

Episode_6_Matt.mp3

[00:00:02] 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.

[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.

[00:00:29] The a good five years I can't really remember and I'm assuming that's it. Who knows. Lots of binge drinking.

[00:00:38] Not because I have like a problem with alcoholic alcohol. I should probably get help for that but because I was very consciously like I'm going to drink as much as possible. Farewell what I was doing.

[00:00:53] My name is Matt and my diagnosis is severe clinical depression. I was I was told.

[00:01:12] I think when I was in grade school I was having like some problems in school not like academically but just like being checked out what not in there. Oh well maybe he's got like and they put me on you know like Ritalin and then they move that up the Dexedrine is like I kept telling my mom that I don't want to take this anymore. Like this isn't helping. This is like I'm not happy. And I still can't focus at school. This isn't doing it supposed to be doing I'm like I'm just sad like I'm bombed. And she's like No no no you. You just have a hard time focusing. Like no. I don't know. So like so I think when I was like 14 she agreed to take me off of medication and I started doing better in school. My grades went way up but I was still just like really really sad for like no reason. You know just no. Like I just opened my eyes in the morning be like I'm on Earth. Why am I here. Why am I in this body. Why do I have to get out of bed and there's like no reason for it. Just like I go to school and people back home and don't talk to me.

[00:02:16] You know then as I get older and had a little more like when I got a kid I got kind of kicked out around 17 18 and when that happened I kind of like my first taste of being able like escape if I wasn't happy I could just like disappear and then I guess when I was younger my mom did know what's going on outside of the whole 80s thing so she would take me to like therapists and they would try to talk to me and they thought it was like a relationship issue we had with each other.

[00:02:47] And it's like no I just want someone to really to anyone right now and they never like it. I thought it could be depression but they never identified it. I just thought my mom and I should spend more time together and that never made it better. But there is like a loose diagnosis when I was a kid but that's mainly you know from my mom like my mom telling them what's wrong versus me telling them what's wrong with me or how I was feeling. So I came on her recommendation but fires like the fall on. Yeah. This is clearly what's going on is in college. When I was like dude I said I was like five or six suicide attempts in a month like this. Is it normal. To talk to someone like after weeks of just sitting down and talking and talking and talking and talking there. All right. I think we know what's going on. Oh this makes a lot of sense. You know that that continued until I graduated and then when I graduated I when I was like I don't want to go up or read before I graduated.

[00:03:53] Like I don't take medication anymore. I don't think you guys are very helpful right now.

[00:03:58] But I thought I knew better. Everyone this breast thinks they know better. I would even go to work so I didn't want to do anything ever like at all.

[00:04:25] Get out of bed talk to anybody. So I try to find a way to make that possible. So I had this

job working construction to pay rent while I was in college. But I even want to be in college.

[00:04:36] I was just in college because like Gatorade I've been like disowned by my family I wanted to make them proud somehow because I just kind of like a cut up.

[00:04:47] You know is more interested in unhealthy like unhealthy habits. And so is going to college and how to find a way to pay for it. I got this job working construction that I didn't want to work at all so I had to find a way to like have a job but not get fired from it.

[00:05:04] So they had this like engraving machine if I learned how to use it no one else in the the office knew how to work it.

[00:05:16] I figured if I had learned how to work it they'd save like five or six thousand dollars a month I have me on. I learned how to work this thing and I never told anyone else how to do it. And then once I did that. Oh my God this guy is valuable. He saved us money I just like stopped showing up to work. Remember during the two weeks no one knew where I was or what I was doing. Like wake up on the kitchen floor and think. Oh there's like an empty bottle of Jameson. And apparently I took all these anti-depressants at one time and these sleeping pills that my psychiatrist prescribed to me in college that's not good. So I have like no recollection of doing that. Or like two weeks would go by and like fuck I haven't been home like I want even I don't even know what I was doing. It was just like two weeks of couch surfing or sleep in the back of my car like driving out into the woods and kind of walking out and just sleep to sleep in a nature like trying to disappear like not wanting to like exist but yes I haven't enough like enough courage to commit suicide even though I think I tried like five times in one month and it just didn't work out.

[00:06:34] Like now thinking about it like I did those things that during the time I had like no recollection of it happening that is like a five year span of like being a place or I didn't know where I was.

[00:06:46] I just it's checking out not calling in work not talking to my family not talking my friends and just being like gone for weeks on end.

[00:06:55] Then I come to you like Oh. I should probably go to work and do something now.

[00:06:58] You know graduating and I like I haven't gotten any better ever graduated and we're said to like Olive Garden and everyone is celebrating like Oh my God my baby's like my mom was real proud she's like You're the first they go to like a major university like graduate like this is incredible. My sister graduated like years earlier she was the first in her family thing to get a four year degree. Others like one of my uncles. And then I was the first to go to like a major university and graduate and so they're like they're all celebrating and everyone was like they're really really happy for me. But I never sit at the table like okay. I don't have an excuse now like I know what I'm supposed to do.

[00:07:53] I just disappeared for like a good two years disappeared because I just didn't want to exist and then I'd get lonely and I would pop up in a minute.

[00:08:05] You know just so people wouldn't worry. But then people want to hang on pay attention and be like oh I don't want this anymore and I'd run away but I'm think that too like the two years after I graduated that I just completely checked out and I was gone.

[00:08:17] Was like made some new friends and spent a lot of time around them and a lot of time talking to him and but what what I think spawned that two years was like in college I had to be

medicated for depression and it just I thought it helped me out more than I was to begin with. I wouldn't sleep and I was losing weight.

[00:08:45] Like I had periods where I just like blackout and they kept like adjusting the magic medication to make it worse and I felt like the more medication they gave me the more I was like I just want to die like this sucks. And it's funny if you read like the side effects of a lot of antidepressants it's like may may induce like suicidal thoughts and acquire new copies you give that to anyone that's like sad to begin with. It's like the worst thing you could do.

[00:09:07] But I think after a couple years of like bouncing like medications being adjusted to what non-member telling was right before I graduated tell my psychiatrist as a guy don't want to take these anymore I don't want to do this. Like there's got to be another way. And I remember being at that like that dinner with my family after I graduated like that whole panic like well what am I supposed to do. And I knew I wasn't right. I knew I wasn't OK because I knew the the five years leading up to that point weren't all like normal people don't do that. You know like I had to figure something else out so I kind of took a hiatus from a lot of things that were familiar from family and from some friends I was really close to. And then especially like drinking buddies just look for a job for like two weeks and then I didn't get it because of depression like I applied to be a research assistant in Antarctica. I didn't clear that part of it. You know you qualified but we kind of can't put you down here for like six months with your like a history of mental illness.

[00:10:18] It's not going to be good for you as a guy. No I'll be fine. No you won't. They're probably right.

[00:10:32] So I kind of took two years a step back and I left Colorado and went back to California for a little bit. If you've been to Los Angeles. But it's kind of a kind of an exhausting place that's extremely intimidating and everyone is like infinitely prettier than I am and smarter than me. Like way more ability than I have and it's like I'm just like a dumb kid from the mountains. That's you know.

[00:10:58] But a they were really really really good because I was might as well be from here. I've spent like 20 somebody years in Colorado but I'm originally from L.A. Then I'd go back in the summers like see friends or just go hang out and make more friends. But when I moved back after college most of the people I knew were gone with the exception for like my sister who's not my sister but might as well be my sister and one of my good friends. I only knew like two people there so it's kind of like starting all over again it's like well.

[00:11:36] I didn't have a place to live. I didn't really know anyone seems like all right. There's like a clean slate like here. I'm not a drunk here. I'm not depressed here I'm not all these things that were plaguing me back home so like a fresh start when I wasn't drinking as much because I couldn't afford to then I was living in the backseat of my car for like four months like that kind of Stockton's like well this isn't comfortable.

[00:12:04] I don't know if you've ever lived near Carson. Not the most comfortable but it's it's not much bigger than like an L.A. apartment. So says like well this is uncomfortable so I need to work really really hard so I can move out of my car.

[00:12:22] Then I also need to be really really kind of people make new friends so I can have connections within the city and start surviving because L.A. is like a place where you need to know someone that know someone you know some know someone to get by so it's kind of like that like reinventing myself like.

[00:12:37] All right. I don't I'm not like this piece of shit they shot abuses himself and it's everyone else's trust. I'm not this guy that's just going to disappear like I'm here and I need to do something that was really helpful I think my mom and I were able to start talking so that was good then learning to be friends was kind of like I come to terms with the fact that I just had depression and there is going to be no pill or no amount of talking to anyone was going to change the fact I had severe clinical depression and they're like their professional opinion but like there's nothing that's going to make it go away. It was just it was there. It's like I'm just going to have it till I die. It's it's an in-law that you don't like. It just shows up uninvited hangs around like eats all your cottage cheese and makeup steak and it sits on your couch and runs up your cable bill watching like paper view porn and then it leaves without saying goodbye in your cot Damn. Thank God it's gone. But you know it's it's it's there. It's like you're in law. You can't you know you have to be loving of people in the world. So it shows up at all. You have to accommodate you.

[00:13:53] You're here. And when you're done you'll leave. So I think coming to terms with that that I just had it and I need to learn to like live with and accept it. But learn that that's not like doesn't have to identify me and who I am and how I treat myself and the people around me and I think coming to term like realizing that is what allowed me to start to become friends like my mom and being like well me feeling this way isn't your fault. Like a lot of unfortunate things happen to you in your life and you did the best that you could what you had in it might not have been what I thought was OK it's not about me it's about you trying to raise us. And I appreciate you.

[00:14:36] So I think me coming to terms with what was going on in my head and why I was feeling the way I was feeling allowed me to like remove some I had towards her and then we could finally start to talk heart to heart and then allowed me to approach like some my other friends and they came in. I'm really sorry. The way I was in the past wasn't okay. And like you don't have to forgive me. No I'm not trying to like I have depression. Please forgive me. It's not my fault. It is my fault like I I consciously made the choices I made and I think that made a lot of my friendships better so when all that started to happen I started reconnecting with people yeah that allowed me to meet my wife. But the thing they don't tell you is like like right now I'm all sweaty to my armpits because I get anxiety now cause I'm no longer trying to run from problems get them feeling down or when not if I'm not feeling good I still force myself to go out and talk to people like you have to get out of bed. You have to put your shoes on you have to take a shower you have to brush your teeth. I know and feel like it but you have to do it.

[00:15:42] No like forced myself to do these things like makes my life better. But now it's like I deal with anxiety you know. Oh Evans I it's a separate thing but I don't think it is. I think it's yourself. I don't know.

[00:15:59] I learned I wasn't good at talking to people so I would force myself get on airplanes and travel to cities or I knew absolutely nobody so I still give them like the escapism that I always wanted like when I had depression I always wanted to run away and disappear as a what if I don't. What if I run away but I don't disappear. What if I just take trips. What if I go to strange places filled a strange people and I just force myself to talk to people.

[00:16:24] I started doing that and then I showed up in New York and my wife was like the first person I said hello to man I'd be terrified to tell my younger self something younger younger younger.

[00:16:40] Matt was like 15 pounds heavier and pure muscle and I had a black belt in taekwondo and was way angrier than current day. He would help me up. He would not listen to me at all. But.

[00:16:54] I think I would just like stare myself and like it's gonna be okay. People around you

aren't your enemies like eleven people for a change it's going to make your life a lot easier you should figure this out sooner you're gonna figure it out. Maybe you're not going to feel regretful when you're older. For having wasted so much time being so angry and so elusive then he'd punch me in the face. When I was younger I squandered so many opportunities to go out and travel and meet new people and challenge myself by just being drunk or running away and being afraid because I didn't like myself and I thought I was going to fail no matter what I did didn't want to miss out anymore.

[00:17:51] It started with someone being like hey should come out like you know like me get the invite to go back to Los Angeles.

[00:17:59] It's like OK I'll go and I just like these are these two boxes I took everywhere with me and I had no idea what was in them. But for the last like four years as I moved there the two boxes I always brought with me.

[00:18:11] It's like I got the invite to go to L.A. and I put these two boxes in my car and I like five hundred bucks and as I drove out there ready to make a change and living out there I met people down in San Diego and was able to go to San Diego and I met people San Francisco and I was able to go up there and then a guy in Los Angeles said introduce me to someone out here Denver.

[00:18:35] They gave me a real good job opportunities. I came out to Denver then I met someone in L.A. that knew someone in New York and he hooked me up with a guy in New York. So I was able to go out there and get tatty. It was I wanted to go to New York and get tattooed. And then I met my wife she's like come meet me in Philadelphia. So I went to Philadelphia and then I came back to Denver and that summer I lived in Germany is like who would come visit you in Germany and I just started like you know their little girls just taking the hey.

[00:19:02] She'd come out like OK you know then showing up. Well I don't make any plans I know what I'm supposed to do but I'm just gonna walk around and say hi to people I think people a lot more interesting than like buildings. I mean don't get me wrong. Old architecture. Everything's cool.

[00:19:19] But it's not as cool as like sitting down and having a beer or someone and like talking not that oppressive swing.

[00:19:33] It's pretty easy. You know I'll sleep like. Eight hours I'll pop out a bed Lake said I'll pick up my banjo and play like. Good night ladies. Wake up and enjoy my life. Maybe she loves it. No know it by now because it's just. I'll play for 30 minutes the same opening lake but then I will take my dog to the dog park and she'll run around a dog's it's like flop around worshipping the sun like all this feels so good on my skin and then bring the dog home and I'll go to my backyard and rub my face and all the plants because they all smell good and then I'll like go buy muffins or whatever and bring them to work and then like hog all my co-workers and you know just try really really hard know that I'll go home and I'll sing and dance on the way home.

[00:20:18] Pretty happy go lucky. I feel like a muppet when you know like.

[00:20:24] Yeah I like Fozzie the Bear or something what it shows up it's kind of like I want some sleep really.

[00:20:36] Twelve hours. It's going to take me an hour to get out of bed. I'm not going to brush my hair. I'm probably going to like not shower for a week. I'm not going to. I'm probably going to try to get by eating like one meal a day.

[00:20:52] I'm not going to feel motivated at all to work I'll get real quiet.

[00:21:00] No. I'll I'll I'll I'll try to be like friendly to everybody.

[00:21:03] Biologist don't reach out to people as much my wife is real helpful helping me combat all that.

[00:21:15] She's like the ultimate antidepressant because she's just like pure joy personified in a human being. But she's also like I've told her whenever or even like friends I'm really really close to like what it sets on it's pretty easy to notice but just like ignore it don't like cater to it because then that's just going to make me feel real guilty and real low and I'm still sensitive. I don't get depressive or not depressive I gonna get like defensive and lash out like but you know if you just ignore it. Come on do you just get your shoes on. We need to go like our guy. And like no we need to go to the grocery store. Like I don't care what you say we're going to like OK you know think you have to get this drawing down like sit down and draw not like forced me to do things but making sure I'm like taking care of the stuff I need to like that's been real helpful having people watch out for me.

[00:22:05] I like to think if I feel let me out.

[00:22:07] Everyone else probably feels lonely to so maybe we can make each other better just by being friendly with one another and talking to each other. I think that's helped me with depression too. I don't feel as lonely when I talk to someone even if it's like what kind of food does your cat like green pea and chicken coal mine likes like salmon flavored cat food you know.

[00:22:30] But at least take like a minute to acknowledge you and your existence and have lived so long. Feel like I didn't exist. It's kind of nice. I think with the pressure you spent so much time in your head so it's good to like talk to strangers and hear what their life is about like what their life is like. Because it's always like that you could be like a CPA for some place in Denver Tech Center. Like oh what's that about.

[00:22:56] I want to know. That's that's interesting. Yeah. Just Hi my name's Matt. Who are you.

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