

Rochelle Pattison

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Welcome to Just breathe parenting your LGBTQ teen. My name is Heather Hester and I am excited to be with you to transform the conversation around loving and raising an LGBTQ child. Wherever you are on this journey right now, in this moment in time, you are not alone. I am so thrilled to share today's guest with you. Rochelle Pattison is one of the principals of Chimera capital limited, which is a licensed financial services provider with specialties and investment management, custody, and corporate advisory. She is also the treasurer of transgender Victoria. Born and raised on a farm outside of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. Rochelle was a typical young boy who happened to dream of being a girl. Since they did not have the knowledge or vocabulary to understand their sense of not being right. They adapted to fit in electing to suppress their identity. Over time, the stresses of that suppression and their gender dysphoria began to significantly interfere with their life, resulting in increasing mental health challenges, including anxiety and depression. In December 2017, Rochelle transitioned and now lives full time as a woman, she speaks about her life, gender dysphoria, and her experienced living as a woman of transgender experience. She lives in Melbourne, Australia with her wife and two sons. Rochelle plays hockey and hockey Victoria women's competition. And as a member of the pride Committee for the Carleton football club. I am so excited to learn from Rochelle today. So without further ado, welcome, Rochelle, and thank you so much for being my guest.



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It's a real privilege to be here, listen to the past episodes. And I think there's some great material in what you've been sharing with the world. It's fantastic.



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Thank you, thank you so much it that that really, really means a lot. And you know, as you know, we've, we've talked about this, I just basically want to get, you know, great information out there. So people don't feel alone. And so people have education available to them and an accessible way, right.



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I think that's such a big issue that even today, when you go through these processes, you come so often you're coming at it from a position that I'm the only one, and I'm not gonna fit wider community. And that's if you're the person who's coming out. The loved ones around them are all told, well, you must support but there's no support network for those loved ones. And it can't be successful unless everyone has a bit of a network to draw upon. Because it's a challenge.



03:37

It's a tough it is.



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It is it is yeah, you had said that the other day when we were talking and I was like, oh, my goodness, that's, that's so well said. Because that's exactly true. And and I think too, as the, you know, the loved ones and and allies around. We often to feel like you know, we want to support we want to support and then we're kind of scrambling behind the scenes to figure out how to do that, right.



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And it's really important to look after your own emotional health and pick up this knowledge that you need to work out what the what the individual going through the experience actually requires. And often they don't know how often they don't know. And it's a strange bewildering world for them, where suddenly these doors that have always been closed, opened, and they want to sample it all. And you know, in the transgender community, we talk a lot about gender dysphoria, and that feeling of not being connected with what's your body. But when you do connect with your correct gender identity, there is definitely This thing which is gender euphoria, and it is such an unbelievable feeling. And it can be lead to you becoming dislocated from your wider world. And your where your

reality really lies, because you're just going, I feel so right. I have not felt this ever before. And it is just pure euphoria and it's amazing. And for the loved ones around you they going, but what about us, you got to remember, you know, so in my, in my case, you know, when I was telling my, my sister and she had to talk to a therapist, who, cuz she was going through her own stuff. And a therapist has just got, oh, my God is it is she because my sister said, and now on top of all of this, my six foot three brother is going to become my sister. And she and she's having so everyone you've spoke, you've spoken in your earlier podcasts, about how people have the movie reel in their face, movie reel in their head. And this is an example of where suddenly a plot twist comes through. And not everyone can deal with it.



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That is exactly right. Oh, I like that. It's a total plot twist.



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So I think support for the people around the individual who's going through their own journey. They're on a big journey themselves.



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That that's absolutely true. And and I think that that's something really important to recognize and for everyone to allow themselves. That I think I think that for, you know, the support, we often feel a little bit guilty about being, you know, taking care of ourselves, right, because, you know, especially, you know, was so I speak very specifically, Connor was in crisis. So how much, you know, there's not a lot of time for self care, when you're in crisis, even though, once I took, you know, kind of step back and took that time to take care of myself and take a breath, you know, I was able to be there for him in a much better way. Right? And, and to really hear him and to just mate help him make better decisions and make better decisions as his parent. So I think you've hit on something really important there.



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And I think that's a really important thing is what your situation is, you are still the parent, you are the one who should have better decision making ability.

 08:11
Right?

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And it doesn't have to be about sexual orientation. bad decisions are still bad decisions.

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That's exactly right. That is exactly right. And I think that that, um, it became one of those things were like, Okay, how much of this is typical teenage behavior? Right? And how much of this is acting out? Because he's angry, or he, you know, has, you know, this self loathing, and he's, where's this coming from? And so it became this kind of weird place of this needs to be addressed. And consequences have to be in place. And for absolute shore, I will tell you that there was a time when we were so he was so fragile, and we were so worried about his his depression and mental health, that we were really careful about how we handled consequences. And now looking back, I know that he knew that. Oh, yeah. And so, right. So there's a certain I say that out loud to everybody now, because I've thought about this a lot. And I think, you know, there's no way of knowing in the moment, but it's certainly something to be aware of, because our kids are smart. Especially these teenagers, their their frontal lobe is not developed. We are their frontal lobe. That is our job. Right? It is okay. As long as you are, you know, you are aware you are paying attention. consequences are good, open, transparent conversations. is so vitally important.

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So I think that's so critical. And let's face it, children have learned how to manipulate us from when they're born, they know that Ron will attract our attention and get them fed up. And as they get older, they just get more subtle and manipulative. But

 10:31
yes, yes.

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Oh, absolutely. It has, you know, I was saying, you know, I always love you, sometimes I don't like you.



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You can still, we can say a bit, but I think you've just got you have to be open to what they're going through. But yes, then just make sure that it's not being used too much as an excuse.



11:00

Correct. Correct. And I think that's, you know, that that's definitely where we wanted to where we were going with that. But I want to kind of shift a little bit because I, there's so much I want to learn from you, and that I want everyone out there to learn from you, you are just quite an extraordinary person with such an interesting experience. So I just want to kind of start with your view of the acceptance of transgender persons in society today.



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Society has moved so far in the last 20 years, I think it's important to remember that there was nowhere in the world that had marriage equality in the last century, nowhere and a lot of younger, LGBT activists just don't appreciate that. So I, homosexuality was still legal in my home state until my final year at school. So when I was growing up, didn't talk really about homosexuals or at all, let alone gender diverse divergent people. So they I remember we had on the farm, we grew up there was two male nurses who lived within a kilometer. And it was only I think, in my towards the end of my schooling, that mom acknowledged that they were both homosexual. And in Walker Walker, which is the pronunciation of the towel.



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Of course, See, I knew I was totally butchering that butchering, madam. So



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no, it was, you know, I was just a normal farm boy, who learned very quickly that any thoughts of being at goal or of doing feminine things, just what it wasn't even to be contemplated. So all of those feelings were very much suppressed. And then I went away

to a all boys boarding school. And, you know, that's not an environment where you explore your sexuality or your gender identity, you can form on and conform. And it was he, in all honesty, it was actually not that hard. I was a saw I was a good student. I because I, I think I was six foot one winners in year seven. So I think that's



13:51

great. So,



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so I always had presence. I, you know, I was rowing in the top crew until my final year when I got dropped to the second so I was an athletic, strong young man. And no one. The only aberration was the fact that I played hockey, being field hockey, not ice hockey. That is completely acceptable as a male sport here in Australia. I was a prefect, I was house present. You know, I was a jock. And I had had a girlfriend, long, steady girlfriend for a long time there. So there was nothing to indicate what was going on in my head at times. I think the Yeah, I say that. But I do remember that in my final year. And my parents came to visit me at school. And because I was pretty successful there I was quite proud and showing them around and saying you No, this is our common room, this is my room. And at the end of the tour tour, my father asked my mother to leave us alone. I thought this, this is a bit odd. And he pulled me aside and said, Look, you're quite pricy. You need to be more you need to manner more. Oh, and I was shocked. And I, I didn't know how to react to that. I. And so I can't even remember how the conversation went from that, because it's really black.



15:42

I'm sure, yes,



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but that. So that was an indication, but there was no outward manifestations of what I was feeling. And then I go to university, in first year university, I met Catherine, my, my, my now wife, and we, you know, fell in love. And we did all the normal things that you do, and this interesting cross dressing, this interest in a feminine side, you know, by as I grew older, I get more economically independent, financially able to indulge in these sort of things. And that was when I found you could go to places, and they would dress cross dress shoe for

you. And that first time that happened was was incredible. And, you know, if you likely I can tell you about that experience. But absolutely, yes. So you know, I've, I think I was about 2627. But I'd been thinking about it for about four or five years beforehand. And then so one day I turn up to this house, which was a specialist in providing cross dressing services.



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How do you even find something like that? That's amazing.



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If you have the interest, you will find it. You will. And, but of course, at that stage, the the internet was in the very early stages, and you're on this bulletin boards and all sorts of weird things. But because you're motivated, even though this is a side of myself that I'm not even acknowledging to myself, right, doing this research. And so I turned up to this fairly nondescript house, get taken into a room, which is, has a wardrobe like you wouldn't believe it. And around the top of the room, there's all the mannequins with the wigs, and it's like, you've got this audience. watching you. The mirror was all covered. And you guys okay. Anyhow, and then it's all what would you like to wear the, and then we sat down, had the makeup applied. And then the wig is put on. And it's only then that the mirror was uncovered. And that's when I saw myself for the first time, and I really loved what I was seeing. And it was such a magical time. Because I just go, oh my god, I can be beautiful. Because addicts I know and that was lasts an hour or so hour and a half. And then you have to pack it all up. You know, just rub your face rule to get rid of any traces. And then you walk away going. That's disgusting. I am a horrible person. What am I doing? And I must never do that again. I think it was another at least another year until I did do it again. But it's Wow. So gender dysphoria is you know, I heard this great analogy which is fantastic for the times we live in now. gender dysphoria is like you're on a bad zoom call. And everyone's and everyone's yelling at you, you're on mute. And you can't be heard you can't see yourself.



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And that's what I love that.



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I I looked in the mirror. I didn't like what I saw. You know how what is one of the big things in the trans communities often showing the before and after photos? I have different I have difficulty doing that, because I hated what I looked like. So I did not take photos of myself. I took a lot of photos. But I was always the one behind the camera Not in front. You know, clearly there are photos out there. But nowadays, you know, I try and limit myself to seven or eight selfies a day.



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I didn't love it.



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And it's great to have children there to just remind you of all No, not another selfie. I What are you doing?



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Doing the



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Yes, kids are very good at keeping us in chakra and Bay.



20:52

Correct? Correct me? How dare you spend time on yourself? Rather? What's really important?



21:04

I don't know who you think you are



21:06

Shuker? Yeah. All right.



21:11

Oh, my goodness,



21:13

you know. So that's was the experience growing up, and it was just all about be the person you're supposed to be. Be that movie real. And I look, I, I did law, I did commerce, I was always interested in being an investment banker and merchant bankers. So I was on a fairly conservative, high achieving pitch. So I just threw myself into my work. And that was my focus, my first car that so suppression, was not that hard. But then those need to have cross dressing experience. Growth just grows and grows. And there's a lot of surveys to saying that, you know, it's around 33 through 245, when the composite the pressure just becomes too much for late transitioning people. And that's when they have to do something about it. Or they kill themselves.



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Which is so tragic.



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It's, it's the harsh reality of when you deny yourself, deny your real identity, it just becomes too uncomfortable. So that's why I think the statistics are 60 to 70% of transgender people have attempted suicide at some stage. And myself, I believe the other 20% align.



23:09

That's something that everybody needs to just sit with for a minute. Because that is that is so powerful. And the the reasoning behind it. That's why we're doing what we're doing. Right? Yeah. And that's not okay.



23:27

And the reason you reach that place, and this is more about male to female, transgender, there are different pressures on female to male. But there's a great show on Netflix at the moment called disclosure. And what it is looking at is trans representation in the media. And the messages that we receive from so early on life about being trans is a joke, you're

gonna be a drug user, you'll be a sex worker, you'll win, you'll be murdered. Or you can take the JK Rowling route and say, you'll be a predator yourself still, you're only doing it you know, I know order to go out and you know, cause harm, or for it's all about sexual desire. It's such a negative portrayal. And of course, there's this whole toxic masculinity which from my background, I you know, which is more conservative, I try not to embrace but I can't denied you're always told, be a man Don't cry. Be strong. Right. Right. You know, you, you know, it's the whole Renee Brown, it's, you know, be up there on that white horse. Don't fall off until the pressure just becomes too much. And it and your break, you break.



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Did you



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reach that point?



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Without a doubt,



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without a doubt. So I yeah, this is actually very interesting. I'm on a five year anniversary at the moment.



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So graduations. So next Wednesday was the first time I ever went out in public, as Rochelle.



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And



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I remember standing in front of the hotel room door. And the thoughts running through my mind about what are you doing? This is madness. If you do this, your life is over, you will lose your job, you will lose your family and you will lose access to your children.



26:21

But I



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I was at this stage where I would rather die than not step through that door. So I had to ask everything off. And step through that door. It wasn't big enough for everyone else to come with me, I had to do it on my own. And although it was just so exciting to do, get out there and do it. It was so lonely walk down the hallway towards the lift. And when I got to lift there was no one else there. And that was fantastic. I breathe a sigh of relief. And then a mother and her child came out. And we're waiting at the lift as well. And the mother wanted to kill me. It just and the child's eyes were just bugging out of their head. And I just had to stand there and go, this is what I want. And I go went down and I was going to a meeting of a support group. And that was the night when I've got it was just the euphoria was just amazing. I'd been dressing for decades. But nothing had prepared me for how good I felt to be acknowledged as she pronouns are so important. It was, you know, and the next morning, I think of it as you know, probably the worst hangover I've ever had in my life. And it wasn't the alcohol. It was the reality that my life. I knew it was over. And it was just a question of how much I could salvage going forward.



28:10

But stepping into your authentic self



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was worth it.



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Right. Because otherwise it would have all been gone. Yeah. Everything else was

irrelevant.



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That that's what it came to.



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I can't imagine the courage that that talk.



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I don't know if it's courage. I think it's desperation



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and panic. Yeah, yeah.



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You've reached the stage where you acknowledge you don't want to end your life. You just have to change it. Right. And I had so much that I loved that I wanted to stay and if it didn't work, then I'd kill myself.



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You put everything on the line.



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That was way you were because you have that is your alternative.



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Right? And backlight but I think that's so powerful for people to really understand that.



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Yeah, I mean, I was successful. I had a good business. I have a Wi Fi love. I had two two boys who I just adored. But I wasn't there. I wasn't present. It the dysphoria had got to me that you know, I was out drinking. I was out. I was out of home at least a couple of nights a week. You know, I any excuse I could be because you get you have this rage inside you and it's very Blocking so much. And always, it's just like how do I get to a situation where I can be me, and balance that with my everyday life. And that usually I was aiming for was to get to a situation where I wasn't living so much of a lie, particularly with Catherine, because she knew none of this. She, she she knew there was something going on, but she didn't, certainly didn't know. My partner. This is another story he knew there was something askew in my life. It when I told him, he said, I had a lot of theories. This was not one of them.



30:52

Oh, my goodness, I am sure. I mean, wow. Trying to imagine being in that place of everything that you knew you had be willing to let go of? To be your authentic self. Right? Because as much as you loved all of those pieces, if you couldn't be



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who



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you are, then life is now worth living. Yeah, at all. Yeah. And for you to be able to kind of pull all of those pieces apart and say, Well, I have to do this, in order to save all of these things that I do love. That's the only this is the only way. You know, there is through, right? I have to walk through this. Yeah. And, and you had no idea what would be on the other side, other than the fact that you would be living.



32:07

So I mean, leading up to that, of course, I've done I've been with a therapist for eight months. At least three and a half months of that was just lying. Gaming. My therapist, I had a lot to do. I've had a lot of common with Connor in that regard. And, you know, when I was speaking to her, eventually I came and I said to her look, I think I'm bisexual. Because that was less shameful than admitting that I was a crossdresser. You know, I still

see myself as a failed man.



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You still did at that point? Or you still do now?



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In my dark moments. Yes. I still say that now. Because I'm not what society wanted me to be. And I think that's what people why the acceptance, why the pride events why they're so important because in our heart of hearts, we still have that messaging eating away at us. So I've digressed but that your original question was about acceptance in society. This, this is why things like misgendering wound so deeply. Why visceral when someone calls me sir. It means he knows I'm a fraud. They know I'm a fraud. They, they're laughing at me, I am a joke. It's such a simple pronoun. That's That's why pronouns are so critical. Because when you're misgendered, it goes to the heart of your soul, that you're truly living an authentic life. So in Melbourne nowadays, that happens rarely it happens. It happens quite often. It's not so bad nowadays. So I must be getting better. But the but most nights I finish if I've been out, so not something I've done for eight months. If I get home and the taxi driver or the Uber driver will say Have a good night, sir. That's a hell of a way to finish or not. Right, but that's so open. But when I go, I traveled Europe at the start of this year. arrive in the UK and passport control person examines my passport. So I've got F for my gender on my passport. I mean, I have been on a plane for 23 hours I get it, I wasn't looking at my best. But he still says Welcome, sir. And then he had this big smirk. And every official I encountered in that airport, and he at Heathrow, or referred to me as sir. I went out walking, the next morning with Catherine and the boys were walking in Hyde Park, a woman actually started laughing when she saw me.



35:43

Oh, my goodness.



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So we're not when we talk about acceptance in society. I'm pretty surprised that in fact, Melbourne seems to be a terribly accepting place in this really quite good it's come on in the last 1015 years. But there's lots of places in the rest of the world where there's a lot of work to be done. misgendering was a constant experience in Europe. In, in Belgium, of all

places, I almost got turned away from a hairdresser. What? Well, cuz she didn't want someone like me and the hairdresser. Now, that was the girl at the desk, the owner came over, Come in Come in did my hair itself. So it seems, but you know, what really drove it home for me is it became quite clear, when I'm being misgendered. So often over there, the panhandlers, the street people never misgendered me. So it was apparent, what I wanted to be looked to how I wanted to be treated. But because they had a financial interest in identifying me the right way, they were prepared to do it. But everyone else just can't be stuffed.



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Right? Last thing, I



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checked this, they don't have gender gender identity training for straight people.



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I know. It's



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just that they don't, this,



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they just a willing to get it. Other people can't be bothered,



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can't be bothered, won't be bothered, those sort of harm. I feel like the lack of compassion is not the word, but being able to see people for who they are, and love them and accept them for who they are, is something that we still need a lot of work, there is a lot of work to be done there. And part of that is being willing to let go of, you know, all the stuff, right? All that whatever your, your mental, what you've been, you know, whether taught or hung on to, or whatever it is, letting go of that. And just seeing people and, and you know, and

that goes into being present, right? And being being human, kind of really participating in the, the human experience. And there's a lot of work to be done. And, you know, everything that you've shared just confirms that, yeah, and it's, it's strange that people pick the things that they want to retain.



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So, you know, some people who say so rigidly that there is a, there must be a binary they must have a man you male and you must have female, they should never cross over. But you then point them in the direction of the intersex experience and say, Hey, this isn't quite clinically, medically, that there is so many variations that occur. There's approximately 36 different intersex or differences in sexual development that can occur. But everyone still reverts back to what they learned in year 10 and say, all but there's x, y and xx. That's all it is. And it goes well, I can show you the research that shows you that there are far more chromosome combinations than just that. That's like, no, no.



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And I think that's the basics, right? I mean, that's where it starts.



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Yeah,



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I think it's, you know, it is so fascinating. And I think you know, when you you can look at it from several, you know, whether you want to look at it from scientific point of view, whether you want to look at it from a religious point of view. There's such a desire to, you know, things have always been one or the other, you know, black and white. And this, the concept of being able to see gray, and acknowledge that gray is what everything is, right, that I think I referenced this maybe on on an episode recently, maybe not, maybe I wrote about it. But anyway, my daughter a year or two ago, was doing some some research. And she came across this phenomenal article. And it was written about, or written by a non binary person. And they were talking about they were referencing science, not going into the detail that you just did, which I think is so fascinating, as well, because I love science. But it was referencing it was more written about the religious point of view. And it was so it, I loved it so much, because that's my background too. But it was talking about,

you know, in the Bible, it says, you know, there's day and night, and there's land and sea, and there's right. But nobody walks around and says, Oh, my gosh, it's dusk, it's an abomination. Right? But it's there. dusk is the thing, Dawn is the thing, right? and marshes are a thing, and streams are a thing, and, you know, all of these that aren't acknowledged because oh my gosh, there's only so much room to write. Right? And, and I, I've loved that article so much, because for me, it was, it was such a beautiful way of saying, holy cow, like pay attention people. Like, really think about this and what this means and the possibility to open your minds and see, and to understand, to me is just it was such a mind expanding experience, you know, something that I already knew here, but it was here, right? I just pointed to my heart in my head for all of you people listening, sorry.

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Um,

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but, you know, just to your point of, there's a huge continuum. And, and,

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and what's incredible is how if I go back to the intersex experience, and trans and let's not conflate the two, I don't want to raise people get in such knots over the thought of young trans people undergoing gender confirming surgery. And it's a serious operation, I understand that. But then they have no problems at all at performing surgery on a baby whose genitals have not don't fit the bill. And that's horrific. And it goes on today where people are surgically altering and castrating young babies, because they think that the penis is not big enough and they'll never be able to gratify a woman. So they will castrate remove the penis. And that poor child will continue to have surgeries through their teen years through to their teen years to create the Nao vagina. But for to perform that, you know, have puberty blockers, or perform gender confirmation on a trans child is an abomination. But provided intersex people get to have the right sort of looking genitals then it's all a case that people have insane thoughts. And then there's no

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no, it's such a double standard



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completely it



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is, you know, and it goes again. I I often, even before Connor, you know, came out and before I knew anything, I always thought Why do people care? You know, like, as far as like, voicing a negative opinion or trying to drive something, why I don't understand that it had if it has nothing It's not affecting you in any way negative or positive. Why wouldn't you want another human being to be who they authentically are? Why? Why does you know that's still? I still then of course, I think about it even more so now. But it's quite extraordinary to me.



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It's a huge pressure to conform. And somehow or another, when people don't conform, that's a challenge to what people perceive to be right. You know,



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yeah, I mean, I get it on and logically I understand it. And people,



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you know, they like to say, you know, in the transcend gender situation, or this is just a new fad. This is a new, this is only just happened. You know, when when I spoke in Europe last year, I spoke with a woman who was 90, I think she was about 90, but she had transitioned in the 1960s. She had gender conforming surgery in Morocco. I think it was at that time. Wow. And what was what was extraordinary was her talking to her and the conversation that she had had with her father. Match the conversation, where my father had told me to stop being so pricy. Our experience had been the same when, when I was in Europe this year, and I visited Pompei. And I went to the museums and I was in Britain saw the museums there. And you look at the pictures, and you look at the statues. There are so many transgender or your gender non conforming images there crossdress males, Dionysus and Baucus they're all got that this is not a new thing.

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No,

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this No, no thing. It is part of the human condition. You know, endless?

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Absolutely.

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It's, it's absolutely, and it's just Yes, only now, can we do surgery? Only now can we have? Do we have the technology for hormones? But that's a good thing. You know, it's not a good thing. Not a bad thing. And I've progressed, medically we have progressed, but society still has some way to go.

 47:52
Yes, they do. Yes, they do. And and that is our that is our mission. Right?

 47:58
Yes, that's right. I mean, a lot of people have a perception of what transgender people are. And they they see them as being some form of racy or gogo dances, drag queens. The icon can't sing or dance to save myself. I know. There was a there's a amazing trans woman I make I think her name was Lynn Conway, who was pivotal inventing the, the modern computer interface. She worked for IBM. Back in the 60s, when she transitioned, she was fired immediately. So she had to go away. And this is what it used to happen to trans people. You were told to cut off ties with all your previous life moves to a new town, so that no one would ever know your dirty secret. No wonder I had no visibility. They were all being called hide and conceal this shameful secret. But you have. Anyhow, she did that. And then she started work with someone else. And she invented this. I don't actually understand what it was, but it was one of the pivotal starts for the modern computer interface. And you just go is a lot of boring, normal trans people out there in society. Just living their life and just wanting to live their life normally.

 49:44
Right?

 49:44
And that's, I think that's where I'm, I'm getting to now. So from that five years ago, now I'm living a pretty amazing life.

 49:56
Are you living I do feel like you're living a normal, boring life. I

 50:05
mean, you know, my, my, my weekends were taking children to sport. It's, you know, trying to make sure that the children are fed there that you know that they get to school, I go go to the school parent teacher meetings or mingle with the other parents. I mean, the big thing I learned early though was that if I go to a women's only event, I must wear flats. Yeah.

 50:42
Yes, that is. That is a good lesson. Um, yes. At six three, you're you're a foot taller than me without with flats. So

 50:55
are we went to an International Women's Day event. And I was wearing heels because I just was so happy with them. And it was like, Alrighty.

 51:12
Oh my gosh, that's so funny. Yes, I'm sure you were. That mean? That probably made you What? 6566?



51:19

Yeah, yeah, that's tall. Young. Yeah. So back that enthusiasm? And of course, yes. Now that I get to wear, you know, get up in the morning, I put up my clothes and things like that. The thrill of hills hills has died a long time ago.



51:37

Yes. Uh huh.



51:42

Yes, well, especially right now, because you don't really have any place to go with heels on. Right?



51:47

Correct. Uh huh.



51:49

Yes. My gym shoes and my Birkenstocks have become my best friends. That's



51:53

right. Yes, very much. Nobody



51:55

leaves my feed.



51:58

So I really want to, I was so excited when when we were sharing ideas on questions. Because my daughter who is a freshman in high school had just come to me the other day, they're doing a do current events, and they had to pick different topics they were interested in. But they're eventually going to debate and one of the topics she brought to

me was transgender, and sport. And I was like, Oh, my gosh, this is so exciting, because this is the one of the things she wanted to talk about. So I told her, I was like, This is gonna be fantastic, because we have an expert. And we had, you know, we're gonna get some some really good information right here that you can use. It's become a hot topic, there's no doubt about the fact that it is a hot topic.



52:51

But it goes back to this whole concept of the gender binary, that people all that. And I hate the term but the biological, what people say are the biological real realities aren't what they think they are. So they think that, you know, there is this huge gap between the abilities of male athletes and female athletes. But if you go and take random studies of testosterone of female athletes and male athletes, you find that it's not as wide a difference, as you might expect. So but that's at the elite level. And we need to then you look at a broader and say, well, we want to be we want girls to play sport. We want to play sport, I think that's a really important thing. And so we want them to be safe. And then they go, Well, how can it be safe when you're playing with a boy, that which is what they tend to call us. And the reality is that the advantage is not so great, particularly if you're talking about young trans children now, who potentially have never been through puberty, a male puberty, and that nuance gets excluded from the discussion completely. But then you also get to what, what happens once you've had testosterone suppression, and the impact of that is vast, your endurance just disappears so quickly, and your strength disappears so quickly. But there's this huge fear of suddenly trans women will dominate our women's sport and the SIS girls will never have a chance against them. It's its demand. Strictly not the case. So, we go back and you have a look at Dr. Renee Richards, who was allowed to play women on the Women's Tennis circuit back in 19. About 1977 1981. So trans women have been able to compete on the Women's Tennis competition. Since that time, she won a court case became quite clear that trans women could compete. Now, if there is a sport that is more conducive to financial inducements for people to pretend to be a woman, and come in and take advantage of so called superior strength, and agility, that would be a sport, you would imagine that, you know, if that people were being driven by a financial incentive, trans women would have flooded the tennis tournament. Right? She's the only one that ever came close. And I think she ranked as high as 22. Now, admittedly, she was older, she was not exactly at a prime at that time. But you look at the other sport. There has been no trans women, sporting champions. In any event, in an open age category, we've had one World Championship and that's in veteran cycling. And she loses as many races as she wins. Then, I know in the US, there was a big hoo ha about cc Telfer, cc, one NCAA championship. Fantastic, and that made for great headlines. But it was the b grade competition, it wasn't the eighth grade, her at her winning time, would have put her in seventh place in the eighth grade.

So there's a lot of things that go into what are the advantages. And I think you'll find that, that



57:21

those biological markers that people are so fearful of just aren't the keys that matter so much. I think one of the advantages that male to female athletes have is that if they've trained as a male, they've been forced to take it seriously. And they've always been far more serious about sport in some of their female compatriots. And that's not a problem with transgender sport. That's a problem with the misogyny that goes on around females or why resources aren't being devoted to female results, sports, that's the, you know, that's the problem. You then have this whole outright lie about oh my god, we can't let trans women into change rooms, because they will prey upon our girls. And it's like, or our girls might get to see a penis. Most trans women are terribly ashamed of the fact that they might still have a penis. They're gonna hide it.



58:43

hand right hand,



58:44

this whole sexual attraction thing? You know, hello, there's lesbians in the world as well. Are we going to exclude them from change rooms? Now, I can see that a lot of people who raise these arguments would like to do that.



58:58

Right. Exactly. Yeah, don't give them ideas.



59:04

But these are your outmoded, their fears that it's pure fear mongering. We need to keep monitoring the situation. We need to collect data. But you know, in tennis, it's been 40 years with no growth. In in I think in the end site NCAA competition. It's over 12 years that they've had the rules allowing transgender participation. It's hasn't become a significant obstacle. And they're not black blocking sis women coming through. It's pure fear mongering and this whole conjecture of, but someone would pretend to be a woman in a

But in order to, you know, they'll put that they'll transition just to win competitions. You know, honey,



1:00:07

honey? Yeah,



1:00:09

you really think I would live this life where people move away from me on public transport and laugh in my face, just to win a sporting competition. It's just, it's unreal. So it's just



1:00:27

such a disconnect from



1:00:30

reality,



1:00:32

reality and from truth. And, and I mean, you hit the nail on the head with the with the fear mongering, and it is a lack of education. And it's a lack of the willingness to understand.



1:00:54

Yep. And one of the other things that infuriates me is when people say, why can't they just go and play in their own sports league? And the reality is, for a start, we want to be part of society, we don't want to live in a ghetto. And secondly, there's no way near enough trans women around to ever make a league. You know, I think in hockey Victoria, there are three trans women playing at the moment. We can't even field the team, let alone having have an opposition.



1:01:34

Right? That's craziness.



1:01:36

And sport, particularly community sport, is so integral to mental health, feeling belonging, you know, enjoying life. It's such an important aspect of it. If you want people to be part of the society, you must allow them to participate in community sport, we need to revisit it, maybe every five to 10 years, if sis women are being pushed out from sport, then I'd be one of the first ones to say we must modify the rules that we're playing with. But at the moment, but at the moment, that's just not happening. Now, it's going to be a continued vexed issue. But unfortunately, a lot of the sporting bodies are holding their nerves, and they're going forth, because they can see that it's not the issue that people try to make it out to be.



1:02:38

Right. Exactly, which thank goodness, yeah, right. So there have been a variable to kind of hold all of that at bay, and keep moving forward. And I think the best thing that, you know, the rest of us can do is just continue to educate people and point to like, you just did, you know, specific examples and very, you know, specific reasons, actual science, right.



1:03:07

I mean, I will, I will say that I am an advocate for testosterone suppression in transgender, male to female transgender athletes. I, I, from what I've seen, that's probably fair. There are others that disagree with me, but I that's where I am at this stage.



1:03:30

Okay.



1:03:32

Interesting. Okay. Well, this will be great. My daughter is going to be thrilled. He just served her her argument right there.



1:03:43

It all sent her that his will his sister greatly.



1:03:47

Okay, awesome. Thank you. So I mean, so such great timing. I was so excited. This is awesome. I love it. It's so much gray. There's so many things I want to ask you. But I want to just I want to shift a little bit into kind of present day, your experience, you know, parenting, what it's like for you parenting as this is transgender woman.



1:04:13

Yeah. Look.



1:04:15

It's



1:04:18

I guess we we did just gloss over the fact that eventually I came out to Katherine. She had her Oh, my god moment. That probably ran for about two years. And then we told the children and the children you know, it was such a stressful moment building up to that period. Sure, telling them and we knew that once we told them we had to tell the world. So right, so we told them at the end of the school year, and then their immediate reaction Was that this was another prank by data and the images that they were being shown. So what the way I told them was I prepared a book, a story book for them. And so, and of course, to make sure they read it, there was lots of pictures of themselves in it. We also share and I gave it to the younger one. And they started reading and reading it out to us until it got to the page that said that I was transgender, and I was now going to live as a woman. And they've gone. He's first reaction was, is that true? He's due to men just become women, when they get old. I don't know.



1:05:49

What happens.



1:05:51

But their acceptance, once they realized that wasn't a joke was immediate. So for a week, I was still living as a man, but they knew. And I would come home. And my youngest child

was say, why aren't you Rochelle today? You know, don't you want to be happy?



1:06:15

Oh,



1:06:17

and so I know. I speak to them, I get battered occasionally. And there's both say, Well, I'm happy because I can tell you're so much happier than what you used to be. And that makes me happy. And I want you to be happy. Now, they're not teenagers yet, so they might change. But



1:06:41

haha.



1:06:44

Well, they'll still think that on the inside, they just won't say it out loud.



1:06:50

And, you know, from Catherine's perspective, it's been really, really challenging. No, I don't think anyone can deny that it's a Hey, we just talk about the moon movie rule. The movie real it did not include us going growing old and stealing each other's bras. The bit but what she says now is she's got back the person she fell in love with. Cuz that that person had gone the dysphoria had made that person go away. And now she has that person back.



1:07:38

I love that. And that's what matters.



1:07:40

Yeah. And so it you know, it's any marriage, you go through periods. We now much closer

emotionally than we've ever we've been for you know, more than a decade.



1:07:59

That is extraordinary.



1:08:01

So that walk I took down that hallway on my own actually brought me back closer to the people I thought I'd left behind.



1:08:14

That is amazing. I mean, really extraordinary.



1:08:18

It's It's been such I'm such a calmer person. I'm, I'm present. Right. And that makes the world of difference. I don't have that rage. In May animal



1:08:39

when you don't have the the mental distraction. Right. I mean, that was taking up. You know, like I said, like, a lot of mental real estate. It's probably a huge amount. The end. I'm guessing it was like taking over.



1:08:54

Yeah. And you're living a lie upon lie upon a lie. Right? No, and I knew what I thought that once I transitioned, I'd suddenly have so much more time because I didn't have a double life. But now, I'm so present. My life has consumed everything. And it's wonderful.



1:09:19

Yeah.



1:09:20

Oh, that just brings me so much joy to hearing you say that and watching you say that and i i wish i could translate that I hope that everybody out there can can feel that because there's there's not. There's no commentary that's needed. This is what we want for anyone who is right, who's coming out transitioning. Just, you know, wanting to be who their authentic self is, you know, striving for that and then It just brings me I'm just, I'm so delighted



1:10:03

that joy of living authentically and being present can't be overstated.



1:10:12

I see it and you know, you've you've shared this so beautifully and articulately. And I and I've seen it with Connor. And right, and it is. Absolutely. There are not words I literally that I just get. I get super emotional about it, because it's walking with someone through this journey is, you know, you kind of have a sense of what others experience. And goodness. I mean, I don't think you said it perfectly. The presence Right. I mean, that's perfect.



1:10:51

Yeah. You got it down. But it's,



1:10:55

yeah. Yeah. I mean, it's not all roses, it there's that that walking through, you have to walk through? Right. The Walking through can be really ugly. And you



1:11:09

and the person going through the experience as responsibilities and has to be kind as well.



1:11:18

Huh?



1:11:20

Yes. Words of deeply wisdom into all of our 12 art adolescents and teenagers who are listening.



1:11:30

There was a time where I was running off the rails. You know, because I was going out and it was fantastic. And, and then I realized if I if I wanted to hold on to the things I loved. I I had to work on that as well.



1:11:52

Well, it's finding the balance, right?



1:11:54

Yeah. Completely.



1:11:58

And it's a new kind of it's a new kind of balance, because it's a it's a true balance, as opposed to one that you were kind of creating that wasn't you it was a conformed balance as something that you thought that everybody else wanted, as opposed to something that really matched your



1:12:19

insides.



1:12:20

Correct. All right.



1:12:21

I'm sure I could have said that a lot better. But you know what I mean?



1:12:24

Yeah, absolutely.



1:12:27

Oh, my goodness. Well, I am talking about, you know, your parenting experience, and just tried to even imagine your little place. I just love that. That is so sweet. But I'm wondering if you can share what your experience and are and why your relationship has with your parents? And, you know, kind of the flip side of that, right?



1:12:52

Yeah, because we were all in this. We're all someone's child.



1:12:59

Exactly. Yes, we are. And



1:13:02

look, the sad thing is, my parents had to pass away, for me to feel free to come out. And I probably would have happened regardless. But so they passed, they passed away that in 2012, and mom in 2013. And I started seeing a therapist towards the end of 2014. Because I maybe that's because I thought I had permission, or I no longer had to fulfill that. But my relationship with them was always stunted. Because I was never I never felt that I could live up or be who they expected me to be. And I de net, they never got to know, the full me. And it's a cause of terrible sorrow to me. And I grieve greatly, that I lacked the courage or the honesty to ever share with them what was really going on. So they lived in wakawaka. I moved away to Melbourne, and through my 20s I rarely used to go home. Because I felt that I wasn't who they really want wanted me to be, and that somehow they might see through the facade, and that I would disappoint them. And I regret it deeply and I feel that lack of attention True, honest relationship with my parents is something I can never fix. Right? And it's, you know, you can't, you can't go back in time, you can't get those moments again. And what I particularly towards the end might, I was very close with my mother. But she'd be going so what have you What have you done in this last week and I can't go? Well, I went through two complete transformations and,



1:15:38

and drank myself legless, because I was dealing with the pain of this bizarre life I had, so she never had any form of insight on who I was. Right. And that's, that's just a horrible thing to now look back and say, My parents never knew me. Yeah, I knew an image of me.



1:16:04

Right. And,



1:16:07

and I, and I know, I can see my children try and conform to what they think I want them to be. And I'm always saying, you know, be yourself. Just go to bed when I tell you to go. That's,



1:16:22

that's right. Eat your vegetables and go to bed and do your homework. But otherwise, be yourself. Yes. Embrace your authenticity, but listen to me. Correct? Oh, my goodness. Yes, that that does become tricky.



1:16:41

Mm hmm.



1:16:42

I think that's probably my greatest regret.



1:16:45

I'm sure. I'm sure. And so understandable. Why you did not share. I think that the parent child relationship is so complicated, but we always want to please, right, and and beat this person that they think we are.



1:17:07

Yeah. And it's like sisters, and I often theorize what would have happened?



1:17:16

And what have you come up with?



1:17:18

And my sisters say that my father would reject me. But I have to believe I have to believe that it would have come back. And he would have embraced me.



1:17:34

He would have just taken time



1:17:36

and time. And I guess this is a reminder that time is limited. Yeah. So we have to seize those moments to be accepting why we still have them and be open and be seen to be open.



1:17:55

Right?



1:17:57

Because I never saw that capacity in my parents to accept me. So I always wanted to hide.



1:18:07

Mm hmm. You know, that was a survival skill for you.



1:18:10

Correct.



1:18:11

That's a it was a very well serving survival skill for many decades. So certainly understandable. But I think this is such a powerful message for everyone. So important to see our kids. See our loved ones and pass it off. When it's hard for you, that's okay. Hard is not bad. Yep. Hard doesn't mean something is bad. Hard doesn't mean that you should reject it. Hard means that you need to do a little work.



1:18:52

Yep. And you've got to do



1:18:55

you have to do the work. You absolutely have to do the work. I mean, I think that is actually a beautiful way to to close. But is there anything that you would like to add or offer?



1:19:11

At the end of the day? I often think should I've gone earlier? Should I've stepped out that door earlier? And the honest answer is it's worth. It's been right for me. Everyone's journey is their own journey. Don't rush. It. Don't leave it too late. That's



1:19:33

beautiful.



1:19:33

Perfect.



1:19:34

I love it. Okay.



1:19:38

I am so happy you joined us today. Remember to just brave, taking those few minutes every day to focus on your breath and calm and center yourself. Email me at any time with ideas or feedback for just brave please take a moment to rate You just breathe on the platform of your choice, and subscribe to my website to stay informed. You may also join the private just breathe Facebook community to chat with other parents and allies and share with anyone who needs to know. They are not alone. Until next time,