

Kevin Nahai

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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 delighted to welcome Kevin Nahai to the show today, Kevin's struggled with a multitude of physical and mental issues as a teen and young adult. And through his journey of healing created his own approach and methodology for whole body wellness. He is now a coach for young adults in their 20s and 30s. Working with them on issues ranging from anxiety and depression, to body image to purpose discovery. I'm looking forward to learning from him today. And so without further ado, welcome, Kevin.



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Thank you so much, Heather. Thank you for having me, and thank you for the beautiful introduction.



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Oh, you're very, very



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welcome. Well, I find your story as I've read about it so interesting, and so relatable, but I love that there's it's very multifaceted. You've really dealt with a lot of different struggles,

both physically and mentally. And, and I'm sure they were connected in some way. Will you share your story with us?



01:50

Yeah, absolutely. Again, thank you for the amazing work that you're doing and for bringing me on the show. My story is long and colorful, and, you know, I'm I'm young, I'm only 28. But I always like to say to people that, you know, the, I think the only reason that I've been able to step into this line of work and really help people is that fortunately, or unfortunately, the majority of my mental physical emotional struggles happened, you know, at a fairly young age, and in a very developmentally significant time in my life. So, you know, my anxiety, depression and body image issues and, and disease and everything really set in around the ages of 18-19. And, you know, so I've been to hell and back 10 times before the age of 30, you know? Yes. And, you know, I know that for many of your your listeners who are, who are, you know, raising kids who might be dealing with with mental and psychological and emotional issues, whether that's because they're anxious or because they're worried, you know, about their, their sexual orientation, their identity, bullying, in school, whatever. Those kids are also really struggling at a young age. I was 19 years old, I was a freshman in college. And I got diagnosed out of the blue with a chronic incurable disease of the stomach. And the main issue was that I couldn't eat anything. Oh my gosh, I started dropping weight like crazy. And this was a very difficult time of transition. Because it was my first semester of college, I had left my family left, my friends left my home. And I was also experiencing the onset of major anxiety. I was always an anxious, but I had never really experienced panic attacks and things like that. And it was sort of a perfect storm of, of, you know, all of my physical and emotional issues coming together at once. So, you know, I was in excruciating physical pain from this disease. I couldn't eat anything. I dropped like 70 pounds. Oh, my goodness. Yeah. And Hi, I started to associate food with pain. And so I basically just stopped eating. And, you know, I started, I hated myself and there was a lot of self loathing, and I felt like, you know, my body had betrayed me. So, I became severely anorexic. And, you know, I had anorexia for three years and my organs started failing. And, you know, I, of course, my stomach disease wasn't able to heal because now I was emaciated and I looked like a ghost. And, you know, my I started treating my stomach and I started treating the anorexia but I still had a lot of emotional trauma. From the things that I had been through, and you know, that trauma, I started to realize that I had abandonment issues from my childhood. And, you know, I was in toxic relationships with women that just weren't working out, and I kept choosing the wrong people for me, and, you know, then I then I fell in and out of depression. And, you know, all of this was before the age of 25. So, basically, I know my poor mother. So, basically, you know, the long and short of it is that, right around the age of 24-25, I had a few sort of come to Jesus moments, not overnight, of course, because it

never happens that way. But I really finally developed the strength and the and the willingness, and the determination to get through these things and take responsibility, and, you know, turn my life around, and I got myself into therapy, I read every book, I could get my hands on, you know, I hire different coaches, I went on a very long and transformative, you know, journey of spiritual and emotional clarity and purification. And, basically, you know, now my mission is,



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is to save other people time, which, you know, and, and, and to bridge the gap for them between where they are right now. And where they want to be. So, you know, essentially, somebody will come to me, and they'll say, I'm 30, I can't figure out why my dating life is in shambles. I've always had low self esteem, I have anxiety problems, you know, and I just, I just, I know why I have these problems. I've been in therapy before, but how do I actually change this? How do I actually get what I want? You know, what are? What are the tools? What are the solutions? How did you? Like, literally, how did you overcome these things, and get to a place where you're finally happy, you're finally at ease, you finally have good relationships, you're finally successful. Because, you know, I'm a huge proponent, proponent of therapy. And I was in therapy for seven or eight years. But you know, you can sit in therapy until the cows come home, there is a certain point at which you need somebody's guidance in. Okay, let's actually get you now from point A to point B, like, now, you know, what you want now, you know, what needs to change? How do you do that? What are the practical steps? You know? So yeah, that's a, that's a little bit about my background and what I'm doing now.



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That is awesome. So I actually like that a lot, though, what what you just said, there are a couple of things that very much resonated with me. But I think that the making that distinction between therapy, which you know, I do talk about a lot and the value in therapy, but my big thing is always you have to do the work, right? therapy isn't just I mean, there is there's a lot of value in having a place to go to where you can process, right, and you can work, you can kind of emotionally, mentally work through a lot of these things. But then there's actual work you have to do to move forward. And I what you just said, and I just want to clarify if I picked this up correctly, that kind of moving from a therapist in to working with a coach is that a coach is able to take everything you've learned about yourself in therapy, and help you move forward with it with actionable steps.



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That'd be my definition of my practice. You know, I don't know how other coaches do things. But yeah, that's, that's a that's a very good summary of the way I work with my clients. Now, again, it's not a knock on therapy at all. I was in therapy forever. My sister's a therapist, you know, and plenty of people come to me, and they say, and I tell them, I would love to be able to help you. But given the trauma and given the things you've been through in your life, First, you need to be treated by a clinical psychologist, because you're not at the place yet. Where you're ready to jump into Transforming Your Life with actionable steps. You need first to garner a little bit of self awareness, you know, a little bit more emotional clarity, you know, first you need to understand what is going on with yourself if you have a lot of mental or psychological issues that I've been getting. And you've never even accessed them. So a lot of people come to me and I say, look, before I can help you that there's some, there's some work that you have to do that I'm not even trained to help you with. But I would say that most of my clientele, the issue that is on their plate is, you know, they've seen the pattern appear in their lives more than a few times, like they know what's going on, they know that no matter what they try, they can't fight that find the right person, or they can't just lose the weight, or they've had anxiety for 10 years, and they've been in therapy, they've had medication, it's like they've, they've, they already know what the experience is, like, they've already been dealing with whatever their problem is, for a while. And so that's where I step in and say, Okay, now we understand your problem pretty intimately by this point in your life. Here's what the solutions are, like, here are the solutions that I used. And, you know, let's, let's actually bridge the gap, again, between where you are right now, and where you want to be. And you know, what, I really like what you said, when you said, you have to do the work. Because most of you know, most of my clients who have been in therapy for a while. They go in, they talk to their therapist for one hour. And it's good to have that space to process or whatever. And I say, Okay, well, what are you doing in the other six days and 23 hours between your sessions, and it's like, well, nothing, I'm sad, I repeat the same mistakes, like I'm kind of lost. So that's where I step in, and I hold each of my clients hand, and I got a lot of a lot of clients, and I talk to them every day, I talk to every one of them either every day or every other day, depending on what's going on with them. Because I have found that if you've identified something that you want, and you're clear on what your goals are, the rent is due every day. You know, you have to even if it's 15 minutes a day that you're devoting to working towards your goal, or working through a breakup or whatever it might be, as long as you do something every day to work on that. As long as you put in that small amount of work, you will be successful. But you know, a lot of people need the accountability. And the therapist is not the person you call, you know, at 11 o'clock at night, you know what I'm saying? So it's just a different model. Yeah.



12:44

Right. Well, I like that. And I like that, you know, they can really work hand in hand, right? Because one is very much a processing piece. And, and becoming aware, because I think you also hit the nail on the head there too. And which is, you know, one of the things I wanted to ask you about was really discovering what that root is, right? Because you can forever say, Well, you know, I, I'm struggling with anxiety, I I can't lose this weight I you know, whatever it is right? Like you've been through so much I've been through so much my kids have been through so much. One of the biggest things that we said, and you've touched on this, too, when Connor especially was going through that initial few years was, you know, people kept wanting to label him while he has, you know, he has an addiction problem. He has this Yeah. And my husband and I would always go back and say, What is the root? Let's figure out what the root is. Why is that happening? What is he? Let's dig all the way down? How do we dig all the way down and figure out what that root issue is? Because if we don't figure that out, then all of these things will just continue happening? Maybe in a different way. Right? they'll pop up somewhere else.



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Yeah, yo,



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ain't treating the root and treating the symptoms. You know, you can't, as you will know, with all of the different interventions you've probably tried with Connor when he was struggling with these things. You can't put a bandaid over a battle wound, you know, but it's and I didn't mean to interrupt you, but but it's interesting that you say what is the route? Because one of the things that I have found is that the symptoms manifest themselves in 1000 different ways. Whether that is drug addiction, or anorexia or social anxiety or bipolar disorder or whatever but the roots are once you really get down to it The routes are very, very similar across human beings. You know, like, when I'm dealing with women in their 30s, who have, you know, haven't been married, or they've been married and divorced, or you know, they've got a lot of relationship problems 98% of the time, the root of that problem is feeling unloved. Whereas when I'm dealing with men who have emotional issues, have low self confidence, you know, have addiction problems 98% of the time, the root is not feeling unloved, it's feeling lost, it's feeling a lack of purpose. So these are just two examples. And there are many different quote unquote, routes. But there are not as many routes as there are symptoms. And once you really get to the heart of the matter, you know, you'll you'll notice that some, you know, the root cause of your

son's issue might actually be the root same as the root cause of one of your issues, or your brother's issue or your friends issue. You know, we're pretty similar across the board, human beings in terms of the things that spiral our lives out of control.



16:21

That's actually really fascinating. And I've never heard it said that way. But oh, my gosh, so true, right. I mean, when you really think about, like, all the I'm sure, you know, everything that you've read, and you teach, right, that it does boil down to and I as you were talking, I was thinking yeah, that's right. Like, that is exactly, you know, Connors issue last, right? And in questioning, like, how is this who I'm supposed to be? I can't be this, this isn't right. And, and,



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and lack of purpose, by the way doesn't mean in terms of what you're supposed to do with your career. Lack of purpose means Who am I what is lack of identity, you know, that's something that men need men, gay, straight, whatever black, white, it doesn't, you know, just a part of being a man, something built into our minds built into our DNA is that we need to know who we are in this life, we're very mission oriented, we need to have a very strong sense of purpose and self. And when, when you're struggling with that, because a part of your identity is being called into question, you know, or you keep failing in school, or your pet, your dad keeps criticizing you or whatever, it takes away your entire manhood, which is essentially, it takes away your reason for existence. Now, you don't know, you know, why you are on this earth. You know, whereas for a lot of women, and this starts when they're young girls, you know, one thing across the board about women, again, gay, straight, black, white, it doesn't matter is that what's at their core of their sort of feminine essence and their feminine. Being is love. What's at the core of a man is purpose, what's at the core of a woman is love. And if a woman is not receiving or a girl is not receiving the proper attention and soothing and affection, then 98% of her emotional problems in her adult life, the root of it will be feeling unloved feeling a lack of love from herself towards herself, feeling a lack of love from men, or women or other partners or friends or parents toward herself. You know, so once once you really boil it down to I'm not saying that these are the only two routes, they're just kind of the low hanging fruits that are easy to explain. Right? Once you really unpack what's going on in a person's, you know, psychological condition. Or as I said, it's easy to draw some parallels among us.



19:08

Oh, for sure. And just thinking of that, you know, I'm always kind of going back as I learned something new, which I am a perpetual learner, and I love I love you know, things like this. This is one of the reasons I love what I do because I always learned so much. And and then wondering how can I apply this and how can other people apply this? And so, you know, as a parent, I think immediately How can I take this information and apply it to parenting my kids, right? How can I you know, ensure that my girls feel loved and that they learn to love themselves, right? And that my boys understand and learn to embrace a purpose, right? And whatever that is, that is what it's meant to be that, that it's that it doesn't matter how wild crazy far reaching, you know, it doesn't need to be, you're gonna be an attorney or, you know, an actor or a professor. Exactly right. Like having that, you know, saying to Connor, the other day, he's he was working on something for school and he was like it was. So he was putting together this documentary film, and he was like, it was so great. I worked on it for an entire day. And it didn't even seem like, the entire day, I was just in this flow, and it felt so good. And I was like, that's what you want, you know, that

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is like,

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that's when you're, that's that feeling that you want, like, where you feel like, this is what I'm supposed to be doing. Right. And so it's my, you know, back to my question,

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which is,

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do you have words of wisdom for how, as parents, we can so support that or instill that in our children?

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Um, well, I'm not a parent, so I don't want to overstep my bounds. You know, I don't have a kid unless you count my puppy.



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They count. They can they totally can.



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Yeah, I know, he's been a handful. But no, but you know, I, I don't, I don't want to, as I said, you know, overstep my bounds and say that I know what it's like to be a parent. But here's what I do know, I know what it's like to be the child of very loving, yet very strict and overachieving parents, you know, I know what it's like to be raised in a very high pressure environment. And I know how that messed me up. And I know how that actually distracted me from finding my purpose. And I know how that sort of contributed to, to my anxiety and to some of my emotional problems. So the first thing that I would say, and this applies to whether your kids are boys or girls, it really doesn't matter. And you're well versed in this because you know, you've talked about your own children a little bit. First thing that I would say is look at your kids behavior, and try to ascertain from the way that they are behaving, what is really brewing under the surface. And when I say look at their behavior, what I mean is that there's a difference between being sad and depressed. And there's a difference between being nervous and being anxious. So if you're sad or nervous, you might be sad about something or nervous about something for you know, a couple of days, and it might affect your behavior a little bit. But eventually, those feelings dissipate, and you go back to being well adjusted. If you're anxious or depressed, it comes through in the way that you behave. Meaning if you're depressed, you lose interest in your normal activities, you sleep all day, you know, you don't want to hang out with people, so forth and so on. If you're anxious, you have some sort of, you know, anxiety disorder, which is what I had growing up, you know, you might frequently get sick, you might have social anxiety where you don't feel you know, you're afraid to socialize with anybody. You might be really attached to a certain person, like your mom, or your best friend, and, and, and you might be behaving in a way that is not as sort of well adjusted. So the first thing I would say is, look at the ways in which your kid is behaving, their grades, are they doing drugs? Are they sleeping around, you know, and try not to judge those things or freak out about those things. But try to look at those things as a prism. And, and as a lens that's going to show you what is going on with your kid on the other side, internally that you are not aware of. So in my case, when I was in high school, I was getting good grades, and I wasn't doing drugs and stuff like that. But I was an emotional mess. And that was showing up in some of my behaviors. But I didn't understand it at the time. And my parents thought that because I wasn't doing drugs and I was getting good grades. I was fine. When I really wasn't. So that's the first thing I would say is anxiety and depression. They're like driving on a flat tire. It only gets worse if you don't identify and treat it, it will not go away. If your kid is anxious or depressed, or has any other sort of, you know, even mild

clinical disorder, don't think it's gonna go away by itself. Because it probably won't, you know? So that would be the first thing more more directly to your question of like, how can you foster your kid, you know, feeling a sense of purpose and embracing a passion and, and, you know, allowing them to, to sort of grow and flourish in that way. You know, I think that structure and discipline really, really help. I would like to be this person that says, like, oh, let your kid like, try everything and don't put rules and don't put restrictions and don't put limitations and, you know, just let them be free as a bird. And I understand the wisdom in that. But I was free as a bird and I tried 300 different things. And I had like, 10 different careers before I, you know, arrived at the thing that I really wanted to do. And a lot of that was out of defiance against my parents, because they had put too many rules and restrictions on me.



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So I was sort of rebelling against that. But I would say, there has to be a fine balance between keeping your kid disciplined, and giving your kids structure, and also giving them the freedom to explore new passions and embrace new passions. So for example, if they come to you, and they say, you know, I want to learn how to play the piano, encourage them to learn how to play the piano, but make sure they're going to give it a six month commitment. You know, if they're not going to give it three to six months of actually trying, then, you know, you you can't, you know, you don't get to, if you want to drink the milk, you got to buy the cow, you know, you don't you don't get to write, just say you want to do something and not give a commitment yourself, you know, and it's, it's, it's also like, learning, learning how to become disciplined at the things that you do, will, will teach you this skill that like, the way you do one thing is the way you do everything. Right, you know, right. So, so yeah, I would say definitely, you know, teach them a balance between having rules and restrictions and guidelines, and also embracing, letting them embrace different passions. But the one thing that I wish my parents had asked me that they that they didn't, not because they were bad parents, but just because I was always a very passionate, outgoing kid, and they weren't worried about it was Kevin, what do you love? Like, what do you think about at nighttime before you go to bed? What's the first thing that comes to your mind? In the morning when you wake up? You know, and for me, the answer for many years was music. I was a musician. for 2122 years, I mean, I started playing drums when I was six. And I still play and for for a long time, that was like, all I could think about. But my parents were always like, you can't be a musician, don't even think about being a professional musician. So I was sort of, like, you know, they, you know, I was sort of suppressing my love of music, you know. But the other thing that I always loved was people, and communicating with people and learning their stories and helping people. You know, that was the other thing that I was always thinking about all the time, which is essentially, you know, what I mean now, so, if I had been given sort of the support

and the freedom to encourage this passion that I have now, for talking to people and helping people and stuff like that, and I probably could have arrived here a little bit earlier. But, uh, you know, but it was, it was also a good thing that they kept me on track, you know, and they gave me rules, and they gave me discipline, and, you know, they taught me the value of working for your money and all of that kind of stuff. So it's a delicate, right? Well, and



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you're young, I mean, I am here to tell you that you're young. I'm I'm older, much older than you and and I did not figure out my purpose and passion until I was in my 40s. So I consider you blast. And of course, that's me looking in from the outside. So I don't mean that in any kind of offensive way. I mean that as a compliment. But I admire your ability. to articulate what you've been through, and, and the fact that you were able to really put all these pieces together. So quickly, because the human brain doesn't finish developing until 25. Ish, I think for guys, it might be a little bit longer. But I think that's quite like 45,



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maybe, maybe 45



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if we're being generous,



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but that's pretty extraordinary that you, you know, that you really are able to connect with and, and figure this out, right? I mean, that is, this is wisdom of, if you hadn't said how old you were, I don't think people would guess that you were in your late 20s. Because it's very wise, and very grounded, and, which is why you're doing what you're doing. Right. And such a good example for people so and just a good model, I think is even a better word. But I was also thinking to, you know, I've, I firmly believe that we go through what we go through in our lives, to be able to do to step into our purpose. So, you know, if you had not had all of those awful, hellish years, you may not be as effective of a coach as you are, you would probably still be very good because you're a people person, and you are charismatic, and you're just naturally wise, right? good listener, these types of things. But that all those extra pieces just make you that much better, as my guest. And I, you know, I

say this to Connor, too, all the time. And you know, all my kids. And I say it to myself, that there's a reason why we've gone through this. And there's a, you know, we step into our purpose when it's time. And because I've gone through many moments of saying, I feel so sad that it took me until my 40s to figure this out, right. But then things had to happen, there were certain things that needed to happen, and that I had to figure out, that make me so much more compassionate and effective. Now,



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I don't know,



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I couldn't, I couldn't agree more with you. And it's amazing that we are otherwise complete strangers, but have, you know, I connect with you on so many levels and the things that you're saying. So, you know, you're taking the words right out of my mouth. But you know, one thing that I think about a lot when it comes to my own life, and that I I try to teach this, you know, to I try to teach this to to anytime, you know, I have like a large audience, I have an opportunity to talk to a lot of people at once. This is one of the points that I always harp on, because every single person has been through something extraordinarily difficult. physically, emotionally, spiritually, whether it's losing a loved one, whether it's going through a divorce, whether it's some kind of mental issue, emotional issue, as we all have been through something that's really difficult. And we have all had this moment, where we ask ourselves, why, where we sit, you know, if you're, if you are spiritual, you might say, God, why are you challenging me in this way? Why are you putting me through this? You know, if you believe in the universe, you might, you know, be saying, Why are the cosmos aligning in such a way that I have such bad luck? You know, if you don't believe in anything higher than yourself, you might say, Is this some kind of a coincidence that I'm suffering? You know, we're all we always have this moment where we question our negative experience, and we question the pain that we are going through. And, you know, you said that you step into your purpose when it's time. And you have to go through, you know, a lot of these things in order to become more compassionate and more wise and really learn what you're meant to be doing. And I couldn't agree with that more. And I'll just piggyback off of that, and, and and say that my belief and what I try to share with other people, is that the reason we go through these really painful negative experiences is not that we have have bad luck or somebody or something is out to get us. The reason we go through them is that they are essential for our correction. So essentially, there is something missing, there is something that is not functioning properly inside of us, there is a piece of us that is broken and needs to be fixed. And you will go through the

same painful experience in a different costume over and over again, until you figure out what that problem is, and how to fix it. So, again, I don't know if it's God, if it's the universe, if it's some alien, some extraterrestrials that are all controlling our lives. No, I can't tell you, you know what the sources, but what I can tell you is that you will be forced to go through pain, so that you can be permitted to heal. So every one of these negative, painful heart wrenching experiences, whether it's your son's struggling, you know, with with his his identity, or it's you as a mother watching these, you know, having your heart ripped out of your chest, or me being suicidal, or your family member going through a divorce or you know, even something just as terrible as, as your dog dies for no reason gets hit by a car, God forbid, every one of these things, no matter how unfair and painful they are. They're essential for your correction. Not that you're bad, not that it's your fault. Not that there's something you know, wrong with you, per se. But there is a wound inside of you that needs to be healed. And you need to take that experience as evidence as an alarm. That this is your opportunity to heal this unloved or anxious or afraid, or abandoned, or self destructive part of you that there's a Boogeyman inside of you that's trying to get you and again, you will be put through pain so that you can be permitted to heal. And, and the cruel joke is the cruel joke of life is that it doesn't just happen once it happens to you. Yeah,



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that is very, very real.



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This is why people have five or six divorces. Every every person that every person that they marry is the same person in a different body. You know, but like, not exactly the same. But like they've got enough similarities, that it's like you're the common denominator among all of those divorces, and why do you keep getting married and divorced and married and divorced because there's something in you? It's very painful to go through a divorce. Nobody wants to do that. But you keep getting divorced, because someone is trying to tell you that there's something in you, you got to heal, you got to fix. And I said the cruel joke is that you're going to keep getting married and divorced until you fix it.



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Right. Well, and I think that's I mean, that's.



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And by the way, this is why addicts keep relapse. Yeah, you can go through treatment 1000 times. But until you figure out what that part of you is, that really needs to be healed, you're gonna relapse. It's, it's God, the universe, whatever you want to call it, putting you through pain once again, until you figure out how to heal it.



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That is brilliant. And so true. And and once again, articulated so well because I have laughed about this, you know, from time to time throughout my you know, probably the past 10 years with different people think he's saying okay, well here's here's a similar you know, same problem, different situation. Clearly, there's a lesson that I need to learn that I haven't learned yet. So what is this lesson and that's the, you know, the lesson that the, whatever needs to be healed, whatever's broken. That's the trick is getting quiet enough and introspective enough to be able to sit with that discomfort because it's uncomfortable. And



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but kudos to you for being the person who says clearly there is a lesson I need to learn here. And what is the lesson, that's what I want to encourage people to do is to have the humility and the patience and the grace towards themselves and the love towards themselves. To say, clearly, there's a lesson I need to learn here. That's very rare Heather, that you can take that responsibility. Wow. So I really admire you, thanks.



40:24

Yeah, my pass that on to everyone. Because there's there is a lot of and being able to do that, I've never really thought about it that way. But and being able to do that, I've been able to allow myself then to get very still, and introspective, and give myself that, you know, instead of the being the harsh, you know, you're your harshest critic, right? Letting go of that. And being gentle and saying, Okay, this isn't fun. Let's figure this out. You know, and, and, you know, to your point two about listening to whatever, whatever your highest power is. So, you know, I respect that's different for everyone, and whatever you can, you know, whomever, whatever you connect with, those are where your answers are going to come.



41:31

Yeah, exactly. But, but, you know, when, when you're sitting there, just, you know, a word of consolation is, when you're sitting there really struggling with something. And you're wondering why this is happening? And oh, god, why are you putting me through this, you know, or why me? First of all, it's very normal to feel that way. But just remember that when you were in elementary school, sitting there taking your math test, the teacher was always in the corner, quiet as a mouse. So, whoever and whatever out there is trying to, you know, teach you this lesson. You don't get to go up to the teacher and and ask for the answer to question number 14, is it a, b, or c? You know, so you might be sitting there wondering, Oh, God, why, you know, why? Why is this happening? And what's the lesson here? But, you know, for me, in my faith, you know, I, I feel a connection with God, maybe not everybody's like that. But I always remind myself whenever I'm going through something, that the teacher is always quiet during the test, you know?



42:49

Oh, my gosh, I love that that is so very true. Or the other thing, I always think like, there are options that are handed by, you know, when you you're struggling with something like that, and you're like, I don't know, and the question is, is answered with a question, right? So instead of, you know, the answer is apples, it's, you know, well, you could think of it this way, or this way, or this way. And then you're like, you're right, but I think, but it does, too, at the same time, right? Because then it gives you it, doesn't it? Yeah, in the moment, you're like, just, I just want to know. Yeah, this is really hard. And I'm depleted and my cup is empty. And you know, all of those things, right? So,



43:36

but look, we all want to know why. Like I said, we've all had that moment that we're really struggling. And we're saying Why?



43:41

Well, that's part of being human.



43:45

And my answer, for every one of those people is the same is that there's a purpose to your pain. You have to I don't care what the situation is, you have to learn a lesson right now

about yourself, there is something in you, that needs to be healed, that needs to be fixed. And I'll tell you, it was a cruel joke in my life. 19 years old, go to the doctor tells me you have a disease, it's going to be excruciating. You're going to have it for the rest of your life, and we don't have any cures. And if you're not careful, you'll die of colon cancer by the age of 25. Like he he said it in a nicer way. But that was just basically the message. Right, exactly. So I'm sitting there and I'm thinking well, what the hell? You know, excuse me, like, what is that? What kind of what kind of cruel joke is this? Like, what what is the What's going on here? And you know what it took me years and years and years to figure this out. But I will tell you now with 110% certainty, as confident as I am that the sky is blue Is that the reason I got this disease? Yes, of course, some of it's hereditary and you know, blah, blah, blah. But the reason that it hit me at the time that it did was that throughout my life as a child, I had been bullied, I had body image issues, I had very bad anxiety, I used to get migraines. You know, when I was really worried as a child as a very nervous, worried anxious kid, I used to have migraines I used to throw up. And until the age of 19, I never did anything about any of it, I suppressed it, I pushed it down, I distracted myself with sports, I always pretended that I was fine. So now what I know, again, as certain as I am, that the sky is blue, and as clearly as I see you sitting in front of me, I know that the reason I got this disease and went through this pain was this was my body's way of telling me, you have a lot of emotional pain that you have never addressed. So here, I'm setting off the flare gun. And as soon as I started to address the emotional issues and the trauma from my childhood in my past, it is no coincidence that my stomach disease improved astronomically. And the mind and body are one. You know, your emotional issues and your physical issues are always intimately connected. Though, I spent some years wondering what the hell's going on? And why am I going through this. And now I have so much clarity, this was the lesson I needed to learn this was the part of myself that I needed to heal. Unfortunately, it manifested itself in a physical disease. Whereas for other people, it might manifest itself in an addiction, or, you know, relationship problems or being suicidal or whatever. But you're going through that pain, because there's something about yourself that your body is trying to alert you to right, you know,



47:04

right. Oh,



47:06

I,



47:07

you're spot on? 100% correct. I believe that as well and have seen it, you know, in so many different ways in my life, and, you know, friends and family and their lives. And and I think the more that you try to like, push stuff down. It just keeps popping up in different ways. So yeah, it totally is. Right. So funny.



47:42

I know, I would, I would tell you, I know your oldest is the one who's you know, really struggled. But I'm the youngest of two of three, I have two older siblings, and they had anxiety and depression and other issues. And they got all the attention. And my parents assumed that I was always fine. So if there are any parents out there who have there's a baby of the family, watch, and you think the baby of the family is like, like jovial and the jester and you know, like, Oh, we you know, by the time we got to the third or fourth kid, he's fine. Like, or she's fine. Watch him. Don't neglect the baby of the family, because the baby of the family gets like the most fun attention, but gets the least serious attention. Because by the time you get there, you're like, Oh, yeah, he's, you know, the last one is cool.



48:35

All right. Are you exhausted? or right, are you? It's so true. And I think the baby also watches everything, and they learn how to adapt, and keep the attention, at least the negative attention off of them. Right. So I think those are very wise words, and very good reminders to all of us, because I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that, as I have, you know, especially when Connor was in acute crisis. That was one of the most stressful parts of it was trying to make sure that my other kids were okay. That they, you know, felt seen and heard. And, and it's almost impossible to do at times because you just, there's just not enough of you, you know,



49:39

no bandwidth. No,



49:41

I mean, I was so stretched them for so long. And my cup was, you know, just there was just nothing there. And I don't say that as an excuse, it's just a fact. And so I know and



49:57

i don't i don't blame my parents at all. You know, I love him to death. But when my brother was 17, he was in high school, my brother is six or seven years older than me. So he was 17, he was in high school, he was suicidal. And I was like, you know, like a happy go lucky, fifth grader. You know, my parents aren't thinking about me, they're like, we got to keep our son alive. You know, so they only had so much bandwidth. So I have a lot of compassion and understanding for that. But you, you know, especially if an older kid is in acute crisis, don't think that means that the little ones are not also struggled. Yes.



50:43

Yes, you're absolutely right. And I think that's a very, I appreciate that reminder, and I think everybody listening will appreciate that reminder, because



50:56

I don't want to be pretentious, I'm not I'm not a parent, you know, all of my appreciation goes out to all of these parents. I just know what it's like, right? The kid?



51:06

Well, and I don't take that as pretension at all. I take that as I mean, I think we all need to be reminded, like, hey, like, you know, you got to shift and that's part of, you know, just doing what we do is being able to shift right. And, and, I mean, I laugh This is when I was actually talking with my husband the other night about this, I typically, unless I'm recording, my office door is always open. And, and it's very intentional. Because I've, especially in this type of COVID, I've learned very much how to focus with lots of noise going on around me. So I can shift into a conversation with a kid and then ship shift back, but to me, and this is just me, and I'm not saying this is the right way to do it, the wrong way to do it. But it's the ability to kind of have my know what the energy of the houses. So I just throw that out there as kind of my what I've learned through this time, of, you know, our journey with Connor, but it's been a, you know, it's been a journey with all six of us. And, and everybody's had their own experience. My daughter, my senior the other day, my husband was like, Oh, you should, you should listen to this particular episode. And she was like, you know, I lived through it once. I don't need to live through it again. And, and which is, you know, and, and very few words, a very powerful statement of how much this

affected all of them. And



52:50

so,



52:52

thank you for saying that.



52:55

Yeah. How does your how has, how does your husband handle, like, you know, I think your your superpower as the mom and the rock of the family, you know, the, the, the person who holds the whole family together as the mom and your, you know, your super super woman is to be so perceptive as always to know what the energy of the house is, like you say, and no matter what's happening with your kid, you know, like, you know, when something's off, but I wonder how your husband has dealt with this, you know, your guys struggle and, and how you guys sort of what, what his role is in in how he how he deals with all this?



53:38

He?



53:40

Well, he's been First of all, he's been really quite amazing. He deals with everything with humor. So you know, there's there's a lot of laughing at her family. He's sarcastic, witty, you know, and my kids have all picked up on this. So, you know, especially when Connor is home, the date the dinner time to have the conversations are oh my gosh, so funny, probably, you know, super inappropriate. And it's just, it just is. But he has this has been an extraordinary growing experience for him because he's, you know, very much the, you know, just that kind of happy go lucky guy like he is has had a good career and, um, you know, love sports, and you know, he's very much like a guy's guy, right. And I just actually interviewed him for my one year anniversary podcast episode and so it was really funny, cuz he's definitely like, he's the clown. He's the one who always likes to be in the spotlight. So the fact that I'm the one doing this is kind of funny, because that's more his role. So he

was laughing that, you know, I finally let him be on the mic and he was so excited. But this is all, you know, quite difficult for him because he did like when Connor first came out, like he literally we were actually away. And he looked at me and he was like, but he, I don't understand it. He has terrible fashion sense. Yeah, that was like his The first thing you said,



55:31

like,



55:34

really?



55:35

You're like, wow, okay, so that goes home.



55:39

So that's what we've been kind of, that's where we kind of started. But overall, you know, he's great. Because, you know, I was like, he's fun. Daddy, you know, he's the one who, you know, does all the gay, you know, takes them to play the sports and is super fun guy. And let's get ice cream. And let's do that. And I'm the one that's like, do your homework and



55:59

add it. You got it? Yeah,



56:02

yeah. Although for whatever reason, they're more scared of him. I don't know what it is. But maybe it's the dad voice.



56:11

But it's,



56:13

it is really funny. So he is, but he has been really good through all of this and, and open to learning like his, one of his big I asked him one of one of his big lessons. And all of this is and he said it was learning to validate emotions. I didn't know you had to do that. Right. Like, it's like a really big thing for him. But a super important lesson, right? And so



56:46

I didn't even know what an emotion was until I was like 26. I mean, really like what an emotion is, and what the difference is between an emotion and a thought. Yeah, you know, most, ask somebody, how do you feel, most of the time, they'll tell you what they think. They won't tell you how they feel because they don't know, they don't know how they feel. that emotion is I'm frustrated, I'm ashamed, I'm afraid, I'm disgusted, I'm angry. I'm sad. You know, emotions are kind of like a treasure chest at the bottom of a sunken ship. And on top of the treasure chest, there are so many layers of like, debris, and stuff that is collected since the ship was capsized. And in order to get to that treasure chest, which is like the actual emotion, you have to sort through all of the layers of anxiety, and negative self talk and thoughts and logic and intellect. And I should be this I should be that, you know, you finally remove all of that stuff. Now you can actually identify and validate the emotion. But it's very, very difficult, you know, human beings are thought to be so such emotional creatures, but we're really not we're actually very feeling phobic. Yeah. And we're not taught how to access and validate and embrace the true emotion. underneath



58:26

a certain experience. It's very true. I wish that were a class that, you know, that the kids could learn before they get so entrenched in their habits of you know, of not doing it, of not recognizing.



58:45

I, you know, that was it.



58:51

I had my own journey with figuring out them, you know, figuring that out myself. And one of the things that my therapist I'd say was, don't show it on yourself, when I would start to

say, Well, I should do this, you know, I should, I should be feeling this way I should be doing this. And, and, and so that that's we have lots of fun sayings, but I that's one of my favorite and, and then you know, then we'd get to the point where, you know, once I was able to really talk about the emotion, you know, where are you feeling it? And that was such a big thing for me. Because, you know, to your point of, I think we are so cerebral, right like, and that's what we think is emotion, right? So but we have that intellect. And so I'd always be like, well, intellectually, I know this, but I feel it here or I feel it in my gut or I feel it. You know, and this is what it feels like. And so being able to then kind of really describe the emotion was so helpful. And being able to put words with it and, and connect it with the intellect or pull it apart from the intellect which often gets in the way. Right.



1:00:13

Yeah, you know, I think that the agony of our existence, the agony of, of the human condition is that there is so much space between what we know in our heads and what we feel in our hearts. That is, that is true is true agony is for example, you know that you're a good mom, you know that you're good looking, you know that you are smart, you know that you are capable. But and I'm not saying you specifically, I'm just saying in general, but in your heart, you feel guilty, or you feel ashamed or you feel like a failure. Right, right. So the reason so many of us are, you know, are miserable and tormented emotionally, is that we live perpetually in this abyss in this space, this black hole between, well, I know all of these things, but I just don't feel them. I just, you know, it's like, I know, I'm, like, Look, I just went through a breakup, you know, fortunately, unfortunately. So I know that I'm charming, and I'm good looking. And I'm capable. And you know, I know that one day, I'll find my perfect person and blah, blah, blah, right. But when you're going through a breakup, or at least in my case, you know, like, now I feel abandoned, I feel lonely, I feel afraid. What if I'm never gonna find somebody, what if I'm not good enough, blah, blah, blah. And so it's so it's so painful to have these two things in stark contrast, and like your friends, or your therapist, or whatever, will always tell you like, oh, but you know, you're fine. And, you know, you're gonna be okay. And like, you know, remind yourself of all of these things that you understand intellectually. But I think that, you know, my quest, at least, in terms of my, my own emotional success, is bridging the gap, and creating harmony between what I know in my head and what I actually feel in my heart in my soul, and my subconscious is making those two things that are diametrically opposed to each other sometimes make them the same thing. What I know, in my mind, is what I actually want to feel and believe in my subconscious. Yeah. And it takes a long time to bridge that gap. does, it takes a lot herself, but it takes a ton of



1:02:49

work. Yes. Yeah. But it's a it's a quest that is worthy. And doable. Yeah.



1:03:00

It's worthy. And it's, and it's doable. You know, and this is a, this is what monks do, by the way, they go and live in a monastery for 20 years, and stay in complete silence, because their entire quest is how do I remove my ego? How do I remove my fear? How do I remove all of these negative limiting beliefs? You know, how do I actually what I know in my head, start to feel that in the core of my existence, you know, and they do it by isolation and meditation and you know, things like that, that that's not what you have to do, you can do it while you know, living still a very full and normal life and stuff like that. But I just want to point out that that discrepancy, you know, and I want to validate for people that sometimes, you know, it's okay, that what you know, in your head, is very different from what you feel about yourself. And I think, I think the best thing you can do is find evidence in your life, for how what you feel about yourself is not true. And find evidence for how what you know, to be true, actually is true. So, if I believe my, if I feel in my heart that I'm undeserving, or I'm not worthy, or I'm never going to find another girlfriend, or, you know, I'm always going to be alone or whatever, because that's what I feel in my subconscious. I am prone to go find evidence to support that, which is like, Oh, well, this girl, you know, didn't work out with this girl and that relationship was failed. And you know, I'm not good looking enough and I don't have a good enough body or whatever. Like now I'm finding all of this evidence to support my subconscious belief. But if you want to change that subconscious belief, and if you want to bring what you feel in your heart and in your body, more in line with what you know in your head, then you have to find evidence to support it, which is, actually I've had a number of very good relationships. And actually, here's here are all of the ways in which I am a good mom, here are all of the ways in which I know that I actually am capable. And then your, you know, your brain takes that evidence, and it says, Hmm, maybe what I feel in my heart is actually just kind of distorted and misleading.



1:05:28

Right? I totally, I think that that is, you know, it's kind of the whole positive and negative self talk, right? have that little idea of, of, and it's connecting those, you know, it's forever that you're trying to connect, trying to get those to connect. And, and just, you know, to add to that I, in the past few years have been careful. And I think this is more because it, it holds me accountable to myself, but I share this with my kids as well, about what I say, you know, about myself, so if I say, you know, yeah, this this pod pack, this podcast is not

going to be successful. Right, I said, I put that out there. My that is that is out into the universe now. So that is an order that I've put out to the universe. And so then, you know, the whole that, you know, I'm reeling it back in. And so it's, it's more of like a very conscious, like, being super conscious of how you're talking not only to yourself, but what you're putting out in the world. And so I'll catch them, you know, they'll say things and like, really, you're ordering that from the universe, you know, that what you're ordering up, cancel that order, you know, so and it's kind of goofy and silly, but it works, because it really makes you stop and think like, you know, makes you be present and aware.



1:07:05

So



1:07:07

if you want to, again, you're taking the words right out of my mouth. But if you want to feel an immediate 20 to 30% improvement about yourself, if you want to immediately, feel a little bit better about yourself, make a promise to yourself that from this moment forward, you are no longer going to make any self deprecating comments or jokes about yourself out loud, ever. Like how you talk to yourself is really, really important. And we always have these negative automatic intrusive thoughts. And you have to pay attention to those and control them. But don't ever let them come out of your mouth. You know, like, from this point forward, if you don't like your body, that's okay. And you can change it. But you don't ever say out loud to anyone. Um, so you know, never let those self deprecating self flagellating words, jokes, comments, phrases, you know, or like, if you're balding, and you're really insecure about that, like, haha, well, maybe if I had more hair, you know, because there's so much power to when your ears hear those words come out of your mouth and go into your ears and go back into your brain. It reinforces the way that you feel about yourself. So I always tell people, and oh my god, I had this client who almost fired me. She was pissed. She actually told me later on she was like, I was so annoyed with you that I was like, just about to quit. I had to tell her like 10 or 20 times a day, no self deprecating comments. I had to like, texted to her I had to cut because she every other word out of her mouth was something negative about herself. She may notice, yeah, you know, but I, and then within three months of working with me, all she would ever say was great positive things about herself. And I was like, this is a this is amazing, you know, but making that commitment to stop talking out loud about yourself or to yourself in a really mean and judgmental way significantly improves the way they write.



1:09:23

And it has an effect and every aspect of your life. I mean, it's quite extraordinary. And



1:09:32

it all bleeds. There's no compartmentalizing, there's no you know, I'm really good at my career but I have a terrible relationship and those things are completely separate you know, they all you can people like to fancy themselves able to compartmentalize, but it's all



1:09:49

connected. It's all connected. Yeah, I often joke I'm like, Oh, I just want to put that on the shelf for a while. You know, Can I shelf that? Yeah, no You know, you can like, maybe put a few file folders back, but it's always there. So, oh my goodness, well, I feel like we could we could definitely make this like a several hour episode, but I want to be respectful of of you and your time. I just want I know, we touched a little bit on, you know what you do specifically, but I really love just for you to let people know like, how they can get in touch with you, what you what you do do specifically and all of those, those good bits.



1:10:43

Sure, yeah. So as I said earlier, my practice is very solution oriented. I demand a lot from my clients, and I really hold them accountable. But they work with me for a short intensive period of time, anywhere from like two to four months. And in that period of time, we identify what the issues are, and we come up with solutions, and we achieve them. And I work on a few areas. One of them is self esteem and self confidence, and you know, just feeling more worthy and more valuable and happier with yourself. The second is body image disorders, whether it's, you know, you're anorexic, or whether you just don't like the way you look, or whether you've got kind of an odd relationship with food. And, or an odd relationship with exercising. That's the second arena that I work in. The third is anxiety, and depression, and you know, sort of related clinical issues. If you've got severe bipolar disorder, or you know, depressive disorder, whatever, then you might have to go to a psychiatrist, I might not be trained to help you. But if you just have sort of persistent anxiety or depression, and they're things that you've tried different solutions, but you need a little bit more of a practical approach, then I can definitely help you. And the last area that I work on is dating and relationships. And I know I said I just, you know, went through a breakup. So it might sound like I don't know what I'm talking about there. I hope I didn't

shoot myself. But But yes, even though I am a dating coach, I also am prone to, you know, we are all prone to learning different lessons in our dating lives and becoming, you know, better and stronger. And



1:12:36

you're human. But yeah,



1:12:37

I really. I'm human. Exactly. So yeah, you know, I help people figure out who they are, what they want, and what their ideal match is going to be. I also help people get through breakups if their relationship is not working out. I work with couples and stuff as well. And the best place to find me is just my Instagram. It's just my name. Kevin. Hi. You can send me a message any time. I will, we can chat over the phone can chat for 30 minutes, an hour, or whatever you need. I won't charge you. I'm always here. I'm always available. Please follow me. And please, please reach out. Yeah, I'll



1:13:21

definitely put that in the show notes. And I'll connect it on my page and on my Instagram, but as well as my website. So yeah, I mean, you are just wonderful and a wonderful resource for people and just a wealth of knowledge. So I just wanted to say one more thing really quickly before we we leave, I keep looking at the time and I'm like, oh my gosh.



1:13:51

Yeah, I'm sorry. I don't want to No, no, no, no, I will I feel this. You've been fast. You've been really fascinating to talk to you. I



1:13:58

feel the same way and it's gone by so quickly. And only now just before I was I like oh my gosh, I'm usually pretty good at like keeping my time. So I apologize. But and and I'll edit all of that out too. But I am just wondering if you can share. We had talked about this way back at the beginning just talking about why this cause coaching and working with this age group of people and doing the work that you do. Why is this mission so important to

you?



1:14:48

You know, this isn't something that I want to do. This is something that I have to do. I have to do this. And the reason is that I went through so much pain, physically, emotionally, spiritually, mentally. And I can't let all of that pain and suffering be for nothing. You know, by the grace of God, I was able to overcome those things. And I'm not saying that everybody who goes through pain has to start a podcast or become a motivational speaker or become a coach or whatever. But I feel so much gratitude, that I am still alive, and I'm still breathing, and I've managed to turn my tragedy into a triumph, that I just feel this obligation, I just feel this is coercion, a good coercion, you know, I feel a compulsion, a good compulsion, to, as I said earlier, save people time. And there are certain experiences you must have on your own, that I cannot save you from, you know, no matter how many times your mother tells you not to touch the stove, you have to touch it in order to feel what it's like to get burned. But there are other experiences that if you've been having them over and over and over again, and you're just going through pain unnecessarily, and you're just lost and struggling unnecessarily, I was you. I was that. And, and I wish I could take your pain away and put it on myself. And I can't do that. But what I can do is help you go through the center of it, and get to the other side faster. I can shorten the amount of time you spend suffering. And I can get you closer to not the life that I think is ideal for you. But I can get you closer to the life that you think is ideal for you. And I can help you figure out what that is. Because it took me a long time to even approach that question. Most people don't even know me.



1:17:22

Right? You know,



1:17:23

so having been there, and having been that, that person and knowing, you know, how confusing and scary it is to deal with these types of issues. You know, I've I've never, I don't know what what Connors struggle was like, you know, because I didn't have to, I never came out to my parents and I would, you know, never struggled with the same things that he did. But I know what his pain is, like, you know, so anything I can do to try to spare people some of that pain is is my is my mission. And, and I also feel compelled to do this work, because I believe that sometimes life is a journey. Mm hmm. Like you said, in your introduction, wherever people are on their journey. They're not alone. But I believe that

sometimes life is a process, not a journey. And if you follow the process of people who have been through what you've been through, and if you can take even one nugget of wisdom from them, and include that in your process, then maybe you won't be lost on your journey for so long.



1:18:40

And why not.



1:18:43

So, again, there are certain things that you got to float around on the ocean for a long time. until you're ready until you know, you know you have a roadmap. But once you have a roadmap, follow it, because otherwise you won't get to your destination.



1:19:01

Exactly.



1:19:02

Oh my goodness. That's so good. That is so good. And I love that and I I identify with that 1,000% because that is exactly why I do what I do.



1:19:16

Not it?



1:19:18

Yeah, you've been like you've been through this and now you're helping other moms and other parents who are struggling with the same exact thing. It's not an option. God bless you for doing that. Yeah, you're



1:19:29

welcome and, and I love I love this and it's very, it's very important that nobody feels

alone and and everyone feels connection that there's a point of connection, right. So, oh my goodness, was there anything else that you would like to add before before we close up?



1:20:00

I'll just add one quick thing. A couple of years ago, one of my best friends, I won't say his name just to protect his confidentiality. He came to me, and we had breakfast or lunch one day. And he said to me that I saved his life when we were 12. And we've been friends since seventh grade. And so what do you, what are you talking about? He's like, when we were in seventh grade, he's gay. You said, when we were in seventh grade, I was so bullied. And I was so tormented. And I had no friends. And I didn't know that I was gay at the time, but I knew that something was wrong. And my parents went out of town for a weekend. And I got my hands on some pills. And I decided that on a Friday afternoon, I was going to go home and take my own life. I mean, a 12 year old being suicidal, imagine. And he told me a couple years ago that that Friday, my friend, Alex, and I, were going to get some pizza after school. And I told him, Hey, do you want to come with us. And he came with us. And because of that experience, he went home. And he didn't take the pills. And when his parents came home, he told him that he had been suicidal, and they got him into therapy, you know, and then he came out and you know, became more comfortable with his identity and everything. And I don't take credit for this, I cannot take credit for his life, all I did was invite him to come eat pizza with us. But he credits me with this, because it was somebody making him feel that he had a friend that he wasn't alone. And especially if your kid is LGBTQ, they already feel alone, they're already in the minority. And the power of someone being there for them. And then having friends and then having a system of support. Even if it's just as simple as, Hey, wanna come get some pizza, you don't know the, the effect it might have, you know. So, again, I don't take credit for this at all, but I just share this story to say, make sure those kids are are getting some good support and love from their friends. As you never know what kind of difference it can make.



1:22:49

That is a beautiful way to end because that is absolutely Bravo. And, you know, your friend is so brave for you know, sharing that and being able to recognize that and and thank you for being his friend, because all of our kids need a friend like you just somebody who will, I will live on like, right.



1:23:19

I'm the green room.



1:23:22

This very kind. So that is where we are going to end today. I just want to remind everyone out there to just breathe to take those few minutes every day to focus on your breath, and to calm and center yourself. Remember to email me at any time with ideas or feedback for just breathe and review. Just breathe on the platform of your choice. Please subscribe to my website to stay informed where you can sign up for my monthly newsletter as well as access to tons of awesome resources. And now Kevin will be one of those and join the private just breathe Facebook community to chat with other parents and allies. And remember to please share with anyone who needs to know that they are not alone. Until next time