

Ditching Invulnerability: Embracing Our Most Authentic Selves (219) - Transcripts

Ann (00:01.794)

Hey everybody, welcome back to Therapist Uncensored. I'm Ann Kelly.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (00:05.757)

I am Sue Marriott, and we are super happy that you hit play and that you're joining us today. Before we get going, we've got a great episode for you today, as always, right? Wanted to do a quick shout out to our online community. We are in a mode of listening, and we sent out a survey, and we just really are soliciting your thoughts and your ideas. We are building our community and we are building programming for our online community. And this is a one, it's a great time to join, therapistsuncensored.com backslash join. But also if you are already a part of it, look for the survey and, or just let us know, send us an email. You can also email Lara at therapistuncensored.com. It's L A R A at therapistsuncensored.com. So please uncensored yourself, speak up. This is a great time. We've got kind of a blank slate. We've got lots of good ideas that might be happening. So we want to hear from you and what you would like to see. All right, Ann, let's do it.

Ann (01:07.01)

All right, great. Let's talk about invulnerability today. We did a recent episode with Liz Plank talking about the Barbie movie. And in there, we talked about toxic masculinity. Well, but part of that conversation we mentioned, and you and I have really been turning more to the concept of toxic invulnerability.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (01:26.347)

Yeah, we got hassled for that a little bit, didn't we?

Ann (01:36.718)

And I wanna dive more deeply into that because let's move it out of a gender issue. We wanna join, this isn't all about masculinity on any level, right? It's kind of a cultural phenomena in a way that is promoting in so many different ways invulnerability in us as humans.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (01:59.801)

Right, it's not about gender and it's also not about just kind of the old kind of trope of the avoidant personality or something like that. We want to talk about it in a more nuanced way for sure.

Ann (02:08.886)

Right. And this isn't new, right? It's very hip to talk about vulnerability and how important it is. And thank you, Brené Brown, you know, for that. We've said it multiples times how important it is and how happy we are, that it's become more of an important topic out there.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (02:22.973)

Right. It's kind of a brand. Can I just say a little bit more about that? I always think of her herding cats and that what she's speaking of is so deeply, deeply true around two things, moving towards vulnerability for all the reasons that her research shows to do that. And then also addressing shame, which stops us from moving towards vulnerability. And I think she's been a real champion at that.

Ann (02:50.072)

Yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (03:05.485)

One thing that I feel like that some of this work adds to that work is some of the unconscious processes that prevent us from doing that. So it actually, it feels like it's related, but also, I don't know, it feels like it can extend that work. There's wonderful workbooks and study groups and things like that on the Brené Brown work. I hope that this can just kind of continue that.

Ann (03:35.39)

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No, that's a really good point. And it's harder to really dive into that shame and recognize it and to recognize our own blocks to vulnerability than we think, right? Like it's not, there's so much unconsciousness to it and there's so much promoted in our society that activates us.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (03:54.377)

Well, we think that we are good at it, I think. It's very easy for us to talk about other people's invulnerability, but we don't even - let's see, let's try to think of real world. We don't think that person's being invulnerable, or defended, or stubborn. And go ahead, as you're listening, go ahead and fill in what your words are.

Ann (04:08.214)

Right, we say that person's being obnoxious or a know-it-all and let's try - can we substitute those words for invulnerability? I'm not quite sure.

Ann (04:33.79)

Yeah, what represents invulnerability because sometimes the more obvious signs of invulnerability that we've even talked about on the podcast or having a difficult time expressing your emotions, difficult time asking for help, kind of being in that uber independent place. But there's other ways of invulnerability, right? There's the idea that we can't set a boundary, right? That actually there's a lot of subtle signs of invulnerability. If I set a boundary, with somebody and they reject me or if they go away and I can't tolerate that vulnerability, we develop patterns around blocking our vulnerability that we don't even know we have.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (05:14.697)

So wait, so you're saying if you have difficulty setting boundaries, because you're worried about the other person's reaction, and so then you're fuzzy with your boundaries, that that's a version of invulnerability because it's more vulnerable to set the boundary than it is to not set the boundary and be blurry. That's interesting. Okay, but wait, let's study that for a second, can we?

Ann (05:42.174)

Okay, let's do it.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (05:43.969)

Because I'm thinking about like, okay, let's say I get defensive. Is me being defensive, not that I ever do. Let's be clear. But let's say I get defensive, theoretically. Does that mean I'm being invulnerable?

Ann (06:01.774)

I think that's a great question. I don't think it's that black and white.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (06:03.809)

Because I don't think it does. As a matter of fact, it means that I'm probably feeling vulnerable.

Ann (06:10.386)

Yeah, but I think the concept of letting yourself feel vulnerable is different than, you know, I think that's the struggle, right? It's whether we allow ourselves to feel the vulnerability, right? If you get really defensive, I agree with you. All right, so I'll acknowledge that I get defensive sometimes, every once in a while. But in our defensiveness, it's likely that we're

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (06:20.03)

I think you're totally right.

Ann (06:39.71)

it becomes intolerable to feel it. And so we can pop into our defended self to say, well, that's not actually true without actually acknowledging the vulnerability of what if it is, or even if it is, right? Then...

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Ann (09:20.254)

Right, where we get stuck in like more entrenched patterns of invulnerability that then become more of our way of life and often unconscious. Brené Brownhoff talks about perfectionism, right? You don't think about perfectionism as being around invulnerability, but it is if I have to be perfect and really good at what I do, and that can look wonderful to everyone around you because you're so good at it, right? Whatever that is. But when it becomes a threat,

to not be in a perfectionistic state, right? When we don't recognize that, I think that we're in a defensive posture, that our nervous system is running in a defensive posture, then that's where it can become toxic. It becomes, I guess it like, we can be even literal when we talk about toxic to our body, right? Like our body knows, we talk about this a lot, right? Our body knows that we need one another, that we're interconnected. And so,

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (10:14.937)

Yeah, that's part of why it scares us so badly to be disconnected. And to be close, both. It's terrifying. People are scary. Let's be honest. We don't need it. We don't need Halloween.

Ann (10:18.702)

That's very true. And so... Ah! You scare me. Oh my gosh. Well, I guess when we talk about it related to masculinity, that's really the concept. People often mistake the concept of toxic masculinity as we're saying that to be masculine is toxic or men are toxic and it's the opposite of that, right? It's like...

the promotion of men need to be strong and that society for a long time says they shouldn't have any weakness and that they should be uber independent. They should be the Clint Eastwoods of I don't need anybody. And specifically it's toxic for their body because our body is smarter. Our body and brain are smarter than our, than our, I guess, cultural learnings and we know we need each other. So.

How it becomes toxic is that if I cut off that awareness, my body still knows I need other people. And so instead we stay in a kind of chronic state of threat underneath the surface, our body does.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (11:25.097)

Mm-hmm. Yeah, so another way it becomes toxic is so people that are raised as boys and men, especially those that are raised with more traditional gender roles are more likely, one, like you're saying, to internalize some of this, these different power differences, but also they're more likely to be in physical fights with one another, with men, other men.

and also to engage in physical violence with women or people who identify as women. So it's, when you talk about toxicity, it's like literally toxic.

Ann (12:05.13)

Right, it's literally toxic for them individually, for their relationships, and then of course then as, and we, you know, and so it's, I think it's such a caring thing to talk about toxic masculinity is the opposite of what it sounds. But I do think that it's important, we both have agreed to this, like we wanna get it out of the gender dialogue because it ends up hiding the really robust, important aspects of it when we say masculinity, it's toxic and vulnerability. Oh, it does, yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (12:08.369)

relationally and culturally.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (12:30.237)

Well, it sounds blaming too, right? That toxic invulnerability hurts men as much as it hurts women. And it disempowers them. It entraps them as much as it does women. So right, getting gender out of this idea of you're either on the bus of working towards mutuality and relationality, or you aren't. And you're

Ann (12:38.592)

Absolutely.

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Ann (12:43.438)
Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (12:59.693)
armored up and you're on the armored, what are those called? The tank, the Hummer, that's what I was thinking. You're on the Hummer of self-protection and the invulnerability.

Ann (13:09.658)
Mm-hmm.

Ann (13:14.85)
Right.

Ann (13:19.547)
Mm-hmm. That's a great way to say it. And.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (13:21.145)
and it doesn't matter your gender, it doesn't matter your political orientation, it doesn't matter your age, it's more about that stance than it is about any of those other groupings. Is that what you're kind of?

Ann (13:32.594)
Exactly, exactly. And we want to broaden it because it's not just men that are getting this message. I think that's a really core important point. In fact, you could think with all the dialogue around how important vulnerability would be and to not send that message, that would be an easy, you know, an easier adjustment, right? That happens for all of us, right? We learn something's unhealthy for us and we stop doing it, all of us, right? So...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (13:56.522)
No. Ehh.

Ann (13:57.226)
Obviously not. And as a society, neither do we do. But you know, we're also, if we think about the culture that is current, right? The force of social media, I think of that. The force of news and politicians and how there is still such a deep embedded sense of keeping us in a state of fear around vulnerability. If we are vulnerable, we're gonna be taken advantage of.

we have people who promote kind of laughing at one another. Politicians will laugh at other politicians' weaknesses. And we're sending that as a message to our culture that that's okay, right? And we solidify that. I really think about the impact of social media though, right? And I wanna dive into a little bit of that in terms of how much social media emphasizes our present presentation and how we come across, how we should come across.

and how we can perfect our image by working on it over and over and over again to be able to send out to say, this is who I am.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (15:06.217)
So say more, what are you getting at there?

Ann (15:08.909)
Well.

Ann (15:13.198)
I think probably everybody's had this experience of watching, it's not just the younger population, I think it's grown dramatically, but like ending up taking picture after picture after picture of themselves to get just the right one, right, and to put out on social media. And we could see that as about that individual and about it being sort of painful that they need that perfect image. But if you stop to think about what social media represents, it is to capture

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that sense of the best look of the most seductive, this is who I am, and how much that impacts that individual and everybody that gets those image and the pressure that it puts. There's a lot of pressure on individuals, especially our young individuals, to present themselves in a way that's almost invulnerable.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (16:06.841)

Okay, so story, story time. Is that okay? And first I want to say how much I'm on the Beyoncé boat and how much I'm a huge fan, such a huge fan that, you know, we schlepped to Houston and saw the concert and loved it, all those things. But this was an important like journey that I took.

Ann (16:10.567)

Okay, let's do it. Yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (16:35.869)

So we got there, there were tons of people and there was a lot of folks that were doing the thing where you are holding the phone out and taking 30 pictures. And I guess we're a little bit out of touch, so that was a little bit, we noticed it. And the people sitting in front of us are taking the pictures of themselves as we're waiting. But then the concert starts and they're continuing to take pictures of themselves or video themselves watching the concert.

Ann (16:53.447)

Uh huh.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (17:06.385)

So tracking all this, this is interesting. It's not judgment, it's more of like, kind of like what you're saying, like what does this mean, what's happening? Then I noticed in the concert that it almost was like I was listening to an album. It was so produced. And then I thought, do you remember the big screens, right? The screens, it was the most amazing video production that was going on above. So much so that your eyes were constantly on the screen. You hardly...

Ann (17:25.562)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (17:30.861)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (17:36.413)

you know, you couldn't hardly see the dancers and stuff. So your eyes would pop up to the screen. And I think you and I both said this, that we found ourselves sort of watching the screen, even when we wanted to look down and watch the actual concert. And so then I noticed that she's, as she's singing and dancing and being her amazing, incredible self, that she's also sort of playing to the video because the video is projecting so that all of us can see her. So then I'm thinking of all these people

Ann (18:03.239)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (18:06.229)

I mean, she's a goddess to these young women. But you see what I mean? It was like this echo of echo of echo. And it was very, I didn't know what to make of it, but it's just sort of, that's the story that popped to mind about this. I don't know. So how does that relate to toxic and vulnerability, I guess? Like, help me make sense of that.

Ann (18:08.547)

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm. Yeah.

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Mm-hmm.

Ann (18:27.074)

Well, if we think about it first just as invulnerable, and we'll leave the word toxic aside for just a second, right, it feels like the image, and I left with the same feeling, is that the image of what was happening, the capturing it for the future in such an amazingly perfect way, ended up being sort of the priority. So the connection to the audience, we left feeling like, wait, I missed feeling the connection, right?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (18:31.653)

Yeah, that's good. That's good.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (18:55.649)

And you're totally right, because as we walked out, I did notice, like sometimes when you leave a concert, you're just like, pumped up, and you're like, and you're high fiving all the strangers around you. And you're just like talking, you're processing it. And I did notice as we walked out, it was like everybody was quiet. And

Nobody, it wasn't bad. Nobody, everybody would have said it was a great concert and they did and it was a great concert. But there was something like, I think we all left with an admiration for this beautiful, talented woman, but not necessarily feeling close to her or that we knew her. I did, I felt like I knew her less. And she was in her hometown, Houston, Texas. I felt like I knew her less after the show.

Ann (19:17.002)

It was a great concert. It was.

Ann (19:27.264)

Yes.

Ann (19:31.787)

Right.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (19:39.293)

than I did before the show. And then I felt less connected to myself like that. I wanted to be fan girl, you know what I mean? I wanted to be like screaming. Ah! I am, and I, yes.

Ann (19:45.926)

Yeah. Cause you are a fan girl. You know what's so funny? Let's bring it into the active moment of vulnerability right now. So as we're talking about it, we are talking to an audience probably of a lot of people who love Beyonce, maybe and who were at that concert, cause there were so many people at that concert. And I'm like, imagine feeling the vulnerability of the responses we're gonna get in saying anything negative about that concert, right? And so.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (19:54.662)

Okay, good.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (20:11.358)

It's true.

Ann (20:12.274)

Right, and we probably will. It's okay, we're open to that. Yeah, but it's so true.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (20:15.081)

We love her, is that not clear? Love, love. Hey, as middle aged, as sassy middle aged people, I'm calling us middle aged, as sassy middle aged women, we go to these rock concerts, we are cool. We love Beyonce. Okay, I'm defending myself. See, I'm defending myself. I was getting activated.

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Ann (20:22.668)
I'm gonna go.

Ann (20:34.594)
Okay, right? Well, I mean, but I, right, but I could feel my, and I think this is what we all experience. This isn't those people over there experiencing the impact of social media. This is us. We all experience it. We're with you. Yes, right?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (20:50.497)
Oh, right, so you were anticipating getting negative review or negative message, right? Well, and then you just saying it, then I was defending myself.

Ann (20:57.846)
Right, so this is the live action of invulnerability, right? This is how social media impacts all of us. Like, okay, so we are gonna be our authentic self. This is therapist uncensored. So we are gonna just talk about this and really kind of be in the muck with everybody, right? That's what we want. But in doing so, we can feel our own vulnerability of, oh, because in social media, one of the things, well, just social, there's, I think the...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (21:00.473)
Exactly. That's true.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (21:22.642)
It's immediate.

Ann (21:23.922)
Right, the things that really can impact us besides just, okay, here's our image going out, it needs to be perfected, it kind of lives, is that because it's non-relational, right, we're not having a direct relationship with the individuals. We can do all sorts of things that can be about social rejection, which is dangerous for our bodies, right? Like I get that if people unfollow us, that's not actually literally dangerous to us, right?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (21:52.794)
Well, but it can hurt. Well, it particularly hurts if they tell us that they're unfollowing. You know, if you're going to unfollow, just unfollow. But if you have to announce that you're unfollowing, it's like getting the finger as you're driving or something. It's like, it's okay if we're...

Ann (21:54.07)
but it can hurt.

Ann (21:58.966)
Ha ha!

Ann (22:04.495)
As you're at the door. But the experience of knowing that you can get an immediate, quick judgment, critique and rejection and cut off, right? Like the cut off from social media is so easy and our ability to judge one another on social media is so easy because you know, what's judgment about, right? Judgment is an activation inside of us that's often is about self-protection, right? Like I don't like...

the part of me you're bringing out. So I'm going to judge you even more harshly so I don't have to feel it. I'm oversimplifying it, but I just was like thinking, oh my gosh, like every time we are out there in any public forum, we are open to rejection. Well, that's exactly what 20 year olds feel, right?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (22:55.741)
That's right. That's really empathic. I really like what you're saying.

Ann (22:59.178)

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Right, like how many likes, and the vulnerability of that. And it's there, don't get me wrong, there's a lot of positive about social media. This isn't an anti-social media podcast.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (23:09.017)

No, I don't think it's coming across that way at all. I think that that's right. And stop me if this takes us off, but like I was thinking when you were saying, it's not, you're not in relationship that there's that new neuroscience article about even Zoom when you're Zooming with someone, even if it's a one-on-one thing that the social emotional parts of your brain don't light up in the same way as it does when you light up.

Ann (23:22.434)

Right.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (23:37.461)

when you are live, when you're sharing molecules. That's not really a surprise, but social media is, you know, removed even from, I mean, much removed even from that because, yeah, I mean, even just the image of the camera turned towards oneself for an audience, for an unknown audience that is ready to like, not like, to, you know, and you're ready to count the likes and, oh, it just, it's just, oh, it makes me cringe.

Ann (23:42.281)

Right.

Ann (23:53.064)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (23:57.159)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (24:04.049)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (24:06.909)

It's painful. It's vulnerable.

Ann (24:07.25)

And it is so important, and where I think it becomes toxic for our culture is if we don't have our own awareness of it, our own ability to ground ourselves, like you were saying, without the social emotional, full social emotional capacity inside our brain being activated, then we don't have that part of us that it can be compassionate and connecting and understanding of the other person.

And instead we can quickly cut and not actually even feel or imagine feeling the impact on the other person. Right, like we can just do an active rejection or a snippy response.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (24:42.729)

Yeah. Oh, I see what you're saying. I see what you're saying. The other side being true too. So the person putting it out there is, that's one half of it, but then the other half is, it's also, it's much, the invulnerability of the thumbs down or the snarky comment or the really cruel comment that you're much more likely to do that over social media than you are otherwise and how harmful that is. And that's where it gets into toxic versus just, yeah.

Ann (25:00.898)

Right?

Ann (25:08.142)

Mm-hmm.

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Yes.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (27:12.809)

I hate the idea of being manly, right? That that's such a gender thing, but really sexy manliness is being able to be vulnerable and being able to feel your feelings and express yourself. So really changing the cultural notion of that. Yeah, or stoicism and being zipped up and not speaking, or just letting ourselves be too anxious and acting on that and acting on that and acting on that.

Ann (27:13.058)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (27:19.555)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (27:28.931)

Right.

Ann (27:34.57)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (27:41.897)

and everybody else has to deal with our anxiety. And as we make noise about our anxiety is another version of this invulnerability.

Ann (27:49.942)

I'm really glad you brought that up because it's one of the things I wanted to for sure go more deeply in is what are these signs of invulnerability we don't recognize because we often speak about the stoicism and the uber independence. We've done a lot on that and kind of flipping it over to the other side. I guess another maybe example that pops up is let's say the vulnerability of our kids.

and our kids struggling or something going wrong, et cetera, and so we have to fix it, fix it, fix it. There is a message that we're sending to them and within us that says having a problem is not okay. Feeling that sense of insecurity with your friends at school is not okay, yet it's the norm. It's important for them to go through that. And then our own vulnerability that we're avoiding by trying to fix it and trying to stay in that hyperactive state is

is a state of invulnerability. It's not as easy to recognize it as the stoicism, but it is, it's, I can't live with the discomfort inside of me that makes me feel weak or scared if I see my kids suffering. And literally sitting with that vulnerability is really, really hard. So we have all these strategies to avoid it, don't we? That we don't even recognize as strategies to live in our defense.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (29:07.097)

Yeah, I'm so mad at you right now for... Oh, God. Like, that's just a gut one right there. And so true. And I also, I think that what we're talking about is... And I love the parenting example. I mean, for the parents out there, who can't relate to giving into our own anxiety and our own needs at the expense of our kids? That's certainly so relatable.

Ann (29:17.6)

Yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (29:36.509)

But also, I wanna hold the idea of toxic lightly because we're not just trying to point out what's wrong or what we're doing wrong. It's not like, oh, that's this and that's this at all. I think what we're really trying to do is, we won't call it toxic until it's like extreme, and it's when you refuse to do anything about it and when it's rigidifies and when it's...

Ann (29:44.984)

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Yes.

Ann (29:55.775)

Yes.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (30:03.709)

And like you said earlier, and you said entrenched when it's like that over there I'm pushing my hands away that over there is what we mean by toxic the involuntary part is natural and it is part of our defensive structure and so we don't want you as you're hearing this to hear it as sort of name-calling or as problematic it's more of like we want instead we want it to evoke curiosity and openness and

Ann (30:07.057)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (30:13.154)

Mm-hmm.

Right.

Ann (30:23.422)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (30:30.045)

Like, so as you can feel yourself, like even when you mention the parenting, oh, it really did, it's just gutting. Um, and you know, and again, if you just, any of you thinking, if you can think of your child or your pet or, you know, your beloved, whoever your beloved is, and something happening to them, it gets right around, you know, that's when we need our defenses and that's when we need. So the idea, what Ann's challenging, challenging us to do is in that most vulnerable place.

Ann (30:42.962)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (30:51.627)

Absolutely.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (30:58.697)

to be able to stand in and still, even when we're imagining that, you know, needing to do the right thing, staying engaged, even with our fear and our anxieties in that most vulnerable state, that is what we're cultivating. It's hard work, it's very difficult, and it is the right thing, and it's about staying engaged and staying connected to yourself and doing the better thing, which is rather than just kind of the lazy, or I hate to use that word, it's the, but the...

Ann (31:07.966)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (31:12.21)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (31:27.242)

Take the word out of it, it's not the lazy, it's the more automated. It's not lazy, it's automated. It's more right. Right. Is it just.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (31:32.999)

The automated reactivity, right, right. That can be more self-serving.

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Ann (31:39.198)

Right, and so yeah, a lot of the way we put it in, because toxicity is about really being, allowing it to be unrecognized and just entrenched. And if we...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (31:48.599)

Well, not a lot, like refusing to recognize it.

Ann (31:51.506)

Oh, that's a good way to reframe it. Yeah. And the refusal is often not conscious. I mean, that's also really important. We're not going, I will not recognize my vulnerability. It's unconscious, right? We have to slow down and feel the discomfort inside of us to recognize that. And okay.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (31:54.505)

What do you think?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (32:08.437)

But let me ask you this, if it's unconscious, if somebody's truly not aware, somebody has been programmed by culture to be the one to know and be the one to be turned to, or like being the helper and just so automatically helps, but it's often not for the other person, it's so that I can feel like a good helper.

and it's unconscious, is that necessarily toxic? To me, I guess I was thinking of it that like, if somebody, I mean, I don't know, is it?

Ann (32:49.166)

I think, well, in that example, and again, you know, we're using the word toxic and that's a powerful word, right? Poisonous.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (32:56.961)

That's why I think I was wanting to preserve it for people who refuse to change it.

Ann (33:02.57)

Well, but I'm gonna challenge you on that because going back to, toxic's extreme, way to put it, we need maybe a lesser word, but if I'm jumping in because I can't handle the vulnerability that I feel if I see, let's say my kid feels insecure and really struggling, and if I'm not aware of my own difficulty with that, I may jump in continuously to either fix it or let's say, for instance,

Let's say our child is feeling insecure with his friendship network at school and comes home and says, saying, you know, they're rejecting me or I don't feel part of things and things like that, that by the way everybody feels, right? If I'm not recognizing my own activation by that, I might try to move my child away from those feelings either by, well, they don't know what they're, you know, by either discounting and putting down the...

the peers or disregarding their struggle. You'll be fine, don't worry about it, everybody feels that way. There's a lot of different ways that it can then strip our child from going through their own difficulties and knowing that those insecurities are natural and allowing our children to feel our insecurities and being with them in there, right? Otherwise...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (34:24.581)

So can we call it harmful invulnerability? Ha ha ha.

Ann (34:27.742)

Impactful. Yeah, like I don't want to say that that's toxic. I do every bit of what I just said. I've done. I can do. Like there's no part of me thinking I walk around as a toxic parent, but I do think that we're not calling anybody toxic. We're saying that the emphasis on invulnerability can be toxic. This isn't about any personal person. It's that if we believe that we shouldn't have weaknesses or insecurities and we continue to perpetuate that because

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Really what's toxic is our society, our global society, sending the message that to have weakness to be messy, you need to fix it, something's wrong. If you don't do your best, like that whole idea of just do your best, be the best at whatever. It sends this message of comparison, right? Like, oh, well, did I do my best? Or it sends, I should be better than, rather than helping...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (35:11.827)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (35:22.59)

as a culture, as a community, helping us feel safer going inside and just being okay that we're gonna have messiness. And we also have strengths. And that's all part of all of us because our goal is for secure relating with ourselves, but with other people. And if we're not recognizing our own focus on invulnerability, then we're losing the way we can more authentically connect to people. So if we think of vulnerability about authenticity.

Right, because I think some people think of vulnerability as I can cry in front of other people or I can't. And we can be an emotional mess and still be invulnerable. Right, it is that just because we cry does not mean that we could be crying for ourselves. I don't wanna get into those details, but I think the message is authenticity. Can we be our authentic selves? Right, we get back to those pictures, right?

Like, if I'm being pulled towards, the most important thing is the image that I'm giving. The most important thing is to show that I'm the sexiest or whatever it is in these images. And if I'm able to do that, then I'm gonna get acceptance and belonging and feel part of things. But if I show my authentic self who says something stupid or has a, you know,

then I'm going to be open for rejection and a quick cutoff. Like the cutoff of social media is, I think, one of the most devastating things right now that I can see hitting all of us, right? I'm like, oh, how many people are going to like, because we said something about a Beyonce concert, right? Like, but our challenge, I think, is to be able to be authentic selves. And the desire is like, if we can find our authentic connected selves,

and really acknowledge our weaknesses as part of us and not just to be fixed and our vulnerability. We're focusing on that our authentic self is about belonging, not our perfect self, that our real messy selves. When research shows that when we connect in our more vulnerable, authentic selves and other people accept us.

Ann (37:40.47)

the areas of our mind and our brain that get activated are much more focused on social connection. And then lovingly, it brings out that in other people that other people can feel vulnerable and be their authentic self. So I think the dialogue is about how to get authentic, how to be real and accept that and to really promote going inside oneself instead of the outward image. And that's a challenge right now, I think.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (38:08.009)

I think that's great. I think that was really well said. I think, yeah, I don't want to get lost in what's toxic or toxic is name calling. I think just to take a couple steps back, I think the bigger thing is that this isn't about, like you just said, that it's not about an individual. It's not name calling. It's not about a gender at all. That toxic invulnerability is about the act of

Ann (38:18.215)

Yeah, I agree.

Ann (38:28.042)

Right.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (38:37.821)

and authenticity and staying out of connection and relationship. And I wanna say, you know, kind of refusing to get, to move into a more mutual relational space. That's the way that I'm thinking of it. And we can all think of it a little bit

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differently. So that's kind of the bigger picture. And then I think that we also then dove into the, the more intricate, you know, individual picture of like, what does that look like for us, each of us individually?

Ann (38:49.342)
Yeah. Right.

Ann (39:03.665)
Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (39:06.493)
And then I was also thinking about, so the young people that are taking, and our young people, some of our young people are included in that, right? Around taking, so it's like, this is all of us, you know, of taking the 30 pictures. It's like, I was thinking about those young people at the concert. It's like, there's no way to walk up to them and be like, oh no, you don't have to do that. You're good, you're already good. You know what I mean? Like that would be out of relationship with them, I think. So it's a...

Ann (39:14.239)
Of sure.

Mm-hmm.

Ann (39:29.631)
Right.

Ann (39:35.338)
Right, because part of what they could be capturing, the argument could be on their place. This is like an amazing experience that they get to be in the presence of this incredible performer. And so they're capturing something for themselves that they can hold it, and that would be really wonderful. That's what I'm saying. Well, it wasn't just 30, it was honestly, I mean, fortunately it was not, I mean, honestly it was the entire concert. I don't know that I saw much of being able to just go in, like, this sounds...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (39:49.833)
But why the 30 times?

Ann (40:05.13)
let me step away from that because I have no idea what their internal experience is. I have no idea. But from the feeling about being able to get inside oneself and be in oneself, I think that's gonna be really hard to do with a camera pointed at you and the images being taken. It just is a challenge and we could, I mean, I'm open for arguments. Some people may be doing that and feel very enlivened in themselves. For me, it felt like more about an...

like it wasn't in the moment. And our challenge in an authentic self is to be able to find our internal selves while with others, right? And it was even interesting at that concert because it was really hard to see her because actually her image was quite dark because the lighting was set up. I mean, we didn't have great seats so we were really far back, but the situation was it was...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (40:48.224)
Yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (40:52.101)
Yeah, I know that was my point. Yeah.

Ann (41:00.094)
the image that she was really, the way that the image was done, she was so dark except for the reflection, you know, and there was something we talked a lot about that, didn't we? It was something about...

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that we're gonna capture this moment for a later date, right? And that seemed, yes, because if we are focused on, that's a good way to put it. Yeah, yeah. And it's a...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (41:16.445)

Yeah, and that's what you're talking about. Right, right. It's an as if instead of being in the moment. It's as if.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (41:29.277)

I mean, just to stick with the concert stuff, this is in contrast to Lizzo. Yes, everyone be impressed how cool I am. But in the Lizzo concert, there was, I was really struck by, like she literally stopped and turned on the house lights and went around all the upper sections and like, you there in the pink top, you know, let me see you. Like on every single section, she went and she said, I see you, I see you, I see you. And...

Ann (41:31.363)

Right?

Ann (41:50.568)

Mmm.

Ann (41:54.687)

Yeah.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (41:58.985)

That was such an amazing experience. And I can tell you on that one, you're walking out talking to strangers and you're part of an experience. And again, not better or worse, but there's something about being with and then in the immediacy of the moment. So I don't know if this really, if that adds to what we're saying or not, but.

Ann (42:19.666)

No, I think it does because I think that's, I mean, if we get to kind of what now, like what are, you know, from a secure relating place, what we're wanting to talk about or what we are talking about is the invulnerability and how that plays into us not being like living, to put it in those framework, what part of us is living our more protected defensive positions and we don't know it. Because if we are not in ourselves and connected, right? If we...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (42:42.708)

Yeah.

Ann (42:49.142)

then we need to check out, are we in our more defensive selves unconsciously? Because if we're in our perfected, our presentation selves, we're not in our authentic self, right? So to really be in our more connected, yeah, I think you're right on target. Being in our more connected selves, we have to be sort of aware, right? Like when I was all of a sudden preoccupied with, oh my gosh, we're saying something negative about Beyonce, I left the conversation for a minute, right?

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (42:58.277)

Yep. Going inside. Yeah. Going inside.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (43:14.113)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (43:15.114)

I was like, oh my God, should we be? And then I'm like, you know what? We're speaking authentically and we just have to keep doing that and trusting our audience out there. They get to have thoughts and feelings and opinions and we wanna hear them, but can they be expressed in relation, right? Like write us an email and talk to us about what

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you think instead of let me drop and run. Like I think the drop and run of social media, Ian, I'm gonna go beyond that. I think it's not good for our culture.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (43:28.725)
Well, and how you can...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (43:36.101)
is scary.

Ann (43:41.61)

It's not only, so if we think about the toxicity of the individual, but also of our relationships, how does, how do we, if we, oh, cancel culture is so powerful. Like dating, I was talking to somebody really recently about their experience, about the dating sites and how hard it is, like the flip left and the flip right, how quick, what is that based on? Is it based on a profile that says, I'm the funniest, I'm the smartest, I can...

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (43:47.977)
cancel culture.

Ann (44:10.61)

Or is it based on sort of an authentic connection? And I'm not saying that can't happen there, but the challenge would be what are, how connected are you to your authentic self? And are you looking for that and welcoming an opening of others that can really be in their authenticity? And I think, so I think that advocating for us to be able to be more comfortable with our vulnerability and authenticity.

and stay in connection so when we're relating on social media or we're relating with other people around Thanksgiving table that we can hold ourselves.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (44:45.225)

We're basically just saying, that's right. Hold ourselves, being your badass self. The way that you came back into the conversation was you shared what stopped you. So you went more relational rather than kind of thinking to yourself, we're just gonna cut this part. Or trying to signal to me like, no, no. You know what I mean? Like you stayed with it and then told me about it and then shared about it and then that was beautiful.

Ann (45:03.5)
Yeah.

Ann (45:06.918)
Yeah.

Ann (45:14.358)
Right, because it's going to happen, right? We're going to.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (45:15.741)

It's modeling, no, you're modeling kind of what is we're talking about. So I love this. I appreciate this conversation, Ann Kelly. It's been thought-provoking and I will continue to think about it. And I hope that you all continue to think about just in general, how to stay inside yourself in your green zone, authentic, connected, and not to be upset when you begin to drift and get a little bit wound up.

but curious and kind of keeping your hands on the steering wheel so you can steer your way back in and be deliberate.

Ann (45:52.478)

and how to promote that and help support that in other people, right? Like how to support, do it for yourself, show self-compassion, like don't look for perfection in self, show self-compassion, but also, you know, we're going into

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some really complex seasons of elections, et cetera, I'm not bringing it in, but just like, look for that in other people, don't like really listen to what it is important to you and go for that and not in this,

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (45:57.058)

Right, and the best way of doing that is to do that first yourself.

Ann (46:24.497)

Like, let's not join in the disconnected, quick judgmental over there, you know, kind of perspective.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (46:33.545)

Well, even I think just to kind of wrap the going back and calling up those young people that we're talking about with the phones, right? So rather than standing back and looking at them, right? Or like you really should put your phone down and watch the concert. Like that isn't at all kind of what was happening, I don't think. I mean, maybe that was happening some, but that's not where I wanna land. Where it's more of like, I really wanted to understand. And I think that I did more deeply.

Ann (46:53.526)

Mm-mm.

Ann (46:58.997)

Mm-hmm.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (47:03.497)

that the concert that they're watching, that was what their hero was doing. And that their hero was doing that because that's what the culture community wants the hero to do. You know what I mean? Like it's this never ending circle. And so empathize, like understanding the, whatever it is that you're seeing that you don't understand, that person is doing that for a really good reason.

Ann (47:08.782)

Mm-hmm.

Ann (47:15.957)

Exactly.

Ann (47:20.662)

Right.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (47:30.505)

that makes a lot of sense to them in that moment, even if it's a symptom of something. And we don't have to understand it all, but seeing them as embedded in, there's a whole history that led up to whatever that moment is. And there's a whole future that none of us know about for that person and just keeping that humility and that kindness and that love and compassion for them as well.

Ann (47:53.134)

Mm-hmm. And then just gonna add one other thing, and that is also to look for how you are also represented in that, in what ways you can relate, because we very much are, we each have our own version of that, right? So it's especially generationally, it's very easy to sit and go, that generation back then, which was, but like, I think that look for your own version, because that way you're connecting with the aspect of I get it, and you're connected to your own,

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (48:03.517)

That's right. Our version of that.

Ann (48:22.442)

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Everyone struggles with things and it allows whatever goes forward from that, it's going to be more relatable in a more secure position.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (48:27.993)

That's right. We're all human. There's almost nothing out there that if you look hard enough, you can't find your version of.

Ann (48:33.671)

It's true, it's true.

Sue Marriott she/her(s) (48:36.917)

Well, thanks for listening, you guys. We really appreciate it, and appreciate you hanging all the way in. Again, invite you to join our online community. It's a great time to do that. [Therapistuncensored.com/join](https://therapistuncensored.com/join)

Ann (48:48.682)

All right, thanks so much for joining us and we'll see you around the bend.