

Episode_4_Andrew.mp3

James Fisher: [00:00:01] Please be advised we will be discussing subjects that may not be suitable for all audiences and will include subjects that some will find challenging traumatic or triggering.

Keaton Leikam: [00:00:14] Welcome to You Don't Fight Alone. A podcast sharing the stories of those of us successfully living with mental illness and how we got there.

Andrew: [00:00:32] So the story starts I think I'm going to go back about four years four to five years and have for for many years of my life I have felt like something is wrong with me just something's wrong with how I didn't.

Andrew: [00:00:59] And it's kind of been a mystery to me it's like it's like as if with how I look with how I how I feel I've had different bouts of light being really socially awkward for months and stuff like that guy could never figure it out. But then this That journey has kind of you know as I've been going through this for the last approximately nine years. Its been.

Andrew: [00:01:36] Its been something that's that got worse as time went time My name is Andrew and I am actually a undiagnosed living in Denver Colorado and actually living with my my mom and some of my family and.

Andrew: [00:02:15] Yeah. Life was life seemed good. Um I was working in a decent job. And uh in a very very conservative subculture and so all my friends and and everything was a very uh just kind of. My world was very very conservative and sometimes maybe strict and whatever. But that's just what I knew. And I started going up to Canada for for my work. I really just kind of found a safe place in my community there and and even a lot of like the social awkwardness that I would struggle with was just much less of a problem for some reason that I couldn't even explain so I eventually I moved to Canada and really by the end of 2015 I decided that was where I was going to be I'd been going up and down a lot and was kind of half in one place half in the other place so back in 2016 beginning of 2016 I started dating this girl and I had this idea that she was like the one for me if that makes sense in fact I even kind of felt like God told me that she was the one. And so I went into this relationship and I kind of had this idea of how it's supposed to look and how I was supposed to act and all these things and and you know this was just what I knew and and so it just it seemed it seemed good for a couple months and then I really started to question it and was really kind of unsure of how much I really liked it how much I wanted her and stuff like that. And these were honestly questions that for me for a lot of my life I haven't really been willing to ask myself and really been willing to be honest with myself about you know to actually ask myself the question what do I want and and what makes you what makes me feel good and stuff like that. I have I've often been you know for a lot of my life I've always often believed it was like well what does. You know it's like what is is God telling me to do and and what am I supposed to do and what should I do and what ought I to do. And all this stuff and leaving very little room for actually being willing to be honest with myself. And yet I felt like I was kind of stuck because I felt like God told me that this was what I was supposed to do. And so I had this idea and I thought that that God would make it happen. And so. So anyways I I really started to struggle in it because I thought that I had to continue with it and that I had to you know move on with the relationship to where it seemed like it was going. But I just continued to have just like so much struggle with it and and eventually I just had to tell her it's like look I know it's like we have to take a little break here. I have to figure this out. You know I need to kind of figure out what what I want here and and whatever.

Andrew: [00:05:47] After a few days actually felt like well you know what. I don't think I can continue with this. Like my heart is just not in this and I feel like I can't my heart and put it into it.

Andrew: [00:06:02] My heart is just simply not in it. And that's just kind of the way that I saw it I guess. And so just because there was no way forward I actually told her that we had to end this and it wasn't really what my friends and family thought that I should do.

Andrew: [00:06:28] But looking back now I'm realizing that it's like I actually have to you know in life we actually have to follow our hearts with these things right. And that was just something that I wasn't willing to do at that point.

Andrew: [00:06:44] But was now fighting with the consequences of refusing to do that. So I thought that now you know once she was she was out of my life that everything would be great. But actually what happened was I continued to feel worse about it I had all sorts of regrets second guessing and like all I did I just miss my big chance and stuff like that and kind of went downhill. Isolated myself I kind of pulled away from people and spent a lot of time just like in my room and which is kind of weird because I was a fairly social person. I'm very I'm very extroverted but I just felt increasingly terrible about being around people. And I felt like nobody really understood what I was going through and I wasn't even sure if I was depressed about breaking up or what it was.

Andrew: [00:07:34] It was just like there was just something that I just like felt was this like wrong with me. And I just couldn't understand it. And so yeah got fairly depressed. I didn't think about suicide too much. I did think about it a bit. And eventually a good friend of mine who is who's a bit of a life coach.

Andrew: [00:08:07] He encouraged me to see this psychologist that he knew that had really helped him through some some real big stuff that he had gone through. And I remember I even remember the conversation I was in his office and and I was talking with him and he he asked me to you know.

Andrew: [00:08:23] So it's like asked me if I'd be. He thought that I really needed to to get some psychological help.

Andrew: [00:08:31] And I remember afterwards just even just how I felt about it those kind of like well no. Absolutely not. I don't need psychological help. I mean God's just going to fix this right. You know it's just like to go to a psychologist and and all of this stuff just seemed to me to be like rejecting faith.

Andrew: [00:09:15] So what happened was is that in January this would be January of last year 2017. I actually came out of all of it in a fairly dramatic way.

Andrew: [00:09:30] And just yeah everything seemed to be gone.

Andrew: [00:09:39] The depression and the hopelessness. And it was actually just uh just something my pastor shared. And I thought that I was good. And I thought OK well there we go. I'm all good now. And I actually went on this extreme high and I over connected with lots of people and I was all excited to prove that hey I'm I'm all good and I don't have any issues. And you know and I even felt like oh you know people in my life they weren't really helpful they didn't really have the answers and in the end I didn't really need them. And you know I didn't see it at the time but there was still some things very wrong with me and uh and I just wasn't willing to see it. And I thought that it was all good. So what happened last year was this whole kind of high emotional high and drive and all this stuff faded away and started to become disillusioned and depressed again. And so I just started feeling like Oh I don't think I can do this and you know what kind of a person am I. And and and even like I just didn't feel like doing things as much anymore and so as I was doing less I started to feel bad because it's all like oh I'm this guy. That's not very interesting. I'm

not really doing much. And um yeah before long I started to become really depressed and just started going back down into that cycle of you know I would work late a lot but I wasn't really getting much done. But it was kind of this nice out and this nice thing that I could be doing. So I didn't actually have to face you know the demons inside. And so I just kind of filled my life with work and then you know movies and just didn't really want to think about anything. I just kind of wanted to just turn my mind off because there was this stuff going on that I was just confused by and.

Andrew: [00:12:08] So I kind of felt stuck and I felt like there was really no future for me. That made everyone's lives worse. And I kind of felt terrible just even talking to people.

Andrew: [00:12:23] And and I just felt like I was a terrible person and I just felt like there was no future. I thought about suicide a lot. I thought about some different ways to commit suicide and. Eventually I kind of I kind of came to the point where I was like Well I don't think it's worth committing suicide it's probably better to keep going anyways. Even though I don't really see any future it's like I mean committing suicide is kind of a kind of a it's like well then you're done right.

Andrew: [00:13:00] And there's kind of a hint. There's got to be I don't. It's got to be at least less worse to not so. So I eventually just work was really hard and really tough and and I just really believed I couldn't do it. And it was inadequate. And stuff like that. And I honestly started to feel less and less like a normal human being. And when you're with and when you're by yourself a lot and you're not even really talking to others or bouncing ideas off of people you can come up with some really weird ideas especially about like yourself and who you are.

Andrew: [00:13:52] February of 2018. Was actually supposed to go on a business trip and it was a business trip that I just dreaded for many many weeks because I had to present something that I had played a large part in creating something that I really didn't think I did well.

Andrew: [00:14:18] I'm kind of embarrassed to say this but this is what happened. No it came time to go fly out to this client site and I just. Just really. Felt like I was ruining the project and I felt like if I went I would destroy our relationship with the client just because I was such a.

Andrew: [00:14:49] Not just because I was a terrible person or just because I would just mess it up because I felt like I couldn't succeed in anything.

Andrew: [00:14:58] And instead of going to the client side I decided just to turn off my phone turn off everything and instead fly to Montreal. I live in Edmonton Alberta and so Montreal's on the other side of Canada and just seemed to be like OK I can just get away I can be done with life I can be out of everyone's life lives because honestly I just make it worse for anybody any ways. This is actually just the best thing.

Andrew: [00:15:25] And so so I went to Montreal and I figured that my family and friends and everybody would just kind of forget about me. Let me go and I could maybe start some new life there and kind of start fresh. I didn't last. I didn't want to go back to the way things were. And it was a pretty miserable time in Montreal honestly. But I I found ways. I just watched lots of movies and tried to you know just not think at all I did didn't want to think and I didn't want to give myself any space to process anything just because it just just painful and it just.

Andrew: [00:16:16] Yeah I just didn't want to go there.

Andrew: [00:16:23] After a couple nights actually the I was in a hotel room I was in the middle of the night and there was this knock on the door and it was actually the RCMP. So that's the Canadian

police force. In that moments I just remember the first thing that I thought was like crap. What is happening like I could have seen that this was going to happen. I should have told my family to not do this. Now it's like this is very awkward very embarrassing. I have no idea how I'm gonna even like talk about this there's no way I want to go back to my community and everybody because. Not to me it's like I mean running off when you're supposed to go on a work trip and stuff like that. It's just it's very unprofessional it's very unethical and it just seemed like a very bad thing to do. But to me it was just was better than destroying basically the project and stuff was what I had convinced myself of so these these three French Canadians came into my hotel room two guys and a girl and.

Andrew: [00:17:45] And they actually surprised me because I was expecting them to be annoyed and upset and frustrated with me. But rather they actually just had me sit down and just started to just.

Andrew: [00:18:01] Talk to me about what was going on and asked me questions and even to share their perspective. And kind of caught me off guard because I felt like I felt like for the first time in a long time here were some people who just simply. Loved me and cared for me and.

Andrew: [00:18:20] It was actually kind of kind of nice in some ways.

Andrew: [00:18:27] You know when they saw that. Okay. Something just isn't normal like what's going on. Why why are you doing this and stuff like that.

Andrew: [00:18:35] Why would you just turn off your phone and all of that. So I actually went to the hospital because they had just asked them for advice and they recommended. Well you know we would probably suggest that you go to the hospital and so they actually took me to the hospital and and and really while I was there in the in the E.R. it gave me a chance to just kind of start to think and actually just process what was going on.

Andrew: [00:19:12] I felt like I had dug a very deep hole and I felt like I had done all sorts of things that maybe I didn't even really do but that it was just impossible to dig out and it was just going to be such a hard road and everything to to actually get out and get to like be somewhat I don't know happy and normal and and then all of that.

Andrew: [00:19:38] So there were a couple nurses at the hospital and I even saw a psychiatrist there who they were they were concerned that I wouldn't just walk out and kill myself. And and it was at that point that I decided that I would actually go back and take the advice of my friend back in back in Alberta and actually see this psychologist. At this point I had woken up to the fact that I needed that I looked. I looked at and there was I was just very afraid. I was actually very afraid of my life in Canada and there was just something about Denver that just kind of wanted to pull me back and it just seemed kind of safe and stuff like that. But I knew I had to decide between the two at least even just for a few months just to see what kind of help I'd get.

Andrew: [00:20:27] And I I actually made the decision to go back to Alberta and honestly after making that decision was a breakthrough for me.

Andrew: [00:20:54] Stopped fighting even.

Andrew: [00:20:55] That's just what I wanted because honestly that's where I wanted to be.

Andrew: [00:21:00] And stopped fighting community and just the things that I was passionate about and and stuff that I that I was even wanting to do in Alberta. And you know and I have lots of desires with music and and even with like political involvement and stuff like that.

Andrew: [00:21:22] And those are things I wanted to do but I just kind of rejected all those things for some reason and I because I I was actually rejecting myself and I was rejecting who I was. And so the last four months because that was about a little over four months ago I have been just a journey of actually going to my psychologist and I've ICM about every two weeks it's been really wonderful and it's been very necessary and I have worked through just a lot of stuff and even just who I who I see myself to be. And even just what I do with things that I want to do and what I do with. Like what's in my heart. Rather than fighting all of those things and thinking that I can't have them I now pursue them and I and I pursue the things that I want to do something that is something that I saw for the first time a couple months ago was that I actually hated myself and that I've been hating myself for years I've believed that I am somehow second rate that I'm not good enough. That my feelings are wrong and had again incredible breakthrough when I turned from that and decided that the way that I am the way that I know I believe that I was created the way that I made is awesome and that nobody gets to tell me that you know. Or something that I've. I've made a decision on is that I'm not going to let other people define who I am. I am going to fully embrace who I am. I'm going to fully embrace who I am created to be. And I'm not going to be ashamed of that anymore and that has helped me so much. And in in being willing to pursue the things that I love and being willing to pursue the things that that the dreams that are in my heart and I'm not interested in trying to do things that just aren't in my heart anymore and more and more I I want to pursue the things that I want to do. The things that you want to do are important and who you are is you are an amazing person. And I don't care what kind of issues you have or what kind of challenges you face in life no. Each. Each person is is just so incredible and so unique and I think one of the best things you can do is is just embrace that and stop fighting who you are and stop thinking that you need to be put in this box that other people create or even that you create. Sometimes we create boxes and we think oh I need to look like this and I need to be this way rather than just simply being ourselves. And it is so much work and it's so hard and it's so frustrating and it gets so discouraging when we try to be something that we're not. And honestly the world needs you to be who you are and you have special gifts special talents and and things that that no. You need that other people need and I think this world would just be a much better place if if people actually embrace who they are and pursue the things that are on their heart and you know live out your dreams.

Andrew: [00:26:00] I would say this to to any any Christians out there that actually you do need help just as much as anybody else needs help. And honestly the issues you face.

Andrew: [00:26:14] A lot of people face this stuff. And. I think that it's time that we stop thinking that somehow we're like special. And actually be willing to have the humility to go to those people who have you know they have real training and they have good techniques that actually do work.

Andrew: [00:26:38] And just like I would hope you'd be willing to go to a physical doctor you break your arm or something like that and be willing to go to somebody who's really a doctor of the mind and a doctor of the emotions and people who are really trained and skilled in that because honestly they are doing wonderful work.

Andrew: [00:27:00] They are doing good work and part of me regrets the fact that I often wrote them off and I was like well that's not even valid. We just don't need that. But nothing could be further from the truth. In fact I think that most of us do need that and most of us do need psychological help and so I would just say get your head out of the clouds and actually get some help.

James Fisher: [00:27:38] For more information please visit youdontfightalone.org

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