affects a person's life and, and all the different types of post traumatic stress and all that. And, you know, people have said to me, when they read those articles, it confirms what they're learning and what they're learning here, which is valuable. But I don't encourage people to necessarily find exercises they can do, or ways of trying to manage their symptoms by using those books. It's really, truly just put in context, the nature of your suffering.

Kim Fauskee 06:39

Do you think, with that being said, Do you think that it creates unrealistic expectations?

Dr. Dana 06:46

Well, I think it creates the illusion that most problems can be solved intellectually, that creates an unrealistic expectation for most people. So the answer, I would say this, yeah, I think that they can be harmful in that regard. Because I mean, I've known people that have read hundreds of those books. And they become extremely insightful about who they are. But it hasn't changed anything about how they feel about themselves, or how they live in the world. So in that way, it's costing them a ton of money. And then most people feel like, well, I did all this stuff, and they don't feel any better. So what's, again, what's wrong with me?

Kim Fauskee 07:24

Do you also feel that a reinforces the notion that you're not good enough?

Dr. Dana 07:29

Well, yes, because a lot of the books are again, as you and I've talked about, you know, they're based on agreeing with you that there's something wrong with you. And, you know, you and I disdain, the notion that you're suffering is because there's something wrong with you. Now, I do understand that some people have chemical imbalances, and so on and so forth. And, you know, those are legitimate concerns, that you still have to sort of look at yourself as being deficient, just because your biology may be your brain chemistry might be off in a certain way.

Kim Fauskee 08:06

How about the context that it also creates avoidance?

Dr. Dana 08:11

Well, it can certainly give you the idea that you're doing something to change your life, which in concept, again, is a really lovely thing. But, I mean, let's talk about depression, just for a brief moment. Most people feel like a failure when they come to see me and they're depressed. And the reason they feel like they're a failure is because they have not been able to use their willpower, their intellect to overcome the symptoms of depression.

Kim Fauskee 08:40

I've tried that, yes, for

Dr. Dana 08:42

most people have, because, you know, we all would like to take responsibility for, you know, for our suffering and do what we can to, to ameliorate it. But, um,

Kim Fauskee 08:51

and I even tried it knowing what was going on, right, it doesn't

Dr. Dana 08:55

work, because it doesn't work. You know, all it does is make you feel even worse than you do. Because, I mean, really, truly, the last time that willpower work to cure depression was never, it's just, it's just not the treatment of choice. For that kind of subtle, it's not it's not a treatment at all. Um, but if you read the books, there's all these recipes for, you know, for how you can treat the depression and

you just have to look deep to kind of do your affirmations, you got to do this, you can't go to stop doing that, you know, you got to change the way you think you got all of these different things that I guess they can be helpful, but not in the absence of really understanding and and dealing with the feelings that are creating the depression in the first place or the chemical imbalance that could be contributing to it.

Kim Fauskee 09:44

So it continues to be a growing industry. Absolutely. People don't have any shortage of problems. That is true. So why wouldn't we try to be proponents of this new kind of concept because it's not a familiar concept to people it's not a popular concept of self culture so called the ovation. Why are people turning that way?

Dr. Dana 10:18

You know, Kim, if you make a devotion to your, to your, to what you call self culture, it takes you from focusing on the outside to really having a deep look at yourself on the inside the avoidance, I think it's one of the scariest things that a person could ever do. I tell people all the time that they're my heroes, the people that come to see me and are willing to work on their problems on a deep level, and they look at me like, why would I be your hero, I'm a mess. And my response is, because you may have symptoms that are, you know, debilitating, and you're really struggling. But the approach that you're taking to heal yourself takes so much courage, because of the stead of externalizing your problems and trying to, you know, figure out who's to blame and so on and so forth. You're doing everything that you can to try to heal, the shame that you have feelings of self hate that you have, you know, all the ways, the fear that debilitate you, all those different qualities to me represented and here, you know, working on those things represent an heroic effort to, to make your world a different place. So when you turned me on to the concept of self culture, I thought, you know, it's about time that we really understood and had a name for really important movement that you and I are going to do our best to try to promote which is read all the books kept, beget, you know, become educated, if that feels like it will help you. But that's not the end of that's the beginning of your healing process. And make sure that you realize that you got to go deep inside yourself in order to truly change the way that you live in the world.

Kim Fauskee 12:07

We've talked about this in previous episodes, and, you know, I wouldn't be sitting here, having a podcast, co authoring a book with you, or living the life that I'm living without doing that right without turning the mirror in my face. And I'd be a hypocrite to say that, that I didn't buy into the self health movement. At some point in my life, I probably had 678 books. And probably every current book that had been either recommended or or came on the bestseller list and, and reading through them. I don't know if anything ever. I don't think I've ever had an epiphany about it, but it did, you know, at least get me enthused enough to want to take the next step forward. But that was that but that was the problem, right? The next step was to the next book, right, the next step forward was to listening to a guy on the internet or listening to one of the self help gurus on there. But nothing for me was ever sustainable Intel, I sat in my shit, right, for a long period of time. And finally figured out after five decades, for decades, whatever it was, who I really was, and why I felt the way that I did why I reacted to things that way I did. Why made mistakes in my life that I did, why I attracted people into my life that I did, and how I saw my

life, and how I felt my life going forward. So no book and no book was ever going to teach me that no seminar was ever going to teach me that no spiritual or self help guru was ever going to teach me that.

Dr. Dana 14:09

Well, but I think that part of what taught you all of that was along with yourself to feel the depth of the feelings that most of us manage on an unconscious level that we're not aware of. And so much of our energy goes into, you know, repressing the sadness and the despair and the loneliness and the, and the shame and the self doubts that, you know, we were hoping would go away if we just read a book and change the way we look at the world. Well,

Kim Fauskee 14:35

we look at I think we look at is Let's shove down our feelings a little bit further, right? They're starting to come to the surface faster. We read something else because now we're uncomfortable, right? Right. And so that's something else shoves those feelings back down, but ultimately, they're going to keep wanting to come back out because you're not dealing with it.

Dr. Dana 14:54

Right. You know, about 20 years ago, there was a book called The courage to heal. Love You have ever

Kim Fauskee 15:00

heard of that book that have a yellow cover to it,

Dr. Dana 15:03

you know, I can't remember. But the purpose of that book was to help mostly women deal with being sexually abused in the course of their life. And the first half of the book was descriptions of all the different experiences that women were brave enough to share about their sexual abuse, and, and all the different ways that it created behaviors that people would not often associate with being abused. The seven second half of the book was a workbook where you were supposed to sort of go through all these exercises in order to heal the trauma. I recommended the book to a lot of people. And the funny thing is, when people started reading the first half of the book, I would say about 25% of the people that bought the book lost it. They couldn't find it, it disappeared. And I thought that was really incredibly fascinating. Because what that told me was that reading about yourself in a book, in really graphic detail, creates a lot of anxiety. And so people would misplace the book twice and never want to see it. That's right. So I know, I can't tell you how many multiple copies of that book that people had to buy in order to get through the first half. I don't know anybody that lost the book, by doing the exercises in the second half of the book. So I would tell people, you know, if you want to do the exercises, more power to you, but really, the first half of the book is the one that's going to sort of help you the most, because it's not a self help book, it's a book that's going to help you recognize that you're not alone in the world. And that your suffering is, is shared by so many other people that have had the same experience that you've had. And that reading, it will stimulate a lot of feelings inside of you, that then you and I can work on. And in the context of doing the work in healing trauma.

Kim Fauskee 17:01

It's interesting that that self help is pretty much a contradiction in its own because it's supposed to be meant to enhance oneself, not to replace oneself. Right, right, which is what the industry has become. Why are people so addicted to self up? Why is the American culture, the American population, like I had said in the beginning of the episode, it's they say now six out of 10, seven out of 10 households have utilized some form of self help and in terms of videos or or memberships, or, or books, etc.

Dr. Dana 17:40

Well, I think that it simply simplifies things that are quite complicated. And I think as Americans, and I mean, no offense to any of us, because I'm, I'm lazy a bit myself, we are sitting in America, right? That's right, that it appeals to a lot of us to take a

Kim Fauskee 17:58

shortcut. It's the magic pill,

Dr. Dana 18:00

yeah, make it you know, to take care of things as quickly as possible. It's like the difference between fast food and, and going to a restaurant. You know, fast food is going to fill you up really quickly, cheaply, and cheaply. And it's going to fill you up in a way that actually is harmful to you. Not that going to a restaurant can be one philosophy but generally speaking, when you go to a restaurant, there's a slightly higher quality Yeah, maybe not quite as much fat and salt foods probably cooked. Right and plus, you know, when you go to a restaurant, generally speaking, you're eating more slowly in your, in your, in your enjoying the experience, you're enjoying the experience and interacting with other people to fill your up with yourself up with fast food. Yeah, it's gonna fill your belly and you're gonna feel full. And then usually Trappy a couple hours later, because it's empty calories, it's not a lot to it that's going to enhance your life in any way.

Kim Fauskee 18:55

So we probably have a lot of listeners right now that are maybe saying screw you. Sure. Maybe not happy with what we're saying here. So we talked about in the first you know, 20 minutes here we've talked about Americans being addicted to self help and I've called out those in our audience that have more than one self help book and take out a highlighter and a pen and underline passages and so on and so forth. And I asked you how sustainable that is. And it isn't that we know that and not being a hypocrite because I've bought into it until I've figured it out myself by doing the work. How do we get the naysayers out there to get people that are like, Oh, that's an interesting concept. How do we flip that and get them addicted to the self cultivation, self culture, part of it and away from leaning into the Best New York Times bestseller are that of this week or the newest, greatest spiritual guru meme that's on Instagram, and proliferating that versus sitting down and taking a look at yourself for the first time in your life?

Dr. Dana 20:15

Well, I think that the term self help is very self explanatory. I mean, it doesn't take a genius to figure out what self health means.

Kim Fauskee 20:24

Except, again, we talked about it being a contradiction than what it really is.

Dr. Dana 20:28

Yes. So I guess what I would love to ask you to do in answering this question is to go into some depth about what self culture looks like. Because part of what you and I need to do is to help people understand what the alternative is, what it means, what it looks like, and what and and, you know, sort of what it's all about, and what it is that you're dedicating yourself to. Just because you and I, you know, love the idea and think it's really useful. In order for it. Didn't I just explain it in two sentences? Yeah, but I think I think more depth would be useful. I'm sorry, Kim, you know, I

Kim Fauskee 21:01

was being facetious, okay, yes. Well, I mean, I have my own interpretation of it, right. And, to simplify it, it's, for me, it was keeping my eyes on my own paper, right, for a significant period of time, I wasn't, I didn't want to have those outside distractions anymore. It was like, okay, if I'm going to figure this out, I'm going to figure out who I am finally, in my life, why I feel the way I do, why I react to the way I do, I have to limit the outside distraction, and, and keep my eyes on my own paper, right? And then go through that exercise of feeling what I feel, you know, the anger, the grief, the sadness, and really work through those things. And I know, we talked about this in the self exploration episode. after about a couple of weeks, two to three weeks of doing that, I like, Okay, this isn't gonna work. This is so uncomfortable. You know, I'm crying every day, I'm angry every day. You know, I don't feel any different. And it's been three weeks already. So, man, you know, and again, buying into that magic pill like, Well, should be able to, I think, isn't there a premise out there that if you change some behavior for 30 days, then it becomes a permanent behavior. So it's up upon that 30 day thing that, you know, I'm thinking, well, nothing, I don't feel any different. You know, I don't think I have any tears left. You know, I've been angry, and so on and so forth. But again, I think what helped is I had an accountability partner as well. That kind of helped me to get through the process. And I'm not talking about embracing me, but embracing me in a hypothetical way, but, but saying, if you quit now, you're going to be back here a year later, you're going to be back here two years later, whatever, you're already a month into the process, you got to continue on. And I'm not sure because it's been, it's been a handful plus years now, since I've done that, I don't know, kind of where I turned the corner and went to the other side, there was a point there where I started seeing things more clearly, in the feelings that I that I were having, I could readily identify with. And then you know, became it became practice in my my regular life, right of being cognizant and aware of those emotions, those feelings that I was having, listening to my intuition, which is obviously the big thing that you and I talk about, and, and having faith in myself having faith in life, that everything was going to be okay, in. A family member just asked me this recently. Well, how do you know that you're just not going to fall back into that same pattern again? Well, I don't, right, there's there are no guarantees in life. And there have been times that I've caught myself falling back into those patterns. But it happened so fast now that I realized that and again, it's an it's an intuition or that feeling, it's like okay, there's uncomfortable feelings coming up again. Oh, I know why now. And so, it's led me to to, again, this is going to sound like a cliché, but it's led me to really understanding who I am finally, and living a life that I probably should have been living 2030 years ago, in that way, and you know, can't can't go back water under the bridge at this point, and I'm glad that I got there. And then I'm able to go forward this way. And it's not one of these things like we were talking about that, you know, you can read a book, or you can send your shit for three months, come out the other side. It's, it's, it's a

constant effort, right? Yeah, it gets easier, because you start realizing you're cognizant of those things, you immediately see red flags of where you, you know, you walked before, and you don't you don't walk again. But you know, it is one of the things that you have to be constantly working on and constantly cognizant of, to have it continue to work in your life. You know, Kim, you that's, that's a really long explanation. And everybody's gonna go, I'm not going to do that.

Dr. Dana 25:50

Well, one of the points that you're making is the difference between a recipe that's going to come to a conclusion and a lifelong practice.

Kim Fauskee 26:01

Yeah, and I guess in your right, and that's good clarification, because somebody always asked me what you know, the difference between a perfectionist and a high achiever as a perfectionist as a finish line, and a high achiever keeps checking themselves along the way, right. So this is a more of a high achiever type thing, that it's a journey that doesn't really have a finish line, right? It's going to morph over time, there's going to be some, you know, turns in the road, there's going to be some obstacles in the road, but you're going to be able to handle them better, and you're going to be able to see them further away, they're going to be a lot clearer and your rationale is going to be different than any other time in your life.

Dr. Dana 26:41

You know, again, the idea that you get to a certain point where you don't have to keep working on yourself, is something that I believe is promoted really strongly in the self help movement, that there's a conclusion to whatever it is that that you bought the book for, you get to the end of the book, he gets to the end of that problem,

Kim Fauskee 27:03

isn't there only one finish line in life?

Dr. Dana 27:06

I'm assuming

Kim Fauskee 27:08

we don't know that yet.

Dr. Dana 27:10

But what I'm, what I'm getting at is this idea that what if it turns out that if you have enough food and shelter, to not have to worry about where you're going to sleep tonight, and what you're going to have for dinner, that there is a force that in the universe that's going to propel you toward evolving to a higher place, both spiritually and emotionally. And that you're really a lucky person, if you have the opportunity to sort of allow that force to become a part of your life, that forces them go away, and you don't come to a conclusion, until like you say, until you die, and we don't even know if it ends at that point. But you know, the only point that we need to worry about for our purposes is that if it turns out that you know, that the process of healing yourself and knowing yourself is a lifelong journey. And it's not about trying

to figure out what's wrong with you, but trying to enter each stage of life with as much sort of enthusiasm and, and the creation of joy and the dealing with the hardships in life as possible.

Kim Fauskee 28:20

And I think you make a very good differentiation there about not being What's wrong with you. And I never really did look at it early on that way. But I kind of changed that context to I really want to know myself. Because the way I know myself doesn't feel right. So I'm living and I was living a lie, but I was living a bit in a haze.

Dr. Dana 28:47

Well, I mean, think about what it is you've had to cope with in the course of your life. Right? You started experiencing post traumatic stress at a very, very young age by, you know, being adopted into a family where your father didn't want you. And he showed you that in almost every way possible, and that your mother may have been excited to receive you, but she should enact, like you mattered to her after a certain point. And so for the beginning of your life, it wasn't about necessarily growing and thriving. It was about surviving.

Kim Fauskee 29:19

And surviving. It was surviving then existing. Absolutely.

Dr. Dana 29:22

So everything gets tucked away inside your body. It doesn't go away. And so, you know, part of what you and I are advocating is like a volcano. Yeah, in the self culture movement is to recognize that you're the accumulation of everything that's happened to you. It doesn't matter. You know how many years ago it was there. I mean, I met a guy once who was in his mid 80s. And he came to see me because he was traveling in a Volkswagen van on the freeway. And it was late at night and there was nobody around and somebody cut them off and the van flipped upside down into the bush. was and nobody saw it happen. And so he was in his car and became invisible because it fell down a bit of a color. So nobody knew what happened to him. So for three or four days, he was hanging upside down in his Volkswagen. And then finally, somebody noticed the paramedics came, and when they arrived, and they found him upside down almost dead in his bus, not from physical injuries, because he wasn't really harmed physically. But what happened to him was that he went back to World War Two, in his mind, and as soon as they took him out of the quarry started saying, How are my guys? How are my guys, and the paramedics were really confused, they didn't know what he was talking about, they looked all around the van, and they couldn't find anybody. And so they took this guy to the local hospital. And he spent four days sort of hallucinating about all of the post traumatic stress experiences he had in World War Two that he'd never talked to anybody about. And this was 60 years. Prior to this accident, it turned out that he was one of those gunners at the bottom of a bomber, you know that that would sit in the glass turret with machine guns, right. And they would leave England and fly over to Germany, and they drop bombs, and there was nothing to protect them except glass. That was, you know, so every moment of his life on those bombing runs was, in his mind, the last moment that he was going to be alive. But what I didn't understand is that every time those planes flew back to England, half of them actually crashed, landed onto the runway, because they weren't designed properly, the landing gear didn't go down, they were brought into production so quickly because of the war, that the landing

gear didn't work. So more people died actually from landing on the runway back in London than did in the bombing runs. And so he said, I got to the point where I just stopped introducing myself to any of the crew on the airplane. And I just pretended like I was in another world. And that's how I survived all of these people dying, you know, for years until I came back to the United States. And I never told anybody about it. We never spoke about the war during that period of time, all I did was drink myself into oblivion, and I spent the next 60 years living my life and only when I got in that car accident that I realized that that I was on was 60 some odd years ago, and to deal with the post traumatic stress, and he went on to live the rest of his life and, and he was fine. And I bring this up to say that, that you know, the things that happened to us, they don't disappear, no matter how much time goes by. And they have a lifelong effect on us. And so I figure, why wait until you're in your 80s most of your life is over. You know, all this stuff happened to him when he was in his young 20s?

Kim Fauskee 32:56

Or that you have to have a horrific event happened in your life to get that epiphany. Right. Right. You know, what, when's a better time? Yeah. Now,

Dr. Dana 33:07

he said to me, the last meeting we had, I'm so sorry that I didn't get to know you, you know, six years ago. And so, you know, at that time it was in life. I couldn't help them, man. But that's, you know, certainly help was available.

Kim Fauskee 33:25

How about this, the notion that we can be anything we want to be I mean, that that kind of goes part and parcel with this, this help self help. Movement of, well, you don't have you don't have to be this person you can be, you can be anybody you want to be? That's great. Because I would like to be a six foot nine, our Ford in the NBA. Well, you're pretty tall. But but that but that, but that's not gonna, that's not going to happen. No, right? Not everybody in this world is cut out to be an entrepreneur, not everybody is going to be cut out to be a neurosurgeon. Not everybody is going to be cut out to be a gifted psychologist in this world, and, and I think one of the things that I had to come to a realization about, because I was always chasing the money, I was always chasing this success, because that's what not only I was taught, you know, by my parents, but society taught me that as well that I was as a man, that's, that's what you do if I wanted to keep up with the Joneses, keep up with my friends, and so on and so forth as needed to do until I finally realized that that what I needed to do was navigate around my own capabilities, right and enhanced those capabilities. And I think we've gotten so far off the mark, in our mindsets that we're so influenced that we should be or could be somebody else, we totally go away from navigating within ourselves.

Dr. Dana 35:10

Well, isn't that what the self-culture movement is all about is shifting away from this fantasy that if we just work hard enough, we can become a different person. Exactly. Because in my mind, people don't become really all that different as a result of doing deep psychotherapy, or almost anything. I think that what you what you can do is change the way you feel about yourself, change how you look at yourself, learn what your capacities are, learn what your gifts are, and focus on the, the good parts of yourself and understand that you're going to have some imperfections and that there ever, nobody gets a life

without pain. And this notion that you can live a happy, pain free life is absurd. And that, really, the whole idea is to learn how to become more in tune with who you are, like you say, start off by understanding how you feel and becoming really in tune with your feelings. And then understand that one of the most important parts of your existence is your intuition. And that that's going to lead you in so many different ways. If you're willing to embrace it, it's not just about dealing with hardship, it's also finding the creative outlets and the love that's, you know, potentially there for you in terms of friendships and romantic love and, and career path. All kinds of stuff can come from developing that intuition. If all your energy is going into coping with your trauma, it leaves you very little energy to focus on your intuition in a way that you can hear it very clearly. And it's going to guide you with this much. Emphasis and, and sort of certainty as we'd all would like so that it makes it easy to trust. So, you know, that's, that's one of the other reasons why it's so important to, you know, that idea of self culture, focus on your own internal culture, the things that have shaped you and, and affected not just who you are, from an experiential standpoint, but I think it's all important for us to understand who we are from a genetic genetic standpoint, when you learn that you're an empath. That's not because you were raised to be an empath, you were born an empath. And nobody tells you what your level of sensitivity and emotional depth of feeling is, when you're born, you don't get a measure of that we measure you know, your height and your weight. And, and as you develop, we measure your IQ and your capacity and all kinds of performance oriented ways. But as a kid who told anybody tell you how sensitive you are, other than to shame before to make you feel like, you know, there was something really wrong with you. Well, we're

Kim Fauskee 37:53

We live in a society of human doers, not human beings anymore. Right? So we've, we've lost that ability about self. Right? Right, we need to bring in and again, why we're having this discussion today is bringing it back to self heal, and not self help. But self cultivation. Right. And again, I want to make the point that I wasn't living or navigating within yourself, doesn't mean you can't grow, right? And not saying that we're limited by our capabilities, and that we have a ceiling in those and they can't grow beyond that ceiling. And I kind of liken it to you know, going back to athletics, when when your mind tells you is telling you to quit, like if you're out running, it's telling you to quit, I'm tired, you need to stop, your body has 30% more in it when your mind is telling you to quit. Okay. And so I operate from that premise that when I'm thinking that I've reached my ceiling, there's probably 30% More within that capability factor that I have within myself, right that I've that I've used, like, our title of our show, fear me out, I've used fear, to keep me from growing, for whatever reason, they're right and not listening to my intuition. But I but again, I want to make that point that if you continue to operate within your own capabilities, and know what the outside world is telling you, there's still growth that can happen within your own capabilities. You're not stifling yourself, just because oh my god, I didn't get what he had, or she had or whatever, I still can grow within those capabilities, if that makes sense,

Dr. Dana 39:36

right. You know, to tease our listeners for a brief moment, we have some episodes coming up with some really remarkable people that have embraced her intuition in ways that are pretty much unimaginable. And their lives have turned out to be quite remarkable in terms of the things that have come to them as a result of being so married to their, to that deep connection with inside themselves.

Kim Fauskee 40:06

Is it part of it? Again, we're not getting off point because it's part of this. Do you educate your clients' clients on it by listening to their intuition? Is that part of and again, not talking about a cookie cutter methodology that it applies to every one of your clients? But I mean, is that one of the tools that you try to provide them?

Dr. Dana 40:31

Well, I would say that it is a primary tool, because people tell me all the time that they feel confused, and they don't know what to do. And part of what I tried to help the person realize is that it's very rare to be confused. It's really common to be afraid. And when you feel frightened, it creates a feeling of confusion. So part of what I try to help people recognize this that number one, you got to recognize how much fear is interfering with whatever it is that you're trying to come to terms with. And once you can really feel that fear, it's a little bit easier to get past it and understand that you've always known what you wanted to do or not do or whatever the situation warrants. And so I do it all the time. I tell people, I'm sorry. You know, sometimes I teach people and say, it's, I'm sorry, but you know exactly what you want to do. You already told me what you want to do. And you didn't even realize you told me because it was all wrapped up in the reasons why it's not going to work. And, and you know why? All the different excuses people make when they're really afraid. So yeah, do you know the concept of fear to you and is very dear. And fear is not the issue. It's teaching people all of us to recognize its existence, and then make some choices about how you want to proceed from there

Kim Fauskee 41:53

rational choices from

Dr. Dana 41:55

whether it's rational or irrational, I mean, you know, sometimes the fear can seem like it's irrational. But I would say that most of us are not, like, crazy. So there is really good reason for the fear to be there. That doesn't mean it has to stop you from doing what you want to do. Right? When your body tells you to stop running, it's because your body's saying, I'm afraid if we keep doing this harm is going to come. And then you have to decide whether that whether you're feeling that harm, or whether like when the light comes on in your gas tank to tell you that there's not enough gas left, that you have a certain amount of fuel left to get to the gas station, it's about liking you go a mile, that's probably a better metaphor. Right? Right. And it's a little scary, because we're you know, as soon as light comes on this Oh, Where's where's the, you know, where's the first gas station, I can find when you know, generally speaking, there's at least 40 miles left.

Kim Fauskee 42:58

So wait, you don't drive on that for two or three days, like I do? No, I wouldn't do two or

Dr. Dana 43:02

three days, because unless you enjoy running out of gas, but it does give you enough time to recognize that the car was built in a way to protect you. And there's no panic, but there is a certain urgency.

Kim Fauskee 43:19

I want to circle back a little bit because I gave my own interpretation of sitting in my shit. And how my own journey got me to the place I am today. And maybe you have a different take or a different theory on what I was talking about there. So I think people are maybe thinking maybe I'm just assuming here thinking boy, that's a difficult thing for many people to take on. I don't know if I have three months that I can dedicate this to or but I want you to talk about a little bit more from a psychology standpoint.

Dr. Dana 44:03

Well, for me, when I was doing my own therapy, it was all about understanding what it is. That happened to me that created the trauma, but in equal measure what it is that didn't inform me because of the neglect on an emotional level and understanding or trying to figure out if there was a medical component to my depression that I was suffering at that time. So I'm what you call your shit I call take a measure of what you've been through. Also the deprivation that you suffered because I think that if you really want to hurt somebody, treat them like they don't matter. That usually hurts human beings. If that person needs you. hurts more than anything. And so, you know, I didn't really understand how vacuous on an emotional level my parents were. You know, my parents never beat me like you or something like that. My parents were kind hearted people, but they were so possessed by their own problems that it was all survival. And, you know, I was pretty much left to my own devices. And when I was a teenager, that was kind of fun, because I got to come and go and do as I please, without any discipline. But I got to understand that as an example, I never felt like anybody cared about me. I never learned how to discipline myself. And so, you know, what seemed like fun actually turned out to be really, really lonely. And I didn't understand how lonely I was, I didn't understand how sort of unintelligent I felt like I was and that in the end, I felt like I never met her to anybody. And so it took a lot of work, and a lot of crying and a lot of soul searching to understand. First of all, there wasn't my fault. Starting with the abuse I suffered when I was a little kid, you know, I didn't do anything to cause myself to get molested as a four year old. But I sure took it on as my responsibility. I didn't do anything to, you know, cause my parents to sort of leave me in isolation, and not really consider me in any way other than, you know, look, I'm not going to say they didn't feed me and shelter for me, because I was very fortunate in that regard. But my dad cared about money. And that was what his life was all about. And my mom just lived in the world of anxiety. So her self possession in the world of anxiety, took her away from being, you know, present to me. I can remember one time when I was like, I don't know, 10 years old. And I used to tease my brother a lot. And he used to follow me around endlessly because he got less from my parents even than I did. And so he looked to me to take care of him. And I didn't feel equipped to be a parent, as a 10 year old, I wasn't ready for that job. And so I used to tease him and drive him crazy. And he would be screaming and crying. And, you know, eventually what he would do is go to my mom, and, you know, tell on me, and my mom would come after me and start screaming at me to leave your brother alone. And I would look up into my mother's eyes. And I would say to her when she was yelling at me at the top of her lungs, I can't hear you. Now, if my kid ever said that to me at that moment, I'm not sure if I would have been able to control myself. But the reason I said it to her is because provoking her to that level of intensity emotionally. She showed up in her body for a brief moment, like we looked at each other. And all of a sudden my mom was there from whatever planet she lived on. And they had to go through this, you know, horrible ritual just to have, like, 30 seconds of my mother's unadulterated attention. And then I never realized how clever it was. And I'm really lucky, my parents weren't violent. It was a really disrespectful thing to do. But I did it out of desperation, because I just felt so disconnected.

Kim Fauskee 48:17

Sometimes they say negative potential is as good as positive attention.

Dr. Dana 48:21

I just wanted to feel connected to it. I didn't I didn't look at it in terms of positive or negative. I was looking at it like I'm desperate.

Kim Fauskee 48:28

How to. Some people may think what you and I went through in terms of how you're measuring your life and how I was sitting in my shed may have been just we were manifesting what our life going forward was going to look like. Can you explain how it's different than manifesting?

Dr. Dana 48:51

I'm not sure I understand your question, Kim. I'm sorry, that were that we were

Kim Fauskee 48:55

just sitting there, wishing in the universe that our life was different. Yes. And visualizing that our life was different and asking the universe to provide us a different life. Which I think is the common example, or the common misnomer of what manifesting really is, is because that's not what it is. But I think people may think that we're just asking the universe, that we wanted a different course in life. And I was just asking you to kind of explain from your expert side of what the difference between what we did and and manifesting is.

Dr. Dana 49:39

Well, I think that's, you're bringing up an incredibly important point, which is you can ask and try to manifest anything that your heart desires, but a futile feel on a deep level that you deserve it, and that you're worthy of it, and he can comment. And that's the thing that I learned the most powerfully that I tried to help People understand is that manifesting is not magic. It's based on how you feel about yourself. If you don't feel like you deserve love, or you were brought up in an environment, like with a scary mom who you know that you're terrified of all the time. And you know, you go out into the world of romantic relationships, generally speaking, you're gonna find somebody who was pretty close to who your mom was. And only when you come to understand that it wasn't your fault that you got terrorized the way you did. And that all the feelings of fear and shame and overwhelm, once they go away, that opens the door for you to start to feel like you deserve the kind of love that you're looking for. And then it makes it easier to start asking God or whatever to help you get to a, you know, to a connection with a different type of person than you've ever been with before. And then I guess that's what you would call manifesting, but it's not going to happen if it doesn't matter, measure how you feel about yourself.

Kim Fauskee 51:00

Exactly.

Dr. Dana 51:02

That's key.

Kim Fauskee 51:05

I was talking about while sitting in my ship period, about the importance of having an accountability partner, especially when I got to that point, a few weeks into it, where I thought this isn't working too uncomfortable, so on and so forth. And that person kind of refocused me on what I was doing and why I was doing it. So did you have somebody or belief or intuition or something that that kind of kept you going through that process?

Dr. Dana 51:36

I wouldn't be here, if I didn't find the therapist I did when I was 21 years old. I just got super lucky when I moved to Santa Barbara, and was given the names of two or three people by a professor at the University and the one person that answered the phone, ended up becoming my mentor. And I spent 10 years in therapy with him. I just fell in love with therapy. And I fell in love with his intelligence and his ability to understand and he was the person actually that convinced him to become a psychologist, he's recognized in me from his perspective that I had what it took, and he helped me get into the graduate school I went to him was on my dissertation committee. So none of this would have happened without his incredible mentorship in my life, if forever grateful to

Kim Fauskee 52:24

him. And I had an accountability partner, obviously, that understood what I was going through and understood the mission there. So I'm assuming that it's important that if people that are listening to this episode today, are thinking that they may want to embark on this journey, that they have an accountability partner that that fully understands what's involved in this and the emotional upset that's involved in it, and how they can help them get through that whole process.

Dr. Dana 52:56

Think about the things that have happened to you and didn't happen for you, always, in the hands of other humans. So I figured that the healing process also requires the hands of a human because it creates a balance. And you get to feel what it's like, in my mind, to be cared for in a really deep way, probably for the first time in your life. Because I know people say, oh, you know, I paid for your time you don't, you know, this is all professional, this and that. And I understand that it's really scary to believe that somebody could actually care about you as deeply as, as I do. The people that I work with, yeah, I charge money for my time. But I wouldn't work with somebody who I didn't feel like if I met them under other circumstances, I wouldn't want them to be a friend. So that I can really take joy in that person's presence in my life. So that it's a pleasure to be with a person. And I think that people begin after a period of time to trust that it's real. And that's a whole new experience: a barrier sold to somebody and have them not looking at you like Jesus, what was wrong with you?

Kim Fauskee 54:04

Does it do you think it needs to be a psychologist or a therapist to be your accountability partner in this process, or I

Dr. Dana 54:12

know that it shouldn't be a relative or somebody that's closely tied to that way. I think that a clergy person or whatever is somebody that you trust is skilled enough to really understand, you know, what

you need. But the other thing is that if the person is not healed within themselves on a deep enough level, they can only take you as far as you've been able to go yourself. And that's a really important point that I don't think most people understand. You gotta go down the whole long way. That's right, because so many people have been hurt in unspeakable ways and, and if, you know, I as a therapist never came to terms with being sexually abused, I would not be able to. To work with people who've had that issue. My unconscious process would just steer me away from it.

Kim Fauskee 55:02

And we've talked in previous episodes about the majority of people want to peel off the first or second layers of stuff, and then it gets too comfortable, too uncomfortable, too painful. I'm done with this.

Dr. Dana 55:13

Well, you know, Kim, the other thing that I marvel at is that I've worked with hundreds of couples over time. Somebody comes to me for relationship counseling. And I would say a handful of people have asked me about whether I'm married, how many times I've been married, whether my relationship is satisfying. Now I get that you're not supposed to know too much about me if I'm your therapist. But,

Kim Fauskee 55:41

you know, it's only so much transparency that goes on in therapy. But you know, and I'm

Dr. Dana 55:45

I was also really lucky to be able to answer that question by saying, yes, I've been married for 40 odd years, to the same person. It appears as though she still loves me. I know how much I love her. So he, you know, sort of like a, there's no ducking cover on you. Yeah. So that's why I, you know, I can kind of ask that, or bring that issue up with some confidence because I know so many therapists that are, you know, been divorced, 10 times, whatever. And they have no business helping people in their relationships, they can help them in other ways. But if you can't manage your own relationship, you should not be trying to help people manage theirs. And how would a client know that you're a disaster in your own life? If you don't sort of ask in some way? I think it's a legitimate question. Right. But we're not taught that that's especially in school. I mean, I was taught you don't let anybody know anything about you. And I just thought, that's so disrespectful to the people that are coming into my life.

Kim Fauskee 56:45

I mean, it brings up another issue about you know, when I've gone through this, this self actualization piece, and really get to know myself, I become a lot more comfortable in being transparent. You know, and again, they say, the older you get, the less you care about judgment. We're humans, we care about judgment, right? We're all vain in some way. And in things, but I have no problem being transparent. And maybe I've become even an oversharing of information now. To the point where I think that and again, I'm no intellectual savant, people that have listened to this podcast already have gathered from this, but again, I just look at people having the same intellectual capacity as me and I start having conversations like we've just had for the last hour here. And they're like, looking at me like a golden retriever with their head tucked. Like, who are you in? Where did you come from, and I've never heard anything like that before.

Dr. Dana 57:51

But that's the whole reason why you and I started all of this. Because we want to show the world what it looks like for, you know, old farts like us to be super vulnerable, and to take chances in exposing who we are. And nothing bad has happened so far. Actually, it's been an incredible adventure as far as I'm concerned. And I have no

Kim Fauskee 58:11

enjoy, just called out the self help industry. So I'm sure I'm sure the I just polarized a few people in the angry emails. But

Dr. Dana 58:18

you know, okay, so we're not here to please everybody. And I know that you and I are both very bias people, and we have our own share of whatever we bring to the table. You know, that's human nature, I just want people to consider that there is a really healthy movement that hasn't been really very much talked about, in a way that you and I are bringing up today, which is, you know, think about the idea of looking at yourself as being the source of healing with the help of someone to guide you and help you not feel like you're alone in that process.

Kim Fauskee 58:56

So I'm going to do the self help cliché here. And I'm going to have a call to action for our listeners, that I want you to put down those books, I want you to put down those highlighters, and I want you to put down those pens. And I want you to look at yourself. And then I want you to email us at fear me out@gmail.com And tell us what you saw. Thanks, Dana. Really interesting conversation. Absolutely. We'll see everybody next time. We appreciate

Fear Me Out 59:21

our listeners and are interested in your comments and suggestions. Feel free to email us at your me out podcast@gmail.com If you're interested in becoming a sponsor for this podcast, please email us at fear me out podcast@gmail.com Thank you for listening. See you next time.