Why You Can't Heal Until You Learn to Thank Yourself (The Fawn Response Explained) Transcript

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Introduction to the podcast and guest

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But people on the outside won't, so they'll just assume, oh, that's just another trend. And so to your question, I think that it was here. I do think it does change generation over generation.

We don't talk about emotions like there's no time to be sad. Just buck up. You got this. Push through. And it worked. It works until it doesn't. Welcome to Take Back My Brain with Lori Hammer where real healing starts in the brain.

Lori, a functional nutritionist and mom who's walked the path from anxiety and burnout to clarity and calm. Each week, we're going to dive into brain-based tools like amino acid therapy, gut health, fasting and faith to help you reclaim your energy, emotions and sense of self.

My goodness, you are going to love today's podcast because we're going talk about gratitude of self. I know you're like, what in the heck are you talking about?

How can you be gratitude for yourself? And we are also going dive into a little bit of trauma-informed therapy and how to navigate all those things because Kamini is my guest today and she believes the nervous system will always choose protection over performance.

And so we're going to dive into that. So make sure you stay to the end because we are going talk about things that probably none of you have ever heard on this podcast or maybe even another one.

Kamani, thank you for joining us today. Thank you having me. I'm so excited to be here. Yeah, it is great to have you. I'm excited for this conversation.

Tell the audience just a little bit about yourself and how did you get into, you know, trauma-informed therapy and all those kinds of things? Yeah. So, well, a bit of about me, first of all, from a personal perspective, I am the mom to five.

My oldest is 24. And my youngest is 12. When people ask me what's your why, they're my why. But professionally, I'm a coach, but I really work with people one-on-one.

I generally work high-functioning, high achieving individuals, teenagers, all the way through adults, helping them understand themselves on that relational level.

so that they can recognize patterns. I call myself a pattern interrupter because we're recognizing patterns that may have served them in the past, but no longer serve them.

They're keeping them stuck or keeping some type of cycle that's no more moving them forward. That's really what I say that I do is I help them interrupt those patterns, notice them, interrupt them and then how are we going to shift them?

High achievers, overfunctioning, and fawning

In order to build the life that want, whether professionally or personally. high performing, high achieving? Are we

talking like type A personalities?

How would you define that? That's such a great question because I think the natural is to go with type a personality. I own it, I'm a type-A personality, although I definitely work with high-achieving people who are kind of laid back.

We would maybe, if I met them on the street, be like, wow, you're kind more like a Type-B. However, so when I say high, achieving, a high performance, what I am actually referring to is the high functioners.

I'm going to keep pushing through, going keep going. They are very dependable individuals, right? They've always figured it out. There are the ones who are going handle the schedule.

So they're my over functioners. Those are ones that are constantly doing and they achieve something but then they go on to the next thing. so they don't always have to be a type A.

It's more about nexting. And I've accomplished this and instead of even taking a moment to acknowledge what they just accomplished and who they were being as they accomplished that, they are on the the Right.

What do you think facilitates that, you know, that over-functioning the, it's just, I don't want to even say it like it is never enough, but it s like, okay, now, like you just have to move on, which is not always a bad thing.

But sometimes it doesn't serve that individual well. Yeah, and so what I have started to recognize is it's actually, a lot of times, it is a fawn response.

So we talk a lots about fight, flight and freeze, but not a whole lot conversation has happened around faun and fauning and that is also a survival F-A-W-N.

It's a relational survival mechanism. And what I often see with people who have that tendency, the over-functioning, over giving, if we can And you know unpack it just a bit.

A lot of times that came as a survival mechanism right if I over function and I Over give it keeps things at peace. It keeps it. Keeps us from having conflict.

it Keep people happy. keeps Things moving along and that creates a sense of safety. And so I've actually been talking a lot more about this, not just with my clients, but even as I have been researching more, about fawning, because myself, I say that there's a part of me that's people-pleaser.

There's part me a perfectionist. Me too. And I recognize like, wow, that that actually me fawning. It's me trying to stay safe. Because if I people please, and I'm making sure that person over there is happy, then it creates safety within me.

Cause now I don't have to worry about conflict. Right. And do you feel like people who are in the space that you and I are, you know, the coaching, wellness space, all those kinds of things, therapy, maybe tend towards that?

I actually say it a lot. Yes. I mean, I do think that it's so common. And I think oftentimes, too, from a social perspective, being the person who's reliable, the one who gets things right, who keeps things flowing, someone who makes sure everybody's happy, they're actually celebrated.

So there's almost a reaffirmation when we do show up that way. But I also think our space is filled with that. I think caregivers and those of us who are in the helping space, we already are predisposed to showing up for others.

Right. It's just kind of built into us from a very, very early age, if not in-the-womb kind hopefully a human instinct for most people, is we want people to, you know, delight in us, we delight them, God created us to live in community and to serve each other.

So that's all beautiful and good. It's just when you take it to that next level. that can get a little dysfunctional. And it doesn't serve maybe you, your family, you know, those people around you.

Maybe you're enabling somebody or that type of awning kind of, keeps you from reaching and reaching where God has put you or wants you to go. Like we think we're striving and we are moving to the next thing, the thing.

But a lot of times it's linear and not trajectory. Yes, yes. And you just made such an amazing point. We are meant to be that for each other, right? We ARE meant in community and in connection.

When I'm talking to people about reducing that fawning, reducing the over-giving, it's not about becoming uncaring or becoming selfish. It's just to your point that you said before, when we lean too far into it, it starts to stifle us.

It starts become a detriment. And I say that about a lot of our strengths, right? We have these strengths. But if we lean to far in to it it can become weakness.

I own it. When I lean far too into my empathy, I now take on responsibility for somebody else. and fixing it. And so for me, it's this balance of, yes, Kamini, you are empathetic.

You are with that person and also holding a self-boundary around knowing where I end, right?

Nervous system safety and interrupting patterns

Where I and they begin so that they still have their own agency. Right, and I think that's so key. I that goes back to the quote that you had posted, the nervous system will always choose protection over performance.

Maybe part of that fawning is protection. 100%. Yes. It's the nervous system saying, okay, this feels unsafe. I need, it's, the default, we're going to keep us safe.

How are we going keep a safe? We're gonna fawn. We gonna, you know, We are going make this better. Were going over function. Its not a cognitive thing.

its all becomes part of like just our being. we are on autopilot doing it because the Nervous system is built to make sure that we survive. Right. So how are you helping people disrupt that or shift that?

And shift it. Yeah. The very first thing is, first of all, people need to recognize. I say, let's start at square one, which is recognize when your body, your nervous system is going into survival mode, because most of us don't even know it, so it's actually scanning the body and paying attention to when something shifts within us.

For me personally, I feel it in the pit of my stomach immediately. There's tension and I'm like, oh gosh, So that's step number one. We've got to become aware of when we're even in that space.

And then it starts to, then we can move into a more cognitive place of saying, okay, we actually tell the amygdala, right? We actually name it. I'm actually safe right now.

Nothing is happening. Like nothing that, my survival is not in question. because we've got to somehow pattern interrupt. And then with the fawning, it is making micro changes to, you know, setting certain boundaries of, I'm going to pause before I say yes, i'm gonna pause, before i act, right?

Being able to create some space between what the stimulus is really that we're talking about, and then how we respond to it. It's in that space, this goes back to Viktor Frankl's quote, between stimulus and response, there's a space.

it's really using that to say okay. Hey friend, just a quick break to remind you if calming your brain is the missing piece in your practice or in you're home, my Mind Thrive certification course teaches you exactly how to do that with targeted amino acid therapy.

So it's real science, real results, no band aids. Enrollment is now open. Link is in the show notes. Back to the Show. what would work for me and what won't work.

That's that whole boundary piece and fauners really need to spend some time with those self boundaries. Right, that is so good. There's so much talk right now about, we keep using the word, feeling safe and protection and nervous system regulation.

And there's lots of those buzzwords going on. I know there'll probably be a lot of people listening that, I mean, I was born in the 70s, so 1973. I'm a product of the 80s and 90s.

And we didn't hear about that stuff then. You just made it through life. We drank out of a garden hose, we flew off a merry-go-round. There was no trauma-informed therapy, there wasn't nervous system regulation, all those things.

Sometimes, as those buzzwords are running around, I often wonder, are we creating something that's not there or are labeling it different? Different generations look at things differently.

And so I would love for you to maybe help us unwind, has this always been here or is this something new? Right. You know what I mean? Yes. Cause I mean, I'm from the generation, you just push through it.

You just do it and you move on. Same, same. Totally. Right? Absolutely. I come from, we drank from The Garden hose. We left the house and our parents didn't know where we were until we showed back up.

And we're good. When we like, no, everyone, We were all like I am fine. Maybe our children or our friends would be like. There may be some things there that you need to address.

You know, I love the fact that your bringing that up because I actually recently made a post about this too because there is this idea that some of what we're saying is like pop psychology or it's become trendy.

And my take on it, and I know that there will be people who disagree with me, which Of course, that makes sense, right? We all have the right to our own opinion.

Generational trauma and naming experiences

I think that we finally have words for it, and we actually take the healing part out when we label things as trendy, And we just say, oh, That's pop psychology.

And I want to expand on that for just a second. You know, we only know things from our own experiences and our reality. And so as an example, and this has come up with multiple of my clients who have had to, for the sake of their own well-being, maybe go no contact with a parent as example.

I know online there's been a lot of discussion around this topic. Some feedback that I've even gotten on some of my posts is, well, that's just, it's a trend.

And I hear that and I respect that perspective, but I say that that is a perspective. I think what happens is we start to make judgments and we're human, we are going to have our own judgments.

But we make judgments from our experience and we forget that we don't have the inside scoop to someone else's experience. We don' know what they went through.

Now, I happen to have a glimpse because my clients share with me, it's like I know the depths and the pain and grief processing that went before that decision was made in order to go no contact.

But people on the outside won't, so they'll just assume, oh, that's just another trend. And so to your question, I think that it was here. I do think it does change generation over generation.

We don't talk about emotions. There's no time to be sad. Just buck up. You got this. Push through. It worked, and it works until it doesn't work. So now we're in a place of naming it.

Exactly. I mean, we joke with my kids, you know, when they're getting on the field and they are like having a freak out. It's like, yeah, this isn't the time, buddy.

Like you got to just do your thing. Right, right. However… Get off the horse, get back on horse. Get on a horse exactly. So it's not to say that we're just like oh we just coddle and we only talk about emotions.

But there is power in naming the emotions that you once didn't name. And I do think that there is power in starting to name some of these experiences like trauma informed.

It is knowing that, you know, especially I talk about this in with with businesses a lot in terms of trauma and forms leadership. What I'm really saying is the people that you're leading on your team are human beings.

They have experiences. And if we can recognize that the way that we're speaking to them, we just are cognizant of the fact that this is a human being receiving what we are saying, We pay attention to our communication.

That's an example of being trauma-informed. It doesn't mean we've coddling them or we like, oh my gosh, are you okay? That is not what any of this about.

Its about giving it some verbiage so we could approach it differently. And I think, and I know you do this too, but you give it the verbiage and then you replace it with better verbage.

Like you replaced it so that your brain can make that shift so you aren't stuck in the trauma. And, I, think a lot of psychology has been, let's talk through it, talk, through and you have people that have been in, you know, under psychiatric care for Decades and they have never moved past that and so shifting the neurology in the body in The brain, you know as a man thinks so is he so as he?

So, I mean we have to shift how we're thinking in order to move past set trauma So I know you are not saying that When we name it, we're staying there.

The goal is to move past that, to reframe it so that we can be these competent adults and children that are contributing really well to society so we don't feel like we have to be overachievers stuck in this fawning space.

Am I right in that? Totally. Yes. I think it was Dan Siegel who says, name to tame it. There you go. That's the point, right? It's like we're naming it not so we can continue to be in it and be a victim of it.

It is about we are naming so then we take aligned action to move through it, to grow from it because I am a full believer in the idea that things happen in our life and I'm not toxic-positiving and being like, oh, there's a purpose.

I don't do that at all. But it is to say I have this experience. How do I want to go from which allows us to take some agency to say, I'm going to continue moving forward.

I going continue to evolve as an individual. Right. And then we don't stay in this victim mentality where we're like, this happened to me, so this is who I am.

So you can shift how you identify and walk into who God created you to be instead of who somebody else decided what your value was. Yes, exactly. Exactly.

You know, before we got on the podcast, we were talking about gratitude. And so I want to get into this because, you know gratitude, attitude of gratitude you, know we're praising God, We're saying thank you for everything and it does shift.

I mean, there's so many studies out there that it's shifting everything. and you were taking about that there is a lot

of talk out that you cannot have gratitude towards yourself.

And so I would love to dive into that with you because I want to know what you say. So I take issue with that statement. I'm just going to own it. And I know that other people will not agree.

Again, totally respect that. Because here's the thing. Respect that traditional therapy and therapeutic ways of looking at gratitude and defining gratitude was appreciation.

It's a relational appreciation, an appreciation to something or someone. I take the perspective that there's also a relationship with self, so we can have an appreciation towards ourself.

And I think that it's actually really important, especially with that trauma-informed lens, how do we rebuild ourselves when we've been through, and this has to be a big T trauma, right?

We can add smaller traumas, but how did we re-build that foundational self if we're not taking the time to actually appreciate how we're showing up, appreciate and honor and be grateful for the strengths that we are leaning into.

I'm a huge believer in strengths-based approach to things, like instead of just looking at what's wrong, let's look at whats going well and how can we continue to build upon that.

And if we don't allow for that sense of gratitude to self, we cutting off an entire perspective of that reclamation of self when we've gone through trauma or we gone a part in our life where we're trying to rebuild and really reclaim who we are.

When we talk about self-compassion, that's compassion towards self. We talk leadership, self leadership. How do I lead myself? How to I show up? Self-gratitude.

I think it's another prong, it is another pillar on the whole dynamic of having a relationship with ourselves. And again, to what we said before, we absolutely are here to commune with each other as human beings.

It is about connection. and it doesn't have to be that or relationship of self. it can be an and. Right. So what does that look like when somebody has gratitude toward themselves?

I think it looks like, you know, asking yourself, okay, how did I show up today?

Self-gratitude and rebuilding self-worth

Who was I being and paying attention to that and saying, for me personally, I practice this every single day where I have gratitude for things in my personal world, my professional world.

And then I go to gratitude to self and it says, Okay, Kamini, How did you show in the last 24 hours? who were you being? You know I'm really grateful that I leaned into my empathy.

I am really proud of myself and appreciate that I really exemplified and leaned into bravery in terms of parenting. It's not for the weak, I own it. But that would be an example of appreciation to self because what we're doing is we are reaffirming who we at our core, not just what were doing.

And especially for high achievers who measure so much by outcome and result, this shifts into capital S self. I'm appreciating who I am as a person, as being, and not as doer.

Right. And then you're not leaning into, well, I could have done better, to the condemnation or the guilt or those types of feelings. We're all about like, oh, you know, i was just so stupid today.

Like Lori Hammer, You were so. Stupid. like we say that to ourselves all the time. That is not gratitude. Instead say, Lori hammer, that was a bang up job you did on that podcast today, I feel like, you know, we're going back to

scripture, as a man thinks, so is he, and life and death is in the power of the tongue.

So if you're speaking words over yourself, I teach my clients this all the time, speak life, whether it's to your children, to you spouse, two things around you to yourself.

Like tell yourself you did a great job. Yes. I think it's so important and it is not selfish to say, you did a great job today on that podcast. Nice job.

Let's do it again tomorrow. It's not like you're being… I don't think that's the only thing you do that would make you very, very self-focused. Right?

Right. But when you live an attitude of gratitude, a life of a gratitude you just see the beauty and the all of the amazing things that are coming to you because you're living an amazing life, right?

So you are grateful for the blessings that God has given you. You're grateful that you have a voice that speaks and you can share this message with the world.

So I'm in agreement with you, I think it's amazing. And I love what you just said because when you had that attitude of gratitude, it creates that optimistic outlook, and so if you having that sense of gratitude and appreciation for self, You're building that muscle to know that you can show up and meet life's challenges.

We know, that life is going to throw these challenges at us. The thing is, is that we're, building and again, it's not selfish. It's so full. So we are building ourselves up to, know we can handle it.

Its not going be easy, but we have the ability. to be resilient. We have the ability to trust ourselves. And I think that's what self-gratitude is about.

It's building that self trust. Its building the self acknowledgement, that ability, to know that we're going to okay. Right, right. I we think we are so programmed to do better, you can do you better.

Or you should never think about yourself in that way because everything that you have is from God and it's true. Everything you have is from God. And, but he also gives us the ability to do all of those things, right?

And so, so being excited about theability that you, whether you're a child and you like, Oh, I did it. I climbed the tree without mom and dad. Or, you know, had a client the other day and she was terrified.

to do the amino acid trialing where you're just opening up capsule, putting the, you know, acid under your tongue. You stare at me for two minutes and tell me how you feel.

Like she was terrified, literally terrified to it. It like she canceled her appointment. I don't know how many times. And when she got done, she's like, I did it, and I said, yeah, tell yourself great job.

Thank your body that it actually did. Right. And it was, and as she did, she's like, I think I can do another one. Like, yes. Right? And so, you know, it helps to dispel those I hate to use the word irrational, but irrational fears that we have, we just let them ruminate and they're noisy and then we like own them.

And I think when you practice gratitude of other people, other things in gratitude in yourself, that shifts that noise and dispels all that fear because we're not meant to have fear.

Yes, and also to your point, I mean, i do believe that were all children of God and if we are showing appreciation and gratitude to ourselves, were in essence also appreciating God.

We're created in the image of Him. Exactly. I love the fact that you brought that up. So I would love to know in the comments, what do you guys think about gratitude of self and how that works?

How are you implementing that with your clients? We're talking about all these things, safety, and I imagine that makes a person feel safer too. You know, so, I mean, the grand scheme.

So if we're talking about gratitude, one of the things that I coach around a lot is this idea of gratitude and gratitude to self. And I will say that a lotta my clients will accommodate.

That's weird. You want me to appreciate myself? I'm like, trust me. This is where trust comes in. But to your point around that idea of safety, I say to every single person who works with me that my North Star is emotional safety.

Any relationship connection I have, that is my north star. So when I'm working with my clients, That is what I am trying to create because when we feel that sense of our nervous system feels safe.

That's when you can actually dive deep and we can unpack what needs to be unpacked and then also makeshifts and changes. So to your point before, it's not about staying in victimhood.

This is about how do we move ourselves forward. Right. And so it is, about creating that sense of space where there is no judgment. There is not right way, wrong way.

These are my experiences. this is what I'm thinking. This is how I am feeling. Now with my values identified and my needs identified, how is it that I actually want to move forward?

Right, yeah. It's just showing up in a whole new way for life in general. Yeah. And it's showing up in a way that you're showing it for yourself and as you do that, you can show up for others then, right?

And that's the thing that I think that gets lost. It's like, well, if I do any of this for me, then I'm not focusing on everybody else. I challenge that to say, If you show it up yourself, and you are fully connected with yourself that relationship that have that your trying to create is going to blossom even more.

Right, right. And if we're going to go back to scripture, so in the Bible it says to love your neighbor as yourself. So if you're not loving yourself, if your not grateful for this life that you have, you know, the way your body functions, and the ways your brain functions.

The gifts that your have. Love your neighbour as your self. If you are not loveing yourself it's really hard to to the next person because Maybe this will be controversial too, but we'll go there.

All of our cells have a frequency.

Emotional safety, compassion, and pacing with others

We're created with frequency, God spoke and everything came into being. It's a Frequency. When you're negative or you are not treating yourself well, your frequency of every single cell in your body goes down.

Were supposed to vibrate at a a-frequency up here, and we end up with the frequency down here. So when your Frequency is low, you don't have the energy to give to the person next to you, to your neighbor, your family, whatever it might be.

And that's when we end up sick, when all of that is at such a low level. I believe that when speaking well to ourselves or speaking life over ourselves, over everything in our life, that raises our frequency because God created us to be at a higher frequency.

that transfers over to our neighbor and love is the highest frequency. If we're going to measure emotions, you know, love has the high frequency and so that frequency then can transfer over too everyone else.

And so I feel like that plays a huge part in everything too. I am right there with you. It does, it plays a huge part. And I think, you know, we say like emotions are almost like a contagion, right?

If we walk into a room where that frequency is low, most often we'll leave and we're like, man, I'm really tired, like I've drained, and I don't feel good.

It's because we were around that low frequency. Right? Yeah. And my daughter, she's 19, and she'll just be like, I don't like that person. I'm like why don' you like the person?

And she just picks up on things so quick. No, that person's probably a serial killer and I'm not going anywhere near him. You know, so she may be a little, you know exaggerating on that.

But my point is, is that you can, feel it like you're walking into the room or, somebody walks past you and you were like, I don't know about that, in the airport or something, like I didn't want to sit by that on the plane.

And then there's other people you are just drawn to. You're just drawn to their energy. You love to be in their presence because you feel so good when you're there and you can't wait to see them again.

And you are like, oh my gosh, I need a… you know, whatever fix it is, a Julie fix or whatever, I need to go see them. Um, just because they make you feel so good.

And, um, and I want to be that person, you Know, for people to Be like, i really want To be around Lori because I feel So good when I'm around her and, You know you, know it's happy and It's grateful and those things and i think unless you're feeling Gratitude to raise yourself and everything else, Um and who you were created to, be like that just doesn't happen.

Doesn't Happen. Yes. I'm with you. That's like my intention, too. I want to be that person. Right? Yeah. Yeah, I wanna be the fun house. They want our house to where men want it to.

It is something that I do strive for, to that be person where people feel seen and just heard. And they do, they feel good. They just feel whole and complete.

And there's not really a whole lot of verbiage to go with it. It's just like, ah, I just don't feel. Yeah, and do that without fawning. Yes, exactly, yes.

So what does it look like to be that, without fawnin'? You know, and that's like the work in progress for those of us who've done it our whole life, right?

And it really is. And I hold myself accountable to it's not about people pleasing. It's to be with people, to Be with them in the moment. There's a difference between empathy, compassion and sympathy, empathy is I'm with you in your experience, I'm with you and also I am not going to fix it." And then sympathy is, oh, I feel a little bit bad for you.

I try to balance the empathy, compassion component. And that's what that means to me. Instead of, you know, over-functioning or over giving or trying to, fix-it-or-people-please, instead I' m with the people that I m sitting with.

That I actually am with them. practice compassion and hear them and I try really hard not to go into fix-it mode. Share with me what you're thinking, share with what your thoughts are, and share what are the options.

I really hold myself accountable as a parent to do this because I think the the fixer in me, the people pleaser in, me would immediately try to jump into, okay, this is how we can solve this.

And so I really, in the way that I do it is I slow down, I pace myself with it where it's like, we're not going to rush. We're going breathe. I breathe before I speak.

Like I consciously am like deep breath from the diaphragm. Where not gonna like pay attention at for a second before we even respond to this and I lean into the idea of when I'm with people, it about pacing with them.

right? We pace with them. And then eventually we can maybe step into leading them, but we got to pace them first. Yeah. Oh my gosh. This is so good. So good!

I've loved this conversation. It has been great. We'll have to do another conversation! Where can my audience find you? I am on the web at comedywood.com and then social media, they can find me Facebook and Instagram with the handle, It's Authentic Me.

Awesome. Comedy, this has been phenomenal. Thank you for being here. I appreciate you. Love your mission. Everyone else listening, I know that you know somebody who needs this.

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