

Episode 46: Some of the Best Moments from Enough, the Podcast

Mandy: This episode is a collection of some big moments in Enough, the podcast. I'll narrate you through some heart opening stories, some tools that have been game changers, and some wisdom drops that will make you feel more zingy and alive. By the end of this episode, I hope you'll have a compassion refresher.

You'll be reminded that you are not broken, regardless of what has happened to you or however you've messed up. You'll be reminded that wholeness is about letting all the imperfections be there without needing to feel shame about them or perform over them, hoping that nobody will notice. Mostly, I'm hoping you'll feel freer, more okay with yourself and less alone as you listen to these shares today.

If you're new here, welcome to Enough, the podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mandy Lehto, executive coach and recovering perfectionist and overachiever. This is a show for anyone who, in spite of all your stellar achievements, secretly never feels good enough. You're hard on yourself. You believe that your worth is dependent on your achievements and maintaining your stellar image.

Oh, I feel you. And this show is a place to rest and to challenge some of those exhausting beliefs. I'm so glad that you're here. I kick us off with a delicious little snippet from my hilarious conversation with Em Stroud and Jason Goldberg. We're talking about how to tap into your resourcefulness and how to build that inner self trust when you're worried about messing up, because people with perfectionistic tendencies are super hard on themselves, like I said, and often worry about messing up and looking like a nugget.

So Jason asks a hum dinger of a question. I'm curious how you would respond to this.

Jason: There's a question that I'll ask people, clients, or even from stage sometimes as just an exercise, is what's a bigger deal to you? Running out of milk or running out of money? And I don't know what would either of you say?

Em: Milk because then I can't have a cup of tea and then I thought there was money.

Mandy: I'm gonna say you're talking to a Brit here

Jason: You're cereal fanatic too. I love cereal.

Em: I'm not joking. Jason, you've just brought up some trauma. On Sunday, I didn't have any milk, so in the morning I had to have peppermint tea because my shop was also not open.

I'm sorry to share it in this experience, but it was very traumatic.

Jason: It sounds very traumatic. I think you should do some like EFT's some tapping around that.

Em: I will, I'm gonna tap on it right now. I'm gonna tap all the different points.

Jason: I've been attaching on a tap to a cow, so you would have.. No, I'm just kidding.

So most people, most people that are not you guys say money. And then the next question is why. And and of course it's higher stakes, right? You run outta milk, big fucking deal. You know, except for you guys. If you run outta money, it's a big thing. And what I offer in that moment is the idea that the reason that for most people running out of milk is not as big of a deal, is because you trust your resourcefulness to find more milk.

Fairly easily, right? So like even if the shop is closed that you went to, typically there's some other shop not too far away or worse comes to worst, you go to a farm somewhere where there's cows, or if you're in

California, they have oat milk and almond milk and shark milk and giraffe milk and alien milk.

And there's all these different options for milk. And so it doesn't feel like that big of a deal, but most people don't trust their resourcefulness in being able to find money if they feel like they're running out of money. And I think the same thing applies here is that there's this non-belief in my resourcefulness to bounce back from a potentially humiliating situation or a situation that doesn't go according to plan.

And I feel like somehow that occurrence is permanent and pervasive in my life, right? Versus it being temporary and isolated, right straight out of the book of positive psychology like the Optimist look at things as temporary and isolated, Pessimist look at things as permanent and pervasive.

And so that's the whole thing, so if we knew, this is like the whole, when I talk about it's not your only line in the play, is that imagine you were in a play and you had one line and it was the most pivotal line in the play, and if you hit the line, then your career takes off.

And the play is a major success. If you screw up the line, everybody's career is tanked and you'll never get a job again. How do you feel waiting off stage to come deliver that line? Do you feel light and creative and expansive, or is your butthole completely puckered up and you do it yourself.

And so you contrast that with what if you're the lead in the play and you have tons of dialogue, then if you flub a line, it may sting like, you may feel it that you flubbed the line. But you have another line three seconds later and you're doing this play three times a day, four days a week for the next six weeks.

Nobody's gonna give a shit about the one line you flubbed on opening night. And so it's this kind of like all or nothing mentality of like, I'm never gonna be able to recover from this. And it's like, but look at your life. There's nothing you've been through that you haven't gotten through because you're listening to this podcast right now or watching it if you're a good human.

And this is what I think is important for us to recognize, like nothing is fricking terminal. I mean, things are, but not in this realm.

Em: No, and that's the thing as well, because quite often I'll ask a question to room of people and I'll be like, "Everyone stand up!", they'll stand up and they're like waiting for.. I've been deep and profound sometimes and I'm like, "Right on the count of three, shout out your favorite fruit."

1, 2, 3, go! There you go.

Jason: Banana!

Mandy: I was gonna, I say carrot.

Em: And there's always somebody that does that. And then you can see all of their fear, "Oh, hang on a minute. Now I'm confused about what carrot." And then I go and they'll sit down and then everyone looks at me and they're like... is... and I'm like, "That was it. We were just shouting out our favorite fruit doesn't matter. But don't you feel better?"

And then they giggle and then, and it's all of that stuff. And it's that thing of, it's just not holding onto things so seriously. You know? Because actually in three months, in three minutes, in three days, in three years, will it matter? Probably not. And of course there are of course, the traumatic stuff, the deep things that do really matter, that do have weight, that can have impact. But the majority of stresses in life is there milk. Have I got a job I like? You know, et cetera, et cetera. The most of them, they won't matter in three years time.

So why are you getting so stressed? Why are you worrying so much about that immediacy? You know? So it's about how do we look at stuff from a different viewpoint rather than being just caught up in it all.

Mandy: Many of us are on the path of learning to hold things with more lightness and levity and to try to care less, or maybe I should say, try to care differently what other people think about us.

So Jason and Em are a great reminder that nothing is really, or almost nothing is really worth worrying about because life moves on. That thing that you said, people will forget it by next week. And once you start

cultivating this inner robustness and bounce back ability, you can hold yourself and all of your squinchy, humanness with so much more lightness and levity and self-compassion.

Next, I share an insight from Christina Glickman in episode 16 on how she went from overextending herself and being the good girl, always pleasing other people to truly stepping into her power and doing her own thing. Christina's gonna share with you how she went about that.

Christina: I will tell you very intentional, and I've worked on that in the past few years because number one, I don't want the badge of busyness anymore.

I come from a hustle culture thinking that, in order for me to show value, that you need to think I work 24 hours a day and I am saving the world. And if I'm not doing that, then I'm not participating at that gold star level. And what I've really come to realize is a few things is that, I have choice over where I spend my time in my day, and I no longer actually care what other people think.

In the sense of, I get to decide what's important to me, and if I always go back to what is important to me, that's going to guide me, right? So number one for me will always be the people that I love are safe and they're loved by me. And if that is the case, I have no fear of failing on a podcast, not going to a meeting, being the smartest one.

All of that comes down to me: a basis of confidence, because I feel so liberated now that I don't need to show up for you; I show up for me. There's no pressure for me to be anyone else but me. And now I understand that sounds simple and it's hard, but if you put into practice every single day and you continue to ask yourself what your true north is, I will get back to that moment every time.

So if I'm gonna attend something and I don't feel prepared, and so I'm not feeling comfortable cause I think I'm ugh, like are they gonna really see me? And if they really see me, will they not like me? Right? But then I think no, because I'm showing up with pure intention and pure heart of who I am.

You can't take me down because I'm not trying to be something I'm not. Whereas I spent years in that fake to make it culture. Years of, I wanna show up to the table to be the smartest. Now I love to show up and say, "Oh, I don't know. That sounds like a great idea. Oh, I've never done that before, share with me."

There I have no fear because I know at the end of the day, the people that matter will still love me. So, you know, again, I've done a book and it's all fun and games until the book is in other people's hands and then you're gonna get comments, right? But then I kept saying, here's what, guess what? At the end of the day, friends and family will buy it.

They'll tell me they loved it because they have to. But nobody else is thinking about me. No one cares about me. Their lives will move on. And even if it was the worst thing they've ever heard, read, who cares? Nothing, there's nothing that is quite as important to me as the people I love. So other than that, that gives me ultimate freedom to pursue anything.

So, because the failure and the consequence to that action isn't anything I can't handle, I can handle it. What I feel bad about myself, I'm embarrassed. To me, at this stage in life, after experiencing a lot of loss and death and it's not that big of a deal and holding weight to that is again, so suffocating and exhausting.

Whereas instead, if I can get up every day, understand that my intention is to feel joy for myself and the people I love, that just guides me. And I think it takes practice. I don't think you just wake up and you're that way because life is messy. So what happens when you're behind and you're stressed and you've got all these things?

It's like take a beat. Just take a beat because I don't wanna end up at the end of the road and say, "What was I doing?" I know that when I lay my head down at night, I'm leading the life I want to lead. And by that I don't mean successful and amazing. I mean it's on my terms, it's what I wanna do. And I spent years, years performing. Being the good girl, doing all the things I should be doing, but I never ever felt the way I feel today, which is fully whole, and that there is no space that I don't belong in. And that's only because I reclaimed myself.

Mandy: On the theme of reclaiming yourself, you're about to hear an extraordinarily brave section of my conversation with Dr. Shoshana Garfield from episode 30. Please note that she makes reference to extreme childhood trauma. What I loved about this conversation with Shoshana was her perspective that whatever has happened in your life, you are not broken. The journey is simply a deep allowing of the wholeness that has always been there.

Dr. Shoshana: One of my earliest memories is of a nightmare, literally a nightmare where I have no face. No eyes, no nose, no mouth, just a flatness that I present to the world for them to write upon, to project upon.

I was obliterated, or rather, my sense of self was utterly obliterated. I honestly don't have the words to describe the devastation of my earlier experiences. To put it in a tiny nutshell, without going into detail, my mom rented me out to paedos and they weren't gentle. It was, in fact, torture; like Amnesty International type stuff, torture.

I was only four. It was kind of formative except where it's not, but I didn't understand that for a really, really, really long time. So I thought I had been utterly obliterated and written by them, created by them, and I was just a wind up good girl toy who got good grades. The first female in my family to ever finish high school.

The first person in my family to ever go to university, and I went to a doozy. I didn't just go to any Uni, I went to an Ivy League. Of course I did. Certainly the only one to get a PhD. But in between university and the PhD, some of the magic started to happen. I had been in therapy for a really long time, 25 years on the couch, and you can ask any of my ex-husbands.

I needed every minute of them.

And then I found energy psychology during the PhD, and that's when the insights really started arriving. Someone would ask me, you know, if therapy were an object, what would it be? And I said, "It was a rock. A rock that you pick up and look under and just look at all the creepy crawlies and the dark loam and the rich earth that there are gifts under the rocks, gifts in the caves, and the caverns."

The terror of standing at the mouth of those dark caverns, but knowing there was no way out except through because what happened to me was so extreme, so extreme. I didn't have the luxury that a lot of people have of getting by, of squishing it down enough to deploy plans of success. Although I clearly was a perfectionist.

I mean, doing what I did and going to an Ivy League Uni, seriously, if I had been a serial killer, everybody would've said on, like a Netflix special, "and we can see why Shoshana, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah" right? But I chose a different path. How I did, I don't know. That's another topic of discussion. But I knew, I knew, I knew the only way out was through, and it was through underground.

Or what I thought was underground. So I went into those caves with my faceless face to meet my demons. Year after year after year after year, decade after decade after decade.

Once I found energy psychology, started with emotional freedom techniques, EFT. It took about five years for me to be completely free of post-traumatic stress. I still have health impacts from having been tortured. Being tortured kind of sucks and it leaves fingerprints in the body in different ways, even when there aren't visible scars that you can might see with usual clothing.

And what I found in those dark caves was something so beautiful.

Every demon I met turned into a friend.

Every friend had a piece of me I thought was gone forever. And every piece of me that I recovered helped me feel more and more whole. And it was a little bit like an arctic dawn, you know, looking, is it a bit grayer than it was yesterday? I don't know. It takes like six months for the sun to come up. And it's only a metaphor because once it dawns, the sun's always there.

As I look back and yes, that sky has definitely got a horizon now and the sun's coming up. What I realized is that all that brokenness, I used to think I kind of carried myself around in a bloody cheese cloth bag, little

pieces of me. But actually, I wasn't like a glued together vase, who knew? And sometimes people, I forget what it's called, there's a Japanese art where a vase breaks and you line it with gold and the kind of, it's beautiful the way it is, and it's a kind of metaphor for being broken and repaired.

It's not that at all. That is a false recovery. It's beautiful art. Beautiful art, exquisite, but a very wrong headed metaphor. What I realized was that actually I was seamless. That recovery is a process of uncovering.

There's nothing to glue together. Just like you said earlier, we are already whole and all the uselessness and not enough-ness and worthlessness that we thought defined us, those were all illusory. Like popping little balloons or demons taking off masks, and they're "Tada! Your friend, surprise."

There are no enemies. There's nothing to fight. There's nothing even to get rid of. Just bits you find to love up and then they evolve.

Mandy: Next, you're gonna hear from Mark Silverman in episode 19. There was a time in Mark's life when he wanted to die, he'd given into his sex addiction, and once he'd gone through recovery there he was facing grim reality.

How could he believe in his self-worth after blowing up his life and feeling so much shame and self-loathing? Shoshana talked about the deep allowing of who we are, that's the recovery process. We're recovering parts of ourselves, so Mark shares his take on reclaiming and recovering his wholeness and how that changed everything.

Mark: I finally let the world know who I was. Right? So that was, for me, I hit rock bottom. I hadn't taken a drink, nothing, but I hit rock bottom. Right? I finally let go of the veneer, of who I really was, and instead of, you know, again, I wanted to die.

I was really suicidal and I wanted to die, but I knew that if I killed myself, the legacy to my kids was unreversible, and there was no way I was gonna do that. So I kept putting one foot in step of the other, you know, I, I decided to run a marathon. I decided to make a million dollars. I decided to do these things because I thought I was gonna die.

Committing to those things is what pulled me through. Committing to creating something, right? I wanted to leave a million dollars for my ex-wife and my kids before I died. Again, being the good boy, I couldn't die pending those. I had to leave him a million dollars. So at least Mark did something in his last thing.

But while I was doing that, I was reading every self-help book. I was reading every spiritual book I could find. And spending hours and hours and hours and learning to meditate. So I went from suicidal and miserable to, okay, I'll live for a little while longer. Okay. I'll live until Jake graduates high school, right? Okay, well actually life isn't so bad. And then to finally, in the middle of, Alan Cohen's 'Relax into Wealth', finding love and forgiveness for myself.

And that was, the revelation, that's what changed everything. When I finally realized that I could forgive myself, and that I could be gray. I didn't have to be black or white. I could be gray. For me, that was when I became an ex-smoker. Like I wanted to tell everybody, "You're okay just the way you are. Oh my God, I didn't know. I had no idea we were all okay. You're okay. I love you. You, I promise you, no matter what you did, no matter what's happening, you're okay."

And, that was you know, I just wanted to shout from the rooftops, and just heal everybody that I met, that you can forgive yourself. It's funny, our mutual friend Steve Hardison. He and I were texting this morning, I was reading "In the Way of Mastery", a book that, I got from him.

And we were texting back and forth about self-forgiveness and forgiveness, is the way to God, is the way to enlightenment. And self-forgiveness, it's hard fought, especially when my ego structure and who Mark is, is predicated on beating Mark up. Letting go of that is like a death. It felt, you know, letting go of beating myself up felt irresponsible.

It's like if I don't beat myself up, who's going to keep this whole thing in check? Like, if I don't absolutely trash myself, who is going to keep me from ruining everything? And to forgive myself? That was blasphemy.

And now it's again, our biggest weakness, our biggest challenge is my biggest strength, is self-forgiveness, forgiveness of others. You know, speaking my mind, being the same person on the outside as I am on the inside, being the same person in private as I am in public.

That's all, that's the byproduct of all this work.

Mandy: Let's talk a bit about sex and bodies because this area of our lives can be riddled with not enoughness and comparison with all of the unreasonable, unreachable images of what bodies and the experience of sex and intimacy is "supposed to look like", which is almost nobody's experience.

And therefore, many of us who try to conform and be perfect might be performing sex rather than being in the toe-curling act of it. So how do we get more into it? Well, there's a theme in the snippets that I'm sharing with you today. It requires being in our wholeness. It requires being in our vulnerability, themes that keep coming up again and again, giving ourselves some compassion, bringing more levity and lightness to life.

I had a deep, powerful conversation with coach and therapist, Catherine Topham Sly, that's episode 34 if you wanna go back and listen afterwards. And she shares that really great sex isn't a performance, in fact, it's quite the opposite. So she tells us about how we can be more in our bodies and how we can communicate more, not only with ourselves, but with our partners.

Catherine: You know, we've got this porn saturated culture. We're living out our lives on social media. We're all experiencing this world where we're so often looking at ourselves from the outside in. Everything, we're doing so many things like a performance so, of course, it's gonna happen to our sex lives as well.

But sex, really good sex, is not a performance. It's actually the complete opposite. When we're having a good time sexually, we're having an opportunity, an experience where we're, I say an opportunity because this is something our healing depends on us working on this. Bringing that perspective from the outside, looking in, into ourselves, being able to be in ourselves, in our bodies, noticing what we are feeling. And sex is one of the great opportunities for us to practice that.

And I think seeing it as a kind of practice in a similar way to how you might think about yoga or meditation can be quite a helpful way to get in touch with those possibilities and those benefits, because it's really true. You know, when we've been shutting down our emotions for a long time, because our emotions exist physically within our bodies, that means that we've been shutting down our physical sensations.

So it's really common to feel really disconnected, self-conscious, you know, on top of that thing of where the perspective is, we've also got really, really busy lives. We've got endless to-do lists, so it's so easy to get distracted. And then there's the thing about feeling unattractive as well, and the feeling unattractive, sometimes it can be about physical things, about comparing ourselves to others, but also it can come from that deep sense of not enoughness. You know, when I feel like I hate my body, my body is not okay, what's really going on? Is it just about that? How much deeper does it run? Is there a sense of being okay, being enough within yourself?

And actually one of the great benefits of sex is how it can remind us that our bodies are not actually for display, for others, for their approval but they're for us to enjoy. And the more pleasure that we can allow ourselves to feel, the more we can get in touch with that and that love for our bodies and that love for ourselves.

It's a real challenge. It's a real challenge in our culture. It's a real challenge for each of us as individuals, but I think it starts with recognizing when we're in that kind of performance mindset and challenging it within ourselves. And I think it's helpful to kind of ask the question of what sex is.

When if you just ask somebody what sex or what were you taught that sex was, the first place that we go to is to just picture penis and vagina, right? That's what we think it is, and this really privileges and prioritizes the experience of people with penises. Our sex education is still so lacking, so I think, actually, it's really helpful to redefine sex and I think, thinking of sex as sharing pleasure is probably the most helpful sort of global perspective on it. Cause you know, we can think about the basics that we really should have been taught in school. We get taught that there's the penis and the vagina, like they're equivalent.

But of course it doesn't work like that. The penis is akin to the clitoris, not the vagina. You know, the vulva is a woman's pleasure center. So right from the start, we've got all these cultural messages going on. And one of them is that women are like receptacles, that they're just there to receive, to give.

So it's no wonder that women in particular start to look at themselves in this way of, well, what have I got to offer to the other rather than what's in it for me? How can I enjoy this body that I'm here having this experience in? And I think if we redefine sex as the time that we spend together sharing pleasure, then we have to find a way to both be present in the here and now together.

And often when we've had long experience of feeling like we are not okay, we've been avoiding that. It's hard to just to be present, to let another see you, but it is also the path to healing.

Mandy: Vulnerability, being okay with all of those imperfections and maybe in time even learning to be neutral or appreciate those parts of ourselves instead of trying to cover them up.

It's kind of like putting concealer, weapons grade concealer over all those parts of our lives that nobody claps for and wholeness, and coming back to wholeness is remembering that we're probably not doing such a good job at hiding those things in the first place. And what if we released ourselves from needing to do that all the time?

What if we could be in our humanness and give ourselves compassion that we don't have to hold ourselves to those ridiculously high unachievable standards, cause it's freaking exhausting!

So it can feel triggering when you see somebody whose life does look figured out and together. And this is what happened in my conversation with author and psychotherapist, Anna Mather.

She summed up all the things in her journey in a nutshell, so neatly and cleanly. And we skipped along through the opening part of the conversation and I thought to myself, wow. Anna's journey has been so logical. And she was so self-compassionate. And immediately I found myself getting distracted from the actual recording by thinking that wasn't me.

Maybe I'm not good at this. Ugh, you see where I'm going with this? So when I finally had the courage to mention it to Anna, then we dropped into this super real, deep conversation about this myth. This heavy, bulky, clunky myth of living the perfection fantasy, and how both of us are over it.

Anna: Everything that you say is my experience. So this period of acceptance for me, you know, that has taken years, that has taken deep pressure.

Mandy: Okay, good, because it sounded so easy.

Anna: No, no, no. Well I think this is the thing, isn't it? When you kind of sum anything up in a nutshell, then the story gets lost. You know, we dunno the time scale. So for example, with my job.

When I became as psycho therapist and I was actually, I'm pretty sure I went into therapy because I needed therapy and I started working clinically. So this process for me, with all of these things has pretty much gone on over a period of years. I went through a burnout a couple of years ago, and again, that was within the pandemic where I'd kind of upped the standards.

And I think it's a constant thing that's gonna come up, especially if we have perfectionism and drive as part of who we are. So, for example, going back to my work situation, the nutshell thing was that I had to come to terms with the fact that I was a messy human doing a job that could not be the fantasy that I'd hoped. It would have its' messiness too. And there were times when I was walking over watery bridge on the way into the clinic and I was struggling with my own depression, and I was just feeling like, who am I to do this job when I'm going through this? Who am I to do this job supporting people when I desperately need people, but will not let others support me?

So there was an absolute process there that so easily overlooked in a nutshell, isn't it? And I think with motherhood as well, I went into motherhood thinking, I'm gonna do this well, right? I'm gonna do this well. This is gonna be the thing that I'm gonna thrive about. This is everything I've ever wanted.

And there were times when I was walking down and I was, I knew that I was living my own dream and hope and fantasy, and then the cracks start to show and, it was all the mixture and massive emotion that come with motherhood. The very normal human response to circumstances, the exhaustion that for me and my second child had silent reflux.

So with the first one, he was very straightforward and I was good. He kind of made it quite easy for me. It didn't... it wasn't really that much of a challenge of identity. We got into a nice routine and that was..

Mandy: You could keep your costume on straight.

Anna: I could keep my costume on straight. And then the second one just completely turned that upside down, which in turn, turned my identity upside down because if I am not this good one, then who am I?

And there was a lot of hidden overwhelm, a lot of shame, a lot of hidden rage that went on behind the closed door. And then I would strut out into the sunshine with a double buggy and my costume would be back on. So coming to that acceptance of this is not the fantasy. It is messy just like me.

And that has to be, I have to accept that and start to embody it, and then I could start to find more forgiving of myself and work with the guilt and accept support because the shame wasn't telling me that I had to do it all on my own, otherwise I was failing. So that process, it's been years and it's something that... have you ever had those fish oil tablets? And then it kind of like comes back up . Do you know what I mean? It repeats on you. So this is cons... this is a process that is constantly repeating on me and will probably be repeating on me in different contexts through the rest of my life. So I might have gathered, you know, I might have worked through the fact that, right? I'm a mum. It's not a fantasy, this is real gritty reality and I'm a real gritty mom. I've gotta let go of that ideal because it's exhausting. I just cannot meet it, and then something will happen, right? Even September, the kids go back to school and I'm like, I find this bit in me that's like, I'm gonna do it right this time.

I'm gonna get everything done on time. I'm gonna be the one that sews the labels in. I'm gonna be the one that like, never forgets a bit of homework, you know? And, and I feel it coming back and I go to our scroll through social media and I see all these people doing all these things and I'm like, I'm gonna be that person this time.

I'm gonna get right. Like I'm scraping the old journal cause it's messy and I've missed out pages and with this time I'm gonna get it right and I feel it repeats on me and I have to go through that process. And it might take hours I might have to coach myself, say, "Anna, come on, have some grace for yourself."

Ah, you've never been that person that's been exhausting. Let's just add a bit more kind of humanness and reality into this. Or I might really tussle with it. And that process might take months, maybe even years with a different thing. And the burnout. Wow. I relate. I never would've understood how physical burnout could be whole nervous system.

All I could do was lie in the sofa and face the sofa cushions and stare at the sofa cushions. I've never known anything like it, and I've never grown such a respect for my limits cause it terrified me. I had three kids at that time. I couldn't function for them. So now, I'm so much more respectful of that gap between the fantasy and the what's underneath the costume.

Mandy: To finish today's buffet of wisdom episode, David Vox from episode 1 is gonna bring us home. So David shares a question, a way of checking in with ourselves around our priorities, especially for those of us who have felt defined by achievements and status and shiny things and looking impressive. David spent years creating a life that looked wow from the outside, but inside, he always felt empty, constantly thinking like, is this all there is? So if this resonates, listen to David's one question that shifted everything.

David: I have one question, which is one integration exercise that anyone on any part of the journey can do.

And after really thinking about it for the last few weeks and really reflecting over my entire life, I feel it might be the most liberating and powerful presentation technique in the entire world. No pressure, but I have to tell a very short story for that seed to have any soil to be planted in. Can I have a very, very short story.

When I grew up in my third family, foster family, my dad had a brother, our uncle, who had a learning disability, so he was like this big Papa bear, but he was like a little child inside, always happy, always smiling, and always hugging, and he loved this TV show. So every single day for every week that I grew up that he would come visit, he would see the same TV show, never anything else.

So when I came home to the house, he would hear the melody from this TV show playing, "...tootoo to dudu..."

And he would be smiling and laughing and talking about his bicycle, that was his greatest love in his life. He covered it up with more colors than bells and whistles and anything else. And unfortunately he died young. And in the funeral I was so shocked as a teenager, I sat there and I was wondering why is the church overcrowded?

My uncle had a learning disability. He was a great guy, but he didn't have any special achievements. He didn't go to war. He didn't, you know, become a millionaire. He didn't do anything extraordinary. Why are there so many people here? Why are people standing? And then one person after the other came in front of the coffin and they said, "You were that one guy that always gave me a hug."

And when they lifted up that coffin and the piano started playing, and I saw that coffin leaving the church, something inside of me completely transformed, and it was how I envisioned myself dying or visiting my own funeral. I was thinking, if I'm lying on my death bed, and I asked myself, have I been a huggable person? A huggable brother, a huggable friend, a huggable boss, a huggable, whatever vault that I'm going to put on me, will the answer be yes?

And it's such an easy question to ask if that is a North Star. At least it is for me to have been an huggable person to have been open. Enough to be able to receive a hug and give hug. Perfect balancing and masculine and feminine right there. Integration exercise for everyone no matter what you're doing.

Because if the answer is no, or if I'm in a situation right now, do I feel huggable? I feel super huggable right now. I feel you are super huggable right now. But if the answer is no, it's my duty to ask myself, where does that voice come from? If I don't feel worthy, if I feel too busy, if I say to myself, I'm not a huggy person, or if I'm in a conflict or in a meeting, am I huggable?

It will give you an instant visceral response. Am I huggable? Because if we have all of these things in our life, on our to-do list and it doesn't lead to a heart of us being able to receive or give a hug, then what is that to do list therefore? If we're on this mountain top of high achievement, but we're so far up people can't reach us for a hug, we need to get the fuck down from the mountain top. And I have been on so many mountain tops, not remembering who I am, which means I'm lost. So I had to walk all the way back to where I came from and what I found out with being a huggable person, like I'm a professional hugger now, is that when I take a moment when I'm in conflict or when I am feeling fragmented and I ask myself, Am I huggable?

And there is a voice that says, "No, you're not worthy or no, nobody should hug you, or no, you don't have time for that." And I let that part of my fragment itself, that inner bully, inner critic, that judgment, let it be hugged. Something happens to me and I feel that simple integration exercise, it's been more powerful than anything else.

Mandy: How do you feel after listening to this episode? Check in, what came up for you and who in your life would benefit from listening? Thank you so much for sharing in advance. I think the more we can spread the word on this, we can get more amazing people like you listening to the podcast. So one thing that came up for me is I'm reminded of the value of hearing other people's stories on how they keep coming back to wholeness, whatever has happened in their lives, whatever they've done, whatever messes they've made.

So check out any of the full episodes that I shared here today that you may have missed.

So for me, it's that process of keeping on coming back. It's kind of like a meditation. So when you get distracted away from your breath or whatever your home base is, you notice and then you bring your thoughts back.

And for me, that's what this journey to wholeness feels like. Like my home base is the knowledge or even being open to the possibility that I'm already enough and whole, and then I get distracted by my thoughts, making a big hullabaloo trying to convince me that I did that thing or said that thing or I'm not enough, or blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And then I notice, and then I can bring my awareness back to the possibility of wholeness. So it's this process, wholeness doesn't look like perfection. That was one of the things that I've learned over the years. I had this image that coming back to wholeness must mean that it was all figured out and neat and tidy.

But nuh-uh! Wholeness is actually the owning of the whole-ness of ourselves. It's not a nice, tidy, shiny place necessarily. It's the being in the mess of it, which I hope has come through in this episode.

So I really hope that listening brought you comfort today. I'll see you back here in two weeks, and don't forget to click follow on the show to make sure that you never miss an episode.