What Does Healing Actually Feel Like? Fle's Journey Through Depression, ADHD, and Generational Trauma Transcript

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Opening on suicidal ideation and the podcast intro

I've had suicidal ideation my entire life, basically, but it only became an intent three times. But if I was hospitalized every time I told, you know, a practitioner that I had suicide ideations, I would have never left the hospital.

It is a subject that often creates barrier because either people aren't really trained to address it or support it, or even to explore it because suicidal is in my belief, your mind's way of kind of protecting you in an odd way, you know?

What was the thought before the ideation? what was it you were experiencing before that thought came into your minds? Don't remember the first time, but usually it stems from exhaustion and it feels kind-of like an exit hatch.

Welcome to the To Curious MD podcast. I'm Dr. Ali Ahmed. With the wisdom from holistic, alternative and these conventional medicines, we are here to challenge the status quo.

Episode introduction and Feliciau2019s background

We're curious about the connectivity and complexity between diverse fields of knowledge as a relief to consciousness, chronic illness, mental health, resilience and beyond.

Learning more about art and science of healing, or listening to stories of extraordinary healing. You're in the right place. Let's dive in. Welcome to another exciting episode of Too Curious, MD podcast, where medicine is more than science, it's story, art, connection, and integration.

Today's episode, we're going to be talking with Felicia Johnson, who has been a mental health advocate and a social media influencer, has documented her healing journey, her struggles in depression, grief, identity, trauma.

Felicia shares her experiences navigating that grief, that depression, a profound loss in her life confronting long-standing depression that she's had since she was very young.

And at Shaw Minds has been involved in treatments with ketamine-assisted therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation, and neurofeedback. Rather than presenting healing as a miracle cure, I hope this conversation explores the reality that recovery often involves, in many modalities, working together with courage, vulnerability, community, and self-compassion leading the way.

I hope listeners will be able to hear what treatment actually feels like from a patient's perspective and how the identity influences mental health and why healing often begins with learning to relate differently to ourselves and learning about ourselves in our healing.

Welcome, Felicia, to our podcast. Thank you, Dr. Armand. I'm happy to be here. For those meeting you for the first time, tell us a little bit about Felícia, beyond the diagnosis.

So, in social media and outside of the medical field, I actually go by Flea. That is my nickname. I spell it FLE. If you see F. L. E. or Fleabag or fleabee anywhere on the internet, odds are it's probably me.

Yeah. Um, i've been using that moniker since you still need an invite to get a gmail. So it's been a while. I grew up in Placer County in a small town.

Came out at a young age, struggled with depression and mental illness for most of my life. And I would say just

within the past three or four months have I felt like I've reached some stability that's been really nice, where I feel like maybe this is what a normal person feels like.

There is a myth of normal, that is for sure. What does normal feel for you?

Living with ADHD, depression, and daily masking

Oh, normal for me is before treatment or after treatment, or now. It really depends. Yeah. I think before treatment I was living with pretty much daily suicidal ideation, if not hourly or more.

I, you know, was slow, sluggish, everything brought me down, I couldn't focus, i was just kind of miserable all the time. And I just thought that's how I had to get through life until until we really started treating my ADHD.

And then I think a lot of stuff turned around. So describe that normal, how did that change for you in treatment? So, I mean, getting on meds helped a lots.

Like it's one of those things where if you've lived with something every day until you're comparing your experience to others, you don't know that it is not normal.

I think the neurofeedback training I'm doing now, which I am on my third session, has really pointed out to me how bad my ADHD is. I just thought that's the way brains work, but now that I actually thinking about how my attention span works, it's awful.

Yeah. Well, tell us more about how to ADHD show up in your life. I'm the type of person that when I am relaxing just by myself, like I will be watching TV, working on my laptop, playing a video game on an iPad and playing different video games on a phone.

Kind of all simultaneously. Wow. And that's functional for you. That keeps you functional to how that kind of evolve to be that way for. I think part of it is like, I just want to be doing so many things at once and like having that allows me to do it.

But, you know, the TV is background noise. The laptop is what I should be focusing on. And then I've just got some other side things. Uh, my streaming setup is pretty similar where I got the project in front of me, TV for distraction and the.

computer, excuse me, the computer and chat for engagement. When was that moment for you that when you realized that I need help with what I'm doing, this is not working for me?

What was it? I mean, that was probably at like the age of 14. But so I am pretty much been in consistent treatment for 25 years. There have been gaps of like, you know, 6 or 7 months without treatment, but since 14, I've always been on some sort of antidepressant or other, drug for mental illness of some.

But the thing that brought me to Shaw Minds was my wife had seen my depression get worse and was like, this isn't working. We need to get you some different help.

And I was, like okay, I can do that. Then I found you guys. What do you think that she observed in you when that realization came? I feel like what she probably observed was the come down from new relationship energy because you know when you get in a new relationships everything is exciting and fun and interesting and you can put all of your energy into it and then as you get further into the relationship, kind of that excitement subsides and you return to your base level and my base-level was very low and very depressive.

And so, you know, she had asked me to pursue more help. I had pursued more health through another medical provider that was essentially failing me. and then I found you guys.

I'm curious to really understand from your perspective this multitasking, this ADHD lifestyle or way of being. Which

one came first? Was it depression or was it an attention or just a way coping with those thoughts, that suicidal ideation that was a daily phenomena for you?

So, you know, I actually think the ADHD may have been there first and thinking about, like, how I interacted with school and my teachers and kind of where I was and, growing up in the 90s and the early aughts, ADHD meant that you were dumb.

Childhood, school struggles, and early signs of ADHD

My parents want, you know, my school wanted me to get tested around the fourth grade and my parents said no because I was clearly an intelligent child so I must not have ADHD.

So I think it presented at a pretty young age and then went untreated and turned into depression. impact at that point in your life that you actually remember this discussion about testing and about what was that fourth grade child really experiencing at I mean, thinking about it, like I, it was around the time that I realized that, I was smart enough that they didn't need to do my homework to pass tests.

So I just stopped trying in school because if I could pass the test, the way. Then I'm proving I know the knowledge and the information enough to past your exam.

Why do I need, to, do the homework? If I already understand the concept. And, you know, reading aloud in school was akin to torture for me. I don't know if other people did this, but in my experience, I was reading four or five times faster than my peers.

So I would read ahead and then it wouldn't get to my turn to read next and have to jump back to wherever they were and try to figure out like how far behind the restaurant SAS was.

Yeah. And this really does sound more like the inattention was really boredom or having the class kind of being able to keep up with the way you think and the ways you understand things.

Wow. So much of this calls to how diagnoses are made and labels that become the person. you know, that you're inattentive, you are not smart, not interested, and not focused.

And it seems like that kind of penetrated into a sense of yourself and a and tell us more about how identity kind of really showed up for you. What kind person do you feel that you are now versus what kind a person you might have been then?

I didn't accept my ADHD diagnosis until probably 33 or 34. And I think you were the first doctor that really gave me that diagnosis. And it's only in the three or four years since that I've been like, oh, right.

I'm like even the neurofeedback, like really realizing that, I can't hold onto a single thought for like more than 30 seconds. and I was like oh this is the problem.

This is the problem because, you know, thinking, that's wine game. I would be like green circle, green, circle green. Circle. The sun is a yellow circle.

Yellow circles. the sun creates iron and it's they're nuclear. Like just start going off of the great green Circle, Green Circle Yeah, yeah, I can see how that can happen.

And sometimes, you know, with advanced thinkers, and again, this is where testing really becomes important in early development and early childhood, because you don't know which way of being distracted, And the pace with others wasn't able to keep up.

And thus that pattern of activity kind of got even more pronounced, it seems like, where your brain is like oh, you know, I've got other things I can be doing at this school.

I distinctly remember in high school, my parents were upset because they got my standardized testing scores back. And I still tested high, but I tested lower than they thought I should have.

And it was like, well, yeah, if you actually look at my test, you can see where I got bored and just started drawing design. Like, I was just filling in bubbles to make designs.

I, was bored and tired of taking the test. So I decided to do something else. And if you actually looked at the scantron, you would be able to tell. Yeah.

Tell us a little bit about the times in your life where the depression came in and how did that affect your functional health, your relationships, you lived experience?

So I think the depression has probably been there again since puberty. I was always kind of othered as a kid and regularly told that I am like too much in general.

Um, I got made fun of in school for reading books that were larger than our textbooks. by both teachers and peers. And so, you know, I just, didn't have anyone that I related to until I turned 16 and was able to drive to Sacramento to meet other young gay kids.

That's when I first started finding people that identified with But, you know, even my family, I was not my immediate family so much, but my extended family.

I other for being the smart, weird, nerdy kid, and the girl that didn't want to play house, would rather play archaeologist than playhouse.

Identity, othering, and finding community

So it wasn't until my 20s and 30s that I really started making friends with people that were interested in the same things that And then finding those people and feeling accepted by them is kind of what helped me heal a lot.

Tell us more about that time. Maybe, well, it's complex. My mom, I think. has some traits of narcissistic personality disorder and I was the family scapegoat for a really long time from my perspective.

I know for sure my dad didn't know how bad my mom's treatment of me was because a lot of it was when he wasn't around but it pretty damaging and then she got sick around the time when I was 24 and her substance use became substance abuse disorder.

And that created a whole realm of trauma. But most of my 20s and 30s were spent partying, drinking, doing drugs, you know, kind of numbing everything to survive.

covid kind of changed a lot of things for everyone and I met my wife and you know we moved in together and got married and she got me in treatment to seeing you guys and my mom passed away and i was able to extract myself out of some unhealthy situations and now i'm much better yeah it's such a It's such a similar experience than I've heard from many people in the LGBTQ community where the othering really puts you in isolation, where you're not able to really be yourself or even often have to mask.

What are some of the unique kind of stressors that you've experienced that people should know about who don't recognize this or haven't had this lived experience as you?

I feel like for me, I tend to do what my therapist and I have dubbed info bursting. And we changed it from info dumping to info bursting because I will info burst all the time.

Like I love, you know, sharing things that I'm excited about and I can go on for a long time and then I have to be like, oh right, I am hogging the room, hog the conversation.

I need to tone it down and be less excited and do you want to hear me ramble endlessly about the subject before I just go off for 20 minutes? Yeah. And like, I feel like it's different than like mansplaining or trying to like educate someone.

It's more like I am also fascinated by this thing. Let's share our fascination. And so, you know, sometimes people don't get that. That's like right, right.

Ask. Yeah. I find that amazing about you actually. I find that that makes you have so much interest and so awareness and knowledge and you're really seeking out really unique things and we've really shared a lot of those.

I'm actually very surprised to hear that was what you had to go through to really Oh man, I remember being told all the time as a kid that I was holding people hostage, just talking to them.

Anytime I felt like someone was interested in what I had to say, like I'd be like, oh, this is a person that actually wants to listen to me. Um, and then, you know, I would follow them around for the rest of the night, like a little puppy.

Yeah. It seems like being really accepted or truly accepted in any, in the community that you're living in had an impact on you and your, your mental health.

Oh, it really did. And you, know I think I'm going to get emotional, but I. My wife is the first person I've ever met that I Truly believe choose me and like loves me by choice like not out of obligation and Finding someone that I could trust and you know believed in me that much that wasn't family Meant a lot and helped me heal quite a bit.

Yeah, take a moment here. Yes really acknowledge that Yeah, to be really seen, understood and even by healthcare providers. What was that experience like from all of the therapy and the mental health care that you had had?

I was seeking out talk therapy again through my previous medical provider and I had my first session with the social worker and was talking to her. you know, giving her kind of the basic surface level rundown.

And at the end of this session, she goes, well, you were laughing and telling jokes and you seemed just fine. So like, I think you should leave. Like, You don't need therapy.

We've talked for 45 minutes. At the time, it wasn't as open and honest about my suicidal ideation because I didn't want to be hospitalized. But I was like Just because someone's masking doesn't mean that they're not in intense pain.

It just means they don't trust you enough to take off the mask. Yeah. And I think that's something that medical professionals and mental health providers should think about is like, Do people trust me enough to take off the mask?

Because all of us mask all the time. Yeah. So your mask, how would you describe your masks and how you would describe that unmasking? I feel like I'm in kind of a weird place now where I try not to have a mask most of the um because I have found that um while I can be very good at masking I don't like it and it feels disingenuous to me and It feels like I'm faking and I've spent a lot of time Trying to take the mask off.

So putting it back on doesn't really serve me anymore unless I am going into a situation where I know it's not safe to be myself. Yeah Yeah, safety in mental health and especially when you really are seeking help but you don't know if that person is going to be really receptive to you and not having that trust.

How was it for you when when felt fully safe? I mean, I have been lucky to where before I started coming to Shaw Minds I had a really good therapist for quite a few years that I felt safe around.

Family trauma, grief, and generational patterns

And then by the time I started seeing you guys, I had gotten pretty good at unmasking in therapy. And I think I was able to get a lot more help, but the fear of hospitalization, keeps a lotta people from being honest about what they're actually thinking and feeling.

I feel like some practitioners, especially newer or younger practitioners might not know the kind of nuance between suicidal ideation and suicidal intent.

And, you know, I've had suicidal, suicidal ideas in my entire life, basically, but it only became an intent three times. But if I was hospitalized, every time I told, uh, a practitioner that I had suicide ideations, and I would have never left the hospital.

Yeah. Yeah, it is a subject that often creates barrier because either people aren't really trained to address it or support it, or even to explore it.

Because suicidal ideation is in my belief, your mind's way of kind of protecting you. What was the thought before the ideations? What were you experiencing before that thought came into your into mind?

remember the first time, but usually it stems from exhaustion and it feels kind of like an exit hatch. I think especially when I felt like I didn't have things to live for or reasons to want to stick around, it was like, well, why bother?

And I It's one of the things that makes me kind of envious of people that have religious or faith-based practices, because they have those tenets guiding you.

But if you don't necessarily believe those things, then you're stuck with the, you know, nihilistic existentialist thread of endless vacuum of a reality.

Yeah, or not even knowing what that could be. Yeah. You've shared your mental health journey publicly in social media. How did it show up for you sharing your story?

So it helped me feel like I'm not alone. And one of the biggest driving factors in a lot of my behaviors is that I don't want other people to experience what I've experienced.

If I can save other people, you know, even, one to two percent of the pain that I have experienced, then my experience was worth it. Like, if I could make that easier on other.

And so I've done a lot of work to try to, make those experiences easier for other, but, feeling like I did was really shitty. So I tried to do everything I, can to make sure other don't feel that way.

Yeah. Having a space to kind of even share to those stories, that experience is often not available for a lot of people. And I find that online support, it's a form of communication.

It's the form connection. it is a kind form community. I mean, in the old days, people would sit around the fire or the camp and kind share their experiences.

There was a storytelling in more community. I mean, that's how humans are designed to live and here we are living this kind of disconnected but connected world.

So how did you traverse from within your family in that sense of connection or not having that connection and then with the community? I think because I never really felt super connected to my family.

I was othered by them as well, except for my immediate family, I didn't really have any friends growing up that when we did get the internet, found a community pretty quickly on the Internet.

And I have a very good friend that I am been friends with for 18 years that i've never met. and you know, Hem and I have spent hundreds of hours playing video games together and, you, know everything about each other, but we've

never met in real life.

I don't even know what he looks like really. But he's one of my nearest and dearest friends and i've had a lot of other friends from, video, games, different communities.

It's just a different way of bringing people together um And like anything there's good and bad, you know, some people are going to be jerks on the internet and some People are gonna find their community Yeah The loss of your mother has been also been a significant part of their story.

Would you be comfortable sharing? I I am um, and it's it''s weird to talk about because um I think my mom was sick for a very long time um and her is a trauma survivor herself suspected.

And I think she coped with it through eating and then had gastric bypass and was no longer able to emotionally eat or cope through. Eating and the gastro bypass morphed into alcoholism and like the first Four years after her bypass, it wasn't really noticeable, but the last 10 years of her life, she was very sick for 10-years and caused a lot of trauma and destruction.

And then she passed away. It'll be four years in February. And I am sad that I lost my mother, but the truth of it is I had lost mother 10 years before that.

She had stopped being the same person. And so the grief process is different than a lot of people expect. Like, I was grieving her while she was alive.

I wasn't sad the way people expected because, you know, for me, her passing was almost a gift. And it's hard to say that. But I would say, It doesn't happen very often.

I think it's down to every six months now. But I had a recurring nightmare after she died pretty regularly that like, she faked her death and came back to life and wanted to resume where everything left off.

And it was one of the only nightmares I've ever had where like I wake up in a cold sweat freaking out. You know, which probably says more about the PTSD and the shrapnel that she caused.

that I initially recognized. Yeah. Well, thank you for being wonderful in this moment. I think it's really demonstrates kind of the effect that generational trauma has and what gets missed in diagnoses.

It's not her alcoholism prior to her gastric bypass, prior her emotional eating. The source of it really wasn't really uncovered and sadly sounded like there was a cascade response to something that was never really rooted.

Ketamine therapy and processing trauma

I mean, I've done a lot of family research and you know, armchair psychiatry analysis of my family. And I have traced it back to the trauma starting at my great grandfather.

I don't really know. As far as I know, his trauma was becoming an okie and homeless at 13 and migrating from Oklahoma to California to survive. And it made him a very tough man.

And he was very top and abusive to his children in a way that would now be considered abuse. But in the 1940s, you know, it was normal to beat the gay out of someone.

Yeah. Um, and, he made his gay son sleep in The Chicken Coop. To try to, beat, the queer out him. His eldest son is my grandfather and he I believe also probably has some form of survival narcissism that was then passed down to all of his kids.

And like it's a clear pattern. I can even see it on, you know, my maternal grandmother's side too. Yeah. As we learn more and more about generational trauma and the effect it can have on that unborn child epigenetically, that

trauma that was instilled in the cellular system of your grandfather or grandmother really was transferred There are studies to really demonstrate that a child, when there's abuse on the mother while she's pregnant, mother and child are one unit.

And essentially when that mother feels the stress and abuse, it's felt with the baby too. The baby is responding as well to that trauma and has a trauma response, so whether that when the baby's born, the temperament of that child is, you know, a lot of, especially if there's toxic level abuse, it shows up in the child's temperamento, in a child response to situational stress where they might be hypervigilant.

They might have the same symptoms of PTSD. that is occurring before that child was even born. And those feedback, that neural, you know, the developmental effect is happening and that pattern is developing in the first five, six years.

If there's an insult to that part of the brain, there is a pathway that develops that would normally not be there. I mean, that makes sense. So you can see how genetics and people say, oh yeah, there's bipolar in our family.

Well, why do you think that is? And so what would be the conditions in your family that you'd think showed up that can trace back into from your life to your generation?

So maternally, generationally. My grandmother had PTSD for sure and depression and substance abuse. Uh, my mother's father on his side, I would say narcissism and PTSD.

And then on my dad's side of the family, his dad was bipolar with like diagnosed in a hospital, bipolar, narcissistic with OCD. Um, and his mother, I would say suffered from depression most of my life and her mother was bipolar as well.

Yeah. And all stemming from some, some sort of trauma, generational. Um. When you've done ketamine treatments, um, tell us about your, your experience with ketamine treatments.

I mean, I really like the ketamine treatments. I think they help me kind of see behind the curtain in a certain way, like kind see how my brain works and ride the roller coaster of my Brain Untamed.

I've had a lot of fun playing with my music selection and using songs and music in my journeys that have specific memories attached to them to help kind of trigger the state that I was in then and process those things.

And I think it's been incredibly helpful. I remember when my mom died or when mom was sick, before she passed away, I would want to listen to Ozzy Osbourne and Metallica because those were her favorite albums.

And I remember the practitioner that I was with was like, are you sure? Are you that's what you want Yeah. What surprised you about that experience? How did you find that music played a part in that?

Experience with you and Ketamine? I mean, it just adds to the landscape of the roller coaster. Like I was still pretty focused on my mom and I, you know, thought about the first concert that she took me to, which was OzFest and, The effect that metal had on her as part of her otherness where we live.

TMS, neurofeedback, and treating the root causes

Because I do think part her trauma was also not being able to live an unmasked life. Yeah. How did ketamine help you in how you saw yourself or in your mental illness or your identity as who you were?

I think the journeys helped me gain some understanding and are kind of launching pads for journaling or philosophical thought. And then I feel like the chemical aspect of it, something about it keep silences the suicidal ideation.

I'm not sure exactly what it is, but I can tell when it's starting to be too long since my last journey, because the

frequency of suicidal ideas will increase.

Yeah. What role did therapy play for you with ketamine treatments? Therapy has been helpful. And I think doing the ketamine and the therapy together is also good because the Ketamine kind of lowers your inhibitions and lets you get access to those places that you might be shielding and guarding because you're not ready.

And Katamine just kind of helps you push through those. I feel like a little bit quicker because I'm one of those people that when I figure out what the problem is, I want to solve it.

Once I do a project, not necessarily the most gentle, once I know where I need to go. Yeah. So it has helped me start having conversations with my inner child and doing some re-parenting of my child, which can be trying and is still kind of scary for me.

It's still an ongoing thing. Yeah, it's hard for me to face my inner child because I sometimes struggle with not feeling like I've disappointed her or let her down But also my life is awesome right now.

So like, I don't know what she would be disappointed in. Yeah Yeah Seems like there's a there is still a part of that wound that is so palpable. Oh, yeah That wound is I'm still working on it.

It's still part the healing process Yeah Well, TMS comes up because you've done ketamine, you have done Tms. How is TMs different for you? I feel like T Ms was probably the thing that like pushed the depression finally aside enough to start treating the ADHD.

like the ketamine helped with the suicidal ideation so that I can function. And then the TMS and the therapy helped, you know, subside the depression enough to where now we're treating the root cause, which is a lot bigger of a root than I thought it was initially.

Yeah. Can you tell us the audience a little bit more about your experience with Tms and what that was like? I mean, I feel like as far as mental health treatments that I've had, TMS besides the time and getting there every day is like the easiest treatment that had.

Like I show up, sit in a chair for 15 minutes. I answer some questions and I leave. Like, I get to see, you know, the lovely staff and the people that I've gotten to know over the years of going there.

But, it doesn't really require a lot of work on the patients part, which is nice. Yeah. Besides coming in every day. Yeah, besides coming it every, but you're not spending an hour processing feelings where you are going to be drained afterwards.

You can drive afterwards, so it's not like ketamine where your kind of out for the rest of the day, you don't necessarily feel, leave feeling drained or woozy, like you can pop in and get your dose, go about your day and it is helping you.

Well, let's just kind of categorically kind look at what were the changes that you noticed in your feedback with attention versus TMS? How would you differentiate those?

I feel like I noticed the changes less consciously, like they happened and they're clear in my behavior, but because they were subtle and I don't have the best recall of the changes of The Subtlety.

Other people noticed the change before I did and more than I. But I think that's why I like the neurofeedback because while I'm doing it, I can be like, oh, this is the thing that isn't working.

And this what I need to do to fix it is just keep training it. But I don't think I ever truly believed I really had an attention problem until I heard the feedback and I was like, whoa.

Well, it sounds like your journey from survival is more about minimization. Yeah, yeah, I have left, you know, flight,

fight or freeze. And now I'm working on thriving instead of just surviving.

Who do you feel like you're becoming? I don't know yet. Someone interesting. And if depression hadn't consumed, depression and ADHD hadn' consumed so much energy in your life, what now has that made room for?

Healing, hope, and advice for listeners

Right now, I have been spending a lot of time focusing on myself and my wife and our family. have a lot more energy to do things than I used to. I don't get as drained.

Um, I'm willing to go out more in public and my wife and I have been going on more date nights. And I've been spending more time with friends. Like I am less agoraphobic than i used To be.

You know, we're traveling a Lot more and i don' get us tired when i travel. I'm not clinging to my safety foods or shows or my safe routines as much as I was.

I am starting to branch out a little bit more. Um, and I've got, you know, my big cross stitch project that I am working on and hoping to get back to.

I'm also in the middle of developing yet another new mobile game. Uh, this is my third mobile. Game I have played around with development. Um I think.

ADHD is really easily taken captive by AI in a lot of ways. And I have all of these dreams and plans and ideas for things. I can just fit them into the AI and be like, what can I do with this?

Yeah. So I've had a lots of different chats with AI about, you know, What can do I with with idea? Yeah, and I've been fascinated by it, I do tell other patients about some of the things that you shared with me about the work that we've done in therapy.

It can be so helpful to have some place to really explore those parts and to not see them as demons or as stigmatized as we often do. What are some of the things that you'd like to share with your audience about who follow you and the responsibility of seeking help for mental health?

I just want everyone to know that it does eventually get better. I was miserable for probably the first 30 years of my life. It started ticking up after 30 and, you know, I will turn 40 next year.

And this is by far been the best decade that I've had. If they keep getting better from here, then it's going to be pretty awesome. But you don't have to live with mental illness.

You don' have be miserable. Talk to someone, talk to anyone. Find me, talked to me online. I'm always willing and able to listen to, you know, anyone that needs to talk, to your friends, find a community.

You don't have to be alone. Being alone in today's day and age is the choice. Looking back at your inner child, what would you say to her? Like, you know, it's just you're not gonna get to really live until you kind of push through all of that.

You're gonna have a lot of fun and you gonna, find out a a through screwing around and doing stupid things, but it will get better. Yeah. Having hope, having community, not being alone, finding a place.

Hope is hard. Hope is really hard because I feel like it's a double edged sword, like too much hope. and you lose focus and not enough and lose the will to continue.

There's a fine balance between the two. Mm-hmm. Well, thank you for sharing your story, Alicia, Flea. Thanks for having me, Dr. Ahmad. We usually ask some rapid-fire questions just to make it fun for our audience.

Coffee or tea? Neither. Soda. Sode, okay. Morning person or night owl? Night owl. A one book everyone should read. The Art of Happiness. Nice. Music that heals.

Broadway. a place where you feel completely safe. My house. One word your younger self needed to hear. Patience. One good thing that grief has taught you, there's only one way out.

Oh, that's true. There you go. If your brain had a theme song, and this is a great question. I love this one. That is a really good question. Probably one of those ridiculous polymorphic sound mashups on TikTok.

It's like every song mashed into each other at once. Oh, that sounds amazing. You should look them up. They're pretty good. Yeah. Okay, final question, three words that describe today's clip.

Kindness, understanding, and compassion. I love that. Well, thank you, Felicia, for being here. Thank you for your honesty. Your story reminds us that healing doesn't erase our past, it just changes our relationship with it.

You've shown that recovery isn't about becoming somebody new, is just becoming more yourself, the unmaskable, and being okay with that, being, yeah, that's who you are.

There's nothing to mask anyways. And it is about uncovering you and who's also behind the depression, the grief, shame, and trauma.

Rapid-fire questions and closing remarks

So I really thank you for sharing that. Thank you, Dr. Ahmad. Thank You. Thanks for joining us on the Two Curious MD podcast. We hope today's episode inspired you to ask new questions and explore fresh perspectives.

Post a comment with a question or curious inquiry that you have and seek to explore or learn with us. Stay curious and we'll see you next time.