

2B_Tiede_Interview_Part_1

Fri, Oct 18, 2024 3:27PM 40:41

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Bonnie Burns, betrayal impacts, same sex attraction, recovery coach, trauma brain, attraction vs arousal, childhood trauma, social stigma, support groups, isolation, community support, recovery journey, cognitive distortions, safe space, emotional betrayal

SPEAKERS

Vickie, Lyschel, Bonny, Pam B.

P Pam B. 00:00
Music. Hi. I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace,

L Lyschel 00:06
and I'm Michelle Burkett with hope redefined,

B Bonny 00:08
and I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us.

L Lyschel 00:15
Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. We have exciting news to remind you about our very own Bonnie Burns is taking Australia by storm and educating many about the impacts of betrayal and how to care for those that are trying to heal. So we ask that you please be praying for her as she travels and teaches over the next month. So what do we do with that third seat at the table while Bonnie is in the Down Under. Well, we've decided that we're asking others to join us and bring their stories to the table. Throughout the next few months, we're going to be introducing you to several women and possibly men who are supporting those healing from sexual betrayal. We're really excited for you to meet or maybe hear again, some of our professional friends. So today, we are going to be talking through a specific betrayal for many women, over the course of the 10 plus years that I've been walking through betrayal stories with other women, many have a story that includes same sex attraction and during discovery or disclosure women learn that their husband has been acting out with men or viewing same sex pornography. Typically, we approach our topics with a broad stroke to discuss betrayal as a whole. But today, we really wanted to sit with a friend who has walked this path and bring hope

to women who are trying to heal from their husband same sex attractions and addictions. So I'm super excited to introduce you to my friend, and I mean that with every letter of their name, friend, Vicky. TD, she is a betrayal, trauma, recovery coach, speaker and author of the book, when your husband's addicted to pornography, healing your wounded heart. Vicki has a passion for helping women navigate the pain of betrayal, particularly in relationships impacted by infidelity and pornography, and she has a particular interest in supporting women whose husbands struggle with same sex attraction. Vick and her husband Mike also work with couples ready for relationship restoration. So please welcome my friend Vicky into the third chair of our chat today.



02:25

It's great to be here. Thanks, Michelle,



Lyschel 02:27

yay. So the extra introduction I'm going to add to this is that many of you might remember or know that I have actually led support groups through Vicky's well, at one point it was a ministry, and then eventually she blessed me to go fly like a little bird out of the nest, and I continued to use the when your husband's addicted pornography as a support group material. And I have grown and just I love so much of that book, and there's so much that has been unpacked for me personally, but I've also witnessed how much it has helped other women heal, and so I love it. And Vicky and I have a very long friendship. So how long have we been friends? Vicky?



Vickie 03:14

Oh, my word. Well, at Oh, I think longer than that. I mean, I think my book came out in 2012 so going on 12 years, maybe, yeah, 1112, years, something like that. And I always say it's unsettling when you have a friend who has memorized your book and you know you said something, and then Michelle says, oh, that's on page, blah, blah, blah. That's a little creepy. But, yeah, but also I love it



Pam B. 03:43

in a good way.




Lyschel 03:45

It's fair. It is good. I'm like, Oh yeah, that wisdom was captured on pages. This is awesome. So, well, good. I'm so glad you're here. And so Pam and I, you know, I kind of talked before we hit record or the days before, was just kind of trying to figure out how to get our arms around this subject, because we know that it's large. We know that it's real. We all have walked with women who are navigating parts of this story or experience, and so we really just wanted to open up the conversation and invite you, Vicky, to be a part of it with your own story. So I'm

going to ask our first question, and we'll follow our similar format, but Vicky, we also just want to really learn from you too. So So listeners, if you happen to hear us, be really quiet, it's because we're taking it all in too. So Alright, so first question we've got today is, what are some of the fears that come up for a partner when they discover same sex attraction in their husband's story?

 04:51

Okay, well, I feel like I'm entering into sacred space here, because this is a conversation that most women who. Walking through this never talk about sometimes don't talk about it in their groups. In fact, rarely talk about it in their groups, and sometimes don't even want to bring it up with their coach or their counselor, because it just feels so conflicting and confusing and complex and all the C words, right? Like, it's just a lot. And so before I talk about the fears, can I just share a little bit about my story, so people know where I'm coming from and go for it I feel like. So I've been married twice, and in my first marriage, that marriage did not it lasted about three and a half years because my husband, I'm always hesitant to say he was gay like I'm hesitant to say that because he has not said that. And yet, every piece of data that was collected would suggest that that was true, acting out with men inviting a man on our honeymoon to meet us. You know, gay gay pornography, gay newsletters, gay chat rooms, like all of the things and and that marriage didn't last. And I I say that some, some people would just assume it didn't last because he was this or that, but honestly, it didn't last because he didn't take any responsibility. There was no remorse. There was no identifying where he was at, there was a lot of gaslighting and a lot of verbal, emotional, sexual abuse. And so because it was all denial, that just was, that just wasn't going to work, I couldn't live that way anymore. Okay, so there's that story. And so I feel like in my own life I have, I can talk about a lot of the fears and the confusion that came around that, and then three and a half years later, I married my husband, Mike, and we had a beautiful marriage to for all intents and purposes, as people would look at our marriage, they were like, This is enviable. Like, we want to be like those people, right? That's what it felt like. And I, I imagine there are listeners even who can go, Yep, that was us, too, until we had a D Day, 20 plus years into our marriage, and he was looking at men, and I my brain. I often talk about the trauma brain being like an accordion. It folded in on itself, and immediately I was back to where I was 28, years before. Who did I call Michelle right, who walked through this path before, together? And so when my brain folded up on itself. I felt like this is the same thing, and what God really showed me is it wasn't at all the same thing, and it was the difference between same sex attraction and acting on that and somebody who struggled not with attraction, but with same sex arousal. And it had to do with childhood traumas that had created a template in his brain that caused him to feel better about himself, to feel stronger and more of a man when he looked at men, because he was trying to identify with this is What a strong person looks like, Yeah,

 Lyschel 08:41

can I enter? Can I ask a question in there? Vicki, real quick. Can you just to help listeners understand what you mean by attraction versus arousal? Can you give some distinction between that?

 08:52

Yeah, that's good and, and it's something I've had to wrestle with, right? Like, attraction is a desire for a desire for that type of intimacy or sexual interaction, right? I'm trying to choose words carefully here. But a desire for that, pursuing that I want to engage with another. I'm going to speak from the role of this, being a husband doing this, right? But I want to engage with another man or have sex with arousal is different than that, in that our bodies will become aroused by things. And if that happens when you're a very, very young person and you don't understand that, you're like, Wow, well, my body reacted that way. Maybe that's what's supposed to happen. And they can see things, and they their body gets excited. They feel aroused by that. And that creates all these, you know, the dopamine hits the arousal, the all of the chemical hormones that happen when we're aroused, but it doesn't. Mean they want to have sex with a man. It doesn't mean they are gay, per se, right? So it's this arousal, in fact, and there's no like, it's not this or that. In fact, I love Mark Yar House's work, and he has a great, great book. It is called. I pulled up the title so I'd get it homosexuality in the Christian a guide for parents, pastors and friends, and I would add and spouses, because it helped me understand this spectrum, this continuum that all of us are on, right? All of us are somewhere on this continuum. So just to throw another monkey wrench into it, there are husbands who started looking at pornography, maybe at a young age, heterosexual pornography, but you don't get to wear a blinder and only see the female side of that. You're also seeing the the male partners in this pornography, and they can't unsee that. And that can also create a template as the addiction progresses. So there's a lot of nuances, and I would never say he is this or he is that. I would say there's this continuum. And what's going to help a marriage survive or thrive and have hope. Is the husband's struggle. I do say this in my book, Michelle, you can probably tell us the page number, but is the woman whose husband is in the struggle. Because most of the world is just doing it and embracing it and saying, This is all good. Isn't this wonderful? Looking at pornography, done choosing your identity. Oh, finally, figuring out who you are, and it creates a lot of confusion what I love and what I hope that at the end of our our conversation is that women see that marriages can thrive. My husband did all of the things that you would want a recovery spouse to do, right, all of the things and by, you know, meeting with coaches and doing the recovery work, but then later doing that childhood work and understanding what happened back there to create that template. Guess what? That template gets reversed. It gets changed. And so like we we do have that marriage. Now that's enviable. Is it perfect? Absolutely not. We are going to be a recovery couple for the rest of our days, until the Lord brings us home. Mm, hmm. But we embrace that. We don't go cross the finish line. We're done. Yeah, we're a continuous work in progress.

P

Pam B. 12:47

Can we just talk even broadly about, how do women respond in general, when this information comes to them? What are the range of responses? But



13:00

I think for most women, it is like an earthquake at the 10 Richter scale, like it absolutely shakes your world because you're when you're navigating the complexities of same sex attraction. First of all, most of us haven't been educated on this continuum that I just talked about, and so our brain will tell us he looked at guys. He must be black or white, right? He must be gay. Oh, my word. What does that mean for me? And we start to we start to struggle with our own identity confusion in that, how do we reconcile the fact that maybe he isn't the orientation I

thought he was, and what does that mean for me, if we've been together this full time, and then what is my role in this marriage, and will we even have a marriage like I think That's one of the big things that comes up right away. Who am I

P

Pam B. 14:07

and and we're already in that trauma space. So it's not small aftershocks, it's big aftershocks on top of already having that earthquake trauma, of just discovery, of deception, or a second life, a secret life, and then to find out what that life was comprised of. Can can take you down even further

L

Lyschel 14:36

the phrases I've heard women say, which make it feel like come to life, like I had a partner say to me one time, I know I couldn't have competed with a female porn star, but I definitely can't compete with a male porn star, right? And that just it was a. A whole different perspective on a person's processing and how she's trying to determine how to move forward right now, of course, we're never going to advocate for you to compete with anybody, because that's not possible. But for her in that season, that was a really profound statement for her to be able to say because I think what it was speaking to was her feeling of defeat, yeah, and feeling very displaced, very displaced, yeah,

P

Pam B. 15:32

so, and I imagine isolated, you're already feeling isolated. Who can I talk to? Who can I bring this to? And there again, is that extra layer of I don't even want to bring this to the people who say they deal with this all the time, because it seems so extreme and so different, but yet, actually, you're saying it's more common than we may realize.



15:58

Many women, it once they know their husband's been looking at porn, or maybe even before they knew, they'll notice that their husband notices attractive women, and it makes them uncomfortable. And then you find out, Oh, wait a minute, he's not looking at women. He's looking at men. Has he? Has he been noticing men? Do I did I miss this? How did I miss this? And if I missed this, if I didn't see for 20 years, for whatever, however, length of time, if I didn't see this, what else have I missed? I've feel like I should call my next book. You are not an idiot, because I hear women say all the time, I feel like such an idiot. I feel like such an idiot. How did I not like? This is huge. You can hide pornography, you can do a lot of things, but how did I not see this? And it shakes your world. You question everything. Is there anything that's true anymore? Is there anything that that I can anchor myself to? And of course, then I point myself and others to God's word, because I think that is our that is our grounding space, right? And then as far as isolation goes, Pam, yes, yes, yes, yes. And also, there's this huge social stigma around this. It's scary even to do a podcast on this topic, because of the social stigma, even in the church, this is controversial, even in I mean, let's not even dip our toes in the political world. And so to share with somebody that this is the struggle causes a woman to fear

judgment and rejection from family, from friends from their community, from I've talked to a partner who said, you know, their kids were devastated as the husband walked away from the marriage, and people said, Isn't it great? Isn't it great that he knows who he is now. Well, isn't it great that her entire marriage has been shattered and that she doesn't know if anything the entire time they were together was true. How do you pick up the pieces from that? Like, is it possible? Absolutely, I'm here to tell you, it's possible both end of the spectrum from someone whose marriage didn't survive, to also being that person whose marriage is thriving and growing and healing because of the work that we did, the work we do, and the work we will always continue to do,

P

Pam B. 19:03

to go back to a minute to to isolation. It might help our listeners to know how prevalent this problem really is, that they're not sitting alone in a in a minority. Percentage of women experiencing this in their betrayal. Can you share some insight on how prevalent this is? Yeah,

i

19:27

you know, I I recently heard a number from another very, very large ministry. He said that over 70% of the men participating in husband material have self identified as struggling with same sex attraction or arousal. And again, I always say both right, because this isn't men who are identifying as LGBTQ. That's another I don't know what the phrase is I want to use, but that's a whole nother issue. This is men who are struggling with same sex attraction or arousal. It is not their desire to move in that direction, but 70% 70%

P

Pam B. 20:14

that's a lot. That's a big number. So if anybody's listening to this and they think this must be only me know that you are not alone. No, that this is a far too common problem.

L

Lyschel 20:26

And I find that often, you know, running groups for as long as I have that that has been a bit of a reality. It's like you said earlier on, like we don't actually go into that level of detail with the story. So even to that point, a woman is still not feeling like she fits, even if she's in a support group for betrayal trauma and betrayed women, if she doesn't have the I don't know if it's permission, but just even the know how to share that element of her story as part of it, I see this a very similar thing for women whose husbands have been caught in pedophilia, yes, and they're like, I can never talk about this in a group, right? Like, but apart, and I know that a lot of that has to do with shame, right? And actually, it's, we've got a guest that's going to come up and a couple weeks to talk about shame, specifically about staying and going, and the nuances of our story and staying. But anyway, I just I see that that isolation, like Pam's already said, or that I don't belong here even still.

i

21:35

Oh, and Michelle, that idea of shame, I mean, that's a common theme. If anybody knew, if I told my family and friends and community what was really going on, one they don't get to go on the journey of recovery with us, and they're told this against my husband, and they're going to assume black and white. I mean, I just again, I want to just honor my husband for giving me permission to share his own you know, like this was a struggle for me, and here's why. And I'm not going to unpack his story of all the things that happened, but that's terrifying, and people can stand then in judgment of that and that. So that's a super scary thing for women to share, yeah, you get in this space with all these other women, and you hear them talking you're in a support group, and you hear them talking about, I'm so triggered when you know we drive past this place, or my husband looks at this or I know that's triggering, so please know I'm not minimizing this at all. But for the women, woman in that space whose husband has struggled with same sex, they just shrink and shrivel because they cannot, they cannot relate to that, and they they have no safe place to be able to say what's true and what's real and how that feels. And sometimes there just aren't words to describe how that feels, but to simply be in the space with other women who feel that emotion that's without words, right? Like, where I don't even know how to explain this, but I know you get it. I know you get it. And the women that I work with, very often, that's what I hear, is, thank you for just being a safe space where I say and you go, I know I'm working with women whose husbands are HIV positive. And again, that's one of those things that you know. Back when HIV was first like becoming known to us, we were clueless. There was so much fear and catastrophizing around that, and we didn't know. But as they learned more about HIV, I didn't stay up to speed on that. Right, right? Yeah, I don't know these things. And I would put money on the fact that most women don't. So if that's your reality, oh my goodness, he's looking at men. Ooh, quick jump to, he must be gay. Oh, quick jump to, he must have HIV. Or what if he does? And then what if I can't even touch him? What if I can't, like crazy, like it's, it's beyond what our brains can handle in that moment. Are those things? True? No, not necessarily, right? Like, we don't know all the things, but those are the kinds of things that a partner, whose spouse is somewhere on that continuum, their brain is going to jump there. And so we have to work on regulation. Let's get regulated so we can start telling ourselves the truth and our brain doesn't run away with us, and we can start to say, what do I know this true? Sounds like I need to get some education and information about some of these things.

L

Lyschel 24:56

The next question is, does recovery look different for women whose stories. Involve same sex addiction. And now that I've said it, I read it out loud again, I thought, Man, I'm really kind of mad that. That's the way I phrased that question. And the reason is, is because when I listen to you share the experience of being in group, Vicky, the first thing that started rolling through my brain is isolation and division is 100% a scheme of the enemy, and he will consistently whisper the phrase, you don't fit here, because, goodness gracious, if you did what happens, right? Suddenly you start to move to a place of healing. And so I do, when we're doing groups with hope, redefine it's one of the things I do try to stress over and over again, is do not compare your story. It will actually not get you very far at all. Yes, you're looking for people to have relatability, but don't take yourself out because you didn't find someone who was a carbon copy, right? It's just not going to happen. Everyone has different nuances, but I am curious if there are different nuances for a woman who is trying to recover and heal, if there is same sex addiction in her story.



26:12

You know, this is a challenging one, but I think it's very real, so we'll just dive there. I think one of the challenges is finding a coach or a counselor. Excuse me, who isn't, doesn't have biases, have biases, and isn't embracing the way of the world. If you have a therapist who's going to say, Oh, isn't it great? That's not going to be helpful, right? You need someone who doesn't sell. Put the celebration of somebody's Oh, that's out of the dark now, right? Like now at least we know that let's celebrate that over the trauma of the betrayal. And I wish it was very simple that we could say, oh, all Christian counselors are going to do this. No, all betrayal trauma coaches are going to do this. No, we have to be mindful and careful and and we're already in a space. And I say we again, because I've been this woman, but we're already in a space where we mistrust ourself. How do we trust people and and if we get into a recovery situation where someone's just making this about the identity or and again, maybe not the identity, but making this about the same sex attraction or arousal, and not paying attention to the trauma of the betrayal. And it's not just the betrayal of either acting out or attract being attracted to or looking at or masturbating to, or all of those things, right? But it's also the betrayal of keeping that level of struggle, that orientation or that same sex piece of this like I thought for sure you were only on a heterosexual spectrum, but if there's another spectrum, keeping that, that's another betrayal. So you have to have support that makes this about your betrayal, all the betrayals, recovery, emotional betrayal, sexual betrayal, like the whole the whole gamut. I think that that is challenging. But yeah,



Lyschel 28:41

what I hear you saying is, like, the awareness of care and what type of care you're seeking out, and like, really extending a level of awareness, but also caution around working with individuals who come from a worldview mindset, right? However, what you're also bringing into this is the understanding that many Christian organizations are very much embracing lifestyles that maybe for you is not okay, right, and is not the I'm not, you know, like I could hear a woman say, I'm not okay with him living two, two sexual lifestyles. That's not okay with me. I do remember having a gentleman who had identified as bisexual and his wife said, Well, you're just going to have to accept me, because this is my identity, this is how I identify. And after weeks of coaching, she came to a place of saying, Why do I have to accept that? And I thought it's a powerful question for her to ask herself, why do you have to accept it? Now, of course, there was, you know, we all could unpack that answer for her, for you know, children. In relationship, etc, but he had, but he very much had counseling that was advocating for his sexual preferences, right? And she was so lost and felt so like a whirlwind because of her faith and belief system going, I don't know that that's true. Yeah, so I hear you extending that caution of really helping individuals know that they're allowed to seek out people who do not accept this as an answer, right, that they do not accept this the sexual preference as like you said, use the word celebration and as an identity that it's okay to do that.



30:47

And to complicate it further, let's flip that coin, because a church, while some churches are embracing this, another church is going to be equally black and white and say exactly the the woman's fear, right? Oh, if he has same sex arousal, he must be gay, and so he's out, right? He's out. And we're not going to, we're, you know, we're not going to walk on with this couple on this journey, because there is a fear that, you know, like, again, I think churches are very

black and white. They are affirming, or they are not. And this isn't about affirming LGBTQ. It's not about any of that. It's about meeting that couple where they are and being on the journey with them another

P

Pam B. 31:42

layer of loss on top of several losses. And so what I hope that our listeners are hearing is permission to seek out different support, to go shopping, it's okay. You're not abandoning Jesus. You're not abandoning your faith if you seek out other faith based resources that will deal with what you're really struggling with, what's with, what's yours to manage without. We don't need to talk about what the behaviors were from the from the betraying partner, whether it's financial betrayal. I mean, you know, I know one woman who found out her husband had been involved in organized crime and hid it from her a huge Syndic crime syndicate. That's sin, right? We look at that as sin, and that's dangerous, and that's shocking, too, right? That what he could have been involved in it. It really doesn't matter the specifics and the details of what her partner was doing in the betrayal and the dangerous behavior. We want to meet her where her heart is and where her safety is, and help her make sense of what that need. Help her remember who she is in this that his behavior doesn't change who she is.

P

33:17

That's exactly right. I think, recovery wise, there's a whole lot more that is the same. For the same the same things that a woman whose husband looks at heterosexual pornography or acts out in that way as those whose husbands struggle with same sex attraction or arousal, the recovery is mostly the same. Doing it, there may be more of a tendency to isolate because of concepts, and I maybe have contributed to that fear like, Oh, you're never going to find anybody that is not true. There are lots of people out there who can and are stand ready to help ourselves included, and you need to to lean in.

L

Lyschel 34:00

Yeah. I I really want to stress something. I think you said that was so important there, Vicki is, I can't tell you how long I spent trying to take us to the next level by myself, right? And so I heard you say that, and I grabbed onto an immediate like, yes, because I'm, you know, my personality, I'm a fighter, I'm a we're going to excel, we're going to achieve, and that's not actually possible without both. And so I just want to and and, and I don't want to say that so that listeners go, oh, well, if he's not there, then we're never going to get better. It's not necessarily that, that there, there is that individual aspect of healing and recovery before you can turn and give your full buy in to the to the relationship. And it's not a it's not necessarily that it's a particular amount of time. We're not like, oh, it takes four years before. You guys can start couples work, but I think that's such an important key indicator, and also just a self awareness for women who are trying to get there, because we all want to get to the other we all want to get to the other side, right so badly we want to get to the other side, and so we'll try and rush it. We'll try and rush to get to the other side, because it's gotta be better than where I am now. Mm, hmm, and understanding that it is a process



35:29

well, and we're trying to get to the top of the mountain, right? It's like pushing a wet noodle up the top of the mountain. Like, imagine trying to push a wet noodle up a mountain. Like it's just not gonna happen. It's not how big is this noodle? I need to I need a very, sometimes 150 200 pound noodle. There's not a willingness, and it just keeps sliding down and they're not right, like that's doesn't work. I think for us, we we had to stay in our own lane of recovery at first, right? Like Yeah. Knew we were aiming for the top of the mountain. We knew what God was calling us to. We knew what we desired things to look like. We had to trust our tribe, and we built an army. It's It's hilarious, even as we're doing this. Call my little pink army. That's what we call my support group. They're texting me, going, I'm praying for you. Like that's part of our army, and that's the beauty of community, which I know we're going to talk about too. But you have to build that army, and you have to trust that your army, your counselors, your coaches, your community, your whatever that looks like, your army's going to support you while you heal enough to start doing the work together. But we can't start by doing the work together. We're going to the same place, and I'll meet you there. How you doing on your work over there? I'm doing great. I made progress today. Was really hard. I slid back, like all of those things, but we're aiming for the same place. And this is when I say that, hey, I'm doing great, but today was really hard, and I slipped back. I'm talking about me. I'm not talking about a relapse or a slip. I mean, that could be true too, but I'm talking about there were days when I felt like, Okay, I'm feeling better. I'm really trusting God, like we've had worship music blast in here all the time, and and some people do that all the time, but not me. Like, I don't like noise. I like things quiet. I think once my children launched, I was like, I love a quiet house, right? So for me to have music, worship music, playing all the time, was a big deal. That, being said, I could be doing really, really well. And something happened. I remembered something. I connected a dot. I went, Oh, wait. Or the enemy whispered something in my ear. You're never going to be as desired by him as some full lie like that that would cause me to lose ground, and so I'd have to get you know a think of climbing a mountain and hitting loose gravel and sliding backwards, and your feet are just like trying to find level ground again. And I would need to find that space, and often it was my army, it was my coach or my counselor or my support group saying you're okay. I've got you I've got you breathe and helping me regulate so that I could start to climb again, and that's okay. And sometimes I wasn't climbing, sometimes I was just standing on a ledge, standing on ledge, getting feeling secure again.



Pam B. 38:48

I often say it's just sort of human nature that when you have all these other inputs from the world, like these other voices that are saying of the world, Oh, it's okay. And you know, just accept who people are as they are and all these and maybe even your partner who's not in recovery, saying sharing cognitive distortions or something, you need seven other people surrounding you with a different message. Because if I tell you the sky is purple seven times. The first time I say it, you're going to go, what? That's crazy, but I bet by the seventh time I say it, you walk outside, you're going to look up and check because that's how the brain works. And so with the enemy out there and culture and the world and other unhealthy voices that can surround us, we need a group of people constantly speaking into us, speaking over our lives, and reminding us that we're not alone, and it's it's so important to have that input coming into our brains.



Lyschel 39:57



So we're going to pause here for today. And we're actually going to make a second episode where we're going to unpack what it means to have community in this journey, and how do we get to walk alongside others, or have others walk alongside us? So please tune back in for Episode Two, part two with Vicky. TD, you