

EP_68 part_1_insensitive_friends_and_family

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SPEAKERS

Pam B., Bonny, Lyschel

P Pam B. 00:03
Hi. I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace,

L Lyschel 00:06
and I'm Michelle Burke with hope redefine, and I'm

B Bonny 00:09
Bonnie burns of strong wives. We're so glad you're joining us. Welcome to another episode of hope for wives today we are exploring how to navigate when friends or family are unintentionally insensitive to the complexity of the pain involved in our betrayal from sex addiction. I think we got we can probably all think back to episodes in our lives when someone has said something that was hurtful when we've shared something intimate. So that's what we're going to discuss today, and I'm just going to open the questions up to you, Pam and Michelle, what are some experiences either you or your clients have shared regarding insensitive friends and family?

P Pam B. 00:56
Oh, personally, I've experienced the spectrum from Oh, just kick him to the curb. You can come to live with me. Pack all your bags. I'll get I know a really good divorce lawyer too. Well. You know, you have put on a few pounds. Pam, and you know, maybe you just need to spice it up in the bedroom. And you know, all all guys typically do this, and just so tone deaf, just so painful to experience that kind of response. I



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Lyschel 01:38

experienced a lot of what I would title is minimization now and that it wasn't that big a deal. Or I would bring back up the pain that I was still navigating after it, just after relapses and having some family that were just like, Oh, we're still talking about this. So I had a particular client group member who they were newly married, and the husband was in seminary school, and this was a very clear issue of pornography use in their relationship. And she sought out her family, trying to ask for support, and she was met with, do not tell anybody, because it will ruin his career. Right? He was headed into pastoral care, and it was a we don't need to tell people about this. By the time he becomes a pastor, this will be long gone in the past, and so is these unintentionally insensitive but also just really flawed responses begin to silence us in the throes of our pain and not sure what to do with it, because we're going to these people for validation, right? It's part of what we do in our human nature is to go towards others to be like, tell me I'm not crazy. Make sure this is right. Like, I'm not trusting myself right now. I need help from other people. And then we're experiencing these situations or interactions where they're telling us things, and we're we're buying into it, I mean, and she really believed it, she she did not speak that out to anyone, and did not. Was like when she finally hit her breaking point, which was after multiple relapses, was when she joined a group and then she shared. It took me years to join a group because I was joining his career. Yeah,

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Bonny 03:36

for my I agree. I had the same experiences as you, Lachelle and Pam, I was told to look at myself, what's my part in this? And are the from the verse the first D Day My part was and I wrongly accepted the blame. And I know I've talked about this before, but was that I was not showing up in the bedroom. So if you show up, you will affair proof your marriage, which is wrong, but that that became my life's work for a while, figuring out my low libido, which I found out, I found it, and it empowered me to understand even more about this sex addiction. It's not about me, but the other thing too that I did experience, what were friends who were just incapable of sitting in the pain? Yes, they didn't actually say the wrong things. They changed the subject immediately. But that was very devastating to me, because these were friends that had been my friends for a long time, and they were actually kind of aware. So this would have been my last D Day, the most recent one. So these friends were kind of aware of what had happened through the years, but the subject was immediately changed, and while that greatly hurt in the moment, I. Was able to see the lack of capacity really had nothing to do with me, but, but it did hurt that I was I felt very uncared for.

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Lyschel 05:13

So, yeah, I think you speak to something that is also really important. I very much experienced people around me who knew what was going on, and they said nothing. So it was like I walked into this space with this ginormous elephant with me, and it, you know, I I don't know what I expect. I didn't necessarily expect them to let me, like discuss the elephant, but it was just the fact that it was just never even addressed, right? And, um, yeah, this is very difficult, because silence is loud. It can be very loud.

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Bonny 05:55

So Lyschel, why is this kind of thing so uncomfortable?

So ladies, why is this kind of thing so uncomfortable?

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Pam B. 06:00

For me, it was I felt even more invisible. I felt invisible because of my husband's addiction and behaviors, and I was reaching out for help. I was reaching out for a lifeline, for support. Really, in hindsight, I can see people were so uncomfortable with the topic that they wanted to fix me. They just wanted to move me right into the solution so that they didn't have to feel their discomfort and so my pain, my emotions, were minimized. I felt invisible. I felt judged, embarrassed, guilt, um, I had one friend tell me, after telling her I was staying in the relationship, she said to me, I just wish you had more respect for yourself. If I translate the story I tell myself is that she thought if I had a higher level of respect, I would just exit that was and here's where, if I can sort of backtrack for a minute, my background is in two areas, marketing and Adult Education, and you learn about the power of story. And so when I was going out and telling my entire story to people, what happens is, when you hear someone else's story, subconsciously, even you insert yourself into that person's story. And that can be very powerful. So people I know now were inserting themselves into my story and saying, Well, what would I do? Here's what if I were in that situation, here's how I would look at it, here's what I would do. And that was giving them, I suppose, some measure of comfort or a way to escape the painful feelings. But what was happening is they were taken away my reality. My reality was the depths of pain, the depths of isolation. I already was judging myself. I was already embarrassed. I already felt guilty for not knowing, guilty for staying. Did I? Did I have a hand in it? I was at that place where I didn't know, and so I felt invisible. I was confused by their responses.

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Bonny 08:31

I think it was so uncomfortable for me, especially that last D Day and subjects being changed or silence altogether is that I couldn't be authentic. I had to put on the happy face. And that was that was almost as painful as the betrayal itself, because now I've got this super high value for authenticity. My BS meter is very accurate, and not being able to be myself, it was just painful on many levels.

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Pam B. 09:13

Would you say that was kind of a self betrayal too?

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Bonny 09:17

Yes, yeah, absolutely, having

P

Pam B. 09:20

to put that face on, yeah, been there

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Bonny 09:29

to backtrack a little bit to experiences women have had around insensitive friends. I do have a story from a client that they they worked at a non profit, volunteering, and it had a large female staff. And there were a couple in there that they were closest with so of these, these closest friends that she had, she shared what was going on and the insensitivity came from these. Women not respecting physical distance boundaries with the husband to help my client feel safe. So it was like they it just went in one ear and out the other. They didn't. They just had no concept of keeping her safe through their actions.

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Lyschel 10:22

When you ask the question, why is this kind of situation so uncomfortable? The word uncomfortable felt like it kind of got stuck in my brain as I was trying to think about an answer, because it's like, why is this kind of situation so dangerous? Why is this kind of situation so heartbreaking? Those were things that kind of started rolling around for me as alternative words to uncomfortable. And the answer to that is a lot of what you both have already spoken to, which is that loss of being honest, that authenticity and and US gaslighting ourselves and betraying ourselves like that's what makes this so dangerous and so difficult and and what I've seen much like I was sharing with the client whose husband was going into seminary, and She was encouraged not to share. You watch women navigate a world without their own healing, and it it has such long term effects on them because they've been met with insensitivity. I have walked with women who the words that were said to them is much like you said, Bonnie, is you better show up in the bedroom and they you know, I that was even said to me at one point. I had a a woman who was same age as I was. It wasn't like she was older, but same age. I had just had our fourth baby, and she had asked about whether or not we were having sex, because, you know, you just had a baby. And I was like, This doesn't have anything. I had enough know how, or know with how at that point to go, this has nothing to do with having a baby, but also recognizing that even though I could say it in the moment, this has nothing to do about having a baby, I still walked away from there being like, or does it right? Or does it like, is there? Is there something I can do to fix this? And that's a part of where I think this, the unintentional insensitivity into sensitivity comes from like. That's some of the danger is that it puts a lot of responsibility back on us. And how do we fix it? How do you control it? And that's usually having friends around her who just wanted to fix her or fix the situation, so they just try to give you a solution. And this is what we've come to understand. Is this the this is people walking through the world without the ability to hold space for other people, right? And being able to say, I hear you, I see you. This is that's has to be so painful, etc, and validating, versus saying, Go have more sex, that surely that will do it. But what it does is it's perpetuating all of these really unhealthy behaviors. Because you know that that friend had, I had, I walked away from that and been like, Yeah, I'm supposed to be more available to my husband sexually. And that didn't fix it, right? Because it was never about sex. So then I'm going to continue to live in a place of over functioning and striving for something that is not accurate and it's not healthy. I was still trying to fix the situation so.

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Bonny 13:52

So we're going to work towards Wrapping this one up, and in our next episode, we are going to talk about practical tips and tools to help you navigate insensitive friends. But before we go, we do want to leave you with some hope. So what can we offer our listeners today? Pam and

do want to leave you with some hope. So what can we offer our listeners today: Pam and Michelle,

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Lyschel 14:12

well, the hope I would leave is that we see you. We've walked those steps too. We've experienced those things, either we or others we're close to have shared the reality of these situations, these statements that have been made, or ways that you've been handled. And there's just something so powerful about bearing witness to another person's experience in a healthy in a safe way. And so my hope would be is that you continue to pursue community that's going to get it, that is going to help you see this and meet you with sensitivity and help you move into a place that allows you to sit in your own truth and doesn't try to make you move faster than you need to. So and leads you to a place that heals.

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Pam B. 15:09

I just want to echo what you just said, Lachelle, that getting in with the people who are educated, who are experienced, who do understand the depths and the lay multiple layers beyond just the surface level of what other people see. Other people don't, don't generally get education on these topics. They don't go out and learn what this is about. We do and to get with the people who who do understand and have the education and training is so, so powerful, and the hope that I would leave is in your own recovery and education, and we're going to help you with that. We can provide you with some tools and framework to approach family and friends in a way that is safe for you and to get what you do need from those people.

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Bonny 16:10

Yeah, the hope I would leave is if you are surrounded with people who lack understanding, yes, find a group like I just want to echo what Michelle said, and in addition, perhaps pray about God bringing you that one friend that is in your life who does have the capacity to hold space for your for your pain, and to sit with you without trying to fix it or trying to point out your flaws. Chances are you do have one friend in your world that you've been burned so much it feels dangerous to try one more time. Yeah. So hi, yeah, just pray that God shines a spotlight on who she is, or perhaps she'll call you and go, Hey, I just get the sense that something's really up. God can God can convict people, and God can show you. So what the hope I'd offer is prayer. Well, that's it for our segment on insensitive friends and family when it comes to your betrayal, and like I mentioned, our next episode, we're going to give you some practical tips and tools. If you would like to learn more about Lachelle, Pam and Bonnie, you can find us at our specific niches. Lachelle runs a non profit called Hope redefined. And that's hope redefined.org. And Pam is at recovered peace.com. I am strong lives com, and if you'd like to learn more about us and why we do what we do, you can check out those websites and also our offerings, yeah, so we'll say goodbye for Now, and we'll talk with you again next week. Bye.