

# Emotional\_Relational\_Safety

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safety, emotional, emotions, recovery, husband, couples, relational, feelings, rebuilding, vulnerability, feel, safe, question, relationship, pam, hear, emotionally, starting, vulnerable, ownership

## SPEAKERS

Pam B., Lyschel, Bonny

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Pam B. 00:03

Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from Recovered Peace. And I'm Lyschel Burket with Hope Redefined. And I'm Bonnie Burns of Strong Wives, we're so glad you're joining us.



Bonny 00:14

Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. This is Bonnie. And when I first started my recovery journey, I heard a lot about safety. And in my mind, I thought that term was referring to physical safety. And of course, we want every wife impacted by sexual betrayal to be physically safe. However, the safety talked about had had a lot more to do with relational or emotional safety. And that idea was harder for me and many of my clients to wrap our minds around. So today, we're going to discuss emotional or relational safety, what it is, and how to navigate rebuilding relational safety with a spouse in good recovery from sex addiction. So our first question to you, Michelle, and Pam, and me, what is relational or emotional safety to you?



Pam B. 01:07

I had the same reaction when the experts were telling me, are you safe? And you have to established safety? And I'm like, no, no, no, you don't understand he doesn't hit me. I didn't feel safe. But I didn't have those words for it. So once somebody explained it to me, I was grateful. Jason Martinez and worthy of her trust, uses an analogy of how has it's the husband's responsibility to, to work really hard to rebuild trust. And he uses an analogy of a Lego sculpture that he has to put together, put trust back together one brick at a time, and I'm going to build on that, I'm going to say that my safety is in relational safety is like a Lego bridge. And there's my side of the bridge, and there's his side of the bridge. And then there's the relationship in between my relational safety begins on my side of the bridge, with myself care with my boundaries, my values, my principles, my strengths, a safety plan, that I need to be a safe person to, even with my wounds, but then I'm taking care of myself, I'm I'm I have to decide what that safety means. And I think in in relationship with my husband, I feel safe. If I

feel accepted, if I feel that he's a safe place for me to share all of my wounds, whether they were from him in his addiction or elsewhere, and that he isn't trying to change me he isn't trying to fix me, he's just holding space for for me with all my bumps and bruises.

L

Lyschel 02:52

So I'm just gonna I'll, I'll hop in here, Bonnie with the question of what is emotional and relational safety. I went to the handy dandy Wikipedia, because I wanted to just kind of see like a definition of it. And it says in psychology, emotional safety refers to an emotional state achieved in attachment relationships, where each individual is open and vulnerable. The concept is primarily used in couples therapists that describe intimate relationships. When a relationship is emotionally safe, the partners trust each other and routinely give each other the benefit of the doubt in questionable situations. When emotional safety is lost. The partners are inclined to be distrustful, looking for possible hidden meanings, and potentially threats and each other's words and behaviors. So that's what I I totally agree with that. I can see how this plays out in my story. But I think to answer your question, I agree with Pam, I didn't necessarily understand emotional safety. I can tell you I felt safe emotionally, if I put them in the opposite order with my husband to an extent. But I also wouldn't tell you that I probably was very familiar what with what emotional safety was for myself as a human because I didn't really grow up in a lot of emotionally safe Relationships and family of origin. So that whole vulnerability and being open there was still a guardedness that was very familiar to me. So I probably in my first part of my recovery journey, I would have said, Oh yeah, we're emotionally safe, like I can be vulnerable and trust Him and this was before disclosure, right? However, the path and the journey that we have been on emotional safety for me now at 42 looks way different than it did at 26 with the same person because I think I have a better understanding of what that definition and what it means to be open and vulnerable with another person.

B

Bonny 04:47

I love that you went to Wikipedia. I didn't I didn't even think of that. Because to be honest, I think I still struggle with this. I mean, I can understand all of those things. But I'm a real feeling person so I can feel it more than I can explain it the way I felt it. Even pre discovery, there was still some criticism, guardedness coming at me, which put my wall up. So walls up, I think are a place of what's the opposite of safety danger. You know, if you're feeling your walls up, you're in kind of a threatened response, but walls down is emotional safety. I'm just coming at it from a different perspective. I think for me, I felt it more than I could understand it verbally.

L

Lyschel 05:45

I think you just triggered a thought for me is it's important to understand that sometimes you said walls, I noticed that my own healing my own growing up into maturity and even with clients that I get to work with. Now, sometimes we confuse boundaries and walls, we think that they're kind of one in the same. And that's not actually true. And so that was even difficult for me. Sorry, I may and maybe I'm getting off on a tangent about something that's not really helpful. But I think that was important for me when I didn't understand emotional safety. It was also hard for me to grab the concept of boundaries. Because what I thought was boundaries was just being walled off, emotionally walled off. And that's not actually what boundaries are

right. And so I think I just want to like you triggered that font in there. So I'll just throw it out there as a nugget, like your emotional safety is you can still have emotional safety with a person and also have healthy boundaries.

**B** Bonny 06:36

Yes, yes. Absolutely. And you can expound more on that when we get to question number three. Okay. Yes. Awesome. So, moving on. How is relational or emotional safety ruptured in a marriage, when one spouse has a sex addiction.

**P** Pam B. 06:53

I can speak from my own experience with early discoveries, where my emotions were off the charts, I was feeling things I had never felt before. And I didn't have the tools. I didn't have the words, even so my reaction was scary to my sexually addicted husband who wasn't yet in good recovery. Because addicts don't do emotions, addicts medicate emotions. They can't deal with our own, much less anybody else's. My big big emotions weren't safe with my husband at the time because he, he couldn't tolerate them. He couldn't see them, he wouldn't hear them. And like all addictions, you know, addicts who aren't in recovery, they use denial. They keep people at a distance, emotional distance, so you don't get close. My soft place to fall was him in the past, and he wasn't there. To hold space for me, to hold my emotions to see me. And to tell me everything was going to be okay or to soothe me. I didn't have anywhere I could go. I was embarrassed. I was ashamed. I didn't have anywhere I could go to feel these feelings in a safe way that somebody wouldn't tell me what you're overreacting and what are you upset about? Basically telling me everything that he was saying was all my emotions were wrong. So I even questioned myself, are my emotions wrong? Am I overreacting? So that put me into a swirl questioning myself through the process of recovery, my own and his, we learned that the goal was to not to feel better, but to get better at feeling. And so that was a process that was a learning process. And I you know, I thought I was pretty good at emotional management. Up to that point. I had done a lot of work because like Michelle, I came from a background where I didn't always have emotional safety. I had survival. That's what I had to so I didn't have the tools or skills to deal with it until kind people helped me learn.

**B** Bonny 09:08

My emotional safety. What what we had of emotional safety was ruptured. When I discovered he wasn't the person I thought he was so that that bond I had with him just exploded. There might have been a couple of little, little tendrils still between he and I, but that's what ruptured my emotional safety when it first happened. It's it's an attachment wound. That's how I perceived it. Yeah, he wasn't safe. I couldn't trust him. Everything he told me for decades was really not true. So my reality was different. And he had ruptured it through the, you know, murdering the trust I had in him.

**P** Pam B. 09:51

Now it was just I said, good way to put it. The trust was murdered. It didn't just dissipate or slowly die away. There was an earthquake awake and a tsunami?

slowly die away. There was an earthquake aware, and a tsunami.

L

Lyschel 10:02

To answer the question, How is relational or emotional safety ruptured in a marriage where one spouse has a sex addiction? Obviously, the betrayal is like the most obvious exactly what both of you are defining and describing in your both of your relationships. On top of the betrayal, what I consistently see that continues to impact the emotional safety is actually the emotional withdrawal that happens for both persons. So she experiences the betrayal. And it's like her hearts been sitting on the kitchen table this whole time, whether they've been married six months, or 60 years or 30 years or whatever, right? It she just didn't understand that that wasn't a safe place to leave her heart was right out there in the open. And so the betrayal, obviously, what she insists, typically you see her do as she goes into picks it up, and she puts it in her pocket. And it's no longer allowed to be out there and vulnerable and open. Because clearly you didn't value what was sitting there. So I'm going to keep it with me, right? On the other side, like Pam was talking about is that the root of sex addiction is it's an emotional disorder, right? It's so their inability to be able to empathize, connect all those things. So here's how this looked before and have watched it play out. So my husband was and he still is he was just such a go with the flow kind of guy. And like Pam was talking about, like I was the one with my hair on fire all the time. And so he was my emotional safety. Like I talked about how that was one of the things that I was so attracted to him was that he balanced me, you know, he was cool and calm and collected, and I can have my hair on fire, but we'd still get to the appointment on time, right? Because somehow or another, we balanced each other. So when the betrayal happened or when the discovery happened or disclosure, what began to happen was I as I started to understand what sex addiction was, I suddenly realized that what I thought was calm, cool and collected, which felt safe for me was actually a deficit, right? My husband is functioning in a deficit. So then I didn't know who I was working with here. Everything felt very murky started getting really confusing. Can I still say I was asking lots of questions, can I still have my hair on fire? Can he handle that, because all of a sudden, I know that stress makes him act out that I'm learning about things about him. And I'm questioning everything about who I was, and the safety that was in that relationship. For me that foundation. On the other side, my husband is still trying to figure out what emotional safety even is, if we if we start to unpack that emotions are not safe for them, as addicts at some point in their story, emotions became dangerous, or overwhelming is probably the best word to use, not dangerous, but overwhelming. And so they're living in a consistent space of avoidance. So that's why I was capable of having my hair on fire, because my husband would literally just walk around me, right? Because he can avoid my hair on fire. Well, now all of a sudden, he's starting to get this emotional intelligence or awareness, my emotions, my I'm still my hair still on fire. And now all of a sudden, he's like, you're really hot. It's making me uncomfortable. I don't like that. Because he's starting to get emotional language right? Now all of a sudden, I'm going well, that's not how you were supposed to show up in this, because that's not consistent from what our history has always been. I don't know if this is like connecting well, but this is one of the hardest places that I think a lot of couples struggle with repair because it changes the paradigm, what they want, knew what was normal, quote, normal before will not look the same in the future. And here's the problem, a lot of guys who managed to get into sobriety, and they stop, right, they don't move into recovery, they want to go back into the way that they emotionally function before. And here's the here's the kicker, it's so triggering for a woman to watch him go back into being emotionally disconnected. So that's why you'll hear her say, I don't feel emotionally safe with you. And then you hear the the guy going, what do you want from me? I'm sober, right? I'm sober. What do you want from me? And the answer is there's an emotional maturity

that has to come in order to repair that emotional brokenness, that relational emotional safety has to be reestablished. Yeah, so that's, that's kind of what's going around in my brain. I think about things that I even see with couples, when they're trying to navigate relapses and slips. She will have some sort of indicator typically, because one of the first signs that a woman is going to pick up on is emotional disconnect. He may actually have not even acted out yet, but her little spidey senses or the Holy Spirit, either one is like on you know, and is just like, hey, there's something off here. So that emotional disconnect is a gauge for her. I think that a lot of guys don't recognize. I think a lot of women don't even recognize it. Like they're like there's something going on inside but I don't know what it is. And that's what it is. Is that emotion disconnect. And then the other thing that I see that's a consistent struggle for couples in recovery is it's this place where they're doing their couples connection exercises is what I'll call it. So things like fan OHS, right. And so we can talk about fitness on another, but fantasies, feelings, affirmations, needs, ownership sobriety, or self care. And it was, I think, Deb Lazar created it, Deb and Mark Lazar was in their book. But anyway, it's a it's a safe check in process. So if someone's never heard of that, that's what it is, is you take this opportunity to emotionally connect, that's what you're attempting to do. You're trying to own your stuff. But you're also trying to build self awareness. And it allows for space for connection. Because if you go back, and you remember what I gave the definition from Wikipedia, emotional safety is vulnerability and openness. And that's exactly what fantasy is trying to take you into is creating some parameters or boundaries to create vulnerability, which is let me tell you about my feelings. Let me affirm you. Let me talk about what I need. Let me take ownership for stuff who, that's all vulnerable stuff, right? That's all vulnerability and being open. Well, oftentimes, what I see what I see happen is, sadly, fan OHS. This Suite tools, so great, but it gets really chunky sometimes and relationship repair is he shows up, and he's very robotic about it. He's not offering her very much at all, he's got two feelings, which is like mad and sad, mad and tired that it uh, like, it's not, he's not digging, I'll say that he doesn't go deep, right, he's not digging deep in there to build any additional self awareness. So she consistently gets to that fan of his process. And she's going, something's still missing for me. And it's because he's not showing up with the vulnerability that she's hoping for. Because she's looking for this to be repaired. She wants that emotional safety there. On the other side, oftentimes women will show up in this space, and they're still so anxious about being vulnerable and open again, because I had my heart on the table, and you totally dismissed it. I am not ready to put it back out there. And it's a it's a back and forth. It's consistent, intentional work that has to happen in a couple ship, in order for them to recognize that both of them are responsible for rebuilding this emotional safety with each other. And they're not actually rebuilding, they're building something altogether new, because the likelihood of them having emotional safety beforehand is pretty low.

B

Bonny 17:34

And what comes up for me when you say all that is about couples focused therapy, I think we've heard a lot about he does his recovery, I do my recovery, which is great stuff that needs to happen. But at some point, there's an intersection and and you do have to get vulnerable. And it's it's a couples focused thing.

L

Lyschel 17:54

At one point in a couples recovery process. Bonnie, do you find it important to do couples focus therapy?

B

Bonny 17:59

I say right off the beginning, right off the bat. But

P

Pam B. 18:03

important, but important to note. It is not traditional marriage therapy, no. Which treats the marriage as the client, the marriage isn't the problem. The Marriage isn't the cause of the addiction and the be in addiction behaviors.

B

Bonny 18:19

Know this, the couple's focus therapy really starts with empathy training for him.

P

Pam B. 18:24

And I want to offer encouragement to people who are maybe currently struggling with this phase right now it sometimes it looks like it gets worse before it gets better. And that's normal. Because as Michelle pointed out, it's an entirely new language, an entirely new territory. My husband in his 2020 hindsight now that he's in recovery says Don't forget, you took my Binky away. I don't have my addiction to go hide into to hide from emotions, emotions, bad emotions, Boogeyman. Emotions is the was the enemy. And so now you want me to just be emotional. And I don't know how. And I don't know what I feel what was encouraging for me to hear, because I felt that robotic sense to it, the behavior has to change first, and the feelings will follow. And so we just stuck with it. So if you're out there and you're struggling, just stick with it. Just show up. Fail forward. I like to say, the fact that you're trying new things, this new language, you're rebuilding new neural pathways, you're changing habits of relating, so just stick with it. I'm here to tell you it worked for us it. We still do Fanus every Sunday night after four and a half years, and I love it.

B

Bonny 19:45

That's awesome. And everything you've just said plays really well into our next question, which is how does a betrayed partner start to rebuild emotional safety?

L

Lyschel 19:54

I want to just like expand on pan's suggestion there which is doing the work when when she was talking what made me think was I remember learning Spanish in high school, and it was like, Donde esta el banco? And then I was like, Oh, wait, it's not even that. And it was no bond. Whoa, right, I had the thing. All I'm asking is where's the bathroom? Right? It was so complicated for me to learn how to roll my R's and all that. But there is no way that we could expect a person to sit in 120 minute class on Spanish and think that they're going to come out and be fluid in that language. We cannot expect this of ourselves when it comes to learning

emotional languages. Now, this again, it's altogether different and new, could just even did put that in that perspective, like, how long does it take a person to become fluent in a new language? I don't really know the answer to that. I can Wikipedia it. But you have to, you know, you start to put into perspective, the grace that comes with that, like, oh, wow, they interchange the nouns and pronouns and whatever, like how funny and so if you can start to apply that kind of perspective, when you're talking about building this emotional safety in this, this language for you guys, there's a lot of time and space, we have been, we've been in marriage counseling for a long time, we've done lots of marriage intensives, and marriage conferences and things like that. And it's funny, because one of our last therapists that we have is our marriage counselor, he said You both are incredible communicators, you're just very, very good at communicating. It's the emotional language that still struggling, which I thought was really important for both of us to hear that like, but a part of it came back to just tell you why this was a deficit still, after nine years. At that point, we've been doing it now for, I don't know, 817 years. But what was coming up though, was the thing that was missing is that I still didn't have emotional safety with him. So while I could communicate really well, I was very articulate, being vulnerable and open. In other words, let me just tell you what a vulnerable and open for me look like was sharing my truth. Even if I knew it would upset him or dysregulate him. That was my that was my, that was a big hang up. For me, it was hard for me to move back into emotional safety. Part of that was because his I was so nervous about his reaction. Like I mentioned before, if I say something that stresses you out, will you react, aka act out or relapse, we needed time and space to be able to really rebuild that and know that he had sobriety and had navigated stressful situations and stayed sober. And those stressful situations weren't directly correlated to me. So let's just say he navigated some really rough stuff at work or extended family things or whatever. And like he stayed sober. He was using his tools. He was doing what he needed to do to choose sobriety that took some time I was watching and paying attention and then being like, okay, maybe now I can start to be, I can start to open back up again. I can start to be myself, my hair can catch on fire again. And it's not going to dysregulate I don't think I answered your question, though. No, I

B

Bonny 23:02

think he did. How does the betrayed partner start to rebuild emotional safety? So yeah, you did, because he did consistent behaviors over time, and helped rebuild your trust, which helped you feel more able to be more vulnerable with them? Yes, yes.

P

Pam B. 23:23

They show the fruits of recovery, not just the tasks of recovering. Yeah, the humility, humbleness, mindfulness before you open up your mouth to speak. In my case, I know that my husband struggled like I did to know what I feel to know what I need. I remember being so upset with the therapist, because he would say Pam, what are you feeling? And I would say, Well, I feel he No, no, no, that's not a feeling that's a judgment and I was so mad at him. And that's where the feelings wheel came in and helped me just separate my thoughts from my feelings because my feelings are authentic. My feelings are my feelings are my feelings, but I can have some thoughts that were cognitive distortion. So really being able to hone in on what am I really feeling? Am I feeling sad, hurt joy, pride, shame, versus I think he's a jerk, or I think he's being impatient. I think he's this or that. And I used to confuse that with feelings. And I know Jeff had the same had the same issue that knowing what you feel, how do I know what I

feel because I stopped for so long, because we didn't have the emotional depth. The emotional safety or connection that we had was very shallow. And so learning how to discern what I was feeling to be able to communicate it to him and learning that language was a way that I had to help rebuild emotional safety between us to be able to hold space for my own feelings. And I think what really helped me there was learning emotional safety. group with other women to see other people allow my emotions to know what that's supposed to look like. And that set the bar are like, well wait a minute, I know all this 12 Women in this group are nodding their head at me when I say I feel sad, and I feel scared, but you're telling me I've got nothing to feel sad or scared about. So group was real, real significant in my movement forward in in learning what safety was supposed to look like.

**B** Bonny 25:27

So what I'm hearing is that there's the initial rupture, which can be repaired through his actions, consistent actions and recovery. But then what I'm hearing you say Pam, is about kind of a higher level recovery of when you start to do introspection on yourself. I

**P** Pam B. 25:46

call it higher for me, like it doesn't feel higher. For me. It felt so brand new, it felt foundational for me.

**L** Lyschel 25:54

So was it depth instead of height?

**P** Pam B. 25:56

Yeah, yes, thank you. Because like you love shall we're saying, I grew up in a in a home where emotions weren't allowed. Emotions were allowed. We're not allowed. If I was upset, I was gaslit. And told that I didn't have anything to be upset about. I was a truth speaker. And so I was punished for calling out other people's toxic behavior. I had learned to stuff my feelings and my emotions, because I've got so frustrated with trying to express them or feel them and all the world around me not being able to tolerate them. So their way of dealing with with that was to shut me up and pushed me away dough. I had gaslit myself. And so I didn't know what to have emotional safety. I had to know what emotions were for myself. And separate out because if I were to show up and say, Okay, here's my feelings, I feel you're not being sober. I feel you're not being honest. Those aren't feelings. I feel afraid. I feel scared, I feel alone. Those are feelings. So I had to learn how to feel my own feelings so that I could show up with them.

**B** Bonny 26:58

And then once you know your feelings, you can speak into your needs. Exactly. Yeah. And knowing your needs, when rebuilding emotional safety, helps you create your boundaries, which are different from walls, boundaries will be a whole other episode. But stay tuned. So do

we have anything more to say about rebuilding emotional safety?

L

Lyschel 27:26

Yes, I do. Okay, good. Okay. So I actually have an acronym that I use quite often to talk to women and even couples about what it looks like to rebuild trust. And I think that this is a part of that right? Safety trust. If we go back to the pyramid of intimacy, it starts the base of that pyramid is truth. Then we move into safety, trust, vulnerability and intimacy. Those are the five layers of the pyramid of intimacy that I know it's in Dan, Dan Drake, and Janice coddles book, and you can look it up on look up Google pyramid of intimacy. But anyway, the thing that consistently I think, helps couples, I'm just, I'm trying to pare this down. Because this is this really is kind of complex, as much as we want to act. Like we just woke up one morning, and we're like, I know all my emotions, and I like, everybody wants them. Um, it's not right. It's a lot of work. PS, I just want to add this in as Pam was talking, I remember the Thol The only thing I could think of the thought tha w as my emotions, they scared me to death. I was like, I think I need drugs. Like, I think I need an antidepressant or anxiety meds or something like because they were overwhelming. And I'm just putting that out there. Now, I am totally supportive of whatever you need to do to keep yourself healthy. If someone is like in this. It's not like they're not necessarily navigating their trauma. They're at hyper vigilant trauma, they're a little further into recovery, but they're just all of a sudden, they're starting to have all these emotions, and they don't know what to do with them. Because that's what self awareness does. Just like Bonnie just said that self awareness is like the first critical step of your own recovery. I can't fix what I don't know I can do anything with it if I don't know what my emotions are, and or I don't understand them. And granted, they don't always make sense. Totally understand that. But if I don't know that what I'm feeling right now is anxiety. There's nothing for me to do with it. And I'll just throw this out there right? Because anxiety oftentimes actually comes out as rage. It's not actually rage, right? But all of a sudden, I'm feeling super anxious on the inside and I come in and I just exploded my kids because the living room looks like a homeless shelter, the environment and everything about it has created anxiety inside of me. So until I start to learn the skill of self awareness and I can slow myself down and go what's going on Michelle? Oh, the living room being destroyed creates chaos for me. And those human beings who made the chaos which are my children are the victims of my wrath because I need I need order and then I start to learn Order gives me peace. Isn't that funny that Lord would do that to me. For those who don't know, I have five children. So there's never any order in this house. But but it's still it's a it's a sense of just starting to dig in and really figure yourself out. So anyway, I wanted to give this acronym because I think this is a really great thing to keep in mind. It's called vows. VO W s, okay? It stands for vulnerability ownership, do your work, offer safety vows. Super cool that we're talking about marital repair and relationship here. So it's pretty easy to remember, we all took vows, right? When you begin to think about what rebuilding emotional safety looks like, it looks like being vulnerable. It looks like taking ownership for things that you need to take ownership for. So me walking back into my living room and saying, Hey, guys, I totally lost my cool over the condition of this living room that was not on you. It's because I just had a lot of anxiety about it. And I'm sorry, that's ownership that's walking into my husband and being like, Okay, I know that you're being emotionally disconnected. And I am super amped up right now because of it. But I'm, I need to hear what's going on for you on the inside to really help alleviate some of that anxiety and apprehension for me, can you please help me I'm taking ownership for what's going on inside of me. Same for him, right? You start thinking about a guy showing up? And so my husband answering that question, tell me what's going on inside of you right now. And him being able to turn around and offer vulnerability, like, I'm really scared about something that's going on at work, or I'm just overwhelmed. So that vulnerability

ownership, the do your work. This is true for both parties. I had just like Pam was talking about I have my own work to do. I got to figure out me, I really thought that I was going to get married, and this man was going to read my mind, and it was going to be glorious. That never happens. I'm so sorry. If you've just tuned in, and that's news. He's never gonna read your mind. It's a gift and a curse. Right? The

P

Pam B. 32:00

phrases that we have to eliminate is, but if he loved me, he would know what I need, right?

L

Lyschel 32:06

Yeah, that's right. So doing your work, I've got to learn how to do exactly what I just described. And even in that analogy with my kids, I've got to learn how to recognize what's going on with me, I need to take ownership for that. Because you know what I used to do, I used to excuse my anger or my rage and be like, yep, well, I'm just mad, get over it. That's who I am. How many family members do you have, where they're like Uncle Joe's just a jerk. It's just who he is. That's called lack of ownership. That's, that's some of my own ownership things that I need to do. And then my personal work, I need to recognize what is it that I need to do for myself to start to navigate my world differently? That would look like getting into therapy, doing some coaching work, learning how to be mindfulness, right, and self care, all the things that come with this for him that works gonna look like some of his recovery work, like sobriety and doing his whatever that looks like groups and things like that. But then there's that next layer, that next layer of emotional awareness, emotional intelligence, learning all those things. So it doesn't just stop with sobriety. There's this never this other layer, I call it that's the difference between sobriety and recovery. Recovery is a 360. It's doing something completely different, or a 180. Maybe I should give it that. And then the last part of that was the s was safety is that learning to do know what it looks like for safety, really defining that which we've talked about with this emotional safety, right, but being safe for another person being safe for ourselves, there's a lot of that in there. That would be my little tidbit for rebuilding emotional safety is consider implementing this little vows thing.

B

Bonny 33:39

I love that. We'll have that in the show notes, too. We'll even put Wikipedia in the show notes. How about we move on to our favorite question, how can we offer hope to our listeners when it comes to relational or emotional safety?

P

Pam B. 33:58

It works when you work it fail forward. It's new. Keep trying keep doing the work, keep doing the education. Don't try to do it all on your own. Take the experts advice, read books, do group, find people that you can be safe with until your your spouse can get there. It may take a while for him to get there. But be open to what that might look like. You might think it looks like here's how conversations are going to go between my husband and I about emotional safety. Just be open to the possibilities that it might look even better than you're imagining.

L

## Lyschel 34:38

Okay, here's my hope that I want to extend to others. And I don't want this to sound like a spiritual platitude. So please just bear with me. The truth is, I had to get emotionally safe with the Lord first to really arrive at this level of vulnerability with boundaries that I could with my husband. So this looks like me being on a journey. I'm trying to discover God in a relational way more so than in a transactional way. I had this limited belief system with God that if I did a and b, then see what happened based on me performing and doing and all the things right? Well, we know that that is actually legalism, that is religion. This that's not relationship. That's not how God functions actually at all with us, I had to start asking God just really innocent and honest questions about what he was like to be with relationally. Because he became very safe for me. And when I was able to live in a safe relationship with the Lord, I'm going to be honest with you, I had a lot less expectations on my husband, he did not have to emotionally show up and be everything for me. So my husband could do what Pam just said, which was fall forward. And it didn't wreck me, because he wasn't my everything. My husband success didn't determine how I needed to be healing, it didn't determine how I was going to respond. It didn't, right. And I know that that might sound very, very mystical. And I don't want it to sound mystical, I want it to be an invitation to any woman who sitting there going, I really never even tasted a safe relationship before. I used to joke that the safest relationship I had was with my dog, which is so true. Like, I can be all things at any moment with my dog. And that was like as close to what I could understand of understanding God in a different way. I did not understand everlasting love, because everlasting love is a relationship that I can show up in and be vulnerable take ownership, I feel safe in that was such a foreign concept to me, across the board. I didn't understand how to do that with humans, I got a little bit of a taste of it with my dog. Okay, if you call yourself these things, what does that even look like? How do I even live in a relationship with you with everlasting when we allow him to answer that question, and we start to live that out pieces of our foundation shift. And all of a sudden, our husband doesn't actually make up our foundation. We're sitting and standing and leaning on the Lord every time. So if we sit in a Fanus, in my husband can't show up that day, because he's distracted and emotionally disconnected. And he's overwhelmed with stress, and so on and so forth. And so I go, What feelings do you have, and he's like, doesn't want to show up. When my foundation my relationship with the Lord is super off, that literally implodes me, because somehow or another, I was going to get something out of this experience with my husband, it was going to give me value or purpose, or I don't know what I was looking for. But there was something in there that I was anticipating. And so when he can't do that, and I don't have relationship with the Lord, it's destructive and feels defeating. But when my world when my conversations, my breaks in the day are about Lord, help my mouth and the thoughts of my heart, please, you helped me to know what it looks like to lean on you, Lord, what do I do when I'm scaring myself? And he emotionally shows up for me like in that relational way. And I start to feel this real connection to him through his word, and worship and prayer and all the things that I that I know to do. And my husband shows up, and he has nothing for that. Fanus I'm okay. Am I frustrated? Yes. But does it destroy me? No. And I just feel like there's such a clear distinction for us to know that because our hope is not found in recovery. Our hope is not found in our husband's recovery, our hope is not found in him being able to attend group just right every week, I'm not excusing his need for those things, because he needs them, I'm just telling you that that's not where my hope is found. I want to just keep seeing it all the time, my hope, is found nothing less than Jesus



P

Pam B. 38:41

as an as a new, heartfelt Christian, who invited the Lord into her life. Just a short time ago, I can relate that my husband and I were having a difficult moment early in recovery. And I was trying to get him to see the light about my feelings. And I had this wonderful tool called the tap out, which helped me understand when to walk away from a conversation because I was flooded. And I went into my bedroom to my retreat, and I sat in my rocking chair. And I prayed, Lord, this is all I'm trying to do is to get him to understand this and to get him to see that and I sat in that quiet and I felt so heard, and so seen and so known by Jesus, I sat there for a while, and I came back out and my husband said, Do you want to talk about it? Still I do a bad impression of him. He says, and I said, No, I'm fine. What do you want for dinner? It wasn't an issue anymore, because I knew Jesus heard my heart. Jesus got it. There's a great song. I think it's king and country. God only knows only He can fill those deepest, deepest parts of me at that level.

L

Lyschel 39:55

Absolutely. I'm just also just going to encourage our listeners like If you're struggling to see him relationally, because it just still what I'm saying feels really foreign, my invitation or encouragement would be to just go to Psalm 139. And you start to get to see him from a relational side. Like there's so much because relationship is intentional. And that Scripture is so intentional about how he's done, what he's done to make us who we are.

B

Bonny 40:22

I agree with everything you've said, both of you, the hope I would leave, as you probably heard, this is a process. There's nothing miraculous, other than the divine healing of Jesus. But Jesus asked us also to step forward, and that's what Pam was talking about doing your work. But in what Pam said, Romans five, three and four came to mind. And so I pulled it up, and it's talking about how Jesus is our access to faith and grace. And not only so but we also glory in our sufferings. Because we know that sufferings produces perseverance, perseverance produces character and character hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who's been given to us. So if there's no final words, I'll close this out. Okay. All right. Well, listeners, thank you for joining us. We hope to be a bright spot on your recovery journey. If you'd like to leave us a question or comment, please go through the contact button on our website, and also help a friend by leaving a five star review on iTunes so others can find us see into it. Goodbye