Mel Robbins Keypoints — Healing, Trauma & Emotions

Mel Robbins Keypoints

Episodes in this pack: 26

How to Master Your Emotions & Never Get Angry or Bothered by Anyone

Guest: Dr. Marc Brackett
Date: 2026-07-16 · Duration: 1:04:11
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWvHZkkrAjc

KEYPOINTS

• Emotional intelligence is a set of learnable skills, and it decides who succeeds

Dr. Marc Brackett, founding director of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and author of Permission to Feel and Dealing with Feeling, defines emotional intelligence as skills that help you use emotions wisely to reach your goals. His Yale framework has reached more than 5,000 schools and over 10 million students. He tells his 500 Yale students that their CVs, grades and SAT scores all look the same. Just as height doesn't separate basketball players, intelligence won't decide who gets hired. Emotional skills will.

• Your mood quietly biases your judgments

In one study, teachers spent five minutes recalling their best or worst classroom day, then graded the identical essay. Grades differed by one to two full letter grades depending on mood, and the teachers insisted their feelings had no influence. Brackett's point is that emotions steer decisions all day without our noticing. The antidote starts with naming the emotion so it stops working unseen.

• It starts with permission to feel

Brackett grew up in northern New Jersey with a 'tough it up' father and an anxious mother, neither able to handle their own emotions, let alone his. He was abused from age 5 to 10 by his parents' closest friend, and he suppressed it until he was 48. The turning point was his uncle Marvin, a sixth-grade teacher and part-time band leader who practised a feelings curriculum with 11-year-old Marc in the backyard. Marvin was the first adult to ask him 'How are you feeling?', and Brackett says his whole career rests on that moment.

• Only about a third of people had an emotional ally

In Brackett's research, roughly one in three people say they had an 'Uncle Marvin or Aunt Maria' growing up, and two-thirds say they didn't. He calls the traits of these allies the 'big five': warmth, being non-judgmental, great listening, compassion and steady reliability. Brilliance, problem-solving and advice-giving aren't on the list. People fear being an ally because they can't fix things, but nobody is looking for a fix. If you didn't have one, he suggests becoming your own.

• RULER: recognize, understand, label, express, regulate

Brackett's five skills. Recognize that an emotion is happening, from your body, face and voice. Understand its causes and consequences. Label it precisely. Express it in ways that serve your goals. Regulate it. Mel rates herself 10/10 at noticing an emotion and 4/10 at knowing what it is.

• Precise labels point to the right fix

Anger is about injustice. Anxiety is about uncertainty about the future, so deep breaths and walks won't stop you ruminating. Stress is too many demands for your resources, so the gym brings only brief relief. You either accept that the job never ends or delegate and get support. Precision guides healthy regulation.

• 'Authentic self' isn't always your 'best self'

Brackett pushes back on reading permission to feel as permission to say whatever you feel whenever you like. Homes, workplaces and society have norms. Be true to yourself, but ask whether that's the most helpful self in the moment.

• Regulate with breath, then cognitive strategies

His sequence: permission to feel, then vocabulary, then deactivating your body (for him, a few breaths; for others, a walk or a short meditation), then a thinking strategy. His favourite is temporal distancing: 'How will I feel about this in a month?'

• The picture frame: watch the moment like a movie

When someone's energy turns hostile, as a relative of his did at family gatherings, Brackett imagines putting a frame around the scene so he is observing it instead of absorbing it. He fact-checks his catastrophic story ('she didn't actually say that') and chooses a response. Mel links this to her Let Them approach. Distance creates space to regulate, but you still have to regulate.

• Negative self-talk comes from outside, not within

Brackett argues self-talk starts early and is installed by other people. People don't want to self-sabotage, he says. They have been 'gaslighted' into it, which is why it helps to name where a voice came from.

• Ask how they feel, and offer yours first

After almost 30 years of marriage, Mel's most-asked question is 'What are you thinking?', which rarely gets an answer. Brackett says we're 'intimacy-phobic'. Model it instead: 'I'm in a weird place, an odd mix of frustration and overwhelm, and I want you to know.' Mel realised her husband's shutting down wasn't a power move. He felt there was nothing he could do.

EXAMPLES

• 'Your Uncle Marvin was my Uncle Marvin'

At a talk in New York State, a man stood up and asked whether Brackett meant Marvin Moore, the sixth-grade social studies teacher from Monticello. He was. Marvin had transformed his life too. After 45 minutes of conversation, the man asked Brackett: 'For whom are you an Uncle Marvin?'

• Students said 'stressed' when they meant envy

About 70% of Brackett's students (and 77% of high schoolers in a national study) report feeling tired, stressed and bored. When he had students journal the reasons, the real emotion was envy: peers who studied less and got better grades, better looks, better-connected parents. Counselling centres prescribe breathing and yoga, and he jokes that no yoga pose decreases envy.

• The $7 almond milk

Raised by a father who criticised spending, Brackett bristles when his partner buys organic almond milk. He walks down another aisle, breathes, and asks whether it's worth the relationship and whether he'll remember it in a week.

- **The bullying video at a conference**

  After Brackett spoke, the next presenter showed a video of a boy being bullied and joked, 'That was before he got his black belt,' in front of 300 people. Brackett says he regressed to age 12, and as a fifth-degree black belt he pictured a flying sidekick. His best self waited. Afterwards he told the man it was embarrassing for the whole community and would never happen again.

- **His niece Esme in kindergarten**

  Brackett brought his niece Esme home from Guatemala 21 years ago. In kindergarten a classmate called her skin colour 'disgusting' compared with her mother's. He had to tell her, in five-year-old language, that no one has the right to define her reality.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Daily RULER check-in**

  Ask 'How am I feeling?' and push past 'fine', 'tired' or 'stressed' to a precise word, then ask what caused it and what you need.

- **Before big judgments, name your mood**

  Grading, hiring, replying to a hard email: notice whether a good or bad day is tilting your call, and wait if needed.

- **Be someone's Uncle Marvin**

  Be warm, non-judgmental and reliable, and listen without fixing. Asking a kid or colleague 'How are you feeling?' can matter for decades.

You’re Not Broken: Why You People-Please, Feel Anxious, & Never Feel Good Enough – and How to Heal

Guest: Kelly McDaniel
Date: 2026-05-21 · Duration: 1:08:09
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li5PCbqEaEw

KEYPOINTS

• 'Mother hunger' is a yearning for a quality of love that one or more of three essentials didn't provide.
Therapist Kelly McDaniel says every child needs nurturing (to grow the brain), protection (to feel safe and flourish) and, later, guidance. Mother hunger means one or all of these went missing in your formative years. It's often mistaken for romantic longing, so people look for it in partners and friends and stay frustrated. She stresses it isn't about blaming mothers, many of whom did their best.

• She calls it 'the most primitive wound our body can sustain.'
A baby is 'already in love' with its mother at birth: her smell, her heartbeat, her body as 'our first home.' Infants are built to stay close for feeding, holding and sleep. McDaniel says it shows up across race and class because infant needs are universal, and early care teaches us whether we're worthy, lovable and safe.

• Common adult signs include people-pleasing and emotional monitoring.
Mel and McDaniel list perfectionism, harsh self-criticism, disordered eating, trouble sitting still, people-pleasing, monitoring everyone's emotions in the room, treating everyone's happiness as your job, and always putting others' needs first. McDaniel connects these patterns to early care. They aren't a diagnosis.

• An unkind mother can wound as deeply as no mother at all, because criticism creates shame.
If your mother died, it hurts, but you don't take it personally. A critical mother creates shame and rejection from 'our first love.' Her examples: cruel comments about a daughter's developing body ('you're too fat to wear that'), dismissing her interests, or being so unpredictable that the child never knew what would set her off.

• Parentified daughters become their mother's caretaker or best friend.
Some mothers punish daughters for not being like them or not 'building her resume.' Others become martyrs: 'Poor me, my daughter doesn't…', complaining to the family or friends until the daughter makes her feel better. A mother who needed a best friend and 'used you' instead of finding her own leaves the daughter feeling her mom is only happy if she's her twin.

• 'My childhood was perfect, but nothing works now' is a mismatch worth exploring.
McDaniel explains that an infant or toddler's body can't handle stress hormones like cortisol and norepinephrine, and that chronic early stress can affect the brain's memory center. So 'I don't remember much, but it was all good' makes her wonder whether the child was under strain. She only explores this with clients who are willing, and notes mother hunger doesn't affect everyone.

• 'Pathological hope' keeps you trying the same approach for decades.
Daughters of 'compromised mothers' hope the mother they have will become the mother they need. Hope is natural, but it turns pathological when all the evidence says it isn't happening and you keep trying a new angle anyway. Her advice: 'Let yourself off the hook. Relax. Quit trying. See what happens.' The same pattern applies to an ex, a boss or a difficult child.

• The 'apology ache' is waiting for an apology that may never come.
A real apology is 'I'm sorry I did that, and I'm going to do something different now.' 'I'm sorry you feel that way' doesn't count. Most adult women carry this ache and push it onto partners, friends and kids. Mel's point: we often want the apology because we haven't honored the truth of our own experience. You can heal without one.

• Healing starts with grief, then becoming 'the mother of yourself.'
Naming it lets grief thaw, and it may come as rage, blame, sadness or numbness, on its own timeline. Your 'first job' as the mother of yourself is protection: be careful who you tell. Siblings may have had a different mother (as McDaniel puts it, 'number two in line' versus 'number seven' when money was stable), and friends who don't get it can add shame.

• Be cautious about bringing this to your mother.
Unless your mother is doing her own work and has an 'open, willing, humble heart,' she probably won't welcome it. This is intergenerational: every mother was a daughter first. Mel sums up the goal: 'I still love my mom, she is who she is, I'm not going to ask her to change. If I do the work for myself, I change.'

EXAMPLES

• 'I want my mom' during love-addiction withdrawal
McDaniel found the concept while treating women recovering from love addiction. When clients stepped away from romance, she kept hearing 'I want my mom.' It looked 'biological,' a craving so strong they could barely breathe. The reasons their mothers weren't available varied: death, mental illness, addiction and more.

• Mel's apology to her daughters
Mel shares that she tells her daughters she was dysregulated, under heavy financial stress, and had postpartum depression that made it hard to bond with one of them as a baby. 'If I could change it all, I would. I'm responsible for that.' She finds saying it liberating. McDaniel calls it a gift but says only the daughters can say how it lands.

• The partner who feels like a parent
One sign in couples: 'I do as much for my partner as I do my children… I want a partner.' The partner receiving all that care may not see their own mother hunger at all.

• Marriages after healing
McDaniel has seen some clients leave marriages that triggered them every single day. Others realize the marriage isn't broken: 'I just need to quit expecting this partner of mine to be my mother.' Relationships improve, food gets easier, and cravings shrink, though addiction still needs its own treatment.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Three-need audit**
  Ask yourself separately: Was I nurtured? Was I protected and safe? Was I guided? Notice which gap matches the patterns you see in yourself now.
- **Building a safe place to talk**
  Ask a therapist or coach directly: 'I need a place to talk about this.' If they're unwilling, find someone else. Or start a reading group with friends who are working through the same material, which is free and can happen over a shared meal.
- **Spotting pathological hope**
  List the strategies you've tried for years to win someone's approval. If the evidence says no, practice stopping and watch what changes in you.
- **Her book**
  McDaniel's book Mother Hunger lays out the nurture, protect and guide framework discussed here.

Your Grief & Heartbreak Will Get Better the Moment You Watch This

Guest: David Kessler
Date: 2025-12-18 · Duration: 1:25:59
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSZy6Ww3e6A

KEYPOINTS

- **If you can find a way to grieve fully, you'll be able to live fully.**
  Grief expert David Kessler says loss stretches your capacity for pain and also your capacity for joy and laughter. His goal for grief work is to eventually 'remember with more love than pain.' He reminds people that 'you come from a long line of dead people.' Every ancestor grieved, and something in us knows how.
- **We live in a 'grief-illiterate' world that expects grief to follow a TV script.**
  On TV, episode one someone dies, episode two we cry, episode three it's back to normal. Real grief 'has a longer shadow.' Kessler says people most often reach out to a professional around five years after a loss, after years of wishing it away, and the second most common time is just after one year, when they expected it to be gone.
- **Early grief lasts about two years.**
  If a friend seems to be 'taking too long,' they're probably still in early grief. Of roughly 18,000 listener emails, Kessler and Mel estimate about 99% described guilt or pressure to move on. People telling them it's time to move on usually haven't lost the same kind of person.
- **There are different grieving styles, and practical grievers aren't heartless.**
  Some people do a week or two of memorials and then want to move on. Kessler calls them practical grievers. They were practical about divorce and moves too, and they don't change during a big loss. Emotional grievers think practical grievers don't feel enough, and practical grievers think emotional grievers feel too much. Neither group needs to change the other.
- **Grief bursts and love bursts are both normal.**
  Something at work or a song can trigger a sudden wave of grief that overwhelms you. You'll also get sudden waves of love for the person, just as your feelings toward them varied when they were alive.
- **Don't compare losses. The worst grief is yours.**
  When we compare, we're in our heads, but 'we don't have a broken mind, we have a broken heart.' Grief isn't a pie where someone else's loss takes a slice of yours. A fiancée of three months and a spouse of 40 years are both grieving.
- **Numbness and denial protect you, and complicated grief goes in circles.**
  Kessler calls numbness a wise mind 'titrating' feelings, giving you only as much as you can handle. People who come to deal with a loss 5, 10 or 20 years later are 'ready now.' Complicated grief is like a big branch that falls into a river: the water starts to swirl, 'no longer evolving, it's revolving.' The fix is to examine the branch, be with it and talk about it.
- **The meaning isn't in the loss. It's in who you become.**
  There is no meaning in a child's death or a tragedy, and a loss is not 'a test, a lesson... a gift or a blessing.' Meaning shows up after you 'excavate the pain,' and choosing to live again is a decision.
- **Anger is pain's bodyguard, and guilt is grief's companion.**
  People who cry get tissues. People who get angry get treated 'like a porcupine,' yet they're in just as much pain and need a hug just as much. Guilt and 'if only' bargaining stick around because the mind would rather feel guilty than helpless: guilt offers a sense of control.
- **Grief has to be witnessed, not fixed.**
  Instead of 'Dad's always with you,' ask: 'What's it like to sit across from that empty chair tonight?' What they say will make you uncomfortable and you'll want to fix it, but no one is broken. Accept the person as who they are now.

EXAMPLES

- **Kessler's own losses**
  His mother died when he was 13, and he thought he was the only kid who had ever lost a parent. He later adopted two boys aged four and five. His son David, born drug-exposed, struggled with trauma and addiction as a teenager and died. Kessler was already a grief expert of decades.
- **The haunted-house moment**
  About a year after David's death, Kessler pictured teenagers in 30 years biking past a broken-down house with spider webs and saying a grief expert lived there who 'never came out again.' He realized that future was possible, and he chose to live.
- **The postponed wedding**
  Early in the pandemic, a roughly 20-year-old neighbor sobbed to him about her postponed wedding. A friend scoffed that he'd been to shootings and 9/11. He replied, 'You know so little about grief.'
- **Mel's husband's second-opinion guilt**
  Nearly 20 years later, Mel's husband, a death doula and hospice volunteer, still wonders 'if only I'd gotten a second opinion.' Kessler asked: if everyone got second opinions, would people stop dying in that hospital? No.
- **Changing the village**
  An Australian researcher described villages where, the night someone dies, every household changes something in their house or yard, so the family wakes up knowing that everyone recognizes everything has changed.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **The rule of threes**
  Show up at 3 days, 3 weeks and 3 months. Don't ask 'what do you need?' Bring food, take their car in, buy groceries, drive the kids to soccer. Kessler was moved to find a frozen lasagna someone had quietly left in his freezer for the night he'd need it.
- **What not to say, and what to say instead**

Avoid 'at least,' 'there's a reason for this,' 'they're in a better place' (fine from clergy, he says) and 'God needed another angel.' Try: 'I don't have the words... but you're not going to walk it alone. Angry, be angry. Sad, be sad. Stuck, be stuck. I'm here with you.'

• Gauging a loved one's room

Whether keeping a room intact is healthy depends on frequency, duration and intensity, and on whether it brings comfort or distress, not on a right or wrong rule.

• Finding Meaning

Kessler's book on meaning as the next step after grief, along with his support groups, including one specifically for older losses.

World Leading Therapist: Why You Feel Stuck in Life & How to Get Unstuck

Guest: Lori Gottlieb
Date: 2025-11-24 · Duration: 1:26:28
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpgabAQo85I

KEYPOINTS

• People come to therapy wanting someone else to change

Lori Gottlieb, a therapist, New York Times 'Ask the Therapist' columnist and author of Maybe You Should Talk to Someone, says the request is the same whether it comes from patients, column letters or podcast listeners: 'they want to feel better' by changing another person. You can't change someone else, but you can influence them by doing something different yourself. She doesn't deny that difficult people exist. Her point is that we play a role in what keeps us stuck.

• The way you narrate your life shapes its quality

She calls that role our 'story.' Change the way you talk to yourself and you immediately change the story, which changes 'what happens on the next page.' Insight alone is useless, though. 'If you don't take action out in the world,' nothing changes.

• Many of our stories were handed to us

Childhood labels like 'the sensitive one' versus 'the easygoing sister' become roles we keep playing as adults without realizing it. Often the label reflects the parent's own story, for instance one who grew up in a family where feelings weren't allowed. Gottlieb reframes 'too sensitive' as 'a keen observer' who notices what the rest of the family denies.

• An outsized reaction signals a story underneath

Your feelings are valid, she says, but check their size. If it's 80° in the room, it's hot, but does it feel like 95 to you? If your 'thermostat is off,' some story about yourself is probably being triggered, like 'of course I can't find a partner who treats me well.'

• We collect evidence for our story and drop what contradicts it

Like a detective with a thesis, we fixate on what supports 'I'm being dumped' and leave out anything that doesn't. Her antidote is to deliberately look for counterexamples. Stories are rarely 'always' or 'never.'

• Offer wise compassion, not idiot compassion

She borrows the Buddhist term 'idiot compassion': avoiding rocking the boat to spare someone's feelings even when the boat needs rocking. Telling a friend who fears being fired 'you deserve a better boss' is idiot compassion if you know they haven't been trying. Wise compassion gently holds up a mirror: 'It seems like you haven't really been invested in that job.'

• The person you talk to most is you, so ask whether it's kind, true and useful

Mel guesses she talks most to her husband or her executive producer, Tracy. Gottlieb says it's actually yourself, all day long. She tests self-talk with three questions: is it kind, is it true, is it useful? For a 'never good enough' story, she suggests not globalizing one shortfall, finding a few counterexamples, and walking into the world assuming you are good enough.

• Change and loss travel together

Even good changes, like starting to exercise or moving, mean grieving what you're giving up, such as a familiar lifestyle or habit. Not expecting that grief is part of why people slide back. Her own therapist compared her to a cartoon prisoner shaking the bars of a cell that's open on both sides. Walking around the bars means taking responsibility, which means change.

• Anxiety is living in the past or the future, narrated as a horror story

Anxiety means you aren't in the present. We tell catastrophic stories: 'my boss doesn't like my work,' 'people are talking about me.' The alternative is asking 'this happened, what can I do about it now?' She describes feelings as a compass pointing to important information.

EXAMPLES

• Two letters from one marriage

A woman wrote in sure her husband was cheating: late-night calls with a coworker, distance. Her father had cheated with a coworker. Her husband also wrote in, details changed for privacy: his father had died, his wife wanted him to move on, and she couldn't understand because her own father had left. Each was trapped in their own story, writing to a columnist instead of to each other.

• 'John'

The first patient in her book is insulting and critical and thinks everyone around him is an idiot, even the person at the Apple Store. Underneath is family trauma and a story that he has to be 'the rock.' He cares deeply about loving and being loved. Readers who despised him at first end up wanting to give him a hug.

• The wedding invitation

A woman discovered two high-school friends were getting married only by spotting an invitation at one friend's house. Neither had invited her, though she'd invited them. Gottlieb thinks asking them directly would have helped. They'd likely have explained, and she'd have felt better even if not great.

• 'I'm such a bully to myself'

A patient insisted she wasn't self-critical. Gottlieb asked her to write down everything she said to herself for a week. She came back, scrolled through her notes and started crying.

• Mel's roadside rants

Miserable after moving from the home where she'd raised her kids for 26 years to small-town Vermont, Mel was nitpicking Chris. Her therapist had her pull the car over on drives from Boston, turn back toward the city and say everything she felt. Once the 'valve was released,' she could keep driving forward.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Fight one thing at a time

First, pick your battles: is this from my past, is it realistic, what does my partner put up with from me? Wait 15–30 minutes. If it still matters, raise it that day, not two days later, to avoid 'kitchen-sink fighting' with a mental list of 10 complaints.

- **Read your partner's owner's manual**
  One client needed 15 minutes in sweats before talking about her day. Another felt uncared for when her partner asked nothing. Learn how your person works instead of assuming.
- **When you dislike your adult child's partner**
  Criticizing pushes her toward him. She isn't ready to leave, or she would. Unless there's danger or abuse, stay close and invite her to things she used to love, like a museum trip, so she notices the contrast herself.
- **Boundaries are about your action, not their compliance**
  'If you comment on my appearance, I'll end the conversation.' When it happens, calmly say 'It was fun being with you. Talk to you later' instead of 'you didn't respect my boundary.' Do it 100% of the time. She says 98% doesn't work.

Reset Your Mind & Soul: How to Find Peace When Life Feels Overwhelming

Guest: Diego Perez (Yung Pueblo)
Date: 2025-08-07 · Duration: 1:12:53
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3v9VK3T-WE

KEYPOINTS

• Healing depends on facing emotions, not on time

Diego Perez, who writes as Yung Pueblo, says the biggest factor in healing is your ability to face the emotions you used to run from. Craving distraction is often fear of feeling. He uses a pen name because it gives him the freedom to be honest about his own suffering. Mel adds that most of us aren't so much afraid of our emotions as unwilling to deal with them, because the joint, the gummy or the beer is easier than sitting with boredom or loneliness.

• You don't need a rock bottom to change

Diego hit his own rock bottom, but he's watched his wife and friends transform after a simple moment of awareness: "I could do things a little better." Mel asks whether his crash made him want to notice warning signs earlier, and he agrees. For him it was change or die.

• Addiction as a search for your own attention

His poem: "I was never addicted to one thing. I was addicted to filling a void within myself with things other than my own love." Growing up poor after immigrating at age four, he watched his parents fight over rent and food and had no way to process the anxiety. Once he began giving himself attention and accepting his emotional history, he says, alcohol and cocaine lost their hold.

• Feel the truth of an emotion without letting it drive

You can feel sadness without acting in ways you'll regret, and feel anger without letting the story in your head create "fake stress." He calls this subtlety: peace lives in the gray area of observing rather than reacting. Suffering doesn't have to mean a dramatic low. It can be a life of constant friction over small things.

• Inner peace sometimes just means not adding to tension

His poem says inner peace isn't always pristine calm; sometimes it's accepting the tension inside you without reacting or reinforcing it, then moving gently through your day. If you're still angry about yesterday's conversation with your boss, acknowledge it, be careful with your words and don't let it snowball. Mel noticed mid-conversation that her shoulders were up by her ears and dropped them, since relaxing the body gives the mind some peace.

• If you're struggling, you're probably fighting change

After two 45-day and three 30-day silent meditation retreats, and about 13,000 hours of practice, Diego says the main thing he observes is that everything changes. Attachment, meaning craving for things to stay a particular way, is like standing against a river's current: you'll get knocked down. Mel's image is punching ocean waves instead of climbing onto a raft.

• Relationships aren't supposed to be easy

Romantic comedies teach that love fixes everything after one hurdle, but feeling love is only the beginning. Knowing how to care for someone means learning each other's emotional histories, triggers and how each of you likes to be supported. Waiting until you're perfectly healed could take a lifetime. What matters is whether both people are willing to grow when the relationship holds up a mirror.

• You can't connect deeply with someone disconnected from themselves

The clearest sign of a disconnected partner is real difficulty being vulnerable or sharing highs and lows. Mel realized she has few close friends from high school, college or law school because she was distracting herself with constant relationships. Diego notes that how distant someone feels often mirrors how far you are from yourself.

• Boundaries shouldn't become walls

A boundary is what you will and won't accept, such as disrespect or someone who only takes. It becomes a wall when you use it to avoid problem-solving. Boundaries need reviewing as your needs change year to year. People-pleasing isn't compassion: Mel ties it to being unable to bear the feeling of disappointing someone, and Diego adds an ancient fear of being kicked out of the tribe.

EXAMPLES

• The night on the floor at 23

From roughly ages 20 to 23 in college, Diego reached for a joint, a drink or a party whenever sadness or anxiety rose, and made sure he was never alone. It escalated to pills and cocaine. It ended with him crying on the floor feeling his heart break. A doctor he saw a week later said it sounded like a mild heart attack. He describes it as a slow car crash.

• Five minutes on the bed instead of a joint

The first time he slowed down, he sat on his bed as anxiety rose and challenged himself to feel it for five to ten minutes, before he knew anything about meditation. His emotions had felt like the monster under a child's bed, but facing them was "way less scary" than he'd imagined. His rule became to do the opposite: feel instead of run, tell the truth instead of "everything's fine," and build strength instead of sickness.

• Building a home within yourself

He read a piece he wrote for Mel about building a home with another person several times and watching each one come apart in storms, until he realized he needed "a palace of peace" inside himself. You're seeking a home in someone else if your happiness feels fully dependent on them. Wanting marriage is fine; it's richer when you already enjoy your own company.

• His small gratitudes

Asked on the spot, he named natural spring water and his reliable Toyota RAV4, which he can't bring himself to give up. The point is that gratitude works best when it's small and specific.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Watch for one red flag and three green ones

The red flag is someone who overestimates their capacity, promises things and doesn't show up, which he reads as a struggle to face their own truth. The green flags are growth, kindness, and compassion in the sense of stepping outside their own perspective to see yours, which he calls the key to resolving arguments. Your people are those who make your heart feel seen and your nervous system feel calm.

• Practice his three healthiest habits

First, be grateful for little things. Second, when your nervous system is overwhelmed, say no to anything new that would take energy: covering a shift, an obligatory fundraiser, or an emotional invitation like a partner's after-work irritation or gossip. You can listen without joining their tension. Third, don't hide your love. Mel adds that you should go first in saying what you admire about people, and it comes back tenfold.

• Tell intuition from fear by how it feels in your body

Diego says intuition is bodily, comes from your core and tends to point toward your next chapter; craving ice cream isn't intuition. Mel's version is that fear is loud, specific and depleting, while intuition sits in the gut or heart and feels expansive even when it makes you nervous.

• Make space for rest, because good work doesn't come from exhaustion

Your next great thing will come from a reservoir of rest, not exhaustion. You don't need a vacation for clarity: silence, a short walk or pouring a cup of tea can be enough. His recipe for a good life: follow your intuition, build with people who love to grow, take responsibility for your healing, forgive, and never stop being kind.

How to Move On, Let Go of Past Mistakes, and Reinvent Yourself

Guest: Carl Lentz
Date: 2025-07-24 · Duration: 1:04:23
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7a-FiD6QPLo

KEYPOINTS

• You can only get so far on an untreated 'fracture'

Carl Lentz, former pastor of Hillsong's New York church, compares unaddressed problems to an athlete playing on a broken ankle. You can numb it and get through a season or two while other parts of you overcompensate, but it shortens your career. 'Your problems don't go anywhere. You either fix them or they destroy you.' The only open question is what your life looks like when it cracks.

• Living a double life means the good parts keep working while the rest burns

Mel describes the state Carl was in: parts of your life going brilliantly while something burns to the ground in the background. Carl admits his public success and his private dysfunction ran side by side for years. Mel adds that when you're in the middle of it, you assume everyone knows.

• Ask yourself what you're afraid to get checked out

Carl's test for whether you have a dangerous 'fracture' is whatever you're avoiding looking at, like not going to the doctor because you don't want the diagnosis. He pushes back on men calling major trauma 'just being a man.' His point is that it's dysfunction, and it can be fixed.

• Dread builds on itself, so face it right away

'Whatever's causing dread demands an immediate confrontation.' Carl says dread compounds: something dreadful today is twice as dreadful tomorrow, and two or three years of putting it off leaves your life 'suffocated.' Much of him back then, he says, was taken up with the 'maintenance of dread.'

• Putting off the truth 'to protect people' is a selfish story

When a therapist asked why he didn't come clean sooner, Carl said he didn't want to let people down. She replied, 'Oh, isn't that sweet? So you've made yourself the hero.' He now sees delaying honesty as robbing both himself and the people who need the best of him.

• He takes full ownership and doesn't blame the marriage

Carl says people assume an affair means a bad marriage, and in his case that wasn't true. He loved his wife, Laura, and had 'a phenomenal family'; he was 'extraordinarily broken.' He admits that when Laura sensed something, he lied to her by leaving things out, telling a different story, or overpowering her until she doubted what she saw.

• Rock bottom wasn't one moment; he 'moved into' it

After the confrontation, telling his family and being kicked out of a friend's home, Carl calls it a place he lived for a while, not a single moment ('Rock Bottomville'). His story also set off a domino effect across a network of connected churches, and he accepts he was partly the trigger.

• You prove you've forgiven yourself by investing in who you are now

Saying 'I forgive myself' is step one. The evidence, Carl says, is putting time and effort into the better person you're becoming. People who are stuck show lots of evidence of who they were and none of who they are now. For him, the turning point was faith: if God had forgiven him, it was 'ridiculous' not to forgive himself.

• Shame keeps the focus on you; healing is the alternative

Carl calls 'You should be ashamed of yourself' a selfish idea, because it asks you to keep staring at yourself, and 'everybody loses.' He describes the body language of shame, shoulders and head down, and contrasts it with healing, grace, mercy and change. Some people want him to stay visibly broken, he says, but that says more about them.

• Forgiveness isn't 'fairy dust'; expect aftershocks

Almost five years on, Carl says the light came slowly and has to be fed every day. Forgiving someone, even someone who abused you for years, doesn't mean the feelings disappear or that you have to have dinner with them. When the old feelings return, he suggests saying it honestly: 'Today is a day where I'm struggling to follow through with the forgiveness I've given.'

EXAMPLES

• Building Hillsong's New York church

Mel describes Carl as one of the most recognizable megachurch pastors in the world, in leather and skinny jeans with rock music blaring. In Mel's telling, he co-founded the first Hillsong church in America with his wife and grew it to almost 150,000 members, and he was a fixture in the news in 2017–2019.

• A brain scan and a warning he ignored

While accompanying a struggling friend to a brain doctor, Carl had a scan himself. Dr. Amen called him in and told him to resign and get help because his brain wasn't functioning correctly: 'if you haven't made bad decisions yet, you will.' Carl's reaction was that it would never happen, and he kept running on the fracture.

• The day it came out

His assistant and a close friend on staff confronted him. He told Laura that day and says he never wants to forget her face, because he never intends to be there again. They told their kids, roughly 16, 14 and 11–12 at the time, because the news would become public. He told his daughter Charlie, who was getting mental health treatment, over Zoom.

• Two U-Hauls and nowhere to go

Having just sold their New Jersey house, the family was staying at a friend's Brooklyn apartment. When the news broke, the friend texted that they had to be out by the end of the night. With paparazzi outside, they loaded two U-Hauls and drove without a destination; some people wouldn't return his calls. A friend named Kim offered her home. His young son Roman asked, 'Dad, where are we going?' and Carl answered, 'I don't know, man.'

• 'We're not rebuilding our marriage. We are on a fresh one.'

Carl says his healing meant going back to his 'sexual wiring' after being sexually abused as a young child, which isn't fixed in a day. He and Laura have ups and downs. Mel jokes that second marriages are great, 'particularly when it's with the first person.'

OTHER RELEVANT

- **The dread test**

  List what you're dreading or avoiding getting checked out. Carl's rule is to confront it now, because every day you wait makes it heavier.

- **Self-forgiveness in two steps**

  First say it: 'I forgive myself.' Then back it up by investing visibly in the new version of you: habits, relationships and work that show who you are now.

- **Get professional help**

  Carl credits a therapist with exposing the 'hero' story he was telling himself, and says deep issues like childhood abuse take long, ongoing work.

- **Pick up 'the pen of ownership'**

  Mel's closing: others can encourage you, but nobody else can write your next chapter. Ask who you might become if you invested in that person.

This Life-Changing Conversation Will Help You Make Peace With Who You Are

Guest: Mon Rovîa
Date: 2025-06-19 · Duration: 1:13:14
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rN83hi9QxUM

KEYPOINTS

• Moving on starts with looking honestly at your past

Singer-songwriter Mon Rovîa says you can't let the past 'take you out of the world that you are meant to be a part of.' For years it did that to him while he 'wallowed,' blaming himself. Acceptance took years, not a moment, and he says you have to make quiet spaces, away from 'the loudness of the world,' to sit still and look at the truth.

• 'Find another day' to quit

On days he couldn't face his survivor's guilt or his feelings about his mother, he told himself to find another day to quit: not today. Mel points out why it works better than forced positivity. It admits how hard things are and gives permission to quit later, while still choosing to keep going today. He calls his whole life 'the art of continuing.'

• Being adopted doesn't mean you've 'been saved, so you're good'

Mon says many adoptive families assume a rescued child is fine. His, he stresses, was amazing, but being pulled from your land, language and people leaves damage that a child has no words for. He didn't speak to his adoptive family for a long time; they thought something was wrong. Decades later he still dreams of being chased by child soldiers.

• You can fall in love with your suffering

Mon believed 'I deserve bad things.' Falling in love with suffering, he says, is when you stop hearing the people who whisper 'don't say that about yourself.' Looking back, he felt he 'wasted a lot of time doing absolutely nothing for what my story deserves.'

• Notice the hands reaching toward you; you can't heal alone

His turning point came from accepting help he had refused before. People often push helpers away, he says, out of fear that their darkness will swallow them. His advice is to notice who has stayed with you through dark nights, and to 'look to the helpers.' His song 'crooked the road,' which he performs at the end, is about accepting help.

• Turn guilt into growth, in small steps

Mon felt survivor's guilt that he was the child chosen to leave when his sister or brother might have 'made more of the opportunity.' His reframe is to let growth take guilt's place. It doesn't happen overnight; even drinking one fewer beer one day counts. Mel describes it as moving from blaming yourself to seeing it as a gift, because you're meant to be here.

• Holding back isn't the same as not being able to speak

When Mon said he wasn't a good speaker, Mel suggested he hadn't felt safe saying what he needed to say, and he agreed. He calls himself a 'watcher,' someone who steps back to protect himself. Music and journaling became the safe places where he could finally say it, and the lyrics often turn into something that helps others.

• Owning your whole story can bring peace

Learning the painful truth about how he came to be gave Mon peace, because 'from violence still beautiful things can come.' Asked 'Who am I?', the question that haunted him, he now answers: 'John J Monrovia, son of Maria from Liberia, West Africa.'

EXAMPLES

• Chosen at seven

Mon was born in the middle of Liberia's civil war. Many of his siblings died during the war, and his mother died in childbirth, leaving his grandmother to raise the children. His older brothers fought as child soldiers between the ages of 5 and 10. An aunt took him to a missionary family working in Monrovia. 'It could have been my sister... my other brother,' he says, and that became the source of his guilt.

• Rock bottom on Lookout Mountain

Living with roommates in Georgia, he was drinking and using drugs heavily, doing odd jobs and unable to pay rent. He texted his dad's friends asking for money, which got back to his father. His father had offered help before; this time Mon took it: 'Dad, I have nothing else.'

• Tearing down a house to rebuild himself

In Dana Point, California, he helped his father build a house. Alone for hours pulling nails and breaking down walls, he saw the link between tearing down the home and rebuilding something new, and asked whether he could do the same with himself. That alone time, he says, is what healed him.

• Weeping after a sold-out show

Driving back from a tour with his manager, he called his older sister and asked about his mother and father. Hearing how it had happened, he wept in the back seat, letting out tears he'd held in for years. His managers just gave him space and didn't ask questions.

• From a cheap ukulele to Newport

He won a people's choice award at a music event at Covenant College but still felt 'this is not for me,' partly because he never saw anyone who looked like him in singer-songwriter music. He wrote over rap beats until 2022, then picked up the ukulele his parents had given him (he'd wanted a guitar). He took the name Monrovia, Liberia's capital, in 2019 to stay grounded in his roots. Mel notes he was on Spotify's 2024 artists-to-watch list and has more than 1.5 million monthly listeners.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Script: 'Not today. I'll find another day.'

Use it on days when quitting feels close. It acknowledges how hard things are and buys you today. If you're having thoughts of ending your life, contact a crisis line or professional right away.

• Make a quiet space for the truth

Set aside time away from noise to look at your past clearly. Mon found his through physical work, music and journaling.

- **List the people who stayed**
  Write down who has kept reaching out. Answer one of them instead of pushing them away.
- **One small growth step**
  Replace one guilt spiral with one small change today; Mon's example is having one fewer drink.

Reinvent Yourself: Let Go of Past Mistakes & Create a New Version of You With Charlamagne tha God

Guest: Charlamagne tha God
Date: 2025-04-07 · Duration: 1:23:38
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CMKkM84vOk

KEYPOINTS

• Turning your life around starts with deciding the current way isn't working

Charlamagne grew up in a single-wide trailer on a dirt road in Moncks Corner, South Carolina. His mom was an English teacher, and his dad struggled with addiction, mental health and the law. His father warned him he'd end up 'in jail, dead, or broke sitting under a tree.' Mel's takeaway is that you don't need to know what the new life looks like. You just need to decide 'I'm not doing it like this anymore,' because despair is often the biggest obstacle.

• You don't have to know what you want, just that you want to do something

After the streets, he took any job that kept him out of them: Taco Bell, a mall clothing store, and telemarketing '20 CDs for a penny.' His acronym for the mindset is PEACE: 'positive energy activates constant elevation.'

• There's no redo on life

Watching older guys he admired end up exactly where his dad predicted made something click: the day you're living is gone for good. He quotes Biggie, 'being broke at 30 give a brother the chills,' and admits he was still broke at 30, but by then he was on his way in radio.

• Love every version of yourself

He says 20-year-old him didn't know what 46-year-old him knows, so why punish yourself for what you didn't know? He imagines hugging his 8-, 16- and 20-year-old selves and thanking them for choices like reading or getting into radio. A therapist told him you can't have the success without the problems. His Back to the Future line: Marty McFly went back to help his parents, not to curse them out. Mel notes the same grace extends to other people.

• If you don't deal with your trauma, it will deal with you

He started therapy when the panic attacks and depression were getting worse even as his money and success peaked, and while he 'wasn't doing right' by his wife. Critics call him a fake mental health advocate. He says he did the work because 'hurt people hurt people.' He believes '99.9%' of adult struggles trace back to childhood, so he talks to his inner child daily: 'calm down, we know why that is causing you to act that way.'

• He was disciplined for things he was never taught

His first real breakthrough in therapy was seeing that his father raised him 'out of fear, not love,' terrified his son would repeat his mistakes. The proof was an incident at 16: his dad slapped him for running a stop sign that his dad had just run himself. He adds that kids will live their lives regardless, so 'you got to let them.'

• The microphone can cause hurt or healing

He was once called 'the hip-hop Howard Stern' and admits saying things while drunk or high. Fired from radio four times, he was in 'by any means necessary' survival mode when he joined The Breakfast Club in 2010, after serving as Wendy Williams's 'attack dog.' Young artists like Young Thug told him his jabs hurt because their families listened. He now tells podcasters and hosts to 'choose the healing.'

• When generosity gets turned against you, treat it as data

He described people he lifted up turning antagonistic. Mel applied her Let Them framework: they may not have done the inner work, so lifting them up 'drags up the devil inside.' Let them reveal who they are, then let me choose how much time and energy to give. 'Don't stop giving. Just not to them.' His version: God judges you by how you treat people, not by how they treat you.

• Skip small talk by knowing your IG

In Get Honest or Die Lying he says IG stands for intention and goals: know why you're in the conversation and get to it. 'I didn't order the appetizer, give me the entrée.'

EXAMPLES

• Throwing up in a holding cell

He did about 45 days in county jail after a friend fired a gun from the car he was riding in, and he was pulled out of the high school where his mom taught. Later, after the house his crew sold from was raided, he stood in a holding cell at the Berkeley County Detention Center with 11 or 12 others, threw up at the steel toilet, and resolved to figure out his life.

• From intern to Saturday nights

In 1998, while chasing rap at a Charleston studio, he asked DJ Willie Will how he got into radio. 'Ask for an internship.' He drove the station van to events and then became a paid promotions intern at about $5 an hour. Music director Ron White asked if he'd ever thought about being on air: 'No, but I am now.' He started on voice-tracked Sunday mornings, then moved to Saturday nights.

• His father's secret

After reading Shook One, the week of Thanksgiving 2018, and after a 25-year-old cousin's suicide, his father revealed he'd once attempted suicide, gone to therapy two or three times a week and taken 10 to 12 medications. Charlamagne says knowing that as a kid would have helped him recognize his own panic attacks and depression.

• Wendy Williams's dinner remark

At a recent dinner, Wendy, his former mentor who is now in a conservatorship, wondered aloud whether her situation was connected to how she used to talk about people. He says he doesn't believe that's the cause, but it confirmed his choice to change his words.

• 'It's okay, you've never done this before'

After snapping at his 16-year-old and realizing he was projecting his fears onto her, he apologized. She told him it was his

first time being a father to a 16-year-old. He doesn't hit his four daughters and teaches them to treat the custodian like the CEO.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Try grounding and gratitude outdoors

His sacred purpose coach, Yachty Alba, had him lie 'face down' in the grass barefoot, lean his forehead against a tree and breathe, with no phone. In the water, he looks at the sun and just says thank you. When everything has gone wrong, he suggests starting with 'it could be worse.'

• His 4:15 a.m. routine

One snooze, then prayer, a shower, at least five minutes of meditation, readings from Ryan Holiday's The Daily Stoic and Robert Greene's The Daily Laws, kisses for his sleeping wife and daughters, and an energizing podcast on the drive. His daily intention is to serve.

• Put kids in therapy before there's a crisis

During COVID he started his then 13- or 14-year-old in therapy 'for no reason other than why not,' as part of breaking the cycle he inherited.

Why You Feel Lost in Life: Dr. Gabor Maté on Trauma & How to Heal

Guest: Dr. Gabor Maté
Date: 2025-03-24 · Duration: 1:17:54
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tool-R8VJ2Y

KEYPOINTS

• Trauma is the wound inside you, not the event itself

Maté defines trauma by its Greek root, 'wound': it is what happened inside you as a result of what happened to you. For him, the trauma wasn't being handed to a stranger but the belief he formed from it: that he was unwanted and not lovable enough. The blow to the head is the event; the concussion is the trauma.

• Nobody is damaged goods: most 'flaws' started as adaptations

Shame, self-criticism, perfectionism, hypervigilance and shutting down began as sensible responses to difficult circumstances. A child who can't escape, fight back or ask for help may dissociate, and that protection then gets wired into the personality. In his words, these are 'perfectly normal responses to abnormal circumstances'.

• Children can be wounded by needs that go unmet, not only by bad things done to them

Besides the 'big T' events (abuse, neglect, an addicted, jailed, mentally ill or dead parent, family violence, a bitter divorce, poverty, racism), Maté stresses needs that go unmet. These include unconditional acceptance, adults who understand a child's emotions, play, and 'rest': a relationship the child doesn't have to work to keep. A child told 'don't be so sensitive' learns that something is wrong with them.

• Stress during pregnancy reaches the baby, and this is not about blaming mothers

Cortisol crosses the placenta and affects developing brain circuits. Maté links stress and depression in pregnancy with higher rates of ADHD and other mental health problems in children. He insists this isn't about blaming mothers, and he reframed Mel's guilt: pain flowed through her to her kids, but she didn't hurt them.

• Childhood trauma shows up in the body as well as the mind

Maté says people with severe childhood trauma have measurably higher inflammation, raising their risk of autoimmune disease, cancer, depression and addiction. Trauma can switch genes on or off and dysregulate the stress system. Long-term stress hormones thin bones, raise blood pressure, suppress immunity and add belly fat. He also says asthma risk rises with experiences of racism.

• No two siblings have the same childhood

Birth order, gender, the state of the marriage, money pressures and each child's temperament all change how a parent shows up. A child experiences how the parent actually behaves, not how much they are loved, so even a perfectly consistent parent would be experienced differently by each child.

• Unresolved trauma weakens your ability to handle stress, so you look for escape

Trauma disrupts the brain circuits that develop the ability to regulate stress, leaving adults overwhelmed and looking for escape. Maté says his own relapses into addictive behaviour usually followed stress. In rat studies, pups handled poorly by their mothers developed normally when placed with attentive mothers. He calls this epigenetic, which means it can change.

• We play down our own childhoods because the truth was too painful

Mel's husband Chris had a workaholic, heavy-drinking father but said he wasn't traumatised because there was food on the table. Maté's test is to imagine your own child in that house: would you tell them to stop complaining? He says this kind of dismissiveness, and a lack of self-compassion, are themselves signs of trauma.

• It's not your fault, but healing is your job

Maté separates default from fault: you followed patterns programmed into you, so the shame isn't deserved. But he also rejects a victim mindset. Recognising what happened is simply where taking responsibility begins. He quotes trauma psychologist Peter Levine: the goal is to stop 'living under the tyranny of the past'.

• Some trauma looks like success

The drive to prove he mattered made Maté a respected physician while he was depressed and unpredictable at home. A relentless effort to be attractive or look young can come from never feeling accepted as you were. Fear of hugs and emotional shutdown can also be old protective shells.

EXAMPLES

• Maté's infancy in Nazi-occupied Budapest

He was born in January 1944 to Jewish parents. Half a million Hungarian Jews were murdered between March and June, including his grandparents. At 11 months, his mother handed him to a Christian stranger to save his life, and he didn't see her for five or six weeks. When they were reunited, he wouldn't look at her for days.

• Mel's traumatic birth with Sawyer

After 36 hours of labour, forceps, vacuum extraction and emergency surgery with 2.5 litres of blood lost, Mel developed severe postpartum depression and was 'a zombie' on medication for 10 weeks. In EMDR therapy, Sawyer recalled lying in her crib wanting her mother while others came instead.

• The 9/11 pregnancy study and research on infants' brainwaves

Maté cites research on women who developed PTSD in their third trimester after 9/11: their babies had abnormal stress hormone levels a year later. He also says EEGs of six-month-olds could identify which babies had depressed mothers. The cause, he says, was not less love but less smiling, attuned interaction.

• Mel's fourth-grade assault, reframed

Mel shared that as a fourth grader she woke up on holiday to an older child molesting her, and she told no one. Maté said the deeper wound was how alone she already was, possibly while protecting stressed parents. Mel recognised it as the first time she remembers dissociating.

• The airport text and the Winnie-the-Pooh ending

When his wife texted that she hadn't left yet to collect him, Maté sank into a sullen withdrawal, unconsciously reliving his abandonment as a baby. He says the ending of Winnie-the-Pooh made him cry as an adult because nobody played with him as a baby.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Step 1: admit that you're suffering**

  Stop taking your pain for granted or running from it through busyness and addictive behaviours. Maté notes this echoes the Buddha's first teaching that life involves suffering.

- **Step 2: get curious with compassion**

  'Why am I like this?' asked as an accusation keeps the shame going. Try 'Hmm, I wonder why I do this?' and trace the behaviour back to what it once protected you from.

- **Step 3: ask for help**

  Babies are born knowing how to ask for help. If you've always believed you have to handle everything alone, treat that belief as an adaptation to help not being available, and reach out.

- **Take play and affection back on purpose**

  Maté cites a palliative care nurse's book on the top five regrets of the dying, one of which is working too hard and not playing enough. He says play matters more to brain development than academic learning. Mel is consciously working on hugging her kids more.

Start Strong: Do This Every Morning to Get Out of Bed, Beat Anxiety, and Feel Incredible All Day

Date: 2024-10-21 · Duration: 0:45:56
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71RHa9ml4bM

KEYPOINTS

• Mel recorded this from bed to teach 'slithering'

In her eye mask and retainer, with her cat Mr. Noodle beside her, Mel shares a technique her therapist Anne Davin taught her. She describes waking for most of her life to dread: heaviness like an elephant on her chest, the bed a magnet and her a paper clip. Then her mind spins to yesterday's mistakes, unprepared meetings, the kids, skipped workouts. It happened on vacation, at home or traveling.

• It started during one of the hardest periods of her life

Three or four years earlier, the family had moved from Boston after 26 years to a tiny southern Vermont town and were living with her mother-in-law. Mel slept in a bunk room in the dead of winter, had no friends, had lost her dream job as a daytime talk show host, and felt she'd made a huge mistake. She'd fantasize, as she did in law school, about falling back asleep and waking up to a different life.

• Morning dread can trace back to childhood

Anne asked when the feeling started: law school, college, high school, earlier? They traced it to fourth grade, on a ski trip with other families, when Mel woke in a bunk room to an older child sexually abusing her. Confused, she curled up, stayed quiet to protect her little brother in the next bunk, and the next morning hid under the covers until everyone left, feeling she had done something wrong. Waking became fused with that sensation.

• Kids blame themselves for what others do

Mel cites Stanford psychiatrist Dr. Paul Conti on a 'flaw' in human design called attribution: young children can't attribute adults' or others' bad behavior to them, so they conclude something is wrong with themselves. She also notes her view that a child who does this to another child is likely being abused too.

• Your body stores experiences as sensations

Mel's takeaway from therapy and the show's experts: it needn't be something as severe as abuse. A parent whose mood you could never predict, uncertainty about food, bullying or an undiagnosed learning disability can leave you bracing, freezing or in fight-or-flight. She later linked a second memory: waking in high school to her mother crying in her arms because a family friend's son had been killed by a drunk driver.

• Talking and pushing through hadn't removed the feeling

Her 5 Second Rule got her out of bed, but the dread returned the next morning. Anne's line: 'Sometimes it's better to feel our way through rather than try to figure our way out.' Anne explains slithering isn't a formal taught method but an example of somatic inquiry, letting the body 'speak its mind' through movement.

• Anne's explanation: the dread was 'somatic residue'

In a voice memo, Anne, a psychologist of over 30 years with a PhD in depth psychology, says the child Mel had to wake and face what happened the night before without inner or outer resources. The adult dread was residue of that unresolved trauma, causing her to freeze. Joining with the symptom, turning toward and even amplifying it, shifted it from frozen to thawing to fluid, and her nervous system from distress to neutral to calm.

• Move with the heaviness instead of against it

Anne told Mel not to push herself out of bed but to imagine how the dread would move if it could, and let it lead. Slither one foot out, then the other, drip down the side of the bed and roll onto the floor. Lie there and slowly twist, bend your knees and roll until you feel the heaviness break apart. Then get on all fours and crawl toward the bathroom; don't stand until you feel ready.

• It felt absurd, but it worked from day one

Mel worried her kids or mother-in-law would see her crawling down the hall to the bathroom. By the time she got there, the heaviness was gone and replaced by freedom and a desire to stand up and face the day. While she was moving, her mind was busy with 'what are you doing?' instead of the day's worries.

EXAMPLES

• Six weeks of progress

Mel slithered every morning for six weeks. At first she lay on the floor a couple of minutes. Within a week or two she was ready to stand after three or four crawl steps, eight fewer than the week before. Eventually she only needed to roll to the floor, then just put a leg out before feeling free.

• Dogs Homie and Yolo joined in

When her dogs came over to lick her and crawl alongside her to the bathroom, Mel found she felt less alone and laughed, which broke up the sensation faster.

• The couch version

If heaviness pins you to the couch, Mel says to slide off onto the floor, slither, and crawl to the doorway of the room.

• Questions Mel gets about the technique

What if it's scary to drop into your body after decades of running from the feeling? Start small: slide one leg out and let gravity take over, and you'll find the sensation shifts and you have more power than you think. When should you use it? Any morning that feels like too much to bear.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Adapting slithering safely

If your bed is high, get one leg out, then the other, go from half-sitting to lying with your arm's support; there's no right way,

just get your whole body on the floor. If you have a disability, Mel suggests asking a physical therapist, nurse or doctor how to adapt the idea of moving with the feeling. Once up, don't get back in bed; she makes it right away.

• Doing it with kids

For an anxious child who dreads mornings, climb in and say 'let's slither out of bed today.' It validates the heaviness instead of correcting or pushing, and you crawl together until they're ready to stand.

• Anne's self-guided version

Ask: where am I feeling friction in my life, and is it recurring? Close your eyes, notice where you feel it in your body. Ask how it would move if it could, and let it move you for a few minutes, with or without music. Then check what shifted. Mel stresses she isn't a therapist and Anne isn't yours; this is a resource to try.

How to Learn From Your Mistakes: Let Go of Regret & Move Forward (My Breast Implant Nightmare)

Date: 2024-10-07 · Duration: 0:53:46
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiD4CJVFqUo

KEYPOINTS

• Regret hurts more when you carry it alone

Mel's main lesson from a six-year ordeal is that staying silent made her regret worse and her shame bigger. For three years after getting implants she wore bigger shirts, smiled and pretended she was happy, because she'd done it to herself. She says the moment she started talking about it and moved into 'fix-it mode,' the shame went away.

• Obsession pushes out research

At 47, after three kids and breastfeeding, Mel hated her breasts so much that she skipped her homework. She used a friend's surgeon without interviewing anyone else and accepted his claim that a lift wouldn't work. She chose textured teardrop 'gummy bear' implants because they 'looked natural.' Her takeaway: when you're fixated on fixing something, give the decision the time and consideration it needs.

• You think you're the exception

Mel says she got a pamphlet with warnings in tiny print, but when you're excited you skip the warnings because you assume you'll be the exception. She compares it to going on a date with someone everyone warned you about.

• Your body and intuition send signals

Mel says she knew it was a mistake the moment she woke up from surgery. Over three years she developed numbness in her right arm, tingling in her pinky and armpit, worsening Raynaud's (her hands turned white when she reached into a freezer), brain fog, dry eyes, rashes, thinning hair, depression and anxiety. She blamed premenopause or work stress. Looking back, she calls it her intuition knocking on the door.

• Most decisions can be reversed

Mel's estimate is that '99% of decisions in life can be reversed.' She says the issue is rarely your ability to make things better. It's how long regret keeps you stuck. You can apologize, to yourself or someone else, and learn from it. Once is a mistake, and repeating it is a pattern. Learning from it is what she calls wisdom.

• Only you can make the call about your body

Before the removal surgery, Mel spiraled about the cost (about twice the original, not covered by insurance) and whether her chest would look worse. A friend who'd had a double mastectomy had the same fear about removing her reconstruction implants. Mel's advice is to take in all the information and recommendations, then tune out the fear and decide for yourself.

• Regret is self-punishment

Mel calls regret a 'psychological implant' you choose to carry. No one has ever fixed the past by regretting it, she says. Feeling bad for a day or two is a healthy response, but after that you need to learn and move on. She asks: what if this mistake is the beginning of a new chapter rather than the end of the story?

• There's a group for every mistake

Mel says that whatever you regret, there's a group online of people sharing the same story, and you can join under a fake name if you need to. Being there reminds you that you're human, not uniquely foolish, and it often brings practical next steps.

EXAMPLES

• She asked for a 36B and woke up a 38D

Mel says she told the surgeon repeatedly that she wanted small 'baseball' breasts and would never come back wishing she'd gone bigger. Her husband Chris told her the surgeon had tried 21 combinations of implants because her breasts were different sizes. After the swelling went down she was a 38D. She couldn't jog, twisting in yoga was awkward, and she felt her chest 'came into the room before I did.'

• A chance meeting at the Las Vegas airport

Three years in, a fellow keynote speaker stopped Mel in the terminal and said she was flying to Cleveland for explant surgery. She said her implants were behind her hair loss, numbness and brain fog, and after losing her mother to cancer she wasn't taking chances. She sent Mel an invitation-only Facebook group, which Mel read for five hours straight in her hotel.

• Jody's verdict in the hotel mirror

In San Diego, Mel's best friend since elementary school, Jody, looked at her in the bathroom mirror and said the right implant looked like 'half a chicken breast' and sat an inch higher than the left. Mel says that was capsular contracture: scar tissue had hardened enough to pull the implant up and press on her nerves.

• A recall no one told her about

Mel says the explant surgeon's clinic told her that her Allergan Biocell textured implants had been recalled more than a year earlier because of a link to a rare lymphoma. Her original surgeon never notified her. She says 84% of people with that cancer have the same implants, and that Allergan offered replacement implants rather than covering removal.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Research to read before getting implants

Mel cites a 2021 survey of 182 people, found through the National Library of Medicine. 97% said their implants had hurt their health, and 96% had them for cosmetic reasons. Brain fog, fatigue, joint pain and hair loss were the top symptoms. 60% learned about breast implant illness from friends, family or social media, not their doctors. Of the 40% who had removal, 97% reported relief. It's a self-reported survey, so talk with your own doctors.

• What the removal involved

Dr. Lu-Jean Feng's Cleveland clinic, which Mel says specializes in explant surgery and is pushing for insurance coverage,

had a year-long waitlist that was expedited after the recall. The six-hour surgery removed every piece of scar capsule, repaired a pectoral muscle Mel says had been cut in half (147 stitches) and included a lift. Her tingling was gone within a week.

• Follow-up screening after a recalled implant

Because of the lymphoma link, Mel had a mammogram and ultrasound every six months for three years. At her latest visit at Mass General, she was cleared to go back to annual breast cancer screening.

How to Create a New Version of Yourself: Let Go of Past Mistakes & Regret with Sarah Jakes Roberts

Guest: Sarah Jakes Roberts
Date: 2024-07-25 · Duration: 1:26:19
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M98E87vhM_c

KEYPOINTS

• A pregnancy at 13 seemed to confirm she didn't fit

Sarah Jakes Roberts, daughter of a prominent megachurch pastor, became pregnant at 13 and had her son at 14. She expected to be grounded, but her parents' grief showed her it was life-altering. She had never felt like one of the 'good church girls,' and the pregnancy confirmed that insecurity. For about 10 years she carried shame and decided to figure life out on her own.

• Ten years of trying on other identities like Cinderella's shoes

She compared herself to other kinds of girls, chased achievement, success and relationships, waitressed at a strip club, stayed in toxic relationships, went to school and worked for the government. Eventually the 'country girl from West Virginia' decided to go barefoot and stand flat-footed in who she was. Then she tried faith, to see whether a God said to love you no matter what might work 'for someone like me.'

• You can't heal while you're still punishing yourself

For those ten years she sat with herself, but punishingly: 'How could you be so stupid? No one's ever going to want you.' She says replaying other people's cruel words never heals. Real healing means sitting with yourself in pursuit of compassion until you no longer cringe, which feels uncomfortable because it stretches you. People punish themselves thinking it will prevent repeats, but you'll never be more than that moment if you keep replaying it.

• 'But also': you're more than your worst moment

She stopped trying to escape the 'teen mom' label and added to it: a teen mom, and also an author, a dreamer, someone who loves herself. She is divorced and on the Mel Robbins podcast, and all of it is true. She doesn't want to be defined by her achievements either. She wants to be 'a girl on her journey and a woman owning her power.'

• Most people underestimate how necessary they are

Her core message: our lives aren't random, and when people underestimate their importance they don't take their healing or their thoughts seriously. They 'put themselves on discount' and give themselves away 'to the lowest bidder.' Growing up during the height of purity culture, she felt that once virginity, the 'highest prize,' was gone, her price kept dropping, so she accepted things she otherwise wouldn't have.

• Your value is an inside job, and hard experiences add to it

Working with women who have experienced divorce, molestation and other painful events, she finds everyone has something that challenged their sense of worth. Rather than lowering your value, she argues, surviving those things adds wisdom and resilience that make you more confident and courageous.

• Cook with your leftovers instead of reinventing yourself

She failed repeatedly trying to bury the pregnancy under a brand-new identity, like becoming an accountant or a CFO, using 'ingredients that don't exist.' Open the cupboard and use what's there: a child, a writing gift, insecurities, a divorce. Mel adds that what you hide gives others power over you. Hiding it leads to people-pleasing, being whoever others need you to be.

• Watch your whole movie, not one scene

Regret comes from replaying one scene. Now she feels compassion for her 13-year-old self, who was lost, lonely and angry. Her parents' church had exploded overnight, bringing death threats and security, and they assumed the kids were okay. Anyone with what was in her cupboard might have made the same choice. Mel adds that your parents were doing life for the first time too, which doesn't excuse everything.

• Change old precedents when you're running on fumes

She knows she's overextended when her family and team asking for things she set them up to expect starts to annoy her, like her eight-year-old asking what's for dinner. Rest first, then work out what's still true for you and who needs to know, and change the expectation kindly instead of resenting people. Mel asks her team to send her the clip to replay.

EXAMPLES

• 'I always knew to expect something like this from you'

When she got pregnant, someone close to her said this, and she 'ate it for breakfast' for 10 years. Years later, praying before a tour that unexpectedly sold out, she felt God say the same sentence back with the opposite meaning. She now uses it when doubt creeps in.

• The blog that wouldn't stop inspiring people

In her early 20s, in a toxic relationship, she blogged to process her thoughts. When readers called her inspiring, she tried to put them off by revealing the teen pregnancy, the divorce and dropping out of college. They responded 'me too,' and the things she thought disqualified her were exactly what people connected with.

• The wig came off mid-sermon

Back in Dallas, unsure whether the confidence she'd built in LA would carry over, she noticed women in the congregation signaling that her ponytail wig was slipping. It had been sewn only to the wig cap. With about 50,000 people streaming, she pulled it off, tossed it to her sister and kept preaching in the wig cap. Women said it felt liberating, and one threw her own wig on the altar. 'The message is always bigger than the mess.'

• Turning down the global invitation

Because she's an introvert who loves being home, someone declined an international invitation on her behalf. She went back and said that traveling the world would be a dream and she was open to it, so as not to let an outdated belief about her block opportunities.

• 'That wasn't kind' at Starbucks

Her 14-year-old daughter flung a car door into the next car, and the owner called her an insult. Instead of matching his anger, Roberts said, 'Now, that wasn't kind,' which seemed to make him reflect. She admits that on a low day she'd be less gracious.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Let it live outside you

Speak who you're becoming to yourself and to other people, whether it's going back to school, starting a business or being an artist. Saying it out loud empties you out to make room for more and creates space around you. In her experience people are usually more flexible than you expect, like a packed concert crowd that still makes room.

• Take baby dares, and introduce the new you gradually

After years of self-doubt, believing in yourself is a dare, not a leap. Picture who's within reach, then introduce that version to the people close to you a little at a time. Rest is part of it: her ritual is letting her grown self take 13-year-old Sarah's hand and show her how far they've come.

• Power is authenticity, resilience and humility flowing together

Her definition is 100% of each: resilience to get up, humility to own mistakes, authenticity to know when you need nurturing. Power flows from one season or city into the next, so ask what power looks like for you now. She paraphrases Esther Perel on confidence: knowing your gifts and flaws without being swayed by either.

World Leading Psychologist: How to Master Your Emotions & Deal With Negative People

Guest: Dr. Susan David
Date: 2024-07-08 · Duration: 1:05:00
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsNqnurfP5A

KEYPOINTS

• Many people feel 'untethered,' and Dr. David says the rise is real

Mel opens with herself glaring at a woman unloading potatoes one at a time at the grocery store. Psychologist Dr. Susan David says the pandemic, war and rapid change have left many people untethered from themselves. She says research shows a huge increase in depression, anxiety, burnout and lashing out. Because no one teaches the science of handling emotions at school or work, a world that feels out of control makes people feel out of control too.

• Stop 'hustling' with yourself over what you're allowed to feel

David says we hustle internally: Should I feel this? Am I allowed? If I accept myself, can I still want more? That fight cuts us off from our values. Her image is a gymnast who adjusts to the crowd and the music because of a strong inner core. Emotional agility is about building that core.

• Emotions are data, not directives

Emotions evolved to help us adapt. David rejects the pop-psychology split into positive and negative, and the old idea that emotions are weak or feminine. Thoughts like 'I'm a fraud' and stories written on our 'mental chalkboards' at age five are normal. Feeling something doesn't mean you have to act on it. Meeting it with compassion and curiosity gives you the distance to choose who you want to be.

• Invalidating a child's feelings teaches 'display rules'

Display rules are a family's unspoken rules about which emotions are allowed. If a child is told, even subtly, not to be upset, they learn 'sadness has no place here' and turn away from themselves. Kids learn to regulate by feeling sadness and then noticing it pass, so allowing every emotion is 'the core work of parenting.' David links people-pleasing to the same rules: learning as a child which feelings risked a caregiver's love.

• Get more precise than 'stressed'

'Stressed' gives your body nothing to work with. Disappointed, unsupported, unseen and bored each point to a different cause. Precise labeling builds what psychologists call readiness potential, pushing you toward a fix: if you're bored, what would make you not bored? David says children as young as two or three with more emotional granularity do better 10, 20 and 30 years later.

• Avoid both bottling and brooding

Bottling means suppressing feelings: Netflix as a default, forced positivity, rushing to fix. When leaders tell struggling staff 'everything will be fine,' David calls it 'denial wrapped up in rainbows and sparkles.' Brooding means getting stuck in the feeling. Co-brooding, a big shared moan, makes friends feel closer but, she says, worsens the long-term relationship with the person complained about, and brooding predicts longer-term depression and anxiety.

• 'I'm noticing that I feel sad' instead of 'I am sad'

'I am sad' or 'I'm a bad parent' makes you the cloud, all of you defined by one state. Saying 'I'm noticing a story that I needed to be a perfect parent' treats thoughts, emotions and stories as parts of you, alongside your wisdom and values. In her words, you are 'the whole damn sky.' Gentle acceptance, which she distinguishes from passive resignation, comes first.

• Separating from a loved one's pain means boundaries, not detachment

Parents tend to be 'only as happy as your most unhappy child.' Mel admits that when her kids' anxiety or her husband's depression comes up, she rushes in to fix things, then pours a drink. David's three-step boundary: name the need ('I can see you need me right now'), empathize, then say what you can and can't do ('I'm cooking; can we talk in an hour?'). You stay compassionate but don't let their anxiety knock you both off balance.

• Behind passive-aggression is usually an unmet need

Emotions are signposts: loneliness points to a need for connection, boredom to growth, anger to fairness or a crossed value. Reacting to a passive-aggressive text by calling someone toxic, which David links to the fundamental attribution error, escalates things. Asking what the emotion is for keeps the relationship 'clean.'

• Discomfort is the price of admission to a meaningful life

David says solving, fixing and controlling are part of the problem: we swap phones, cut off friends and try to replace hard thoughts with positive ones. Never having your heart broken is 'a dead person's goal.' Careers, relationships and families all come with stress. The skills are compassion, curiosity and courage.

EXAMPLES

• The stolen book title

Years ago, a far more famous professor asked David at a conference what she was working on. Six months later, while she sat in a Starbucks, he left a voicemail asking if she minded him using her concept as his book title, which was already on pre-sale on Amazon. She called her husband, a physician, who said he had a patient on the table for an emergency procedure and hung up. She resolved not to take his call back, which she offers as a model of how not to do it.

• 'It's not okay, your child is in pain'

When her newborn screamed during shots, David kept saying 'It's okay.' A nurse gently told her it wasn't okay, her child was in pain, though it would be okay. Despite her PhD, she had invalidated him.

• Hands on heart: 'It's hard to human right now'

David's quick grounding practice, which she uses with doctors about to give bad news, is to put your hands on your chest, feel your feet on the floor and say, 'It's hard to human right now.' She contrasts it with telling yourself you should just be grateful.

- **'Thanks a lot for inviting me'**

  A friend of Mel's held a small birthday dinner and got a passive-aggressive text from someone left out. Mel gets similar ones ('I see you're in Boston, thanks for calling'). David reads the text as asking 'Do I matter? Am I still part of us?' Mel's reframed reply: 'I can see you're upset; let's talk tomorrow, I don't want you to feel that way.'

- **'Suzy, we all die. It's normal to be scared'**

  At five, David crawled into her parents' bed night after night begging them to promise they'd never die. Her father didn't brush it off. He told her everyone dies and it's normal to be scared. He died of cancer when she was 15. Her lesson from him: courage isn't the absence of fear, it's 'fear walking.'

OTHER RELEVANT

- **When someone erupts, be present instead of fixing**

  David says simple presence, not jostling, distracting or reasoning with someone mid-meltdown, de-escalates difficult emotions. Respond with your feet on the ground rather than reacting.

- **Get specific about the feeling behind resentment**

  For a listener angry that her brother-in-law is dating her best friend, David says skip forced happiness and name the real feeling: loss, or a sense of an interloper. Mel adds that territorial feelings often come from insecurity, and David's 'keep your eyes on your own work' applies.

- **Vent less, label more**

  Before sending a string of angry texts, notice that venting often comes from not tolerating your own feelings. Name the emotion, ask what need it points to, then decide on a response that fits your values.

5 Ways To Improve Your Subconscious Mind & Be Happier: Amazing Insight From Dr Paul Conti

Guest: Dr. Paul Conti
Date: 2023-12-04 · Duration: 1:19:48
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIGaYbPSChA

KEYPOINTS

• The little voice is a background dialogue you can control only once you notice it

Dr. Paul Conti, a Stanford- and Harvard-trained psychiatrist whose book has a foreword by Lady Gaga, describes a running set of opinions about ourselves behind our experience of the present. Many of us have never put words to it. The first step is curiosity: what do I tell myself when I'm sitting quietly, when I drop something, or when I walk into a new social situation?

• Inner dialogue is more deterministic than external factors

In 25 years of practice, Conti says, what people tell themselves has proven far more decisive than schedules, gym access or other practical fixes. If 'you'll get in shape, then lose it and feel worse' is running in the background, logistics won't save the plan. He likens it to dragging the weights of the past and projecting them into the future.

• Repetition is information, not fate

Patients often say they'll never have a good relationship because the last seven were bad. Conti replies that unless they were bad in seven different ways, it's one pattern repeated, which means you haven't failed seven times; you've done one thing seven times and can learn to do it differently.

• Negativity bias is a hijacked survival mechanism, not self-hatred

Conti stresses that no part of us wants to harm us. Our brains weight negative events more, as in remembering the berry that made you sick, which helped hunter-gatherers survive. That salience bias gets turned toward false conclusions about ourselves. Like weeds outgrowing flowers, negative voices grow louder unless the positive ones get an ally.

• Childhood lessons stick because children blame themselves

Without abstract thought or life experience, a child yelled at by a stressed parent concludes 'it must be me,' not 'they're in a bad place.' A child rewarded or punished unpredictably learns 'I can't control this' and 'I am bad.' Those lessons aren't retested in adulthood: unlike a computer, the brain doesn't reboot to check for new information. Conti compares it to going back to check whether you wrote down x = 3 when it was 5.

• Trauma generates shame that belongs to someone else

Shame is a reflex to trauma, so victims often feel at fault for what was done to them. Conti suggests asking what you'd say to someone else who was assaulted while asleep: would you tell them how awful they are? Don't make yourself the exception to the compassion you'd give anyone else.

• Avoiding the past lets it grow

Conti compares it to ignoring an overflowing toilet: pretending it isn't happening turns a mild problem into a disaster. People fear they'll start crying and never stop, or curl up and never get up; he says that never happens. The scary 'goblins' outside the room are decoration around answers that can change your life.

• Get thoughts out of your head

Thinking alone tends to loop, so write, talk to a trusted friend or see a therapist. Conti himself never misses his own therapy, since he can't give himself an impartial perspective. He says professional help is essential if thoughts turn to not wanting to be alive.

• Expect months, not weeks

Negative pathways atrophy over time but don't vanish at once; say a word 5,000 times and it'll be on your mind for days. He typically tells patients four to six months, with improvement possibly starting in a couple of weeks. A 20% drop in how often a negative thought appears over a few months can be a real achievement, and he criticizes systems that offer ten sessions and expect a cure.

• Good enough is the parenting goal, and it starts with self-care

Citing English physician D.W. Winnicott, Conti says the aim is a child who feels solidly good enough to face hard things and get back up. Parents should start by checking whether they're too tired, hungry or stretched to be present, and apologize when they snap rather than looking away in shame.

EXAMPLES

• The man who believed he was dead

Conti treated a patient with Cotard's syndrome, a rare belief that one has already died. Affable and funny, he joked about Conti listening to a dead man's heart. Years of isolation had turned his self-talk from 'I'll find someone' to 'you don't get to have people.' Conti's point: if self-talk can convince someone they're dead, it can certainly convince you you'll never get a better job.

• The 50-minute commute with no music

A young man who loved music took a poorly paid job 50 minutes away when better ones were closer, and drove in silence, which Conti realized was self-punishment for being ashamed of the job. Its roots were childhood abuse he felt responsible for. After working through the shame, he got more education and a far better job.

• Mel's 'someone is mad at me' reflex

On vacation, Mel woke at 8:30, found Chris, the kids and the dogs gone, and instantly felt she was in trouble. Through EMDR with her therapist she traced it to fourth grade, waking at a family gathering with an older kid on top of her, then hiding under the covers feeling she'd done something wrong. Despite degrees and years of therapy, she hadn't connected that moment to decades of the same voice. Chris, she notes, was happily walking the dogs.

• Conti's own sense of being cursed

After a series of traumas, Conti began to feel that if something went well, something bad would follow. Putting it into words let

him challenge it: he didn't believe anyone else was cursed, so why him?

- **What listeners' inner voices say**

  In Mel's audience poll, 95% recognized the voice. Kind nudges included 'take care of yourself' and 'start another business even though the first failed'; far more were harsh: 'you're not going to make it,' 'my anxiety is right,' 'am I ever going to be enough?'

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Put up the umbrella**

  Conti notes how often we walk through rain rather than open an umbrella; 'to hell with it' really means 'to hell with me.' Small acts of kindness to yourself and others, like opening the umbrella, picking up what a stranger dropped or smiling, build the momentum to face harder things.

- **Watch for self-fulfilling body language**

  Someone convinced no one will approach them goes out head down and avoidant, isn't approached, and finds 'proof.' Friends often see it, like a change since a breakup, so ask trusted people what they notice.

- **Pair inner work with behavior change**

  If you call yourself a loser for not being healthy, getting up 20 minutes earlier to walk around the block both changes the behavior and starts disproving the voice.

- **Notice it without judging it**

  Mel found that just catching 'there it is again,' like assuming the person ahead of her in the coffee line is mad at her, was rewarding. Conti adds that it takes courage not to feel bad about feeling bad.

The Surprising Psychology Behind the Secrets Everyone Keeps | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Michael Slepian
Date: 2023-08-31 · Duration: 1:12:53
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDJg3IpYC1Q

KEYPOINTS

• The average person keeps 13 secrets

Slepian, a psychologist at Columbia Business School and author of The Secret Life of Secrets, first asked a couple of thousand people what secret they were keeping. From their answers he built 38 categories, then gave the list to about 50,000 people. On average, people had 13 categories of secrets at any one time, 97% had at least one, and 92% of open-ended secrets fit the list. Mel's summary is that about five are secrets people have never told anyone.

• The most common secrets

Top of the list are a significant lie, romantic desire, finances and sexual behaviour. Next come "extra-relational thoughts" (romantic thoughts about someone other than your partner), family secrets, secret ambitions, dissatisfaction with your social life or body, mental health, and broken trust. Mel says the hundreds of secrets her Instagram followers sent all fit his categories.

• A secret starts with intending to withhold

Slepian defines secrecy as the intent to keep information from one or more people, not the act of hiding it. Most secrets rarely come up in conversation, but they exist before and after those moments. A traveller who cheats once has a secret the moment they decide "I can't tell my partner." A small example: stepping away from the Target announcements so your boss doesn't realise you're not at your desk.

• Living with a secret is harder than hiding it

Because people can't read your mind, concealing a secret in conversation is relatively easy. The harm comes from thinking about it alone, doubting your choice, and replaying feelings of shame, isolation and inauthenticity. On your own, you never get the perspective from others that could soften an overly negative view.

• Secrets can make the world feel heavier

His early research followed up on the idea of being "weighed down" by a secret. People thinking about a significant secret judged hills as steeper and distances as longer, in the same way that tired or burdened people do, as if they had fewer resources to deal with what lay ahead.

• Secret versus private

Things that simply never come up, such as your sex life with family, are private. A specific experience you would actively hold back if it became relevant is a secret. Mel notes that "secret" tends to carry shame, while "private" feels like being in control.

• Shame says "I'm bad"; guilt says "I did something bad"

Shame is hard to change because it feels like who you are. Guilt focuses on behaviour, which motivates you to do better. Your past doesn't dictate your future. Mel's version: "You're a good person who did a bad thing." She applies it to cheating on boyfriends in college and law school: a good person with crushing anxiety, coping self-destructively.

• Keep the door open for kids to confess

Children keep secrets as soon as they realise their thoughts are private. The cookie-crumb fibs of three-year-olds are normal. The danger is later, when shame or bullying stays hidden. If confessing leads to an angry outburst, kids learn to keep things to themselves. Mel wants her kids' first thought in trouble to be "I have to call my mom, she'll help," and she saves disappointment for later conversations.

• Family secrets teach children that hiding solves problems

Slepian warns that this can grow into a habit of not asking for help. Mel goes further, calling it emotional abuse when parents make kids keep secrets or pull them into marriage conflicts, because it teaches them that love means loyalty and obedience.

• Before revealing, ask why

There's no undo button. Ask whether you're telling someone because you can't bear carrying it alone, or because they need or would want to know. If you're unsure, talk to a third party first. He also finds that the secrets we think about most are the ones that harm us most.

EXAMPLES

• The midnight call that started it all

About ten years earlier, after a long day interviewing for a job at Columbia by presenting his new research on secrecy, Slepian's dad called around midnight to say he wasn't his biological father. Slepian and his brother were donor-conceived, from different donors, and his parents had made a pact never to tell them. The truth was fine for him; the secrecy was what hurt. Years later, interviewing his parents for his book, he learned his mother let it slip partly because she had been reading his research on how secrets harm people.

• What listeners confessed

Examples included compulsive shopping and binge eating, desperate unhappiness in a marriage, a high-interest loan hidden from a partner, an affair with an employee that led to moving away, falling in love with someone other than a husband with nothing having happened, not graduating from high school, and appearing to thrive after divorce while doing worse than ever.

• "I didn't do well in college"

A friend of Slepian's suddenly told him this at a party, deciding it didn't need to be a secret anymore. It changed nothing between them. New information, even surprising information, is a drop in the bucket of a shared history.

• A grandmother's fear

His deepest regret is not asking questions when he first found out. Years later he learned his paternal grandmother had

pushed hardest for secrecy, fearing the boys would feel less part of the family. Knowing actually made those relationships more meaningful, and he wishes he could have told her.

• Role-playing the party confession

Playing a high school junior calling from a party the police broke up, Mel asked what a parent should say. Slepian: "Let me help you. This is something we can get through together. I'm upset you weren't honest, but I'm glad you brought this to me." Mel said she felt her shoulders drop.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Raise suspicions without accusing

With a partner, start with something like: "I want us to be able to bring anything to each other," then speak about yourself: "I'm feeling insecure about how close you are with so-and-so." With friends who leave you out, say you're open to talking about it.

• Use your "coping compass"

Point yourself to the most helpful available support. Choose emotional support if you need to be heard, or an assertive friend if you need a push to act. Don't shift the burden onto someone it would compromise, such as your partner's best friend. Sometimes the best person is whoever told you the secret.

• Ask two closeness questions

From Mandy Len Catron's New York Times essay: "What is your biggest regret?" and "What is your hardest memory?" Mel and Slepian both answered. His was rereading old emails and seeing he had been a terrible partner at the end of a five-year relationship. Hers was a breakup after her boyfriend's father died by suicide.

Something Scary Happened The Other Day and I Wanted To Talk To You About It | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Mary Catherine McDonald
Date: 2023-08-14 · Duration: 0:51:30
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUjQauuNoHk

KEYPOINTS

• Witnessing a tragedy can be traumatic, even if you didn't know anyone involved

Trauma researcher Dr. Mary Catherine McDonald says we rarely acknowledge that witnessing trauma is traumatic. Vicarious trauma is real, and it can come from seeing an event or from hearing graphic details again and again. She says several of her clients have watched a rescue at sea that didn't end in a rescue, and were deeply shaken.

• Normal memories are filed within roughly 4 to 24 hours

McDonald describes the hippocampus as a file room with workers who put each experience away within about 4 to 24 hours. A well-filed memory has three parts: the story, some of the emotion, and a meaning tag that says where it fits. That's why you can retell a funny grocery-store moment, laugh again, and get on with your day.

• In an overwhelming event, the brain switches to survival mode and memories get fragmented

When the amygdala sounds the alarm, McDonald says the brain reprioritises 47 functions to deal with the threat, and the 'file room workers' leave to help. The result is a fragmented file, scattered sensory pieces without a full story, feelings or meaning. The brain keeps it near the front of your mind so it can try to file it properly later.

• Triggers are your brain's attempt to file the memory, which is why they set off the alarm

When you encounter something that matches a fragment, such as a particular shade of red, the brain pushes the file forward to give you a chance to organise it. But the amygdala has tagged that cue as mortal danger, so the alarm goes off again, even if you're sitting at your desk. Mel says that for her, helicopters, the words 'rip current' and the sight of a tan Suburban now do this.

• The trauma response is adaptive, so drop the shame

McDonald stresses that the trauma response comes from the drive to survive. It starts out helpful and only becomes unhelpful over time. People often jump to 'something is wrong with me, I'm broken', and she sees shame as the biggest barrier to healing. Her line: you're not broken; you're 'the unbroken'.

• There's no hierarchy of whose pain counts

Mel felt guilty for being so shaken when it wasn't her son or anyone she knew. McDonald says we've defined trauma wrongly for about 150 years by ranking whose response is legitimate. Your nervous system is telling you that you need care. You wouldn't refuse treatment for appendicitis because someone else in the ER has a broken collarbone, so don't do it with psychological injury.

• The same event can affect people very differently

A memory can fragment in countless ways, so two people at the same event may react very differently. One may cry and feel anxious; another may shut down and tell the story without feeling anything. McDonald says the second still needs to integrate the memory, because the emotional part of the file is missing. Historically, she says, the calm soldier was used to shame the distressed one.

• What happens right afterwards matters a lot

Not everyone who witnesses something terrible develops trauma. If you can talk it through, give it meaning and feel it with someone soon afterwards, the memory may be filed normally. McDonald recalls a study, she thinks in Israel, in which terror-attack survivors who did a narrative exercise in the emergency room were something like 80% less likely to develop PTSD than those who got standard care.

• Trauma is an unbearable emotional experience with no 'relational home'

Borrowing the term 'relational home' from clinician Robert Stolorow, McDonald defines the risk of chronic trauma as unbearable emotion plus nobody to help you hold it. A relational home is someone who helps you feel through and organise what was too much in the moment. How much you need varies: a divorce might need one every day for six months.

• Healing means integrating, not feeling nothing

Integration means a coherent story with a beginning, middle and end, plus its emotions and meaning. Approaches include EMDR, where occupying your vision while recalling the memory helps restore balance in the brain, narrative therapy, and, she notes, psychedelics such as psilocybin or MDMA, which are thought to quiet the fear centre. McDonald favours using several approaches because the whole body is involved. Memories are supposed to carry feeling, so 'I feel nothing' is the wrong goal.

EXAMPLES

• The missing swimmer

At a rented beach house on a day with huge waves and a rip-current warning, Mel heard car horns at 6:30 p.m. People on the shore were trying to flag down police boats heading the wrong way. Her first two 911 calls didn't connect. On the third, she stood on the porch railing waving a red-and-white towel while the dispatcher redirected the boats. She sent her daughter Kendall running down with the phone.

• Three and a half hours, then recovery

Helicopters, spotlights, dive teams and sheriff's boats searched until 9:30 p.m., when it became a recovery mission. The next morning Mel climbed into bed with her son and held him. She kept replaying what she could have done, donated to the family's GoFundMe, and contacted her therapist and a trauma specialist.

• Mel's rock bottom, now integrated

Fifteen years earlier, Mel faced bankruptcy, heavy drinking, constant fighting and depression, and for a long time couldn't talk about it without choking up. After telling the story many times and letting herself feel it, she says she can describe it honestly without being triggered, which shows how integration works.

- **Giving the event meaning**
  McDonald pointed out that turning the experience into an episode that normalises trauma responses is itself a way of giving meaning to something that felt random and out of control.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Put the shame in a box**
  Close your eyes, picture placing your shame in a box on the highest shelf in your house, and leave it there for a few days. You can take it back later; it's just in the way of healing right now.
- **Write the full story, then feel it with someone**
  Write what happened as if for someone who wasn't there, even if others were with you. Do it daily if you can bear it. Then notice which fragments stand out and what feelings they carry, ideally with someone attuned enough to say 'you must have felt so helpless'. Finally, ask what this means in your life and how you'll carry it forward.
- **Treat your body as a barometer**
  McDonald says not all triggers are conscious, so unease around certain people is worth noticing. She sees triggers as chances to finish filing a memory, not things to avoid forever, and says you have more influence over your nervous system than you think.

Mindset Flip: Getting Real About Your Relationship With Alcohol | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Rachel Hart
Date: 2023-07-17 · Duration: 1:28:08
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmBj6ngdlLw

KEYPOINTS

• Feeling conflicted about drinking is normal, not proof that something is wrong with you

Mel opens with a confession: she isn't ready to quit, but she argues with herself every time she has a gin and tonic, partly because her husband Chris rarely drinks. Coach Rachel Hart says most of her clients start in that in-between place. A huge industry sells alcohol as fun and adult while the science calls it a poison, and two parts of your brain care about different things.

• Your brain learned what alcohol stands for

Hart says we don't just acquire a taste. We learn that drinking is how we relax, connect, open up, watch the game, celebrate or holiday. For her, drinking in her 20s meant relief from perfectionism and anxiety and a way to feel sexy, confident and a little wild. Change starts with asking what alcohol has become a symbol for.

• A drink can act as a boundary between work and rest

Mel describes the drink after a busy day as a lever that shifts her out of work mode. Hart reframes it as a boundary, the signal that you're off the clock. Remove the drink without replacing that boundary and your brain thinks you're still working. Hart's own old line was "I deserve it," and the useful question is what the "it" really is: permission to stop thinking, reward, pleasure, celebration.

• Urges carry information

Rather than treating urges as enemies to defeat, Hart treats them as inner intelligence about a deeper desire, such as more belonging, pleasure, permission or a boundary. 'Just say no' messaging puts you at war with the urge, which gives it power. Control, in her definition, means influencing what happens next, not making urges disappear, which is impossible without getting rid of the lower brain.

• Name the urge as it happens

Hart's first tool is narrating it: "Of course I'm having an urge, it's 5 o'clock, my brain learned we get a reward now." Naming it engages the higher brain and takes you off autopilot. She recalls fixing a cocktail and lighting a cigarette while watching Mad Men without noticing why. Sunsets were enjoyable before you drank; only the association makes something feel missing.

• Fear-based facts about alcohol often backfire

Hart cautions against obsessing over how toxic alcohol is. Some people find it effective, she says, but for many it just adds shame: now you drank the fourth glass and you 'should know better.' Getting curious about what you want and how it feels to be the odd one out is, in her experience, more powerful.

• The worst outcome of not drinking is usually a feeling

Asked to imagine never drinking again, Mel said she'd never have fun, never enjoy March Madness, weddings, dancing or even sex. Hart says those scenarios really come down to an uncomfortable feeling: being sober on the dance floor, or beerless at baseball. Her other mindset prompts include what you make it mean that saying no is hard, and stories like 'I'm all-or-nothing' or 'my brain lacks an off switch.'

• Disappointment is coming either way, so choose which one

You can feel disappointed now because you skipped the drink, or later because you broke your commitment. Mel recalls that on dry-month challenges, urges peaked around 5 to 7 p.m. and passed once she rode the wave, because the desire was for a boundary or a 'liquid hug,' not the drink.

• Manage the lower brain like a toddler

The lower brain wants pleasure, avoids pain and saves energy right now; the prefrontal higher brain can plan and weigh trade-offs. Lecturing a tantrum doesn't work and giving in teaches it that tantrums pay. Instead, say: I know this is hard, you're not in trouble, and I'll stay with you until it passes.

• Change requires a different relationship with commitment

Hart thinks people are all-or-nothing about commitment more than about drinking: you either earn a gold star or break the promise and binge or set even harsher rules, the same pattern as dieting. She also suggests saying "I'm choosing not to" instead of "I can't," since you obviously can, and 'can't' triggers rebellion.

EXAMPLES

• A rum and Coke at Lake Michigan, age 14

Mel traces her belonging trigger to arriving at a state-park beach as the only freshman among her boyfriend's senior friends. When a girl handed her a rum and Coke in a red Solo cup, she exhaled. Decades later, a friend poured two glasses of Sancerre for a garden walk, and Mel joined in despite planning not to drink, then berated herself on the drive home.

• Hart's grumpy four-year-old photo

Hart keeps a picture of herself at four on her phone, on mirrors and over her office. Asking what that child needs is easier than asking her 42-year-old self, who 'shouldn't need anything.' Mel's answer was a hug, and she realised the Solo cup had been one.

• Undiagnosed ADHD and dopamine

Mel connects her love of the first sip to living 47 years with undiagnosed ADHD, which she links to seeking dopamine hits. She also says she had a drinking problem in her 20s, 30s and early 40s, tied to anxiety, financial trouble and sadness.

• The night a friend died

During a past break, Mel heard a friend had died and poured a cocktail. Reviewing it Hart's way showed grief, anger and a belief that the emotion was too big to feel. That's useful data about missing skills, not a moral failure.

• Hart's 30-day break is about testing tools

Unlike Dry January, the goal isn't a perfect streak but trying every technique for urges and excuses. A drink on day two is data to examine. One client's compelling reason was wanting to be 'captain of my own soul,' and Hart has people list reasons across health, relationships, career, faith, money and time.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Look for substitutions

Mel suspects that on nights she skips a drink she buys something or eats a big dessert. Hart says her 'eight problems' were really one: identifying needs and tolerating an unmet desire.

• Replace 'fine' with a real feeling

Hart, self-described as not touchy-feely, had to learn that 'fine' isn't a feeling. Name it, such as disappointed, and treat it as human.

• This isn't only about alcohol

Both say the same skills apply to food, spending, scrolling, procrastinating and video games. For many people sobriety is the right choice, and Mel acknowledges that.

6 Signs You’re Disconnected From Your Power and How to Get It Back | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Thema Bryant
Date: 2023-05-25 · Duration: 1:00:26
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBJrZjZ_TJk

KEYPOINTS

• You can come home to yourself even if you never felt at home

Dr. Thema Bryant, a psychologist, minister and Pepperdine professor named the American Psychological Association's first Black female president in 2023, calls disconnection 'psychological homelessness': wandering, ungrounded and confused. People raised amid stress or trauma often learned survival mode, playing small or people-pleasing, and never got to 'unfold.' Her good news is that you can still find your way home.

• Homecoming starts with telling yourself the truth

The social script is 'I'm fine,' or in faith communities 'I'm blessed,' but you can be blessed and lost. Bryant wants people to be able to say "I miss myself." Recognising that you're disconnected is itself the first step, and she says it means your mind, body and spirit are ready.

• Six questions point to psychological homelessness

Does your inner or outer life fall short of what you imagined? Did you get what you wanted and still feel empty? Do you feel powerless or hopeless? Have you lost energy for things that used to matter? Is there an ache you can't put into words? Do you cry often, or find it impossible to cry? Saying you don't know your purpose is another sign of disconnection.

• A 'bad attitude' can be irritable depression

Bryant says people rarely meet attitude with compassion. But if family, culture or religion taught you that sadness is weakness, you may mask despair with anger and bitterness, like an iceberg. Fighting someone in warrior mode fails because they'll always out-combat you. Instead, soften, share a related experience of your own (transparency is contagious), or name what's happening in their life and ask what's helping or what they need.

• Excellence can hide unhealed wounds

Some survivors cope through busyness and a 'spirit of excellence,' and when you're excellent, people don't notice your wounds, sometimes not even you. Late at night or in certain settings they show up still bleeding. Bryant defines healing as accepting and loving yourself so you have nothing to prove, quoting a Los Angeles life coach named Shannon: "I don't want to be driven, I want to be called."

• Don't keep your healing hostage to people who harmed you

Waiting for an apology or for others to change ('if only my spouse, kids or supervisor would') lets you off the hook and can take a lifetime. Her line: the reason you feel unsettled is that you're not supposed to settle. Look at where you're settling and what you can shift.

• Act before you feel worthy

Cultural, gender and religious messages can frame self-care as selfish, but you're not just a tool for nourishing others. Drawing on behavioural psychology, Bryant says waiting for high self-esteem before caring for yourself won't work, so start the actions first. That includes food ('can I say I'm eating this because I love myself?'), water, moderation and sleep.

• Peace can feel boring if you grew up with chaos

If three episodes of Law & Order is how you relax before bed, Bryant asks why trauma feels soothing. People raised in high stress often find calm fake or dull, so homecoming means leaning into unfamiliar discomfort.

• Growth reveals who wants you whole

People liked the silent, compliant, doormat version of you, so not everyone will celebrate your voice. Some relationships will end and some will change, which may involve grief. In toxic jobs or relationships you have to disconnect to survive, so have compassion for why you stayed.

• Therapy and spirituality both have a role

Bryant defines therapy as a trained, licensed guide who journeys with you without judgment and without needing you to take care of them. She notes research that mental health professionals report lower spirituality than the general public, and defines spirituality as awareness of the sacred beyond what we can see. Believing you're worthy of what you haven't experienced takes faith in 'the more.'

EXAMPLES

• The eagle raised among chickens

Bryant, who attended high school in Liberia, tells a West African fable in Liberian English. An animal expert spots an eagle living with a farmer's chickens. The first time he urges it to fly, it hops back down to its 'chicken brothers and sisters.' The next dawn he carries it to the barn roof as the sun rises, tells it it's not a chicken, and it flies away for good. Her message: people treated like chickens date and pick jobs like chickens.

• "You don't look like any survivor I've ever known"

After Bryant, herself a sexual assault survivor, gave a keynote on sexual assault, a woman with an attitude challenged her in the signing line. Bryant didn't get defensive and simply softened. The woman then said the only survivors she'd known were 'fat and poor like me,' showing how differently surviving can look.

• "Whose peace is it keeping?"

Bryant was taught that silence about abuse kept the peace, until she realised it kept the offender's peace while she held the war in her own small body. She also disproves self-blame with logic: does every girl who develops early deserve to be molested? Then you're not the exception.

• A mother who said 'I love you' felt fake

A client reconnected with her mother, who had struggled with addiction and didn't raise her. The mother said saying 'I love you' felt like something from TV. Bryant told her it isn't fake if you mean it; it just feels unfamiliar because no one said it to her.

• The kid cussed out in the parking lot

Early in her career, Bryant would spend an hour building a child up, only for parents to curse at them before even reaching home. That's why she values family and couples work alongside individual therapy.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Begin with breath and a body scan

In through the nose, out through the mouth, notice where you hold tension, and set intentions for self-compassion and clarity. Mel says her mind went quiet and she 'dropped into her body.'

• Build a morning ritual for a toxic job

Wake before you have to, then add a theme song for the season, stretching, a walk, prayer or meditation, or inspirational reading, so you arrive with a full cup. You are more than your labour or your boss.

• If you feel you have no one, make friends a goal

Try a cooking class, book club, political group or yoga, or deepen surface relationships by going deeper first. Know which people offer emotional support and which offer practical help. Bryant, noting the Surgeon General's loneliness advisory, says loneliness isn't shameful and isn't the same as lacking self-love.

How to Deal With Betrayal and Take Your Power Back | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Date: 2023-03-16 · Duration: 0:45:34
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0xShs1P950

KEYPOINTS

• Before confronting someone who betrayed you, decide what you want

Mel's first step is to ask your goal. Do you want to protect your business and your peace? Repair the relationship? Make them wrong, get a 'gotcha', or pursue them legally? What do you need to say for closure? She chose not to confront the person who stole from her business, but says she'd decide differently in other situations, and in the past she has involved a lawyer.

• Your peace of mind can be worth more than getting the money back

Because the person was in another country, Mel weighed the time, energy and emotional cost of legal action and decided it was too high. She had already put so much into the situation that looking backward would only bring more stress. So she protected the business, took the lesson and moved on.

• You can forgive someone and still not let them back in

Sometimes you need to say out loud: 'I know what you did, I won't surround myself with people who do this, I forgive you, but you're not welcome back in my life.' Forgiveness doesn't require a second chance.

• If you want to keep the relationship, start with an apology and describe the impact

Mel's opener: 'I need to apologise for something: I should have come to you sooner.' Starting this way lowers defensiveness. Then take responsibility for how it's affecting you and describe how their behaviour makes you feel, instead of listing what they did.

• Their reaction tells you everything

If they say 'that's ridiculous, you're too sensitive', you have your answer. If they say 'I had no idea, I feel terrible, what can I do?', that's a relationship worth saving. When Sonia said people in her life simply weren't interested in how they'd affected her, Mel told her that's all she needs to know.

• Closure doesn't require a conversation

Mel argues that when we chase someone down 'for closure', we're often really looking for confirmation or reassurance, which we can give ourselves. If you're clear on your boundaries and their behaviour has already shown you who they are, you can move on without resolving anything with them.

• Look for the pattern that keeps repeating

Mel says patterns repeat until you learn the lesson. Looking back after the business betrayal, she saw a recurring type in her inner circle: people who turned out to be mean, gossiped behind others' backs, and left her scared to leave. Ask which personality types or dynamics keep drawing you in.

• The betrayal is about their pain, not your worth

Speaking as someone who has been both betrayed and, earlier in life, the betrayer, Mel says cheating, lying and stealing come from the other person's trauma, coping mechanisms and avoidance. People reach for the quick rush of cocaine, sex, secret flirting or stealing to escape pain they won't face. That doesn't make it hurt less, but it doesn't decide whether you're lovable.

• Give yourself about a year to grieve

Mel says you're grieving both the reality you thought you had and the future you expected, which is deeply destabilising. Give yourself around a year to move through the anger and the 'how could I not see it?' At some point you'll be saturated with the misery and start to feel sorry for the person, and that empathy is what finally releases it.

• A marriage can survive infidelity, but only if both people do the work

Mel believes any relationship can come out stronger if both people show up: one to forgive and the other to face what led to the betrayal. She says she knows no couple who regretted working through something in therapy, but does know divorced people who wish they'd tried. Even if you split, the work makes you better co-parents and friends.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's business betrayal

At the start of 2022, Mel discovered that someone she trusted had been stealing from her business for a long time, lying to her and her team. She felt stupid, then hurt, then furious. She spent a couple of weeks quietly securing the logins and accounts before cutting ties, and says the experience taught her better boundaries as a businesswoman.

• Sonia from New Zealand

Sonia's marriage ended when her husband got together with her best friend, who had come out as bisexual. Her ex kept reaching out to stay friends. Mel told her she owes no explanation and doesn't need to resolve anything. Sonia said it was freeing to hear, and that she now has wonderful new friends and a new boyfriend.

• Jen from Pennsylvania

After a betrayal ended 14 years of trust, Jen questioned everything about herself and kept thinking it happened because she wasn't pretty or thin enough. She and her husband are in therapy, and he's trying to own what he did. Mel offered a new story: he was lost and felt he wasn't good enough, chasing an old version of himself. 'It's not about you not measuring up.'

• The suspension bridge

Mel says every change is a bridge, and Jen's is as long as the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and sways in the wind. Asked what surprised her, Jen said how strong she is and how much compassion she could find. She gets through her days repeating 'grace, gratitude', going to therapy and doing the hard work.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Turn self-blame into lessons**
  When you notice what you let slide, don't blame yourself. Instead, write down rules for the future: 'When I have a hunch, I won't talk myself out of it.' 'When I'm disrespected, I'll address it.'
- **Write out the anger, then aim for understanding**
  Let yourself feel it and write it down when you're furious. Then steer toward understanding what happened and forgiving, so you don't carry resentment and distrust into what comes next, whether you stay or leave.
- **Tell yourself a kinder story**
  Swap 'it happened because I'm not enough' for 'this reflects their pain and avoidance'. Mel adds that compassion isn't condoning, excusing or taking responsibility for what they did.

How to Get Freedom From Self-Doubt with Lewis Howes | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Lewis Howes
Date: 2023-03-02 · Duration: 1:18:24
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAyVovOO3-c

KEYPOINTS

• Insecurity at school shaped how Lewis showed up

Lewis Howes, host of The School of Greatness and author of The Greatness Mindset, was ranked in the bottom four of his class all through high school. He had a second-grade reading level in eighth grade, was in special-needs classes, cheated on tests to pass, and took seven years to finish college. He hid in the restroom to avoid reading aloud. As a young networker from 25 to 30, he simply asked people questions, and they called him the most interesting guy in the room.

• Losing your backup plan can push you forward

A year before his injury, his father suffered a traumatic brain injury in a car accident and spent three months in a coma. He survived another 17 years but was "physically alive but emotionally dead." He had to sell the insurance business Lewis could have taken over. Lewis calls losing that safety net, along with his own injury, the catalyst for building something himself.

• Ego can get results but leaves you feeling alone

Lewis played 14 Arena Football games with a broken wrist so he'd have game film for the NFL, which ground down a bone. He frames that "nothing can hurt me" toughness as ego, not greatness: it delivers some results but leaves you alone inside.

• Success without self-acceptance never feels like enough

Before 30 he was accomplishing and accumulating, but nothing felt enough because he didn't feel enough. He describes "I'll prove them wrong" as the second most powerful fuel, after anger and not-enoughness, and says it is exhausting. He reached big sports goals after 10–15 years and felt angry afterwards. He now separates success (about me) from greatness (about we).

• Healing means your nervous system stays calm amid chaos

He used to feel tightness in his chest, throat and stomach, lie awake ruminating for an hour and a half, and react from wounds he either didn't recognise or defended with "this is who I am." Healing doesn't mean never being triggered. It means noticing faster and responding from integrated lessons, not old wounds.

• Accepting the thing you hate makes you better at it

Lewis and Mel both have dyslexia. He used to hate himself for stumbling while reading. Now he tells himself "you've got this" when he stutters or has to redo a sentence, and he finds he reads more smoothly and saves time. Mel invites listeners to apply this to whatever they beat themselves up about.

• Saying shame out loud can bring people closer

Lewis believed that if anyone knew he had been sexually abused, no one would ever love him. Hiding it felt like a draining double life. When he finally told people, it made them trust and respect him more. Mel shares her own buried memory from fourth grade, which came back during a seminar, and cites figures of one in four women and one in six men experiencing sexual abuse. Speaking it, she says, is a form of acceptance.

• Stop abandoning yourself to buy peace

His biggest block in relationships was giving in whenever a partner was upset, coming home early or skipping trips, to escape uncomfortable emotions. Years of that led to losing himself and building resentment. Mel says many men struggle with this because they were never taught to handle hard emotions except by defending or shutting down, and compares him to her husband Chris. Lewis now states his values upfront and won't give up who he is to please one person.

• Healing is a journey of processing and integrating

Speaking up was only the start of ten years of different approaches. "The next step is integrating the healing, which is where all the work is." Without continued integration, he says, old pain resurfaces.

EXAMPLES

• On his sister's couch, 2007–08

At about 23, after bone was taken from his hip to rebuild his wrist (20 staples, six weeks bent over), he wore a cast from shoulder to fingers for six months instead of three. It took about a year and a half to straighten his arm. Without a degree during the 2008 crash, he felt "financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually broken." One inner voice kept saying "keep going."

• A pickup basketball fight

At 29, he "turned into the Incredible Hulk" after being headbutted in a friendly game in LA. A friend said he wouldn't play with him anymore. At home he looked in the mirror and asked, "Who are you?" He realised he had too much to lose to let his wounds control him.

• Standing up on day three of a workshop

At a five-day leadership workshop near LAX, he walked to the front, staring at the carpet, and described being abused at five by his babysitter's son. Afterwards, sobbing in the alley, a man in his late 50s told him, "You're my hero." He had been abused at 11, had kept it from his wife of 20-plus years, and now felt able to tell her. Other men followed with their own stories.

• The 405 traffic jam that started a podcast

Stuck in traffic around 2012, after selling his LinkedIn-training business, going through a breakup and the fight, he called Pat Flynn and Derek Halpern about podcasting. They warned him that "greatness" was too broad. He committed to one episode a week for a year as an experiment, with no pressure to make money and about two years of savings from living on a $495-a-month apartment and trains.

• Five months of intensive emotional coaching

Two years before this conversation, he did weekly sessions, sometimes five or six hours on Saturdays, with the stated intention of "peace, clarity and freedom." His coach's breakthrough line was "You're a free man." Having watched both trapped

and emotionally free men during four and a half years of prison visits to his brother, he saw he was "trapped emotionally but free physically." A recurring ball of pain in his chest dissolved, and a month or two later he met his partner, Martha.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Hold on to the voice that says "keep going"

Even if you hear it for only a second a day, Lewis credits that voice with getting him through decades of feeling unlovable, including childhood years of saying "I wish I was dead," which he says were not actual suicidal intent.

• Pick a mission that fits your season

On the couch, his mission was simply earning enough to get off it. Once you're safe, think bigger and include others. He learned in a workshop that you don't win unless everyone around you wins.

• Experiment before going all in

Mel highlights his approach: give yourself a year-long experiment, take the pressure of money off where you can, and improve with each attempt. His first episodes were about winning; his voice developed through practice.

• Consider an emotional coach

People hire business, career and health coaches but rarely invest in emotional skills, which Lewis calls the game most of us never master. Mel adds that "when you put all your energy into keeping peace with others, you create a war inside yourself."

3 Surprising Reasons Why You Have No Childhood Memories ft. Dr. Nicole LePera | Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Nicole LePera
Date: 2023-01-26 · Duration: 1:56:42
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8MxNR9bmHM

KEYPOINTS

• 'At 32 I realized I was a child in an adult body'

Dr. Nicole LePera's viral post described her life at 32: a PhD, a successful psychology practice, a committed partner, the city she wanted — and a numb, shame-filled lack of fulfillment. Her clients, too, reported getting more stuck and frustrated week after week despite insight. She concluded that stress- and trauma-based conditioning from childhood creates habits that keep people disconnected from themselves, their lives and their relationships.

• Change starts with becoming conscious, then making new choices

Her two-step model: first notice how patterned and automatic you are, which creates a little space; then make new choices outside old habits. Even realizing you feel stuck, numb or 'not alive' is the start of consciousness, she says. She adds that people rarely believe change is possible until they experience it.

• Emotional immaturity is being unable to be with your emotions

She defines it as the inability to feel, process, navigate and regulate emotions. It can look like shutting down — suppressing or repressing feelings — or like exploding, yelling and saying hurtful things, or turning the energy inward in self-harming ways. Mel's image: her emotional development stalled around eight or nine while her body kept growing; Dr. LePera pictures a child in a father's oversized suit.

• It's usually inherited, which is a reason for compassion, not shame

Without an emotionally attuned caregiver who could soothe them, children's nervous systems settle into survival mode, and those patterns persist for decades. Dr. LePera notes the emerging science of epigenetics suggests stress can affect later generations at a cellular level, and that the brain stays neuroplastic, so whenever you notice the pattern is when you can start changing it. She describes the causes of mental-health symptoms as holistic, including the gut's role in neurotransmitters.

• Signs of an emotionally immature parent

Unpredictability and explosiveness, where you're always waiting for the other shoe to drop; physical or emotional absence; parentification, where a child parents siblings or the parent; anxious, boundary-crossing helicopter parenting; or so many walls that there's no connection. Consistent patterns — not a single bad moment — push a child's nervous system into fight, flight, fawn or shutdown.

• Little childhood memory can be a sign you weren't present

Dr. LePera once feared a rare neurological condition and volunteered for a memory study; it turned out her whole family remembers little. Her explanation: if you dissociate to stay safe, you aren't present enough to encode recallable memories, and she says chronically high cortisol in childhood affects the hippocampus, a key memory region. Mel, who couldn't recall visiting her best friend Jodi at Central Michigan University, says hearing this ended her fear that something was wrong with her brain.

• You don't need to remember trauma to heal it

Her view is that you're 'a living memory' of your past: it shows up in reactivity, shutdown and how you relate to people. She defines trauma less by the size of the event than by how supported and safe you were when overwhelming things happened. Her line: childhood trauma doesn't come back as a feeling, it comes back as a reaction.

• A dysregulated body can't relax, however much the mind wants peace

Dr. LePera calls herself 'a hippie at heart' who craved rest yet couldn't sit still on a free Sunday. Tense muscles signal threat to the brain, the mind starts scanning for problems, and she'd end up nitpicking her partner. That's why her workbook starts with reconnecting to the body before exploring the stories you tell or your authentic self.

• Healing often feels worse before it feels better

New choices challenge a subconscious that perceives the unfamiliar as threat, and long-suppressed feelings surface. Feeling more, including discomfort, is often a sign you're healing, she says.

EXAMPLES

• Mel's postpartum depression and her daughter

Mel shared that after a traumatic birth she had severe postpartum depression and was so heavily medicated she couldn't care for her daughter for the first eight weeks; at 29 or 30 she was also volatile and unpredictable. Her now-adult daughter, who says she doesn't feel alive, recalled that distress in therapy. Mel believes she passed on a family pattern of hypervigilance; her kids now tell her 'watch your tone' several times a week.

• Dr. LePera's mother and the planner

Her mother, who largely showed up for her academic wins and softball games, found her high-school planner with notes about drinking and run-ins with police, threw it at her head and collapsed on the bed saying she was having a heart attack. For a child already afraid her older parents would die, it confirmed that causing stress could cause harm. Her mother's usual response was the silent treatment, including about a month and a half after discovering she was gay.

• The tech glitch both women felt in their bodies

When an echo delayed the recording, Mel felt herself sensing her team's nerves and fearing her guest's displeasure — the same reaction she had at eight. Dr. LePera, tired and anxious to be perfect, noticed a childlike wish that the problems would cancel the interview so she could disappear. Both caught it, which they say is the point of practice.

• Daggers out, demanding a hug

Dr. LePera describes walling herself off in her bedroom, then blaming partners for not coming in — like holding out a hand with daggers and demanding an embrace. She left relationships for lack of closeness without seeing that she never shared her real feelings. Her partner Lolly, who remembers everything, often recounts outings she can't recall.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Start with one daily 'consciousness check-in'**

  Anchor it to a phone alarm (say 2 p.m.), brushing your teeth or your morning coffee. When it comes, notice without judgment where your attention was, then 'hook' it to your breath, your five senses or the feeling of your body supported by a chair or the ground. Keep that one small promise for a couple of weeks before adding more.

- **Write a 'future self' intention each morning**

  Dr. LePera journals her intention for the day to counter the autopilot that starts the moment you wake; a sticky note in the bathroom works too.

- **Rethink the silent treatment and the 'good boy' script**

  Repeated silence teaches children that part of them is shameful, often leaving adults panicking whenever someone seems distant. Boys, she notes, often learn that crying or anger is weak; anger is a natural signal of violated limits, and suppressing it can lead to explosions later.

3 Proven Methods to Heal Trauma and Rewire Your Nervous System

Date: 2023-01-23 · Duration: 1:18:36
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etmtcooHY_g

KEYPOINTS

- **Trauma is the lasting emotional response to a distressing event, and everyone has some**
  Mel's working definition: trauma is 'the lasting emotional response that comes from living through a stressful, distressing, scary or life-threatening event.' On that definition, no one reaches adulthood without it. She stresses that she is not a doctor, therapist or certified trauma specialist. This episode is her personal account, and an expert conversation follows in the next one.
- **Common signs that past trauma is setting off your nervous system**
  Mel lists reactions researchers associate with it: feeling on edge, snapping or getting frustrated over small things, taking things personally, or the opposite pattern of shutting down, feeling unseen and struggling to ask for what you need. Others include trouble focusing because you feel 'the other shoe is about to drop', addiction, disconnection, and retreating into your head. Rewriting a text 15 times and adding an emoji so no one is mad at you is another example she gives.
- **Trauma is personal and stored in the body**
  What counts is how your body experienced an event, not how big it looks from outside. Two people can come out of the same event with different triggers, as Mel and her mother did after a car crash. The body attaches sensations to the alarm and replays them years later, often when you least expect it.
- **'Little-t' trauma counts**
  Beyond 'capital-T' events like disasters, abuse, witnessing death, neglect or combat, Mel describes smaller experiences your nervous system still remembers. Examples include being the only person of your race or religion in class, being called worthless, having to be quiet because Dad's coming home, or constant comments about your body. She dislikes the big-T and little-t labels because 'little' can make people feel their reaction is a defect.
- **You don't need to remember the original event to heal**
  Asked by producer Jesse, who grew up in a happy home and can't name any trauma but tears up or shuts down easily, Mel says the starting point doesn't matter. Many of these imprints may form before age five, before we can put them into words. Your map to healing is noticing the moments in daily life when you feel overwhelmed or triggered.
- **It isn't about blaming your parents**
  Mel says a frightening tone of voice, or no one comforting you when you were tiny, can be enough. That doesn't make the adults bad. The focus is your body's response and your chance to retrain it now.
- **Talking alone may not change a body-level reaction**
  Mel values talk therapy, including couples counseling with Chris, but found she could talk a situation through and still react the same way when triggered. In her case that reaction is lashing out. Her conclusion is that these reactions start in the body as a feeling, not in your thoughts, so repair has to include the body.
- **Your nervous system is like a home's wiring, and trauma is a nick in it**
  The nervous system includes the brain, spinal cord, gut and nerves. When the wiring works, lights dim smoothly and smoke alarms stay quiet unless there's a real fire. Trauma is a mouse chewing a wire, a wall knocked down, or a breaker that keeps tripping. The result is flickering lights, or an alarm beeping at 3 a.m. when nothing is wrong.
- **Repair means learning to switch from fight-or-flight to rest**
  Mel describes two systems: the sympathetic (fight, flight, fawn or freeze) alarm and the parasympathetic state where you relax, focus, feel confident and let in love. The alarm can get stuck on. She argues three years of pandemic uncertainty left many people there. She says she has given more than 150 talks to companies like Microsoft, Starbucks and JP Morgan in the past year, and focus and productivity problems came up everywhere.
- **The vagus nerve is the switch**
  Mel describes the vagus nerve as running through every major organ and the vocal cords, and says 'toning' it signals safety. Humming, singing and chanting work through the vocal cords. She says there are so many studies that she didn't pick one to cite, so treat this as her overview, not a clinical recommendation.

EXAMPLES

- **The fourth-grade ski trip**
  Mel shares, with a content warning, that on a multi-family ski trip she woke on a bottom bunk with an older kid on top of her. She 'left her body.' The next morning, as her mom flipped pancakes and asked how she slept, she saw the kid and froze, then said 'fine.' She traces her alarm response, control issues, busyness and snapping at people back to that moment.
- **Crunchy snow and black ice**
  Driving from western Michigan to a ski weekend up north in a wood-paneled wagon, Mel, her mom and their dog Freckles rolled several times after a passing car swerved in front of them. The radio had just warned about black ice. Mel describes feeling like she was sitting still inside a tumbling dryer. Decades later, the squeak of wet snow on the way to her mailbox brings it all back. Her mom, in the same car, isn't bothered by snow but tenses up at the words 'black ice.'
- **Chris, the latchkey kid**
  Mel's husband Chris didn't think he had trauma. He was the youngest of three, came home to an empty house every day, walked two miles to school and often had no one at his baseball games. Mel connects that to how he shuts down and doesn't voice his needs at 53, and contrasts it with her own lashing out and addiction to busyness. Both, she says, have improved markedly with nervous system work.
- **The tripping ice maker**
  In their Vermont house, a new ice maker trips its breaker three or four times a week. Mel goes to the basement, finds the switch labeled faintly in pencil, and flips it back. She uses it as a picture of an emotional surge causing a shutdown, and of deliberately resetting yourself.

• What Mel has tried

Over four years: individual and couples therapy, EMDR (an eye-movement trauma therapy), cold exposure, several guided psychedelic therapy sessions with psychiatrists, and a therapist-guided session as a family. She says she's a better leader, parent and wife when she isn't on edge.

OTHER RELEVANT

• High-five your heart

Place one hand over the other on the center of your chest, press in, breathe, and say 'I'm okay, I'm safe, I'm loved.' Mel says her team gathered about 164,000 data points from 91 countries on this as a calming tool. She suggests it for kids who get picked on, after a presentation that falls flat, or when someone cuts you off in traffic.

• Use warm baths and short cold exposure as practice

Ending a shower with 30 seconds of cold water, or sitting in very cold water (she cites 34°F) and breathing through it, trains you to calm yourself while alarmed. Mel admits she hates it and says the point is building capacity, not the bath itself.

• Audit your day and journal

Keep a notebook of when a wave of emotion hits and what set it off, stay curious, and later ask when else you've felt this way. Journal prompts she suggests: 'How can I make today peaceful?' and 'How could I make myself feel safe today?' These tools are free and work with or without therapy.

How Do I Learn to Love Myself, Really? | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Oakley Robbins
Date: 2022-11-28 · Duration: 0:41:36
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wb9oN1720ws

KEYPOINTS

• Being kinder to yourself may be the single biggest lever for wellbeing
Mel cites a large UK study that compared behaviour changes such as diet, gratitude, meditation, exercise and seeing friends more. Being kinder to yourself had the biggest impact on day-to-day quality of life, and it was also the habit people practised least.

• Self-hatred often grows out of tiny moments where we turn on ourselves
Kids can't turn to critics and say 'you idiots, my legs are fine,' so they turn the criticism inward and focus on fitting in or getting attention off themselves. Mel calls each of those moments a small act of self-hatred that cuts your connection to yourself, and says they stay with you for years.

• Comparison hurts, but relentless self-criticism is the real source of self-hatred
Mel separates the two. Social comparison is something to work on, especially online. She notes research that many teens came out of the pandemic worse off after 'mainlining' social media at home, and says Oakley rarely uses it. But she says self-hatred ends when you stop criticising yourself.

• Oakley's breakthrough came when the outside judgment stopped
During the 2020 lockdown, at 14, with no one making fun of him, he played games, jumped on the trampoline, hung out with his dogs and lived with four people who loved him. He stopped checking the mirror for what others might dislike. His lesson: worrying about what other people think 'drags me down', and not caring left him nothing to prove.

• 'You only go through life with yourself'
Oakley's realisation: you're the only person you wake up and go to sleep with every day. You can't please everyone, and if you're not happy, other people's happiness won't make you feel better. Mel calls this a crazy simple statement of why self-acceptance matters.

• Five words to practise: 'There's nothing wrong with me'
Being removed from school made Oakley see that all his energy had gone into managing a belief that something was wrong with him. Mel spent 40-plus years waking up with that belief. Acceptance means accepting yourself exactly as you are and as you aren't. There may be things to improve, but nothing is wrong with you.

• Then ask the radical question: why don't I just like myself?
Most of us make liking ourselves conditional, for example once we lose 30 pounds, pay the bills or stop making mistakes. Mel says research shows you won't feel motivated to change while bashing yourself. Decide to like yourself now, or at least treat yourself as if you do, and motivation and self-care snowball from there. The only thing in the way is your own judgment, which you can remove.

• Self-love is a skill you build like a muscle
Both admit it's hard and takes time. Oakley compares it to lifting: start with a small weight. Negativity is often unconscious, and with practice, being kind to yourself becomes the unconscious default instead. Mel, at 54, says she still works on it daily.

EXAMPLES

• The shorts day
In seventh grade, with bleached hair and eyebrows so blond they looked absent, Oakley wore skinny jeans every day from October to April. On the first warm day he wore shorts, and several kids said, before even saying good morning, that his legs looked weird. He wore jeans in 70- and 80-degree weather for the rest of the year.

• Hiding in sweatshirts
From about 13 he saw chubby cheeks, a double chin and 'man boobs' in the mirror, wrapped his towel around his upper body after showers, and almost never took off a sweatshirt. He later put the split at roughly 70% disliking himself and 30% liking himself.

• Mel's Flashdance perm
In ninth grade Mel got layers and a perm to copy Jennifer Beals and came out looking like a Labradoodle. Everyone in the school hallway laughed. That night she washed her hair about 25 times trying to get the perm out, which only made it frizzier.

• Oakley's three small likes
Asked on the spot, he named his hair and his smile, how he treats and shows up for his friends, and his school results, which he's proud of because he's trying. Mel told him what she admires most is how he lives by his values.

• Listener Corinne Schillinger's challenge
A listener asked what loving yourself actually looks like day to day, because the advice is so general. The episode's answer is small, specific, repeatable habits rather than a broad mindset.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Compliment yourself on one small thing daily
It can be the colour of your eyes, your laugh, being a good friend, your cooking or trying hard at work. If you're stuck, look at your iris, a pattern unique among 8 billion people.

• Name one win before bed
Your brain is scanning for what went wrong. Retrain it with a small win: you got out of bed, got dressed, smiled at a stranger, treated yourself to a coffee, got outside.

• Try the high-five habit

After brushing your teeth, look in the mirror and silently high-five your reflection. Mel says about 50% of people in her research can't or won't look themselves in the eye. Laughing or crying is normal. She claims a breakthrough within five days. These are her own research and claims, from her book The High 5 Habit.

• Compliment others on character, not just looks

Oakley's addition: point out what's great about friends, like a good point in class or how they treat people. He says compliments on how he acts mean more to him because you can control how you show up but not what you look like.

3 Steps To Understanding Your Childhood TRIGGERS And How To Repair Them | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Guest: Dr. Becky Kennedy
Date: 2022-10-27 · Duration: 0:53:24
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZ5BoJoUPGg

KEYPOINTS

• You wired early, and it's never too late to rewire

Clinical psychologist Dr. Becky Kennedy, author of Good Inside, says her adult clients arrived with different labels (anxiety, reactivity, imposter syndrome, depression) but shared one core story. As kids they adapted to thrive in their earliest environment, and those once-clever adaptations now hold them back. She calls the 'double truth' empowering, not a reason to panic about the past.

• Your body is the same one you were born with

Kennedy points out that we never get a new body. It has lived through everything since infancy. We define memory narrowly as events we can retell, but we can only retell what adults helped us make sense of. The hardest moments were often the ones we were left alone with, so the body holds them without a story.

• Babies wire how caregivers respond to their distress

Using a moment Mel witnessed in an airport lounge, where a mother screamed at her baby in a bathroom, Kennedy explains the sequence. She stresses that it is one moment within a repeated pattern. The baby feels overwhelmed, then encodes the caregiver's added fear and anger. The lesson becomes 'when I get upset, my relationships are threatened.' Years later that adult may tell a caring partner 'all good,' then pull away or drink rather than seek comfort.

• Triggers are stories from your past acting out in the present

A father who knew all the right tantrum strategies still yelled awful things when his child melted down, and he said he had no memory of how his own parents handled his emotions. Kennedy told him his body was acting out that memory every time. Strategies sit behind a door you can't open while triggered, so you have to work on yourself too. As she puts it, we respond to the circuit activated in our own body rather than to our kids.

• A protector part shuts down what wasn't allowed

Drawing on Richard Schwartz's Internal Family Systems model, Kennedy explains that when a child's overwhelm brought yelling instead of compassion, the child developed a harsh inner voice ('you ungrateful kid, you're too much'). It shamed them first to avoid punishment or abandonment. As adults, that part takes over the 'boardroom' and does to others what it learned to do to us.

• Ask what someone else's behavior invites you to grow

Rather than trying to make a whining child or coworker more like you, ask what part you were forced to shut down and might need to develop. Start with the most generous interpretation of their behavior, and move from sitting across the table from someone to sitting beside them, facing the problem together.

• Tantrums are explosions of desire

Kennedy believes many women learned to 'be a good girl,' which meant tracking others' wants over their own. That can surface as people-pleasing, perfectionism, overthinking and fear of speaking up, asking for a raise or wanting things for themselves. In the toy-store meltdown, shaming the child ('can you ever focus on someone else?') teaches that wanting is bad. Caving teaches that their wants topple a sturdy leader. The middle path names the want, maybe photographs the Lego, and holds the no.

• Thank your old patterns for their years of service

Kennedy dislikes calling adaptations 'symptoms.' With a hand on your heart, she suggests telling a pattern that it kept you safe for perhaps 18 years, then running small experiments while it protests. Tears are normal. Shame was adaptive in childhood but it is a freeze state, and change requires movement. Self-blame doesn't hold you accountable; it makes change impossible.

• Say 'I am a good person who…'

We collapse behavior into identity: I did a bad thing, so I'm bad. Saying 'I'm a good parent who yelled at my kid' or 'a good person who hasn't worked out this week' separates who you are from an action that doesn't match your values, and frees energy for curiosity and repair. The same applies to kids: 'I have a good kid who is saying I hate you.'

EXAMPLES

• The chicken-again dinner blowup

After a stressful day, a child groans at dinner and the parent explodes. Kennedy's repair, ideally after you first repair with yourself: name what happened, say clearly 'it's never your fault when I yell,' validate that it felt scary, and promise to work on your feelings. Discuss how to voice food complaints separately, perhaps a day later. She calls repair the single most important skill to get good at.

• Mel's anxious-texting daughter

Mel described a daughter who sends 15 texts when nervous, then says 'you're not helping' and hangs up, leaving Mel feeling like a punching bag. Asking for the most generous interpretation made Mel realize the word 'enemy' resonated. As a child, upsetting her mom made her feel like the enemy.

• 'Hi, worry boy'

Kennedy's five-year-old greets his nighttime 'worry boy,' reminds himself it's a part of him and not all of him, and remembers his 'I'm safe boy' and 'happy memories boy.' Adults can do the same with a 'tired part' that stops a morning walk.

• Mel's quick snap at her kids

Mel, whose children are 23, 22 and 17, said she can't recall being yelled at yet snaps at her kids under stress, then quickly apologizes. Kennedy says not remembering is completely normal, because the body still carries the pattern.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **Trace the road to reactivity**
  Instead of asking how not to yell at dinner, ask where the depleting path began, such as the PTA meeting you agreed to despite promising yourself you wouldn't, or the sleep-in you skipped.
- **Check whether a goal comes from shame or values**
  No one motivates from 'I'm lazy.' If the goal really aligns with your values, listen for the part that resists, greet it, and ask it to step back.
- **Repair is permission to keep practicing**
  You will mess up again. Repair rewires both your circuitry and your child's or partner's, and it stops another generation from wiring self-blame.

What To Do If You’re Having a BAD DAY And Don’t Feel Like YOURSELF | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Date: 2022-10-24 · Duration: 1:03:04
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5z0xjtb4_e4

KEYPOINTS

• This episode started as an unplanned conversation about a bad mood

Mel asked her friend and colleague Amy how she was, and Amy, who is almost always upbeat, said she felt 'below the line' and close to tears. Amy agreed to record on audio only. Her struggle was twofold: she disliked the feeling, and she didn't know how to sit in a bad mood and let it pass, especially when people kept noticing and asking what was wrong.

• Anxiety can hit in the middle of a perfect stretch

Mel had just finished 14 days on the road where everything went right: a great speech in Montreal, a surprise hangout with Jay Shetty six floors above her at the Four Seasons, a family wedding in Montana, a spectacular New England fall drive, a new puppy and news of half a million downloads in one week. Walking into her new Vermont house to see Chris and friends, she felt a massive wave of anxiety and felt herself 'leaving her body.'

• Your mind will invent a convenient explanation

Mel noticed herself doing what Dr. Russell Kennedy described on an earlier episode: jumping into her head to ask 'what's wrong with me?' and scanning for a cause. She settled on sadness that her daughters, in LA and Boston, couldn't be there for the puppy, but sensed that wasn't the real reason.

• Locate the feeling in your body and give it a shape

In a therapy session that morning, her therapist Anne Davin had her close her eyes and find where the feeling lived. Mel described a brass corset around her lower ribs, like something from House of the Dragon. Amy, trying it live, felt an oily, viscous slick in her upper chest and the back of her neck. Next, imagine it floating out in front of you, then let it take the form of a younger you.

• Seasonal transitions can trigger stored memories

Mel realized fall, despite being her favorite season, had been the most acute time for her anxiety: junior and senior year of high school, every fall at Dartmouth, a fall overseas, three falls in law school. Anne explained that seasons are processed through the limbic brain and circadian rhythm, so shorter days and fall smells can trigger memories of hard transitions marked by self-hatred, drinking and dissociation. Mel dreads the clocks going back, when it's dark at 3 p.m.

• You have two states: the divine self and the injured self

Anne described a part of you that taps into flow, awe, creativity and connection, and an injured part from childhood that learned to cope. Mel had strengthened the first in public: on stage, with fans, with friends. But that work wasn't complete in private moments, so when the excitement stopped, the injured part 'looked for a place to plug in.'

• The injured self reaches for whatever protected you as a child

Examples include pulling back if parents weren't affectionate, staying quiet to avoid fights, or keeping the peace for approval. For Mel, it's leaving her body and spiraling into worry; for Amy, shame and sadness. Many of these patterns were formed before age five, so your body remembers what your mind has no story for, a point Mel credits to Dr. Becky.

• 'The rattle': getting off the roller coaster leaves you shaky

Anne's analogy: after a thrilling ride, you step onto the platform and feel unsteady until you find your footing. That shakiness is the injured self saying 'remember me?' Mel visualizes herself standing on the platform rather than stuck at the bottom of the ride. Amy recognized her own fear that 'the other shoe has to drop' when life is very good.

• Not feeling like yourself can be a good sign

Mel's reframe: if you've done the healing work, feeling off is noticeable precisely because you now know another way of being. She contrasts this with Eckhart Tolle's 'pain body,' living in your own pain all day, which she says she did for decades.

• Fire up a different memory circuit on purpose

Anne told Mel that injured experiences are encoded in the amygdala, while memories of deep connection and flow use different circuitry. Recalling a specific peak moment, feeling where it sits in your body and toggling back to the heavy spot strengthens the positive pathway. When Amy did this, she rated the oily feeling in her neck as noticeably lower.

EXAMPLES

• The Dante's Inferno assignment

When Mel pictured her corset as a younger self, she recalled senior year English: students wrote cantos sending a classmate to hell and read them aloud. The first six or seven were about her. She left school and didn't return for days. She admits she was insecure and condescending then, and hadn't yet remembered being molested.

• Amy's childhood as the non-golden child

Amy's feeling took the shape of a left-out kid. Her brother, the golden child, had cancer for two years and died at 12 when she was 10. 'You can't compete with somebody who isn't even here,' she said, adding that the narcissism episode helped her see new layers.

• Kendall singing under a full moon

Mel's peak memory: on parents' weekend in LA, Kendall and her pop music program friends joined an impromptu open mic on a peeling porch. Because of COVID, Mel had seen her perform live only once in four years. Kendall covered Ariana Grande's 'Love Me Harder' as phones went up and a full moon rose; Mel felt it below her belly button and took the lyric as a message to love herself harder.

• Amy's errand game with her daughter Jane

Amy put her youngest in charge of a 10 a.m.-to-noon errand list: paint store, TJ Maxx, Price Chopper, a bookstore and more, with Jane calling time ('Mom, you have two minutes'). Both said it was a peak experience, and Amy felt it in her solar plexus.

- **Buckbeak on the boots**
  Mid-recording, Kendall called from a boot store. Mel joked about Buckbeak from Harry Potter, her therapy protection image, and the boots turned out to have a winged design that looked like him. Mel calls these coincidences signs and says noticing them builds circuitry for flow.

OTHER RELEVANT

- **What Mel does when the wave hits**
  Put a hand on your heart and reassure the younger you ('you're okay, I love you'). Say the feeling out loud instead of thinking about it. Ask for a hug; she hugged Chris and said she felt anxious without knowing why. Then let yourself rest; she chose a movie on the couch. She notes research suggesting an emotion typically passes in about 90 seconds if you don't resist or grip it.
- **Get curious instead of numbing**
  Both women admit the instinct is to have a drink, joke it away or get busy. Mel's practice is to notice 'there it is,' avoid making up a story and let the feeling move through.
- **Look for hearts and call out signs**
  From The High 5 Habit: look for naturally occurring hearts, like clouds, stones, a stain or the puppy's heart-shaped freckle. When you find one, tell yourself it was put there for you, pick it up or photograph it, and train your brain to notice things going right.

How To Let Go Of What No Longer Serves You | The Mel Robbins Podcast

Date: 2022-10-17 · Duration: 0:48:14
URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59agbwvJS8Y

KEYPOINTS

• Letting go is how you make room for change

Starting on a fall hike in southern Vermont, before she gets too winded and finishes in the studio, Mel argues that self-improvement usually focuses on adding things. She says the best place to start is often dropping projects, thinking patterns, relationships and habits that no longer serve you. She's answering listener Cheryl's question: how do you know whether to let something go or fight for it harder?

• Trees push their leaves off to survive the winter

Mel explains that leaves turn sunlight into energy for the tree, and in return the tree sends them water. In winter the ground freezes, there's no water, and leaves left on the branches would drain the tree dry. So the tree pulls back water and ejects them. She calls it 'almost a violent act,' not a gentle, pretty one: once the exchange becomes one-way, holding on would kill the tree.

• The test is whether the energy exchange is still reciprocal

Healthy relationships, jobs, friendships and habits give back roughly what you put in. When something becomes a one-way 'energy suck,' Mel says it's time to let go. Holding on too long depletes your vitality and motivation, and leaves you no time, space or drive to create anything new.

• Honor the purpose something served, then drop the guilt

Things often serve a purpose for a season. Work friends you ate lunch with every day may fade after you move, because the patterns of your life changed, not because something is wrong with you. Mel admits she held on to the house where she raised her kids for 26 years about two years longer than she needed to. Thanking something for its purpose makes it easier to release.

• Your energy doesn't lie

Mel asks listeners to check an internal fuel gauge from empty (burnt out, pouring into everything else) to full (energized even when things are hard). She notes how a grumpy barista can drag down your mood, while a kind one who buys your coffee on a bad day lifts you up. She calls energy a compass tied to intuition: it's why you feel 'off' around some people and why a text from someone you dislike lands differently.

• Easy cases: things that only return negativity

Examples include high-school or pre-pregnancy pants that make you feel bad every time you try them on, a job that puts a pit in your stomach, a friend who only gossips and drags you down, or a roommate who was a fit two years ago. Donate, delete or leave. If you can't leave, like a job you need for the bills, redirect the energy you spend complaining into 30 minutes each morning job-hunting or working on a side project.

• Hard but worthwhile things pay you back

Mel hates exercising and getting out of bed, but once she pushes through, the return is pride and energy. Chris's sobriety took enormous effort at first and now pays back in better sleep, clarity and alignment with his values. Chasing someone who leaves you insecure and distracted, by contrast, is 'an obsession,' not a reciprocal relationship.

• In draining caregiving situations, your values create the return

Caring for an aging parent, or a child or partner with mental-health struggles, can be exhausting, and the person may not be able to give back. Mel's answer is to connect with your values: feel proud that you're a compassionate caregiver acting as the person you want to be, and remind yourself 'this too shall pass.' She keeps showing up for a friend who has struggled for a long time because she would want a friend to stay.

• Winners quit all the time

Responding to DMs asking whether letting go makes you a quitter, Mel says holding on to what no longer serves you is the losing move. Quitting one thing is saying yes to another, so she frames letting go as a beginning and a source of possibility.

EXAMPLES

• The law-firm year Mel wasted

At 30 and pregnant, after loving her work as a New York public defender (in court 8 to 5, visiting Rikers), Mel moved to Boston without a Massachusetts license. She took a big-firm job writing alone in a high-rise office. For a year she rode the 45-minute commuter rail feeling more dread the closer she got. She stayed miserable instead of searching for something else, until maternity leave gave her distance.

• Chris's 12-week ultimatum

With a mortgage and a baby, Chris told Mel she had 12 weeks of maternity leave to find a job paying $60,000. She landed one the night before her leave ended. It paid $55,000, which was enough, and she walked in the next day and quit the firm. Her lesson: give a human a problem to solve and we get creative.

• Stuck in traffic on the way to the studio

Running late, Mel felt the wave of stress and the 'should have gotten up earlier' complaints starting, and recognized it as her own energy draining away.

• 'How do you stop controlling your friends?'

At a Los Angeles event with her friend Kathy Heller, a woman asked Mel this, and Mel says she kept thinking about it. Her answer: when you catch yourself trying to control someone, let go of the urge to change them and put that energy into listening and supporting. Control blocks connection.

OTHER RELEVANT

• Rule one: a 24-hour no-complaining challenge

Mel calls complaining a complete energy drain, whether it's about traffic, your job, your partner or your weight. Try going a full day without complaining, and redirect that energy into fixing the problem or letting it go.

- **Rule two: stop trying to control other people**
  Let people show up as they are. Mel adds that sometimes a person's purpose in your life is simply to teach you how to let go.
- **Give yourself credit for the hard things you're already carrying**
  Mel suggests naming four or five difficult things you keep showing up for and letting yourself feel proud. That pride is the energy coming back to you.