

The Grief School

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Embracing Healing: Janine Rashidi's Journey Through Trauma Part 1



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the grief school
**THE PLACE
WHERE YOU
LEARN TO
GRIEVE**

with Sharon

Sharon ([00:03](#)):

Man, have I got a treat for you ladies today I have met the most amazing woman with a remarkable story of free healing trauma, and she's wrote an amazing book, and it's just, I'm so honored to share this amazing woman with Janine Rashdi, right? Yep. And her story of growth, healing, and brokenness. Welcome to the show, Mike.

Jeannie ([00:35](#)):

Thank you so much for having me, Sharon. It's an honor to be here.

Sharon ([00:39](#)):

So I honestly, you guys, I we're gonna take this journey together because I really want Janine to share her story of really what it was like to grow from the pain. There's so many times that griever, we as griever, we don't understand this one thing. We, grief doesn't just come from death. Mm-Hmm. I believe that hurt feels grief every time there's a loss. I also teach that there are 45 more or more known losses, and so grief can come from so many different places, and that we have to figure out our path for healing, right? So, please share a little bit about your story, your early challenges, what you face, anything from abuse, addiction, whatever you'd like to share, show as little as much, and then I'd like to get into what your body was experiencing in those sort of

Jeannie ([01:37](#)):

Okay. Well I was born into addiction, so both of my parents were parents and still are addicts. I'm not sure if whether or not my mother was using while I was in the womb. However, I did witness her using drugs with my siblings. So I'm assuming, and unfortunately my parents, they just weren't well, obviously, and my experience at a very young age was not only drugs, but also sexual abuse, psychological abuse emotional abuse and physical abuse. And so, go ahead.

Sharon ([02:25](#)):

Oh, no, no, go ahead.

Jeannie ([02:26](#)):

Okay. I'm the eldest of five, and I essentially was put into the mother role because my parents were always partying. So I knew they had a very early age. The white powder that they lined up and snorted, you know, turned them into a different type of mom and dad. Back then, I would call them the bad mommy and daddy. It changed their personality in different ways than alcohol did. And we also were a family that went to church. So that was a little confusing because there was this facade that was going on on the outside while there was something totally different going on, on the inside. And so I questioned continuously one religious beliefs and what is the point if we're really not living that life. But also, I was a child who questioned and dare to, you know, call out like, Hey, why, why do you do that?

Jeannie ([03:21](#)):

Because it turns you into the bad mommy and daddy. And of course, that wasn't received very well. And I know that the responses were such that it made me start questioning what I was seeing, whether or

not that was true or not. You know, and our psyches are so sensitive when we're younger and we look to our parents for that foundational understanding of the feminine principles, the masculine principles, and if those are out of balance, that really shapes a lot of who we are. So I grew up second guessing a lot of my innate intuition. And I've spent, well, I'm 40, almost 46 now. Basically reclaiming all of that. So by the time I was in a teenager, my teachers definitely could tell that there was something going on at home. But there wasn't enough evidence. And what they did was they created after school things for me to come do. They encouraged me, you know, to get into music and sports and things like that, how to apply for scholarships so I could be a part of those programs, which was really amazing. And so I had a lot of my emotional needs met through my teachers.

Jeannie ([04:43](#)):

And my mom seemed to be okay with that. However, when it came to my friendships, that was something that she really had a hard time with because I had a, or she's still a good friend of mine. When we were growing up, she would lend me clothes. She would, you know, give me, basically her hand-me-downs. 'cause We didn't really have any money. And this somehow threatened my mother. So I remember a moment vividly where she took all of the clothes and she drove them back to my friend's house and threw them on the front lawn and told her, my daughter didn't, doesn't need any of this from you. Another vivid memory I have was actually at six years old. And I wrote about this in my book where I was dancing freely in the front room. I had on this beautiful yellow dress with cute little yellow shorts.

Jeannie ([05:29](#)):

And my mother came in and she yelled at me and accused me of trying to seduce my father. Well, what 6-year-old knows what seduction is? Anyway, but what this did was the rule was set that I could no longer wear dresses and I could no longer dance. So this created a lot of rigidity in my body. Also, I did not feel very pretty mainly because I was not able to express myself through my clothing. And that, that, obviously I carried into my adult years for quite some time, and even ended up attracting partners who had the same how do you say that? The same issues, you know, didn't want me wearing dresses, didn't want me dancing, things like that. So here I am in junior high and I'm, you know, very musically talented getting straight A's I go into high school and we start picking classes.

Jeannie ([06:33](#)):

And my first thought was, maybe there's a class that will help me with what's going on at home. But unfortunately, there wasn't such class. And so I thought to myself, I'm a straight A student. I'm destined for medical school, and there's nothing that is helping me with what's going on at home. And so, when you live in an environment like that, it's very hard to think about your future and waiting it out until you can, you know, and it was a, a long shot too, because even if I got a scholarship, I questioned whether or not I would be allowed to go. So I decided to run away from home. And so I hitchhiked from Northern California to Southern California at 15, and I learned how to live homeless for 18 months. And this was fascinating because I met many Vietnam vets.

Jeannie ([07:25](#)):

We got along real well naturally because we all had PTSD but there we all also had trust issues because we had PTSD. But I learned some really valuable skills that I hope I never need to use again. But the thought of like, you know, being financially destitute or not having a place to live doesn't scare me because I've already experienced that. Well, what happens is if you don't heal the trauma that you've got

from your past, you may likely become a statistic, which is you might attract the same type of partner, which is exactly what happens. So here I am now, I'm a runaway. I'm 15 years old, and I meet a man who is 17 years my senior. And the way we connected was through our trauma. And so, you know, sharing stories, and of course, I've got mommy issues and daddy issues.

Jeannie ([08:22](#)):

So the first man, whether it was gonna be a man or a woman to tell me that they loved me, I was starved for that. So of course I believed it. And, you know, I do believe that to this day, he loved me to the best of his ability, but he had the same addiction with methamphetamines. He also had the tendencies of incest, which unfortunately by the time my daughters came into the picture, they both became victim of that. So again, the cycle repeating itself. But it took me 10 years in that domestic violence situation. You know, there was the sexual abuse, there was physical abuse, psychological abuse and emotional abuse. So it took me quite a few attempts of trying to leave with my children. And the problem was, is I had made so many attempts that at some point he caught on and he, you know, he wasn't gonna let me have both of the girls at the same time so that I could leave.

Jeannie ([09:25](#)):

And, but I, you know, figured it out. It took about nine months of planning. I picked up a book called seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. And I learned about this word called self mastered. And it was the first time I had heard this word, and I was fascinated. So when I found out, or, well, yeah, when I suspected first of all that molest was happening with my children, I quit my job and to make sure I was there at all times. So he would leave for the day claiming to go work, and usually he didn't find work. He was usually getting high. And I would take the girls to the pool and I would start reading. And this was when I realized that I have to take charge of my own life. And then I learned this word interdependence, which seemed like such a foreign thing.

Jeannie ([10:16](#)):

I had no idea what that meant. That's certainly not something that I ever saw growing up. But I, something inside me said, I want this, but first I need to do the other steps and get to at least independence before I can even reach interdependence. And then, of course, this self-mastery. So it took quite a bit of planning. I role-played with my daughters for all the different scenarios on how to leave the eldest. She was eight at the time. She knew what was happening. But the youngest, she was too young, and of course, she was going to spill the beans. So this was just a game we were playing. And the day finally came where I gave them the code word which the code word was blueberries. And once they heard that, they knew what was, you know, what they needed to do.

Jeannie ([11:07](#)):

Well, things didn't quite go down as I had planned. So I was collecting unemployment. I had enough out of the apartment and stored at my grandparents' house about a mile and a half away for when this day came, that it would, it was obvious that, you know, things were missing. And my unemployment check didn't come as it usually did. And so I really felt like, man, I'm screwed because if he figures it out, I'm not sure if I'll be able to ever get outta this situation. So we lived in the second floor apartment, and I knew I had to wait another day for this check. So he went and you know, scored his bag of meth. And I thought to myself now, throughout the relationship, he had put meth in my drink. So I would end up high without you know, consent.

Jeannie ([12:01](#)):

And I learned over the years how to, and I believe this is actually how I learned to meditate so well, was I learned how to really focus on the opposite quality of what the drug was doing to me. So I eventually figured out how to not feel wired, even though I had it in my system. I figured out how to sleep, things like that. But it took a lot of, you know, mental focus and a lot of breathing. So I thought to myself, the only way I'm gonna keep this man distracted is if I quote, unquote party with him. And so I did. And so the girls are asleep on the couch. They both have their shoes on, and the first thing he notices is that their shoes are on. And I'm thinking, okay, so he takes the shoes off, and I figure worst case we leave and they have no shoes.

Jeannie ([12:47](#)):

I've got one backpack by the front door, it's got everything that we need in it. And so the next morning comes, and usually when he was coming down off of that, he would get real paranoid. And so we were behind on a payment on the van, and we lived in a cul-de-sac. And he said, I need you to go drive the van to the back of the apartment complex so that they don't come and repossess it. And so I did. I walked out and I got the van, and I thought to myself, I actually need this van parked on the street for obvious reasons so I can get away quickly. And I thought, Lord, help me. I don't know what is gonna happen at this point. And so when I left the apartment to move the car, both of my kids were asleep.

Jeannie ([13:32](#)):

By the time I pulled into the driveway, both kids were downstairs and they were crying. And so I can't remember which one said it, but they said that their dad had gotten upset and had hit them and shoed them out of the house. So I heard this voice, whether it was God or my higher self, I have no idea, but it was the necessary voice that I needed that said, this is it. This is the time. And so I opened the door and I told the girls blueberries. And so the youngest, you know, she got all excited. And then of course, the eldest, her eyes are big, like, oh my God, it's happening. And I looked at her and I said, no matter what you see, no matter what you hear, you are not to unlock this door unless it's me or the police.

Jeannie ([14:16](#)):

So I had the van running. I still had to go upstairs and grab the backpack that had the rest of our identification in it. And so I get up there and there he is standing at the door. And I don't, again, it has to be divine intervention because what came over me was this persona of, oh, no honey, I'm just gonna take the kids to a babysitter so I can come back and we can party it up. You know, I'm trying to appeal to that part of him. And he says, okay, I'll go with you. And I noticed that he had no shoes on. So I said, okay, why don't you go grab your shoes? So I know he is gotta go to the far end of the apartment, which hopefully will gimme enough time to grab the backpack and get downstairs. So I grab the backpack and I, as I'm running downstairs, I lose my footing.

Jeannie ([15:02](#)):

And so my eldest daughter sees me, you know, basically fall down the stairs. And I don't even know if she's watching at this point, you know, as it's happening, but I'm giving her the signal, like, unlock the car door. So she unlocks the car door, I jump in, put it in reverse, I call grandpa. And mind you, that check didn't, hasn't come. Okay? So I have no gas money. And so I called grandpa and I said, I've got seven minutes to get to you and load up the car, because he very well could run that fast. And he knows that

your guys' house is the first place I'll end up. And so and I said, and I have no money. I need at least enough gas money to get to Northern California. And so I backed in, they had the garage door open, they loaded up the back of the van Grandpa, you know, put a lot of cash in my hand.

Jeannie ([15:50](#)):

And he said, go, we'll take care of the rest, should he show up? So I literally drove around town for an hour before I got on the freeway because I was wondering who's gonna take care of him? This was the same thought that went through my mind when I ran away from home, who's gonna take care of my parents, but really more importantly, the big, like, heart wrenching thing that I felt when I ran away was, who's gonna take care of my siblings? 'cause it was not like I could take them with me being the eldest of five. And I was 15, and the youngest was seven. So in hindsight, I can see the consistency of me wanting to be the caretaker of, you know, set abusers.

Jeannie ([16:36](#)):

So once I finally, you know, came to my senses and got on the freeway, the real kicker was where I had to go back to in order to start my new life. And that was back home with my parents. And at this point, they had a clean streak. So I thought, so I was very hopeful, you know, okay, maybe they're actually getting clean, maybe they're getting their act together. And during that time, actually that 18 month period that I took for me to get back on my feet, they actually were clean. So that was actually a good memory. And so, you know, the girls and I, we started our life and my commitment was to stop the cycle of abuse because I left home with the intention of not ending up, excuse me, how my parents were. And yet I ended up in a similar situation. And then my children became victims of abuse.

Sharon ([17:28](#)):

Let me I couldn't even stop you because it just so was not what I was expecting at all. Thank you. Thank you for your honesty. Thank you for sharing. I wanna go back to when you were a little girl.

Jeannie ([17:39](#)):

Yes.

Sharon ([17:40](#)):

Did you know that it was abuse? Or what age do you think you were aware that this is undifferent? Because I distinctly remember for me, some situations that were not, they were not typical situations. And sometimes I'm sharing, I would be sharing the stories of my grief work and people would guess,

Jeannie ([18:01](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([18:02](#)):

In my mind, I didn't realize it was abuse. I thought it was typical. This is just how everybody is. When did that light turn on for you, do you think? What age?

Jeannie ([18:17](#)):

Probably at six or seven years old. Okay. My mother would have these fits of rage, you know, and I, I wanna say the first sleepover that I remember with a friend, it showed me the difference in parenting. When I had my first group sleepover, I think I was in sixth grade, and I remember very vividly asking if the parents were gonna be sleeping with us, and the kids laughing at me. And that's when I realized, oh, that's not normal. But at seven years old when my mother was coming down off meth I don't know what triggered her, but she kicked me out of the house. Now what's interesting is I had had a bike accident where I was racing a little boy who said boys were faster than girls. So of course I needed to show him otherwise.

Jeannie ([19:12](#)):

And through that I ended up falling off my bike and cutting my ankle. So I had stitches. Well, when my mother kicked me out of the house, I grabbed a jar of money that apparently I had been saving for quite some time, what 7-year-old knows to do that. And so I went to the neighbor and I asked the neighbor if I could use her phone. And that's when I called my friend and her friend's mom came and picked me up. But CPS was never called, the police were never called. I had a bloody nose because my mom had like, hit my, you know, she had thrown me into the porcelain toilet. Yeah. So upon reflection, I thought, well, shame on these other adults too. You know, not, I don't wanna be a shamer, but you know what I mean? Like somebody needed to say, oh

Sharon ([19:57](#)):

Yeah, like, somebody should have gotten it. Somebody should have seen it. Okay. Not to share their story because it's their story. Because you were having sitting in the mothering role of them.

Jeannie ([20:07](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([20:08](#)):

How much responsibility did you feel you had?

Jeannie ([20:11](#)):

Oh God. I had all of the responsibility. Like it was my job to make sure everyone got up, everyone was fed, everyone was ready to go to school. That the house was clean. Yeah. And that was all before, you know, like taking care of myself. So the same routine would be at at in the evening too. And plus I had my homework. Yeah. You know, I didn't disappoint my teachers.

Sharon ([20:37](#)):

Have they made it up through on their healing journeys? Have all of them made it?

Jeannie ([20:43](#)):

Actually, yes. And just recently in the last, oh, well, we're coming up on Thanksgiving, so Thanksgiving's actually an anniversary where all five of us finally came back together and were reunited after having our own journeys of disowning the parents. Obviously I was the first one, and then I came back for a bit and then I did a final disowning. But everyone needed to have their own journey of doing that, and that took some time. So there was a period where, you know, I was pretty much the black sheep of the family for doing such a thing. But then as time went on, I just knew, I was like, at some point they're gonna realize. And they did. And now we all are really, you know, close and we're talking about our healing journey. And to be honest, that was not something I ever thought would be possible in his life. So this last year has just been so full of blessings, you know, on that end.

Sharon ([21:35](#)):

Okay, so I interrupted you. So we're gonna get back. So you got back home with the kids? Yes. Not to mom and dad's.

Jeannie ([21:43](#)):

And so up until this point, I had a pretty good career as a VP of marketing for a credit card company that sold visa and MasterCard services to businesses. And so I quickly found a job, but I realized that the nine to five wasn't gonna work for me because I wanted to be a part of, you know, taking the kids to school and their sports, things like that. And so I thought, well, what could I do? And at that time, you know, the trade schools were getting popular, there were two things that interested me becoming a mechanic, why? I don't know, but that's still fascinates me. And massage therapy. And so when I thought about what my hands would look like, I thought, okay, maybe massage might be better. Of course, the work environment is very different, <laugh> as well. So I went with the massage route. Now what's interesting is that I never had a massage before. This was a very logical decision of, okay, I have a marketing background. I'm sure I could figure out how to create my own business. I just need to figure out this massage thing. But it was actually through that massage journey where I started understanding how the body holds trauma.

Jeannie ([22:52](#)):

And so there I am, you know, in massage school and I'm receiving a massage and you know it very quickly I would fall asleep, but I would be in a dream state and I could re, I would start remembering things that I had experienced in my body, you know, so that was just personal experience. That was before I learned about somatic, you know, response and how our body holds trauma and things like that. So I, you know, experiences the highest form of knowledge and I can tell you for certain, that was definitely my experience.

Sharon ([23:22](#)):

Absolutely. So that was your first time embarking on the, that was the very first time embarking on that a possible healing Yes. For your healing journey. Yes. Wow. Yeah. I can only imagine sitting in that classroom learning, even book learning about massages and learning about trauma, and you're like, yeah, yeah, yeah. For the massage. Let's talk more about trauma and this trauma. Had you, at that point, had you considered yourself being in an abusive relationship, beautiful relationship and life, right? And had, did you, had you had a label for it yet? Trauma, PTSD

Jeannie ([24:01](#)):

I did not have a label for it yet. Not even the word trauma. The first thing I did was I put the girls and I in therapy. There was this amazing, and actually they, they are still in business. It's called Check Community Health and Awareness Council here in Mountain View, California. And that was the only way I could afford to do counseling. Was it, you know, basically interns needed hours. And so that worked out financially really well for us.

Sharon ([24:31](#)):

And so you're in the massage, you're here about trauma, you're starting to have these experiences. What is, honestly, and this is just a really short tip, what was the next thing you did? You're like, I gotta do something about, you're already in the therapy, but you're like, I'm gonna do something about it.

Jeannie ([24:47](#)):

I don't know that there was an awareness of I need to do something more yet. Okay. Because I was pretty saturated with whatever I was processing in therapy. And then I was going to school from 6:00 AM to 10:00 AM then I was working 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM then I would come home, spend a couple hours with the girls, and then I would see massage clients on the side, you know, to bring in cash. So there really was no downtime. Like when I look back on it, I think to myself, there's no way I could do that at this stage of my life. <Laugh>.

Sharon ([25:23](#)):

I would imagine also that your body ne with that type of schedule, us living with mom and dad and knowing what you knew, that your body never went to rest.

Jeannie ([25:31](#)):

Yeah, it really did.

Sharon ([25:33](#)):

That's the second layer of the trauma, correct? Right. Because you were always on this heightened alert, right?

Jeannie ([25:39](#)):

Yeah. And we didn't, we didn't have a room for a good portion of that 18 months. We were sleeping on the couch, you know, so, you know, and some of my siblings were still home. Yeah. So there wasn't like a sense of quiet either.

Sharon ([25:56](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. What do you think are some of the common misconceptions that people have around trauma and healing, do you think?

Jeannie ([26:06](#)):

Well, that it goes away. And I like to preface that when people come in for trauma work with me. So the process that I created over the last 20 years is all about how to relate differently with your trauma and digest your trauma. But the trauma doesn't go away. You, it's just how you relate with it is differently. So my ability to even have this conversation with you is a sign of growth. Yeah. As before, I mean, my voice would be all shaky. I'd be completely identified with it. So what it does is it takes away the identification of it where you're no longer so identified with the, the story of your trauma. And what that means is it no longer will have a hold on you like that because you no longer identify with it.

Sharon ([26:59](#)):

Yes. So this is where I want to, IM part one.

Jeannie ([27:04](#)):

Okay.

Sharon ([27:04](#)):

We all know your story, A beautiful, beautiful share. Thank you so much. We know your story, but the, the part that I really wanna get into is at some point you decide to fully join onto your healing journey. You write an amazing book. You have a treatment that you help clients with. And that's where I wanna go into part two. So tell everyone I wanna end this one in case they don't get to part two. Where can they find you? Okay. And the title of your book, and then we'll start part two.

Jeannie ([27:34](#)):

So you can find me@goodbyetension.com. And the name of my book is Abundance Beyond Trauma, and it comes with a workbook, abundance Beyond Trauma Workbook.

Sharon ([27:46](#)):

Awesome. And what about.com? Is there a.com

Jeannie ([27:51](#)):

Or website? Is good by tension.com.

Sharon ([27:53](#)):

Good by tension do com. Yeah. Alright friends, see us in part two 'cause this amazing story is gonna continue. Thank you friends.