

# *Fear Me Out Podcast*

## Episode 57

Hosted by Clinical Psychologist - Dana P. Saperstein PhD.

### Dr. Dana Saperstein - The Masks of Addiction

#### **Kim Fauskee**

We're moving on to a new series here. And when Dana and I thought it was important that we talked about addiction, because I don't think there's probably anybody out there, especially anybody listening, that hasn't been addicted know somebody that's addicted or had a family member that that had some type of addiction, and how that's affected not only their lives, but affected the lives of those people that they come in contact with. Again, not to beat a dead horse beer, but if we're in Episode 50, something maybe 60 at this point when this airs. But again, my story involves a an alcoholic father, an abusive alcoholic father, so I have not had addiction issues myself. But I grew up with an alcoholic father. And my oldest child's mother was also an addict that abused alcohol before she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder. And then didn't like her meds and then an alcoholic and was in and out of inpatient treatment facilities for years. And still, unfortunately, after years of dealing with this still doesn't have a handle on it at this point, and so I have personal experience in dealing with it. And I know Dr. Dana also has personal experience with it, and also professional experience with it in, in dealing with with people within his his practice. And I know that he has some important things to say about it, as we continue on in this conference or initial conversation on addiction.

#### **Dr. Dana 01:56**

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 02:15**

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.

#### **Dr. Dana 02:38**

Kim, I had two family members that suffered from addiction, my father was addicted to food. He was probably at least 50 pounds overweight, if not more during my whole life. And he struggled over and over and over again with the shame of being not able to control his weight. I had a sister who was addicted to cigarettes and died of cancer at 51. Which was really, really sad. And I think that she also struggled a lot with alcohol. But mostly, it was cigarettes that killed her. And we spend a lot of time talking about my sister and I tried to figure out a way to help her get over that addiction and she just was not ever able to to get to a place where we're, you know, it didn't get her. So I have personal experience. I have tons of professional experience. I also lost a friend, very dear friend about five years

ago to drugs and alcohol. So yeah, we both have lots to say about how addiction really has affected our lives.

**Kim Fauskee 03:46**

And before we get into our personal stories about how it affected us and how it affected the people that were addicted. In our conversation before we started recording here, we were talking about addiction and what I felt was a misnomer when people say Oh, I'm lucky I don't have the addiction gene or it didn't get passed down to me and again not being an expert in addiction or being an expert in psychology or psychiatry in that way. I don't think I believe that is actually a misnomer that there isn't such a thing as an addiction gene. But there are underlying symptoms that people become addicts to try and mask those symptoms of anxiety depression bipolar disorder things like that. That do get passed down through generations so before we get to talking this person stories I want you to kind of help the audience understand about addiction and why people become addicted to substances to sex to food to anything that even social media. Well,

**Dr. Dana 05:00**

my experience Kim is that addiction is a takes on a life of its own, obviously, is a very serious problem. But in my experience is often a symptom of a much deeper problems for that a person is living with alcohol has the initial effect of creating euphoria as an example. And then as you metabolize it, you know, is a depressant by his nature. People I've known that have really lost themselves to alcohol, in my experience metabolize alcohol as a stimulant, not a depressant. So they have a drink or two. And then their body just says more, more more. And they kind of lose control because our brains love stimulation, can't get enough of it. Actually, most mammals love stimulation. I mean, I remember going to Yosemite one time in the fall when the apples were falling out of the orchard in the valley, and seeing drunk bears walking around after they fermented apples. Yeah, they did. And you would see these bears like stumbling around after having I know, it sounds funny, but, you know, drunk bears and birds also crashing into the trees, because they were, they were drunk. And so I mean, I don't mean to make light of the, but I just believe that we crave stimulation. And it's just part of being a human being. Well, and I

**Kim Fauskee 06:18**

guess when we and again, we're talking a little bit more about alcohol. But if you talk about more illicit drugs, in terms of crack and cocaine and, and a lot of those drugs that are very, still very prevalent out in society, those are all stimulants.

**Dr. Dana 06:35**

Yes. Well, I mean, I don't think that narcotics are stimulating. I think that they actually are numbing agents. And somebody did a worldwide study on heroin addicts, they interviewed heroin addicts, hundreds of them from all around the world trying to figure out if they had anything in common. And the one trait that every single heroin addict that they interviewed had was unresolved grief. So for whatever odd reason, narcotics are the drug of choice for people that have had significant loss that they've never come to terms with. Now, I'm not saying that's the only reason why people become addicted to narcotics, but it's one of the main things that they've noticed in, in studying people is that if you want to

be numb, it's usually to avoid pain, obviously. And if you use alcohol in to access, it's, it's to create euphoria and to avoid pain.

**Kim Fauskee 07:32**

So yeah, so I was on the beginning stages of when elementary school junior high, or somewhere where they started teaching, you don't do drugs? You mean, say no to? And I don't, yeah, say no to drugs. And I don't think there was quite the DARE program out there at that time. But, you know, again, there was always that, that thing is that, you know, well, if he's smoking marijuana cigarette, that's going to lead to cocaine, and then cocaine is gonna lead you to heroin. And heroin is going to lead you to the next truck. Right? Which, in a sense, maybe true. But obviously, what we want to say is, generally, taking drugs doesn't lead to necessarily an addiction.

**Dr. Dana 08:19**

It depends on what it is you're using the drugs for, there's a difference between recreational use, obviously, which I think is fine. I mean, I don't see a problem with, you know, people wanting to recreate and have fun and all that stuff, as long as they're being responsible, and they're not putting anybody else in jeopardy. But using it as medicine is

**Kim Fauskee 08:38**

wasn't an endorsement of us know, saying that people should be using illicit drugs.

**Dr. Dana 08:43**

Right. I but I, you know, I'm not a prude and saying that nobody should ever get high. It's just that, you know, as long as you understand what you're exposing yourself to, and, and the potential danger of, you know, how you're, how you're treating your pain and your trauma. Because it's really common for people to use all kinds of different, working too much or eating too much. And you know, drinking too much, whatever. Well, it's

**Kim Fauskee 09:12**

the avoidance in the numbing. Right, right. Yeah,

**Dr. Dana 09:15**

they want to be comfortably numb. Yeah, because, you know, that's what we're taught on TV all the time. Is that medicate everything. And what you can't medicate, drink away, because every commercial, you'll see it not that people watch regular TV much anymore, but it's all it's all drugs and alcohol, alcohol, right? And it's all you know, they try to tell you that you should do it responsibly. But everybody knows that that's ridiculous.

**Kim Fauskee 09:38**

Right? That's just to prevent you from getting sued or drug and alcohol companies from getting sued. Well,

**Dr. Dana 09:43**

and the other thing is that there are certain mental disorders like being bipolar, that have a huge incidence of alcohol abuse as an example. Because if you're in a manic episode, or even in a depressive episode, alcohol really helps take the edge off. For people that have personality disorders, it's extremely common. Almost 80% of people with personality disorders have an addiction on top of it, usually to alcohol.

**Kim Fauskee 10:10**

And or in terms of personality disorder, are we talking about narcissism as the major one or?

**Dr. Dana 10:16**

Yeah, yep. Yeah, I mean, just, I mean, think about all the famous actors and actresses that, that trade wives and husbands every six months, and also go into rehab and out of rehab 500 times because, you know, living without a sense of self is a really, really difficult thing, even though they're not aware of that. That's the problem. And so you have to do everything you can not to feel your reality,

**Kim Fauskee 10:39**

it's perfect, then you can just be pretend to be somebody else and get paid for it. Exactly.

**Dr. Dana 10:43**

So, you know, it serves a purpose. I remember once, when I was quite young, somebody gave me some pure opium. And I thought, you know, I should see what this is like, I was a fairly experimental person back in the day, so I smoked opium once. And oh, my god, Did it scare me more than I've ever been frightened by any substance that I had ever ingested, because it felt so good. And there was a complete absence of pain in my body. And I know I've talked a lot about in the podcast, so much pain that I suffered from, I just thought, holy crap, I can't ever do this again. Otherwise, I'm in really big trouble. So I threw the rest of it in the garbage can. But man, did it feel good. To erase the pain from my, from my body was just so remarkable. So I understand the attraction. It makes complete sense to me. I mean, I've had tons of surgery and other problems where they have given me narcotics but but none of those did anything close to what? Opium which is, you know, the basis of all of these drugs in its pure form, that's still a thing these days, opium? Well, people smoke heroin, it's, you know, same thing. Same thing, it's really common. I've had a few clients actually that didn't know that you could become addicted to heroin by smoking. And they thought that the only way you could injecting Yeah, was injecting isn't. So the next thing they know they're addicted to heroin, they don't understand why they're throwing up all the time. And

**Kim Fauskee 12:14**

which is, which is kind of funny, instead of sticking a needle in your arm, you just have to smoke it, which seemed would be seemed like the easier way to do it. Well, it doesn't get in your system quite as fast, I guess. But well,

**Dr. Dana 12:24**

but the attraction smoking it as a you cannot smoke a lethal dose of heroin. You pass out that's true, you pass out before you have a legal lethal dose, whereas injecting it there, you could be down down in seconds. And now with fentanyl, you know, as being part of the picture, people have no idea what

they're what they're injecting, or even smoking or ingesting because it's so powerful. That, you know, kills people very readily. Well,

**Kim Fauskee** 12:49

I mean, if you're old enough to remember the ematic epic hack, yes. You know, that used to be a staple in most people's, you know, homes of, you know, you kept in case your kid over, took your parents medication and parent could give them that and they throw it up. Right. And that was a staple in everybody's house. Now the staple may have to be Narcan.

**Dr. Dana** 13:14

Well, and it is in a lot of places, because it's the only thing that can bring you back from an overdose.

**Kim Fauskee** 13:21

And I think yeah, I think the drugstores legally have to give it now with certain opiate medications, which is kind of telling on our society.

**Dr. Dana** 13:31

So on a personal level, do you want to talk about your situation with your dad? Are we?

**Kim Fauskee** 13:37

Yeah, no, know, I'll talk about it. And again, you know, what was in? Whoo, I was thinking about when we were talking starting to begin this podcast was, what age did I actually realize that my dad had a drinking problem? Do you remember? I don't. And maybe as we talk more about it, maybe later in this episode, I'll, I'll figure this out. But you know, we were talking about this. I think it was talking to you about this the other day, there were two things that my dad consistently told me. One was, I never want to adopt you. I did it for your mother. And two was that you're never going to amount to anything, which which is pretty telling.

**Dr. Dana** 14:20

And I would say those are not very complimentary things to know, in general.

**Kim Fauskee** 14:24

Generally, I've not said that to my kids. I've never said that to my kids and will never say that to my kids is number one. I wouldn't believe it. And I would never be horrified if I even came close to saying something like that. Do

**Dr. Dana** 14:38

you think those feelings are fueled by alcohol?

**Kim Fauskee** 14:42

I think when we were talking about again, I don't know if they're feeling fueled by the alcohol. They could have been embellished by the alcohol. I think those were fueled by how he felt about himself. And I think again, getting back to the context of this conversation is that he used alcohol to mask the pain, I don't know, what is, well, I know what a symptomology was, but I don't know what the root cause was, I

didn't know him well enough, or want to know him well enough to understand what happened to him, because something obviously happened to him, you know, he had personality disorder, he was narcissistic. And but, again, alcohol was his rocket fuel, I can remember, probably when I was old enough to remember, I don't know, again, I've talked about this on the podcast, too, I don't really have many memories of myself as a child up till I was probably six or seven years old. Because I think I blocked all that out. Other than sitting in my closet, but I remember he would start he was this is interesting thing, he was a successful businessman. And in fairly well, white and back in that day, you know, socializing and doing business with kind of hand in hand and drinking, you know, if, you know, anybody watched the madman series, you know, a lot of their stuff was evolved, you know, deals and socializing and womanizing and doing all that stuff involved alcohol, right. And so that was, that was a common common thing with with him and my mom, but I remember him, he would begin drinking at noon, he would go out to lunch with with his cronies or business associates, and he'd have a drink or two at lunchtime. And then he would go back to work, which, you know, technically, he was a functioning alcoholic, because his business didn't fail, it only got better. And then he would leave work, you know, five o'clock, 530. And we go to the bar, and, you know, meet, you know, either the same cronies or those cronies and some other people, and we drink at the bar for a couple of hours. And then he would come home. And, and I remember, it was always sitting on pins and needles when he would come home, because whether my mom was going to be the brunt of the attack, or I was going to be the brunt of the attack, or both of us were going to be the brunt of attack, you didn't know somebody was going to be the brunt of attack. And I may have mentioned this in a prior episode, but I can still remember for Batum today, this feeling and the sound, because at that time, I think refrigerators started having icemakers on the outside where you get ice at a refrigerator. And I remember when he came home, he didn't say a word to anybody. He walked in the house, and he had a bar in the house. And he would stop in the kitchen, get his glass and hit the icemaker. And today, when I hit my icemaker at home, it still freaks me out, that's out. And so then he would go and pour himself a drink and go into his man cave at that time and drink Intel you know, have a drank have two drinks, and till dinner was ready. And then all hell break loose. Again, you know, having a conversation with him, he wouldn't he would always be argumentative. It would always be this dinner sucks. And he would you throw his fork down or throw the plate into this into the sink and walk away or he'd be looking to pick on me about something. And then you know, 730 Quart a night, he's gone, he's in bed, passed out, rinse and repeat the next day.

**Dr. Dana** 18:48

So that's just the way he lived every day, but that's

**Kim Fauskee** 18:51

the way he lived every day as life. And eventually you eroded his business relationships, you know, he lost friendships. Because he mean, I think everybody has friends that maybe drink a little bit more than they should. And some are happy and jovial, some are sloppy, and some are just downright mean. And he was mean right? So he would be mean and you know, get into fights and and, you know, erode those friendships. And I remember you know, early on in my life where we would have family barbecues and things like that, you know, with with he had three older sisters, I believe. And at that time his dad and stepmom were still alive. By the time I probably was an early teenager. That all stopped because he had ruined every relationship with every family member at that point, so we

stopped having family functions and he stopped talking to his sister Sister stop talking to my mom. They stopped talking to all of us and They just disappeared out of our life at that point, and you know, that, you know, in when I'd say that I didn't, I never wanted to adopt you. And that I, you're not going to mount it. Anything continued into my adult life into careers that I had good careers that I had in probably at the time till I was 40 years till I was in my late 30s. I'm trying to think now he's been deceased for for quite a while, 20 some years. So I'm trying to think of how old I was. So it was probably in my mid 30s at that time. And, and I think I had just got enough of it. He was so incapacitated at that time, he kind of, you know, had alcoholic neuropathy is and if people don't know what that actually means, it means that he couldn't walk on his own anymore. He had kind of fried all the nerve endings, he pickled his insides and started having, you know, significant health things. Where my mom had to have 24/7 live in house, he was a big guy, he was you know, 612 160 pounds. Wow. And then he would fall in, in my mom would call me and asked for help picking them up. And it wasn't like I wanted to do it for him. I you know, I'd stand over him. And thank God, I really just love to have you just lay on the bathroom floor for 2448 hours just out of spite. But I felt bad for my mom. And so I'd pick him up and a couple times he broke his hip, you know, had call for an ambulance and he'd be in the hospital. And I remember every time we went to the hospital, the problem was he went through the DTS and people that don't know the term DTS is alcohol withdrawals. So he would literally be even medicated, but he'd be unconscious for days, you know, going and going through that stuff. And then he would come out of it like nothing happened. And eventually, like I said, it caught up with him where, you know, he kind of you know, it burned his esophagus. So, you know, drinking alcohol. Toward the end of his years, he couldn't do any more, because he couldn't tolerate it was like pouring gasoline down his thing, it surely did it. It just made him probably more depressed, and probably more angry. But, you know, people always asked me, they said, Did you make amends with your dad? You know, before he passed? And I said, Well, the question was, why would I want to make amends with my dad before he passed? Because I certainly didn't feel like I needed to do that. And if he got on his knees, if he could have gotten on his knees or grovel to me and beg for forgiveness, or, or, or said he was sorry, in sorry, how he treated me and sorry, how he beat me and sorry, how he verbally forbade me and and all that stuff. I would have thought it was veiled. I would never, I would never taken him serious, I probably would have laughed. And I mean, that sounds really bad.

**Dr. Dana** 23:02

No, it sounds like you knew your father really well, actually. And you didn't have any fantasies that he was going to wake up and find the forgiveness, ask you for forgiveness or even be able to take responsibility for the harm he caused

**Kim Fauskee** 23:14

it. I remember. I remember the day he died in he had been in the hospital for a while and, and it was just inevitable and and that's the thing that sucks if you don't die right away. And it's it's either you or a family member, and you're watching somebody and it's like, okay, when's this gonna happen? You know, because they're not gonna, they're not gonna all of a sudden, you know, be okay. And it's prolonging. And I remember the last day, my mom standing over him and looking at him, and he's been unconscious for days at this point. And she goes, aren't you going to thank Don, which is his name? Aren't you going to thank me? I'm like, wow, that's telling. You know, you know, she wanted she was looking for she was looking for some level of, you know, alignment of acknowledgement. It's like,

you're, you're asking a dying unconscious man to say thank you, say thank you and absolve you or say, Oh, my God, you you know, this, this whole thing? That pretty much summed everything up to me at that point. And I guess to answer that question that I that I started talking about is I probably probably, you know, in elementary school, I realized that there was problem you know, yeah, yeah, it was the smell. I mean, he always smelled like alcohol at that at that point. Yeah. And so you know, and people ask me this, you know, and I don't you know, this I don't, I don't drink now, and I don't drink because my dad was an alcoholic. Or I had a problem with alcohol or I couldn't control alcohol. I don't drink because I just don't like the taste of alcohol. And it's not that I haven't before I've had alcoholic beverages in the past, it's just I don't drink because when I don't like the taste of it into I don't like being out of control, which is kind of contrary to me taking LSD. But anyway, yeah. Yeah, I just don't like being being out of control. So I think what it what it taught me was how not to be in life. Right. So the

**Dr. Dana 25:31**

lesson you learned the most profoundly was what not to be and how not to be.

**Kim Fauskee 25:35**

Because I remember his his funeral. And, and again, it sounds like I'm bashing my dad, I'm trying not to. I'm telling the story here. But I remember at his funeral, I was so worried in more so for my mother, that nobody would show up. That would be me, my kids, my sister's kids and my mom. And that would just my mom would take that as a reflection upon her, and not my dad. And I'm lucky enough to have really good friends in this town that we live in here that kind of knew my dad and known me my whole life that showed up out of respect for the family. You know, which was very nice of them to do because they didn't have to do that. But I remember people that got up and talked about him at his funeral. The only thing that was ever said complimentary about him was what a great businessman he was. It wasn't nobody said what he said what he said was, yeah, what a great guy was what a great husband he was, and what a great father he was. And I thought to myself after that, my God, if somebody said that about me, at my funeral, I would turn over my grave. Because that is certainly not what I want to be remembered for about what a great businessman I was, at that point. So, again, he taught me not how to be, you know, I don't want to be him. I don't want to be a father like him. You know, I want to be the antithesis of it. I don't want to in we'll talk about this more as we talk about addiction. But I think people know and you know, this that addicts take hostages or take victims, right. And that was that was very common in our family where that happened. And I remember when he passed the day he passed, I remember crying inconsolably for probably an hour, an hour and a half. And it wasn't that I was sad that he died. It was like 1000 pound weight was taken off my shoulders. So it was like it was like it was like, oh my god, it's freedom. Finally, yeah. Like I like somebody like I had been in jail for 35 years. And again, I'm not completely doing him because it's my own fault that I put myself in that place. But it was like somebody lent me out of prison after 35 years. And I was afraid that

**Dr. Dana 28:21**

when you talk about all this, I'm thinking about my own family. And my experience with addiction is so different in that my father, he never overtly hurt me in any way. He never hit me once in my life, he was actually fairly gentle in a certain way. But man, did he live with a bucket load of shame about himself as a person. He had a really serious eating disorder. I mean, he spent his whole life trying to lose weight, and was never successful at it. And from the time I can remember, my dad was always very, very



overweight and extremely ashamed himself. He talked about it all the time. When I lose weight, blah, blah, blah, when I went out, you know, it was he, he would oscillate between when I'm a millionaire. I'm going to do this and this and this. And when I lose weight, I'm going to do that. And it was like magic for him the idea of money. And last. I knew that my father as a little kid was molested by his mom, as was his two brothers.

**Kim Fauskee** 29:24

So you knew that as a little kid into intuition only. I didn't

**Dr. Dana** 29:29

know it as a little kid that I knew, as I knew that something had happened to him that was sexual in nature. By the time I was 18, because I remember actually, as an 18 year old, we went back to Canada, where I was born and where his family were, where he and his, you know, his where he lived, and I'm going into my uncle's house, and feeling the energy in that house. I was absolutely certain that my uncle was molesting his daughter. And my cousin was Was his, his son would walk around the house all night long, sleepwalking. Because he knew that something was happening, but he didn't know exactly what it was. But I just have the feeling I got such the creeps from being in that situation. And then one of my my other, my father's other brother, he weighed probably at least 400 pounds. And his mother dressed him like a girl until he was had to go to school because she was disappointed that she never had a female child. So my father and his brothers never stood a chance. My grandma was a complete whack job, she was literally insane and extremely harmful to her. Her children, she grew up in a ghetto in Russia, Poland, and was raped and pillaged as a kid. And so she never stood a chance. And she took it out on her children. So the amount of shame that my father walked through life with was pretty profound. And I think that's why he couldn't control himself when it came to food and, and women. I know he was unfaithful to my mom during their home marriage. The thing that that was the biggest effect that it had on me to grow up with somebody who was really overweight and ashamed of himself is that I have lived my whole life being terrified of getting fat. And so I probably weigh now what I did when I was in high school, because I've been really careful not to let that happen to me. And luckily, I have a lot of self discipline. So it's never really been a problem. But I know that I was conditioned to look at being overweight as being a really shameful sign of of weakness, and that there's something really wrong with you if you carry that kind of way. The other thing that was really interesting to me is that my mom was in charge of buying food for our family. And she made sure that the cupboards were filled with everything that my father could not resist. So he she ensured that he stayed fat, by making sure was that was that spite? No, it was an insurance policy, that he'd stick around. Yeah, she was terrified of being abandoned. And she knew that if if he felt good about himself, that he'd walk out the door. And so she did everything she could to make them feel bad about himself. She would tell them all the time, what a fat pig he was, and how disgusting he was. And my dad would then say, what how stupid she was in pathetic she was. And this is how they express their love to each other quid pro quo. Yeah. So you know, I'd watch this, the thing is, people fucking hate each other. They can't even stand the sight of each other, but they are so pathologically connected to each other through their own pain and, and despair that, you know, they'll probably be together forever. At that time, I didn't know that my dad was, had already had probably 20 affairs, or more. And that he was always having sex with other women. He was a busy guy. He was a very busy guy. And, and then eventually, I remembered that actually, when I was in utero, my dad was having an affair with a secretary. And I

know I've talked about this before in the podcast, but my mom believed there was because she was ugly. And so I started taking my mom's pain into my body to protect her from my father leaving her right from the very getgo. So the addiction and the weirdness affected me right from the, the probably the moment of my conception. It was really sad to watch my father be so unhappy with himself because on a certain level, he was he was a very funny, generous man and extremely bright, but never had it, he never stood a chance because he grew up in the kind of poverty and anti semitism that is beyond description. And so um, he quit high school as a 14 year old and had to become a criminal to support his family. And that was just his lot in life. And so he never really felt very good about himself. I knew that for sure. Eventually, he actually did leave my mom when I was in my early 20s, and married a woman that was much more interested in becoming a criminal with him, rather than telling them what a shitty was all the time. Clyde found his body. Yes, he felt he felt Yes. And so they became actually fabulously wealthy as white collar criminals. And I had a little brother in the mix. But it was actually quite sad because my brother and my sister actually, by the time they were young adults, completely shun my father. They would have nothing to do with him. They wouldn't speak to him, they wouldn't engage with him in any way. So I was the only kid in the family that kept a connection with my father. Because I wasn't afraid of him and I didn't feel I wasn't as angry with him as I was sort of with my mom because she was the one that fed off of me and he didn't. So as much as he had a gluttonous appetite, he didn't feed on his kids like my mom who was an empty vessel that needed, you know, to feed off For me in order to feel a sense of well being. So the saddest thing about all of this is that my sister ended up really in bad shape as a result of being my father and my mother daughter. And she was very self destructive. She drank too much and smoked way too much to the point where she died in her in her early 50s. So she so

**Kim Fauskee 35:18**

she took on the pain of your mother and father.

**Dr. Dana 35:21**

Yes, as did I, absolutely, she did it in a different way. Because I'm not 100% Certain and my father didn't molest her. I don't know for sure. That, you know, it's not unusual for somebody who has been molested to then carry it forward in some way. My parents did not protect me from being molested when I was a kid. So it certainly was a part of our family. In that way. It was just really sad to watch him how much he hated himself more than anything. He wasn't like your dad, and that he didn't take it out on other people. You know, in an overt way, he was not a person that went out of his way to hurt people. He just went out of his way to take advantage of everyone he could in a more passive way to enrich himself and, and live the kind of life that he always wanted to live. So he died a very wealthy guy. But still he died a very overweight.

**Kim Fauskee 36:15**

So a couple episodes back and we were talking about talk therapy and hypnotherapy you were talking about your mom and dad being on the precipice or the forefront of when talk therapy came out and got you involved. So in in he doing therapy did did any of this stuff come out? I mean, in terms of the food addiction, being overweight, maybe there was a sex addiction, or obviously, there was some underlying symptomology and trauma or pathology with him did any of that come out. And if it did, did his life get better, personally in some way.

**Dr. Dana** 36:55

Um, the biggest thing that I noticed that changed in my dad's life was that he was really good at making money throughout my soul was mine. But throughout my life, my dad would accumulate a fortune. And then within a very short period of time, we were destitute, he would sabotage it to the point where we would be living in a house on acres and living the life. And then two weeks later, living in an apartment building in some shithole in Los Angeles, because he always found a way to destroy whatever he was able to create, because he never felt like he deserved anything good in life. So the difference that I noticed was that when he left my mom, he was still doing therapy and got to a place where he actually was able to, to accumulate a fortune with his wife, and he didn't destroy. So the biggest change was that he allowed himself to become a wealthy person. I

**Kim Fauskee** 37:50

was gonna say there's an underlying message there. Right. But I don't think we've been talking about right.

**Dr. Dana** 37:55

But I don't think he ever came to terms with why he was addicted to food. I don't think he remembered being molested by his mom.

**Kim Fauskee** 38:03

So he continued to be overweight throughout his entire life.

**Dr. Dana** 38:06

He died a very overweight person. He had heart disease, and he lived in his to his 80s. But I mean, an example of my father and how he lived in the world. When he was in his late 70s, he got leukemia really, really sick. And he was going to die. And he went to USC Medical Center, because my dad was a very, very grandiose person, he approached the doctors, and he said, Look, if you can cure me, I will give this hospital an endowment of \$10 million. And he was a really good salesman, my dad, so he convinced the powers that be

**Kim Fauskee** 38:39

he's gonna say that's a lot of money even even today. Yeah, I mean, he convinced the

**Dr. Dana** 38:43

powers that be that if they cured him, that he would reward them handsomely. So they put them in a special room, and he had around the clock, you know, individual nursing care, and that mean, they treated him like a king, which is what he always believed that he deserved. And they actually he wanted that throne. Yeah. And they actually did cure him.

**Kim Fauskee** 39:02

And so was there a sapper St. Saperstein oncology wing at USC? No,

**Dr. Dana** 39:06

no, because when they came for the money, at the end, my dad looked at me and said, I don't know what the fuck you're talking about. I never told you I was going to give you anything. And he took such pride in the fact that he was able to fool all of these big shots into believing him. And he was so happy that he was able to fool these people, because my dad always, I think, had an inferiority feeling about himself because of the poverty he came from and, and all that stuff. And so he was so proud of himself after he recovered from the cancer, he loved the con. And he loved and he would tell the story, like with such a sense of pride without really realizing that it really wasn't a very nice thing to do. There's an integrity violation in there somewhere. Yeah, but he also understood greed really well. And so his notions about what motivates people. He was very intuitive in that way, and he knew that if he could get these people to be greedy enough that they would do whatever he wanted them to do. And they did. And then he looked at him and he told them that they were idiots and that, you know, his once again, he didn't know anybody anything. So that's kind of an example of the grandiosity that he was able to actually attain and hold on to as a result of being in therapy. So

**Kim Fauskee 40:16**

when did you realize in your life that your dad was different that there was probably, again, I don't wanna put words in your mouth, there was there was addiction, there was integrity, there was being honest in those things that he wasn't really the guy that maybe hoped or thought he was,

**Dr. Dana 40:34**

well, I always knew that there were problems because my dad was not very present to me as a kid, he was always off making money and philandering and doing whatever is doing. So always felt the vacancy of him and in my life, and I know I've said before that, you know, one of the ways that I coped with his absence was wearing his clothes, sleeping with his robe, wearing his shirt, so I could smell his scent and feel like I had a father. Interesting, which is kind of sad. If you think about it, it is very sad, right? That that's, that's your connection near death. But that was so much more of a connection than I ever had to my mom, which is really sad. That that's how I connected with my dad. But then when I started doing therapy, and my dad was doing therapy, we spent hours talking about my childhood and feeling abandoned. And he spent a lot of time apologizing to me and telling me and crying and telling me how sorry he was and, and how bad he felt that he was so messed up and preoccupied that, that he couldn't be there for me. So in a weird way, my dad took responsibility.

**Kim Fauskee 41:40**

And did you feel because obviously, I talked about earlier about how I thought if that ever happened, for my dad, to me that I thought it would be veiled and not genuine? Did you feel that it was genuine,

**Dr. Dana 41:52**

it was it was as genuine as my father was capable of being okay.

**Kim Fauskee 41:56**

And you felt that you felt that

**Dr. Dana 41:59**

I did, I could, I could feel that he wanted the best for me, he did everything he could, despite his problems, and his addictions, and his low self esteem and all that, to make sure that I had a healthy sense of entitlement. Maybe it's even unhealthy in some ways. Because entitlement is not something I suffer a lack of. Right? I've joked around a lot with my clients that I'm gonna, I'm gonna start a Jewish summer camp for adults to teach them how to be entitled, so that they can have whatever it is they want in their life. And I know that's not a very nice thing.

**Kim Fauskee 42:33**

Well, it goes back to, you know, our discussion a couple of months ago about dependency, right. I mean, there is healthy dependency, which is a good thing. And there are there is entitlement that can actually be healthy, right? It's not necessarily a bad word,

**Dr. Dana 42:45**

right. But the saddest thing that happened was that he became demented for the last six or seven years of his life, to the point that he really didn't know who anybody was. And it was really sad to lose him that profoundly before he died. I actually didn't see my father for the last three years of his life, because his wife wouldn't let me even know where he was. Because she didn't trust me. She thought I was, she thought I was going to come after their money for some odd reason, because my dad told me that my brother and I, he didn't even know that my sister had died because we never told them. But he told us that we were not going to inherit anything, that all the money was going to go to his wife and my, my younger brother, and I accepted that, but his wife didn't believe that. You know, that accepted that she even brought her attorney to his funeral. So just in case, just in cases where they'll probably circle the wagons, yeah, it was pretty, you know, messed up situation. But I will say that the last moment that I saw my dad, my son, and I went to see him, because my younger brother said, hey, you know, our dad's going to die really soon. And so when I saw him, I could tell that he was on death's door. And he was completely in a coma and out. And never, you know, he was in I don't know what world he was living in. But it wasn't on Earth. But for a split second, he opened his eyes. And he looked at that my son and I, and he smiled with the most beautiful smile. Right? That's a good memory to have is so sweet. And then he just disappeared again. So it was kind of like a miracle in a certain way that my dad showed up first, you know, that splits 30 seconds or whatever it was to acknowledge my presence at the end of his life. And it was his way of saying goodbye, which was to me was very sweet. And for a very strange reason, I was able to forgive my dad where my brother and sister absolutely no way. And my daughter actually lived in terror of my father. She did not want to have anything to do with him. She didn't want to go anywhere near him. And I never forced her in any way. Whereas my son, she picked up a vibe. Yeah, she picked up. I would never want to be a woman in my dad's life. No way, because he was very perverted in a lot of ways, sexually because of what happened to him and but it didn't affect me because he wasn't perverted toward me in a sexual way. And my, my son actually really adored my dad, because my dad was such a character. And he had such a great sense of humor, and they could joke with each other. And my son didn't feel threatened by his sexual weird energy like my daughter did.

**Kim Fauskee 45:24**

How about your wife? Did she have a relationship with Him? Danny,

**Dr. Dana** 45:27

my wife tolerated my father. She's a very generous woman, as you know. And so she tries to give people sort of the benefit of the doubt she will get sainthood. She was always very uncomfortable around my dad, because my dad was weird with

**Kim Fauskee** 45:40

so she so she picked up the same Oh, you would have

**Dr. Dana** 45:43

to be like, your way not to pick it up. You don't have to be,

**Kim Fauskee** 45:48

you'd have to be comfortably numb. Yes.

**Dr. Dana** 45:50

You know, just the stuff he would say. And the way he looked at women, and it was not okay. Not okay. But of the two parents, he was the one I kind of connected the most with. And he was super generous with me paid for my education completely. He set me up in a way where I had no debt and no concern about, you know, being a professional person. When I was in high school, I kept my surfboard by the side of the house with my wetsuit. And, you know, I probably went to school, maybe two or three days a week on a good week, especially if there was surf. And you know, my dad worked at home during that period of time. And he would say to me, Oh, another assembly hall with a big smile on his face, because he knew that I wasn't going to school. And he knew that I was, you know, that didn't respect the authority. And he really liked that about me that he, you know, he wanted me to become a criminal like he was.

**Kim Fauskee** 46:43

Again, I don't want to sit here and it at least the people that I'm speaking about and speak poorly about them or throw them under the bus. But I had also mentioned, you know, that that my oldest child's mother had a problem with alcohol, not not so much. There were some symptoms, but not so much when the short time that I was with her. But as my daughter was becoming a teenager, it became more prevalent. And I think, you know, as she ultimately got diagnosed with bipolar disorder, I think the bipolar disorder, and I've read about bipolar disorder, I think it comes up at a certain more prevalent at a certain age in your life. And I think she hit that point and you know, that already had trying to mask you know, those symptoms and find the euphoria. And like I said, Before, the medication, like being on the medications, and so on, so forth. But I know, we probably should do an episode on regret. And I know that it's a common premise, not, well, I don't have any regrets on life, or you shouldn't have regrets in life, the biggest. And I haven't admitted to this, at least in this public forum before, but probably the biggest regret that I have, right now, as I sit here is that I witnessed what was going on with, with my child's mother, and my daughter, at that point was not living in the same city that I was living in was established, and her mother was married and had two other kids in the house and, and all that, but I knew better what was happening in Unfortunately, my daughter because she was the oldest child in that house. And, and didn't have a good stepdad that that treated her well, or had an emotional or psychological sophistication, understand what was going on, not only to him, but to his wife and their

two other kids. At that point, my daughter had to become the mom, at 13 or 14 years old. I regret that I didn't pull her out of that situation.

**Dr. Dana** 48:57

I remember during all that time, I remember your pain during that period of time and your confusion about what to do.

**Kim Fauskee** 49:04

I was torn because she had established friendships and kids and I was getting conflicting advice. But But again, going back to the premise of why we do this podcast is listening to your intuition and my intuition kept telling me Do not let her live there. And I had conversations with her and she didn't want to leave because you know, she had those friends and she had those friends parents and and she had a grandmother that was in her life, not my mom, but her other maternal grandmother. That was very much kind of the mom in her life. And I thought okay, well that's enough at that point, but you know, is in I'm lucky that she came out of it, okay. Maybe she will have to deal with it later on in life, but you know, she's done well, and she's happy and She's content and she does not have a good relationship with her mother. But she understands she understood addiction early on, and she went to, she went to Al Anon, but she got her established with a therapist. And so she, she understood. And I remember, she, she was probably 16 or 17 At that time, and I remember her telling me that she had gone to an Al Anon or a meeting, and I think it was part of her mom had been arrested. At one point. You know, she was a flight attendant and had been suspended from work and all this stuff. And I think part of the therapy or the court required therapy was that your kid had to go with you. And I remember my daughter telling me that she says that was the biggest waste of time and biggest bullshit she's ever been through in her life, because they were treating her mom like a victim, and not my daughter, right? And my daughter says, we'll wait a minute. She's not a victim. I get it. She has a medical that she chooses to drink, though, right? And again, we can get into this whole thing about addiction. And we'll get down down the road and further episodes about whether it's a medical condition or what your thoughts are on that. But I remember my Yeah, my daughter, just at that point, had this epiphany like, this is just bullshit, right? In this nobody's taking care of me. They're they're all about my mother. They're saying I can't you know, this, this group therapy thing is like, Why can't believe you treat your mother this way? Yeah. And I have to say, I was very proud of my daughter, for speaking up for speaking up. Yeah. And calling bullshit on that thing. But But again, the only reason I mentioned this is again, that addicts take hostages, right. And, you know, my daughter saw that and opted out of that early on, where I continued in my course in my father for for a long time before I opted out of it or got out of jail card finally. And that I regret that I should have pulled her out of that situation and not have to have her deal with that because you're only kid once in life, and you should be able to be a kid, right? So this should not have your parents fuck up.

**Dr. Dana** 52:24

Another example of what can happen if you don't trust your intuition.

**Kim Fauskee** 52:28

And and again, that and that's the reason I really brought this up, bring it up to the basher mother or for any other reason. But again, I let my head override what my intuition was telling me and I and I think I

got lucky or she, she got lucky at that point. But again, if I had over to, if I had the chance to do it over again, that would have never happened, right. And I know that and again, I again, I want you to talk because I know that you had a close friend.

**Dr. Dana** 53:02

I was just going to mention my my relationship with one of my dear friends. I knew my friend Larry from high school, we became acquainted and started surfing together in high school and I really adored him he was a really, really lovely really fun, charming, handsome, really just everybody loved him, he was so popular and, and such an amazing person. But I will say there is a bug out there, which is that probably by the time he was in his late teens, he was addicted to alcohol and narcotics. And we've spent a lot of time you know, hanging out with each other and, and surfing and all that sort of thing. And then we kind of lost touch with each other for maybe a decade or so. And then when I moved to Santa Barbara, we got reacquainted with each other because he lived here and and we started hanging out and surfing and he told me that he was sober and that he had cleaned himself up and he was very well liked and extremely charismatic and, and well thought of by all of his many, many friends and in his professional life. So I went to sleep in a certain way in relationship to him. I stopped really seeing the signs that he was not telling the truth. I remember once we were on a flight to Mexico to go surfing and he was so I'll drugged on the airplane that we actually couldn't wake them up. When we got to Mexico. We thought we're gonna have to carry him out of the airplane. And I just thought, oh, he must just be really tired. Right? I was I started making excuses for him because I loved him and didn't want to believe that he was as messed up a person as he was. And it turned out that by the time he was in his maybe early 60s, all of his A drug and alcohol use started to catch up with them. He was taking eight extra strength Heikkinen a day, and drinking a fifth of alcohol every single day of his life. To me, that's a lot of chemical.

**Kim Fauskee** 55:13

I was gonna say I'd be unconscious,

**Dr. Dana** 55:15

right. But he got so used to it, he would do it every day. He would go to work, he worked nights. As an oncology nurse, everybody loved him because he was so kind and so sweet with people that were dying of cancer. What nobody understood was that the reason he was so good at his job is because he was floating around the room with them. As high as they were, he was higher than they were. And then it all started to catch up with him. And I remember one day, he called me up and he said, I got some, I gotta tell you, and I thought, Okay, let's go for a walk, because we just to hang out and walk. And, you know, I invited him to become a part of my family, my kids love them. We traveled together, his wife was really lovely. All you know, we just included him as a member of my family. And so I'm expecting that I'm going to arrive at the beach, and he's going to tell me that just dying of cancer, because we were all trying to figure out physically what was wrong with them. But instead, he told the truth. He said, I've never stopped using in my entire life, and that I've been lying to everybody. And my wife has finally figured out that that jar of foughted in that I have in my medicine cabinet that's always full. Actually, I keep filling it up so that she would never know that I've been been there was a couple of doctors in Santa Barbara that finally ended up getting arrested Doctor death or whatever there. Whatever there was the cancer Candyman. Yeah, the Candyman, right? Well, he always had tons of likes and, and, and tons



alcohol, that he ingested every single day, and found a way to manage them. And finally, he told all of us, his friends, many friends and me that, you know, he had lost control himself, and that he was really scared because he was, you know, physically, really in big trouble had all kinds of heart problems and you know, all the stuff that goes along with intense alcohol and narcotic use. He tried rehab a few times. He got sober for very brief periods of time. When he got sober, he started knocking his wife around and abusing her emotionally physically. Now, the hard part for me was that I was the only person that he told us to all of his friends still felt really sorry for him, and really believed that that like you say, it's an A disease and, and that you should feel sorry for people that have really serious addiction problems. But then when he started to tell me what his behavior was, like he would when somebody would die on the, on the cancer ward, he was still on morphine and going in the bathroom and injected, and that none of his friends knew any any of this, they had no idea that he started knocking his wife around and, you know, really terrible person. And that he was a, you know, that he was still drugs. And I mean, that he was really not a good person. It was really awful to be the person that knew the truth, but couldn't say anything to anybody. Because I didn't want to ruin his relationships with all of his friends. And the saddest part was that you know, me, Mr. Smarty Pants thinks that, you know, he's always aware of what's happening around him. And I got fooled like everybody else. I was completely buffaloed by this guy, he was so good at lying and so good at acting like just the sweetest, kindest guy that ever walked the face of the earth, that I really just became complacent. And then eventually he died. And it was really, really sad. Because, you know, most of the time when we see people that die from drugs and alcohol, we see it as being unnecessary that they, you know, that it's just a tragic ending to a person's life. But he blamed everybody else for his problems. And I learned a lot about him that I never really understood, which is that he could never take responsibility for himself. It was always somebody else that was causing the problem. Would

**Kim Fauskee 59:01**

you make a good point? Because I think that's common, especially with substance abuse and addicts, because my father was the same thing. Yeah, it was it was never his problem. It was it was somebody else's problem are the doctors are wrong, or you're you're wrong, you know what you're talking about, right?

**Dr. Dana 59:15**

Yes, he was a very typical addict, and never could take responsibility for himself and died a very tragic young death.

**Kim Fauskee 59:24**

So we talked about this in throughout this episode, is that the generally there's an underlying or most of the time, if not all the time, there's an underlying condition, and did he have an underlying condition that caused that you think caused the addiction?

**Dr. Dana 59:43**

Truth be told, I think he actually had the victim variety of narcissism because he was always a victim. It was always somebody else's fault. When he went to rehab, he left rehab after a week because they were mean to him by holding him accountable for his behavior. her. And he was so outraged that they would actually force him to be responsible for the choices he made. And I never really understood this

about him. But looking back, I started to see really clearly now, I never told anybody this except my wife. Because again, I felt the need to protect his friends from from the disillusion meant that I fell, because it was so sad to see the real person underneath the facade that he created, because people adored him, he was so charming, and so lovable and such a sweet guy, when he was under the influence. And I didn't want to mess it up. But it was sure hard to be his friends once I started to hear the truth and understand his underlying pathology.

**Kim Fauskee 1:00:45**

So I want to end this episode, with a question in and I'm being serious. And in this, I'm gonna say it's probably not going to come off in a good light for me. Okay. And I'm going to ask you the question first. Do you have any sense of compassion for addicts?

**Dr. Dana 1:01:06**

Me personally? Yes, probably. That's a tough one, I would say yes. And no. Which I know is not the answer. Because, you know, I'm talking out of both sides of my mouth, I have compassion for anybody who's suffering. And I feel really sad that people treat their trauma by being self destructive. So that's where the compassion comes into the picture. But I am also of the school of thought that nobody has ever forced anybody to take a drink or use a drug, it's a choice. And so that's where my compassion kind of gets a little shaky. And I lose a bit of respect, because I don't know anybody that's been forced to drink or take drugs. I know people that may be in certain situations, like if you're a prostitute or whatever, your, your, your pimps gonna force you to, you know, become a drug addict and all that. But we're not talking about necessarily that segment of people, we're talking mostly about the general, you know, people that become addicted to whatever, I happen to believe that all drugs and alcohol should be completely legal, everything. Because ever, all the steps that we've taken to try to manage it, through the law, have only created an underground economy Drink responsibly, because they say yes, and I know, it's, you know, it's not a very nice thing to say that, you know, you have to let people make their choices and suffer the consequences of their behavior, because a lot of people live really terrible lives, and drugs are the only answer for them. But there's nothing that we've done to help people that suffer from addiction by making it illegal. It's just created a situation in Mexico where we support their gross national product, by all the money that we send there for the drugs that they send here. And I just don't think it does any good to try to control these things. Because we don't. I mean, when I talk to young people, every single drug that you could ever imagine, is available at every high school on Santa Barbara, and every other place, that whether it's a private elite school or a regular public high school, you can get anything in a moment's notice any kind of drug you want. And so all of our efforts to criminalize and punish have completely failed miserably. But from a political standpoint, it's, it's not okay to say that people should be given free will and choice.

**Kim Fauskee 1:03:28**

Well, I'm going to answer the question with a little bit of qualification. For the most part, I don't have any compassion for ethics. If you do take responsibility for your actions, then yes, okay. But I don't know many addicts, at least in my life, or that I've known that have ever taken responsibility for their actions. And so for that answer, I don't have compassion for addicts. But I also know people and in some people that have been on the show that have had problems with it, that have overcome it. And yes, I have compassion for those people. Because they ultimately did take the responsibility. They did get

themselves clean. They are, you know, outstanding people and outstanding citizens in for that reason. But for the most addicts that have crossed my path, absolutely nothing.

**Dr. Dana** 1:04:20

And again, as a paramedic, you saw the worst of the worst.

**Kim Fauskee** 1:04:23

And I saw the worst, and I saw the worst of the worst. And again, we can get on this political soapbox and the societal soapbox right now with with chronic drug addiction and hopelessness, and it's not going to do us any good because you and I probably have similar opinions or differing opinions, and everybody listening has similar differing opinions either and I think like you said, it's not going to be solved anytime soon. And as long as somebody is still making money from it, and somebody's still profiting from it, then it's going to be it's going to be it's going to be a thing but I And certainly if somebody came up to me and said, Kim, I have a problem with drugs and I need help. I'm not going to turn a cold shoulder and say that's on you.

**Dr. Dana** 1:05:10

Yeah, but that's somebody who's taking responsibility. Somebody's taking refunds so of course you're gonna have compassion for that person.

**Kim Fauskee** 1:05:16

Well, there's a lot more to talk about in addiction and and we'll talk more about it and more than likely have a guest or two that has some personal experience with addiction and can speak from it from that point, but

**Dr. Dana** 1:05:30

absolutely,

**Kim Fauskee** 1:05:31

thanks Dana and I hope our listening audience and got something out of this and enjoyed this hour and six minutes.

**Fear Me Out** 1:05:40

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