

Windy

Okay, Nathan, what, from your perspective is the purpose of our conversation today? 0.04

Nathan

I'm hoping that you will help give me some, maybe resources to deal with some challenging feelings of envy that frequently form a part of my life. Whoa. Okay. Stop. 0.21

Nathan

Hello, listener. Welcome to Why Do I Feel? I'm your host. Nathan Filer. I am an author and so I'm interested in stories. I believe that stories are crucial in allowing us to make sense of our experiences, including that most commonplace yet utterly bizarre human experience emotions. That's what this podcast is all about, finding and sharing stories to help us understand why we feel, not necessarily how a scientist would understand it. Although there'll be a bit of science too, but in the way that we can come to a deeper understanding of ourselves by spending time with other people who may have felt the same way. Over the coming episodes, I'll be asking a lot of strangers to tell me some pretty deep personal stuff. So it only seems fair to lead by example, come and join me in therapy. 01.31

Windy

From your perspective, would it be useful to take an example that may happen in the future? Or has happened in the past or is currently happening something that would help us both to really understand the process of envy a la Nathan. 01.50

Nathan

That's Dr Windy Dryden, he's an emeritus professor of psychotherapy and a leading authority on envy an emotion that I personally find myself battling with more often than I care to admit. And that's the subject of this episode, envy and jealousy. They have different meanings, which we'll tease apart a bit later, but if you've ever found yourself, coveting the lives, careers, or possessions of others, or maybe worrying into the wee small hours about losing your lover to the embrace of another, you are certainly not alone. To help me begin to make sense of these feelings Dr Dryden has kindly offered to give me a single session of psychotherapy for your edification and my excruciating humiliation. 02.43

Nathan

I can feel myself getting hot and feeling embarrassed to, to give you an example because, um, it could be, cause a long with the envy that I feel comes associated feelings of shame. 02.54

Windy

Would you like to work on the shame first, then deal with the envy or would you like to deal with the envy and kind of plow through the shame? 03.04

Nathan

Hey, you're the, you're the doctor. Uh, 03.08

Windy

It's your life, Nathan? 03.11

Nathan

Well, let's, uh, let's focus on. So an example, okay. Say in my professional life, I find it often very difficult to be happy for other authors who are enjoying success, even authors that I know, and that I like on a personal level, I've said it, I feel disgusting for saying it, but I've said it and I frequently experience the success of others. As a failing of my own. And for that specific example,

I suppose when it often happens, I might, um, I might just look up other authors books. I might just look them up on Amazon and I might, I don't, I might look at, I might. 04.01

Windy

Hoping, hoping to see what Nathan? 04.04

Nathan

Well, yeah. Yeah. That's a really good question. Hoping to see, hoping to see what, what, I know what I'm going to see. I'm going to see, I'm going to see the book that I'm looking at and I'm going to see. You know how well reviewed and rated it is and how many ratings it's got. Um, and, and then I'm going to have some feelings. Yeah, I might, I might feel some envy if I felt that, uh, if I feel that's going particularly, well. I do want to add to that to give it some, uh, some context. I do. I think the reason the shame comes with it is I do, I am at least self-aware enough to know that. I have had and enjoyed some success as an author. I've arguably had more than my fair share of success. So when I then feel envious for others who are enjoying that moment, that negative feeling of envy is really compounded by, by a kind of. Self disgust, I suppose. And, you know, without wanting to complicate this picture too much, I suppose, maybe that's something slightly reductive for, for me in terms of that initial question of, do you want to deal with the envy or do you want to deal with the shame because they feel quite sort of, um, intimately connected, I suppose, on some level I start to feel. And, and I can rationalise this as, uh, as erroneous, but never in, in the moment I start to feel that there is only sort of so much success to go round and if they're having it well, then, you know, good for them. But, but that means that I can. 05.50

Windy

But let's suppose that that's, you know, since you, since you go there and let's suppose that let's suppose. Then that, you know, it is a failing of yours that you're not doing as well as you hope that you are, you're failing in this aspect of your life. How, how do you feel about that failing when they are succeeding? How do I feel about it? 06.18

Nathan

Um, I don't know if I, if I acknowledge if that's true and I am failing and, um, What I don't feel great at it. Windy. That's not, 06.30

Windy

I didn't ask you. I did not ask it. Didn't ask. I asked you what, you didn't feel, those that I asked you what you did feel. 06.38

Nathan

Ah, I feel like, um, I felt like I'm disappearing from the face of the earth. I feel like I'm vanishing and becoming an absolute nothing. And, uh, nobody. 06.55

Windy

Okay. Yeah. Right. Okay. So it sounds like that in a way that you have connected your worth as a person to your achievements in this area of your life. 07.11

Nathan

Yeah, that's probably fair. 07.13

Windy

And do you want to continue to do this? 07.18

Nathan

Well, as I heard myself saying the words, I feel like I'm disappearing off the face of the earth.
07.24

Nathan

No, no I'd rather not. 07.29

Windy

You'd rather not. 07.31

Nathan

Well, that was an uncomfortable five minutes of my life. Let's leave me disappearing off the face of the earth for now. People can be envious of many things. Some are harder to deal with than others. 07.45

Yvonne

I never believed I would ever get married. So I'm now in a marriage and I'm like, oh my God, this is amazing. You know, it just felt normal and natural to want to have a child. 07.59

Nathan

This is Yvonne. I met her at her home in Luton and was immediately welcomed with a slice of fruit cake that she'd been baking in preparation for her upcoming 50th birthday. I could hear her husband busying himself upstairs, but he never came down to join us. There were no children in the house. 08.20

Yvonne

I remember when we were trying, we, we, we spent three years trying. And I did have to convince him. I did have to convince my husband to do it. It wasn't hard cause you know, just promise them lots of sex. I do have to, I suppose, in a way, apologise to him because I changed the narrative. Our narrative, when we entered the marriage was it was just going to be the two of us. And all of a sudden I dealt a different hand and he never understood that because it, in a way it was like, He was blindsided. All of a sudden I'm like, I want a baby. And he was like, you what, cause this wasn't part of the plan we tried naturally for three years. And in that time, especially at the beginning, there was a real excitement. I mean, looking back, I never thought there'd be a problem. Anyway. I'd never thought this would be difficult. I've got pregnant with two guys having sex once with both of them not being in love. 09.18

Nathan

That happened when she was at university, she'd had two pregnancies ending in two terminations. She never told anybody about it. 09.27

Yvonne

So I had to shut it away, put it in my suitcase, put the padlock on, throw the key away and just get on with my life. So it almost became this. You just have to move on. Um, it didn't feel like a natural, normal thing to do. It just felt like, as I said, it just felt like put the shame away and just get on with it. 09.49

Nathan

It was a lot to carry, but now, 09.52

Yvonne

So I'm now in love with somebody I've said happily ever after, you know, I've committed to, I have the dream. This should be easy. Regardless of my age, people we know people get pregnant in their forties and I was 40 when I started trying, this is not going to be hard. I loved that feeling of hope. There was so much energy in that. And there was so much excitement in that I remember, I remember thinking or having images in my mind of our daughter climbing on my husband's lap because he was studying at the time while he was studying, she would just climb on his lap. He'd lift his arm up. She would just lie there. You put yourself down on her and continue studying while she just rested on him. I had have images of me and her because she would be just like me. We'd be ganging up on him. My child would be strapped to my back while I climbed Kilimanjaro, because we were going to have this exciting life. You know, I never had those thoughts before and it was just. It was something else. It really was something else. And then it died. It was like somewhere in those three years, it just disappeared. I don't even know when it stopped. I have no memory of when that ended. I just know it did, and it became harder and harder. You know, month after month, my body was telling me this isn't going to happen. I didn't understand why. And I wasn't prepared for that. I really, really wasn't prepared for that. And then we started fighting, you know, I never, never could have imagined one it's, something so much could lead to so much hurt and disappointment and upset, you know, something that should have been such a joyous experience. Just became so robotic and regimental and hard, you know, we stopped laughing. We stopped playing, we stopped kissing. It was just literally I'm ovulating. Let's just get on with it. 12.54

Nathan

I've got a couple of friends who are trying to have children now. The the age, actually that you're talking about when you were trying, and one thing that they're all noticing. And so I'm interested in whether this is something you were noticing as well as well, is of course, as they're trying to get pregnant, everybody else is having babies. 13.14

Yvonne

How does that happen? How does that happen? Is like the world and his wife were all pregnant. When I was trying, it was like, and it's not, for me. It was more when I had the realization, it wasn't happening and it might not happen. And then it's not going to happen that everybody was announcing they were pregnant or every woman I pass in the street had a bump and not feel like why can't I have that? You know, why can't that be me? I know I'd pull away because I couldn't be around it. I would just walk away because I couldn't be in that joy. 13.53

Nathan

Yvonne had a friend who was also trying to conceive, but conceive her second child. And after seven months she did. 14.03

Yvonne

I hated it. I, I mean, I hated the feeling, but I hated that I was there. I hated that I was feeling so much envy that somebody who already had a child was complaining about conceiving her second child, but was pregnant. And I couldn't even get pregnant with one, you know, I hated being at my goddaughter's play and watching all the mums and gooing and gushing over their kids in this play. And I was like, this is never going to happen to me. You know, all these, you know, why has it taken you? To get, you can get pregnant when your marriage is difficult and mine isn't and I'm struggling. And why, why, why? There are so many ways, so many ways, you know, I never realized all these points was me being envious. Because that wasn't going to be me, that wasn't going to be me sending an email to all my friends saying that I'm pregnant. That wasn't going to be me with my family and my Dad's saying "our family's growing". Cause it wasn't going to be about me when my dad was relaying stories. You know, these. Beautiful stories of his moments

with his grand daughter and watching his face and just burst into tears because he was never going to have those stories about my kids. They were never going to have memories of their grandparents. You know, that I was so envious of the fact that he would, he would never have, I won't have that place in his heart. My kids won't have that place in his heart that. I won't have that place in my family with both my brothers, having kids and the kids getting together in the cousins playing, I will never, I always have to look on the sideline. You know, family days out, I can't do them anymore because the parents, the grandparents, I feel like people are looking at me going, why are you here? And I can never look in and go, oh, there's my child. The one in the blue. I should probably be wearing red actually, but you know, the one that's fighting everyone. That's her, I'm not going to have those stories or those moments. And it sucks. 14.03

Nathan

You know, as I'm hearing that, and I'm thinking about, um, I'm thinking about those feelings of envy that you had, but you know, what I felt I'm sort of learning from this conversation is as, as well as it is so reductive to, to think of envy as this sort of big emotion sitting there, but by itself, because, because hearing you, it feels like, well, envy is a symptom, but underlying that is this maelstrom such complex feeling this, and you've used the word grief a number of times as well. It feels that that's sitting under there. Does it feel that way to you? 17.20

Yvonne

Yes.

I mean, that was the driving force. I, I, you know, if I hadn't experienced that, would I have felt that envy? No, I would have felt something else. I'm sure I'd have been envious of something else, you know, but for that experience, grief was grief was the driving force to that emotion. Grief was what opened that up for me. And I resisted that because. I didn't think I deserved to grieve anyway. I mean, I didn't think, well, I haven't lost anything. So how can I be grieving when I came to understand a bit more about it, I then was, I don't deserve it. I've had two terminations. I've given up my opportunity to be a mum. I don't deserve to grieve 18.06

Nathan

But when did your journey of wanting to have children? If it has ended. 18.19

Yvonne

I'm not sure I would ever say I stopped wanting to have children or that journey ended. It took a lot of work and healing to even sit at that part, get to that part of the journey and be able to say enough's enough. I, I just want it to focus on me now. And also at that point, my marriage had suffered, it was breaking down. 18.49

I wanted it, but at some point I needed to have my life back so I can hold both. Now. I know I still want it. And that's where, why I still like and enjoy and allow the tears because it reminds me. Of how much I loved my unborn children, how much I decide that hope. And I can also hope hold on to the hope of having this amazing life without it. 19.19

Nathan

And Yvonne is living an amazing life. She uses her experiences to help other women who are childless through no choice of their own she's part of gateway women, a support network. You can find out more about that in the show notes or search for them online, my own feelings of envy, your recall, lack, the quiet dignity of Yvonne's. I'm not trying to reconcile being unable to have children. Something it's impossible not to sympathise with. Rather mine is a squalid and shitty breed of envy that revolves around my professional life as an author. I find it difficult to be happy for other authors who are enjoying success. I look at them and I feel like a failure. You'll

remember that we left me disappearing off the face of the earth in therapy with Dr Windy Dryden. Who incidentally has written and edited over 240 books about mental health. I've written two. Both of which nearly killed me. And I can tell you now that 240 books is rude compared to him. I'm failing.

Aren't I? 20.40

Windy

What would be for you a healthy way of dealing with the fact we're assuming temporarily that's the case that you are failing, that you're not doing as well as these people. 20.51

What would it be healthy for you to feel to fail instead of that? 20.55

Nathan

Um, Well, it would be healthy for me to feel instead of that something like, you know, the lessons of Baz Luhrmann's wear sunscreen, but you know that the road is long. Sometimes you're ahead sometimes you're behind, but ultimately the race is only with yourself and I'm sort of aware of the, of these sort of useful mantras but I don't really go there. 20.21

Windy

Okay, because, because I didn't ask you about mantras. I asked you about feelings. Now, let me, let me tell you if I was to say that you in answer to my feeling question, you can only use one word. Okay. All right. What, what would the feeling, the healthy feeling be about you failing, where others have succeeded in your areas of interest? 21.47

Nathan

Aye. Aye. Aye. I mean, I am really struggling to think of a one word feeling that it's plausible that I could, that I could go there if I'm feeling that that I'm, that I'm failing like a good emotion that I could go to one when faced with when faced with that. But that maybe, maybe something like, um, you might need to help me. 22.20

Windy

I will. But I think it's important that you kind of, you know, struggle a little bit more before. 22.29

Nathan

Yeah. I mean, if I could. If I could see it really for what it was, if I could see the clarity on that and for it not to like to see that I could be failing in that area, if indeed I was comparing comparatively. Um, and for that not to be this sort of global sense of, of complete failure or worthlessness, then I suppose a feeling I could have there, um, is, is, is. As a sense of perspective on that. But, but again, I don't know, you're going to say that probably perspective. Isn't isn't quite right. 23.07

Windy

Would you like me to kind of maybe suggest something to aim for? 23.11

Nathan

God yes, please. 23.13

Windy

Okay. A feeling of disappointment, not in yourself. But in the fact that you haven't achieved what you want to achieve, would that be a healthy emotion to strive for when you're faced with the failing? We're assuming again, that you know that you are. 23.39

Nathan

It seems healthier. 23.41

Windy

Do you have any doubt or reservation about that? 23.45

Nathan

I can see that, um, that not doing as well in. In any given aspect of your life or indeed in, in many aspects of your life, but that doesn't equate to being a complete failure. And even if you are failing in by most objective measures, nearly every aspect of your life, that doesn't equate to being a bad person. And I would prize being a good person and being honest and having integrity and being helpful and being loving, I would, I would prize all of those things, um, ahead of being, uh, a good writer. 24.29

Windy

Even in your answer, you you've edited, edited out half the picture. Because you focused on the idea that the idea of, you know, that you wouldn't say to anybody that, you know, their worth is, is actually dependent upon their, you know, with a successful failure, but you didn't really kind of, kind of really get into the idea that it really is disappointing when you fail. 24.54

You see? And I think maybe you're not allowing yourself to feel disappointed. 25.03

Nathan

But is it right to feel disappointed when I aye. It would, yeah. Like, is it right to feel disappointed when, what I'm feeling disappointed by is someone else doing well? That feels like a horrible thing to feel disappointed about, especially as, you know, things are going okay for me, it's not, you know, like somebody getting, you know, 20,000 five-star reviews or winning the Booker prize, doesn't actually take away from my achievements. I can see that. So, so to fail, to feel disappointed, feels horribly mean spirited. 25.40

Windy

Yeah. You know, in terms of working with you, just in that little brief, um, in our, in our brief session and, you know, please don't take this the wrong way. Uh, but. If you were a horse. 25.56

Nathan

I'm starting to take it the wrong way. 26.01

Windy

We'd have to put blinkers on you because the reason that you're not solving your problem, and there's all kinds of reasons why you're not solving your problem, you're blaming yourself for having it and things like that. But you know, what are, you know, When I said about disappointments, you know, you said, am I right to feel disappointed with about other successes? 26.27

Look, you're only feeling envious because that you're making the comparison. Then you're focusing on the fact that you, at that time. Aren't doing as well as you want to. I think that part of the reason that you're not kind of solving your problem is it's hard for you to really focus on the problem and process it in a way that gives you an opportunity for a solution. 26.54

Let's put all these things together. Okay. And let's see if, if this, if this sounds like a plausible solution, You become aware of a situation where somebody that you know is doing very well and that you are then reminded of the fact that this point that you're not doing as well as you would like, I, you recognise that that is a matter of, to be very disappointed about, but it doesn't prove that you're nothing, that you could be a somebody, whether or not you do well. Or you don't do well, but it is disappointing when you don't do well, but you are still as somebody now, would that, would that be a germ of a solution there for you to take forward? Yeah. Yeah. Cause I think in a way what you're doing is when you look at Amazon, you're practicing the problem. I don't know if that means, you know, you can understand that. And so you need to practice the solution.

Nathan

It might be a broader lesson. Now I might not want any of us look at Amazon, we're practicing the problem, but now I'm getting into matter of not going into the, the ethical problems with Amazon. And again, what I'm doing there actually is trying not to look at the problem. Isn't it? So, um, yeah. 28.13

Windy

And try to, try to kind of humour yourself, slightly away from it. When you were growing up, did anybody sort of, you know, say to you, I dunno, you know, sound or whatever it is. Whatever you do in life. One thing is not going to change about you. You're still a somebody, no matter how well or poorly you do, but some it's probably better to do well than to do poorly. Does anybody kind of say that to you or to try to teach you that type of philosophy? 28.49

Nathan

I mean, I'd have a, I think a very nice relationship with my, my parents. I'm not going to start putting blame anywhere, but, but what you said then just sounded absolutely extraordinary to me. I want you to say it all over again. Uh, not for the recording, but just for me. Cause I felt like I wanted someone to tell me that. Can you just tell me that whole thing again? 29.08

Windy

Yeah, sure. son. 29.11

Nathan

You don't have to call me son it's okay. 29.18

Windy

Whatever you do, you know, you know, you're still somebody, you know, that, that even if you do poorly, it doesn't mean that you're a nothing, but it's, it's preferable for you to do well, according to your own landmark than the not to do well. And therefore, oh, your to feel disappointed when you don't achieve your goals, but hold onto the idea that it was still a, somebody. I love that. Well, here's my suggestion. Okay. How old are your sons? 29.54

Nathan

Uh, I've got a son and a daughter. I've got an eight year and a five year old. 29.57

Windy

Okay. Well, my suggestion that start to teach them that, but imagine that you're also teaching yourself that at the same time. 30.11

Windy

So there are three people being taught that not two. 30.17

Nathan

That brief session of therapy affected me more than I thought it would. If you believe that you might benefit from therapy or simply interested to discover more about single session therapy, that sharp focus blast of help that Dr. Dryden specialises in. You can find some resources in the show notes. 30.37

Nathan

Envy is wanting something that someone else has be it, possessions or status jealousy. In contrast, if the fear of losing something that you do have to somebody else. 30.53

T

I kept a corkboard before we lived together. You know, it had all our memories on it. Like our first concert, we went through together the first, um, I, I kept everything from every one of our dates. I kept one little thing. So like from our first day I kept the bus ticket. I used to get to the place we went to on the second day, I kept the lid of the bottle of wine. The third day I kept a rapper from chewing. That we had. So I was really physically attached to these objects, like, um, or sentimentally attached to other, sorry. And when I got home and I just saw my empty bedroom filled with these boxes of a life I don't have anymore. And I saw all those photos of us being cute and happy together. And my oh just, it was horrible. 31.32

Nathan

This is T he's asked us not to use his full name. That was the end of T's relationship, a relationship that was torn apart by a very specific type of jealousy. At the beginning things were great. 31.48

T

So it was a very millennial love story. It was literally, I've never really used Tinder before. That was the first time. So there you go. But yeah, we just spoke on that and then she was on holiday and then the day after she came back, we went out for like, What would have been our first date? So we spent the day in the high street of the sort of like area we lived in and we spent about, it was literally about seven or nine hours just talking. It was really nice. I loved it. And we just walked around because we were on quite like a seafront town. So it's quite, you know, aesthetically pleasing for them. So yeah, we just spent about seven or nine hours just walking around talking. And it was really cool because we got to talk about, um, we have a lot of similarities. I like music's we have a similar interest. 32.28

Nathan

Was it love at first sight? 32.30

T

Um, No, I didn't know this at the time, but she was seeing at least one other person at the same time, which was, you know, we weren't official. That's fine. I didn't know at the time, but I didn't. I think I went in tonight and we built a wardrobe together on our fifth date. So that was quite fun because when you build a flat pack with someone you see the best and worst in em, it was, I didn't mind it though. It was really fun. I got to be with the person that I liked the most at the time. It was really fun. 32.50

Nathan

I mean, that's you describe it? It sounds like a really sweet. Lovely relationship to me. So I just wonder whether, um, there was, uh, a specific moment that you remember when you started to have these feelings of jealousy and what they were the moment I knew where we were at, where I lived at the time. 33.11

T

Um, We were there just, you know, and you're in bed and you're scrolling on your phones. You're just laying there doing nothing. And it was scrolling down the phones and I was like, oh, this guy I know's having a baby. And then she pointed out, oh, I slept with him, uh, last year. And I was like, oh, and I just, I remember I remember it when, you know, when you felt like your stomach just shrinks and I got really freaked out and I don't know why I then couldn't stop. Because I knew him. I knew who he was. I've met him beforehand and obviously had conversations, shook his hand, everything like that. So, um, and yeah, I just, I remember getting really freaked out. I said, I've got to go for a walk and I'd just left her alone in the bedroom of the place I lived in at the time. And I went out cause uh, I lived by the woods. So I went out there and yeah. 33.52

Nathan

T experiences, something called retroactive jealousy. He calls it RJ for short. Let's ask Dr. Windy, Dryden what it means. 34.01

Windy

Retroactive jealousy is to my mind, the idea that I have to be the only person that my partner has an interest in not only now, but in the past. So I often see this type of jealousy as a desperate try, a desperate attempt to try to convince myself. Of something that I cannot be convinced of. 34.31

T

I remember freaking out, I just couldn't stop picturing it. And I was like, I ended up getting home and I told her, you know, why I left in such a hurry. It's just, I'll never forget that stomach crippling sort of feeling for the first time. 34.43

Nathan

And I'm going to ask you a really personal question, and maybe you can say to me, you know, that really isn't relevant to this experience, but intuitively it feels to me like, um, like it might be, so I'm interested in your, just your take on it. How was your sexual relationship with her? 35.02

T

It was quite good early days. It was really good early days. And then as I got. You know, more aware of RJ. I started to compare myself to the other people from before and the less driven I was to do it. And then the more self-conscious I felt during, and then, yeah, it was, yeah. It was nothing against her past. It's not her fault for having a life before me, not in the slightest. So, but yeah, it was just, she obviously introduced me to her ex fiance cause he was part of her friend group. It was easy to picture because I saw him quite a lot so, yeah, that was, it was just mostly the interest of thoughts. Cause when we were together, uh, I still had them, no matter what activity we're doing, whether we're watching a film and that was keeping focused, whether we were cooking together, whether we were having sex, whether we were on a walk or playing music or anything, anything like that, it was still running at the back of their mind. I think a lot of people with RJ do it, they look up the other people that they know their partner have been with because you think it's a release and it's the mystery each year. And it's not the case. 35.57

Nathan

Yeah. Well, I suppose this is, yeah, this is probably what's worth teasing apart a bit because it wasn't just that it was unpleasant, but it seems like it, it started to really consume you. 36.07

T

Consume's a great word. I think engulf is also relevant as well, because it was, it was the. Towards the end of our relationship, especially I noticed that I couldn't stop. When I told her about

the retroactive jealousy, intrusive thoughts, it seemed like she was offended. She took it personally. She asked me, are you calling me like a slag or something like that? And I'm like, no, it's not. It's not your fault for having a life before you met me. That's not, you know, you're an attractive person. Of course you've slept with people. I'm not upset with that. I just can't stop picturing it. I can't stop picturing that. Even when we were laying there together, like it was, I know where your hands have been. I know where your lips have been. I know where they've been. And I couldn't like, it's not the fact that I didn't want to touch her because I know she's been touched in those places by other people. It's not like I didn't want to. But it was to a degree actually, but it was quite scary. I thought I was insane. I really did. I thought I was the only person in the world that pictures this. 36.58

Nathan

It might be useful to get a bit of a sense of precisely what you mean by these intrusive thoughts. Do you just, do you mean, do you mean sort of images of her sleeping with these other guys? Is that what you mean by an intrusive thought? 37.10

T

I got a really dangerous skill, which was, I learned how to carry on with my day. But have those thoughts sort of playing as a screen behind your eyes. So I would spend all day with ours at work and shout it on the phone or doing spreadsheets and refunds, whether I was skating or whether I was playing music whenever I was doing anything, it was always there. And I learned to backseat it, and that was so bad. It was just constantly this movie by one way. I think I'd word it is. If you're in the middle of, you know, X amount of screens like TVs around you, right. Um, and you're sitting in the middle and there's all these screens around you and everywhere you look, it's something horrible on the screen and you can't, you don't see a way out of this sort of ring of screens. It was just, I couldn't stop it. 37.57

Nathan

To be honest T. It sounds like agony. And, and it seems to me like, you know, that relationship came to an end and it's seamless to me, it can be like, totally honest with you. It's sounds to me like that that relationship had to come to an end that, you know, it wasn't sustainable for you to be in that much pain. And of course there could be no expectation on, on her to, to deal with that either. You know, it sounds like it was completely untenable for for both of you and I wonder, as you speak about it now you, well, I get a sense that you're still carrying a lot of that pain and you're, you are still processing some of that stuff. And I just wonder, um, Yeah, where you are now and how you first went about getting help and what that help looked like. 38.42

T

What I'm doing for me is what I've learned with Eva, with Eva. 38.46

Nathan

And Eva is your therapist? 38.48

T

Yeah, she was my RTT. So Rapid Transformational Therapy. She was a fucking rock star. Like, what Eva's helped me do is learn why I have the intrusive thoughts and retroactive jealousy about my partner, about my ex partner, because when you find out why you can then sort it out, well, not sort out, that's probably a really bad term to use, but you can then like, you know, you know, what to do next, you get your next steps. And then because mine's based in insecurity, which if you haven't picked up as a common theme with me. 39.14

Nathan

I imagine it's. the common theme with everybody who suffers from this. 39.17

T

It never occurred to me that these things could be linked to it. So one thing about me being insecure is when I was at school, um, I went through a bit, I say, went through I'm I'm, you know, I'm nearly 25. I'm still going through my EMO faze um, in school I was a bit chubby. Um, I still am, uh, I'm working on it and they have, um, These kids who were my friends. Um, they like, they played this game called pink belly. 39.43

Nathan

No, it sounds cruel already. 39.45

T

Yeah. It's not fun. Basically, they slap your stomach and say it turns pink. Really a really good game. They were playing it with each other. Um, but yeah, they pinned me down and they lifted up my shirt and they started slapping it. Um, and then they were like, oh, look at this. And then they call people over. And I was like, I felt so horrible. I've got a scar on my chest from a heart operation I've had as well. So I don't like my torso. I don't like the weight, I don't like the size, I don't like this horrible scar, I've got on it. I don't like it. Um, so I'll, maybe I was afraid of her seeing me shirtless and going, Nope. other guys I've slept with, haven't had these horrible physical features. I don't want him they're better. 40.20

Nathan

And these kinds of issues from your, from your childhood and relating to your self-esteem were part of what came up in, in therapy. So you could start to focus on those rather than, uh, rather than turning to the relationship again. 40.31

T

So, yeah. Yeah. I've started to do things now to like myself a bit more like now that I've got a different job title, I feel more me. I'm doing something I want to do. So I'm, I feel more like T. As I'm working, I feel more like me because I'm learning how to be comfortable in my own skin, whether that means gaining weight or losing weight or whatever, I'm learning to have a body. I like. That's why I got you know, like tattoos and piercings, so I can feel more me, you know, I've got a bit more control of how I look, because I want to look that way. 40.58

Nathan

What advice would you with everything you've been through and accepting that you're still working on some of this now, what advice would you give to somebody else who's perhaps in a relationship and is starting to have those intrusive, jealous thoughts as you've described. 41.14

T

It's if based the advice I would give is something that I wish I would have done a hundred percent, I would say don't ignore it, don't pretend it doesn't exist, don't suppress it for the sake of what someone else might think. Your thoughts, your feelings, your reaction, your emotions are relevant because you have them. Whether or not they're based on circumstances from someone else's past, you are relevant. You feel those things you need to address them because you feel them. You can't just, you know, not be you. 41.48

Nathan

Your thoughts, your feelings, your reaction, your emotions are relevant because you have them. You are relevant. You've been listening to, why do I feel with me, Nathan finer, please subscribe to make sure you don't miss out on future episodes. 42.22