

Ep_25_Denial_part_1

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SPEAKERS

Lyschel, Pam B., Bonny

P Pam B. 00:03
Hi, I'm Pam Blizzard from RecoveredPeace.com.

L Lyschel 00:06
And I'm Lyschel Burket with HopeRedefined.com,

B Bonny 00:08
And I'm Bonnie Burns of StrongWivers.com We're so glad you're joining us. Welcome to Season Two of Hope for Wives, where we acknowledge the devastation of sexual betrayal and infidelity, while offering practical insight and hope for healing all through a Christian lens. And we also hope you'll find some joy through laughter in spite of our serious subject. So Pam, Michelle and I are returning to the recording studio after a six month hiatus, which was loudly protested by many of you precious listeners, and we heard you. But we also want to model for you what excellent self care and self containment boundaries look like. So before we get into the meat of our discussion today, which is around denial and betrayal blindness, we're going to first briefly remind you all of who we are, and our mission with the podcast. I'm Pam Blizzard, and I founded recovered peace, which is an educational informational resource for betrayed spouses. We've seen through the last season that our audience includes not only betrayed partners, but husbands in recovery, see SATs app sets, therapists and coaches, marriage and family therapists and religious leaders. I'm Michele Berkut. I'm the executive director and founder of a ministry called Hope redefined. We get to support women in a lot of different ways through online support groups, professional coaching,

L Lyschel 01:43
we have an online community as well as we offer an intensive healing retreat twice a year. I love what I get to do through that ministry. But I also love getting to step out and do something

like this with you all, and be a part of this, I am a certified professional coach. I am also a certified app sets coach. And currently I serve on the app sets board, going into almost my second year of serving there and get to support them as they continue their mission as well. I just want to remind our listeners that another focus that we have envisioned for this podcast is to continually be intentional about the format of this podcast. And what we're attempting to do is create a roadmap to recovery.

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Bonny 02:30

Thanks, Michelle. And I'm Bonnie burns. And since the launch of season one, I too am now a certified professional coach, and an APSET Certified Partner coach. I've also completed a training called early recovery couples empathy model. And so now I not only coach individuals, most mostly women who've been impacted by sexual betrayal. I also coach couples through the IRCAM philosophy. And also, I've developed a small group to help empower wives with godly healthy understanding of their sexuality, and sexual experience. And that's called Sexual clarity for Christian wives. And I offer that ongoing throughout the year. I'm also on the leadership of a free Christian support organization for betrayed wives called the Sara society. And that's the wives collaboration to the Samsung society. So our topic today to introduce season two is denial. Something it's also called betrayal blindness. So our first question that we're going to roundtable discuss is, when we talk about a betrayed wife possibly experiencing denial, what do we mean?

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Pam B. 03:53

I think it would be good that we preface our discussion with denial can help and it can hinder denial can help, because it's the brain's way of protecting yourself protecting your heart from things you aren't ready to deal with yet. So denial isn't always a bad thing. Sometimes denial can actually protect you, and allow you to take baby steps towards acceptance. Now, it can hurt you if you stay in denial too long. And it prevents you from taking any steps towards protecting your heart and your safety and your vulnerability.

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Lyschel 04:39

I think and so to answer the question, I thought that was a great explanation and intro Pam that needed to be said. The question you ask Bonnie is that when we talk about a betrayed wife possibly experiencing denial, what do we mean by that? Oftentimes what I see when I get to meet somebody who maybe is relatively new in their recovery journey doesn't mean that the betrayal is new, but they're new to the journey they've been, they will be having the ability to start to see places where they would minimize situations for themselves. Knowingly or unknowingly. Some of it had to do with just they couldn't believe that this was reality, or they had other people who were helping them. Minimize the situation, I say, helping them loosely. But minimizing the situation. So it really did keep them in a position or a place of being like, well, it's not that bad. Or it's just porn. Those types of it's not infidelity. I've heard women talk about that kind of wrestle, in feeling like they were, quote, stuck in denial. And I use quotes, because I think that's important for them to understand that that may not be there. They may not have anything to own in that. But I've had women who've sat with religious leaders where they talk about, well, porn is not cut, they're not crossing the flesh line. And so essentially, she

moves into a place of thinking, what I'm what I'm hurting from is not a big deal. And I need to move into denial of my own pain. So I feel like betrayal. Denial comes in a lot of different forms, I don't think it's just limited to denial of the situation or the event. There's denial around the impact, there's denial around the the depravity of the actual behaviors, there can be denial around our emotions, and how they really are coming through. So I think that's how I would answer that question is what do we mean by denial?

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Bonny 06:45

I mean, I wholeheartedly agree with both of you what you've said, denial is a coping mechanism. As you've said, Pam, if we could look at reality, it would be too overwhelming, because that threatens our attachment to our most secure person, if we can really see reality for what it is and connect the dots. Denial helps us manage that overwhelm. Because if we did see reality, it could threaten the entire life that we've built. So while I don't see denial as a heinous thing, it does keep us from Yeah, seeing our reality seeing the truth. And if we don't see reality for what it is, we can't make good choices. We can't make choices based on all the facts. And

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Pam B. 07:38

I just think, you know, I also, personally speaking, I was in denial, about a couple of things I was in denial about, that I needed help. I was in denial that I could actually benefit from professional help. I thought I can handle this, I'm a strong woman, I should be able to deal with it. I'll just roll with the changes. But I was in denial about the magnitude of the impact it actually had on me. I thought it was just emotional. I thought, well, just I can just deal with this stuff emotionally. But it had impact on me, neurologically at the cellular level. And I was in denial about that. I was also in denial about any solutions, that there's all these other solutions for our relationship. I really thought this is as good as it's ever gonna get. I didn't believe I was in denial about recovery possibilities. So I think, Pam, what you are addressing is a lot to do with our next question.

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Bonny 08:47

Did we ever experienced denial or betrayal blindness? And how did that play out in your life?

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Lyschel 08:56

I would say yes, most definitely have experienced it.

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Lyschel 09:05

Lyschei 09:03

in hindsight, I can look back now and see why and how that was necessary for that season. And so that's one of the things I feel like we've we've started to do, but I'm just going to say it is there isn't an incredible amount of grace for someone who's in denial. It is a primitive survival skill. Sometimes we don't actually choose it, it just kind of moves as we move into it is in an in the moment of attempting to try and survive. And so I definitely feel like I've experienced it out of that exact reason was survival at one particular season. You know, it was he had a relapse, and I had small children. And it was incredibly difficult to make the hard choice to do certain things in that in the aftermath of that betrayal. Because I am attempting to try and keep some sense of normalcy for my children. I was not working out of the home at the time, I didn't have any family surrounding us that was going to be a support system. And so I definitely think I had a denial and a minimization to the impact of the situation. For the just for stability, I just desperately needed this stability. I couldn't, I don't think my brain could figure out how to hold the the the bigness of the betrayal. And also, at this time, I had a very young baby and two toddlers, that in and of itself is a big, right. And so how do you do the two and so something had to go. And the thing that had to go was all of those emotions and just boxing them up, keeping them tidy, putting them under the bed. And, you know, I didn't know if they'd ever come back out. But I had purpose. I knew I had some reason in there. As I look back at it in the moment, I didn't, but certainly have navigated that denial and betrayal, blindness, I was in the same place, I had a small child special needs child. And

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Pam B. 11:13

when I did try to consider all my options, worst case scenario, because you don't, you don't know what other people are going to do. It's out of your control. I was just completely overwhelmed. And I'm sure I no denial took over. And I just tried to live in the moment. Which with what was right in front of me. That you know, that helped me survive. The downside was is I was just surviving. When you don't know what you don't know, you don't know that you could potentially thrive if you take action. That again, when you don't know what you don't know. You do whatever you can with what you have to work with.

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Bonny 12:03

Yeah, I dealt with it. I dealt with it mostly in the first, the first episode the first D Day. And it had a lot to do with what you were mentioning the shell, the cultural message, the cultural message that had infiltrated the religious leader thought process of it's not breaking the flesh barrier. I had a man and addiction who was telling me all of those things, too. And I just didn't have the support to say to whisper the truth in my ear. I mean, yes, I could read the Bible. And that's truth. But I didn't have another person helping me say no, no reject that. So my denial, the betrayal, blindness, was also a coping mechanism that I could not piece apart, how I could stand firm and my values, and actually be in conflict with my husband and active addiction. I didn't know how to do that. It would have been such a fight at that point. So when I started to break through my denial was actually 10 years later at the next D Day, that's when the real wrestle started. And I'll tell you how I finally broke through it, I figured out my values, I figured out what I would tolerate in my life. And God showed me that he was my ultimate provider, that no matter what happened to my marriage, that if I stood for righteousness and my godly values, he would take care of me no matter what that was when I started to step out, and to, to inform myself, of not just around sexual addiction, but to inform myself of boundaries in general, how to boundaries work in your life overall. What do you do when someone doesn't

like your boundaries? How do you reject it? I worked through all of that, too. So it wasn't sex addiction specific it was, it was bodybuilding. So it really served the denial and the betrayal, blindness served its purpose, because I also had three, they weren't young young, they were middle school aged children, that that first go around, but I had three that was mostly my responsibility because they traveled so much. So that's my personal experience with the betrayal, blindness and betrayal blindness, just as a psychoeducation piece was a term coined by Jennifer frayed, who, who did research on betrayal, trauma in children, and their experience with parents betraying them, and then it's been, it's been absorbed into the bitter real trauma vocabulary as well.

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Lyschel 15:04

I'm going to add one more thing just for relatability. I mentioned just the stability and survival, like that was definitely one that was motivating for me. And I could see how denial was serving its purpose. The other one is, it goes into just wanting to get over it. And so we kind of talked about that I mentioned that earlier about the emotional denial. But I think that there were seasons where I just wanted to move forward and get past this. And so that denial really served me well in an effort to try and perform more and move forward. And I mean, like, not like perform in my marriage, but just perform in life in general. You know, the phrase that keeps coming to my brain is like, ain't nobody got time for this. Right? Like, that was kind of that thing. And so that kind of phrase was definitely something I was holding on to. And it allowed me that denial space, or that denial is what served that and help me move into the next. So. So for me how I started getting out of that denial. And I think this happens

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Pam B. 16:14

for a lot of us. And we notice, you know, denial is also a very big part of addiction, it enables the addiction to continue because the person with the addiction is in denial about the impact on themselves and other people. And there's a term, you know, that we've heard, I've probably, they hit rock bottom, I also, I hit my rock bottom, or I hit a wall, I hit my limit of what I could take. And I could no longer deny the impact of my husband's addiction, and everything that comes with it. Because it's not just the acting out behavior, it's what it does to their personality, their ability to be in the relationship, isolation connection, and I hit my limit. It takes pain to make change, I had to accept that I was in so much pain, that the pain of staying the same and accepting the current status quo was worse than what I used to think was the worst case scenario of divorce and separating finances and separating households and custody of our child and starting things new that looked like the worst case scenario. But it really wasn't. The worst case scenario was living in this constant darkness to different realities, my husband's insisting on his version of reality. Body you kind of alluded to that. And what I kept seeing was reality over and over again, I could no longer deny reality. And the pain of that is what motivated me to seek assistance. It's what made me go Google, it's what made me seek a therapist and start to say no, and start to develop and gather some tools and support to didn't start to develop some sort of a plan out of that darkness. So is there any brief hope we could leave our listeners with? Before we conclude today, I would offer grace, this time, over hope is that and I find myself doing this often, when I meet a new partner who's doing an intro call with us as a ministry. She has a lot of personal shame and judgment against herself when she realizes she's been in denial.

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Lyschel 18:52

And every single time I get an opportunity to give them grace, I will do it. Because we actually don't always get to choose our denial. And honestly, we all listed out various reasons for why that denial was there when it was. And so the grace is, is that you were there. And now you're moving into something else into another phase. So I would just say be kind to yourself. And then also thinking about those who are walking with someone who may be in a betrayal story, and they can see the denial, right? Well, yeah, we can always see things on the outside of us, right. But trying to force someone through denial just really doesn't work. And so my best advice would be to just partner with them where they are, and continue to walk with them knowing that the denial will break eventually.

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Pam B. 19:50

I would also offer the hope that if you're coming out of denial, let yourself take baby steps. And again like Atlas Shaw said, don't shoot yourself I should have known. Give yourself grace, give yourself Self Compassion. ease into it. The hope that we can deal with reality. We can make better, more sound healthy decisions based on this new reality that's emerging. And I would, I would encourage you to talk to Jesus, pray, ask the Lord for insight. Know that God will put things in front of you. When you're ready. Don't worry about all the things that you may not know or may not be accepting that God knows when you're ready. And that things will be revealed when you're when you're ready to deal with them. Yeah,

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Bonny 21:02

I guess what I'd like to offer is that if you are sitting in a place of hopelessness, how is this ever going to change? And you're getting a lot of pushback from your, from your husband who might be an act of addiction. I would pray for God to give you clarity. I would also ask if you can give yourself permission to have that grace for yourself, but also to slowly turn towards reality to slowly it doesn't happen overnight. Especially if this has been a long term issue in your marriage. But where can you start to grow? Because I heard what Pam said earlier, the pain of change has to be less than the pain of what you're sitting in right now. And if that's where you're at, go to God and prayer. He's the only one that can get us through this. We are going to end our conversation here for now. And you can catch the rest of this discussion in our next episode. Thanks for joining us for season two, episode one. And if you want to help others find our podcasts because you found us helpful, please leave a five star rating and a positive review on iTunes. Also, if our discussions have helped you in any way, would you please consider donating to the expenses of this Podcast, the podcast production and the syndication. It all involves fees and we've been paying out of pocket. So if it would just help us tons, if you would like to help us with those costs, and there is a donation button that you can find on our website hope for wives.com or in the show notes. So thanks for joining us, and we'll see you again next week.

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Lyschel 22:52

See ya. Hi

