



## Conscious Life presents

### Toxic Relationships and Anxiety

Guest - Avery Neal

*Disclaimer: The contents of this interview are for informational purposes only and are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This interview does not provide medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical or psychological condition.*

#### **[00:00:09] Alex Howard**

Welcome everyone to this interview where I'm super-excited to be talking with my good friend, Avery Neal. We're going to be talking about toxic relationships, subtle and psychological abuse in relationships, how that impacts anxiety, but also how when our nervous system is dysregulated, it really makes it harder to see clearly what's going on and to access the resources we need to create change in a relationship.

To give a little bit of Avery's background, Avery Neal is a practicing psychotherapist, international author, and speaker. In 2012, she opened Women's Therapy Clinic, which offers psychiatric and counseling support to women.

Avery is the author of *If He's So Great, Why Do I Feel So Bad?: Recognizing and Overcoming Subtle Abuse*, which has been translated and published in 12 languages. Her articles and interviews have been published by oprah.com, American Counseling Association, DailyOm, Best Self magazine, Hitched magazine, Bustle, PopSugar, and many other publications. And her courses have been taken by over 18,000 people worldwide. So Avery, welcome, and thank you for joining me.

#### **Avery Neal**

Thank you so much for having me again. It's nice to be here.

#### **Alex Howard**

I feel like this is a really good subject for us to get into together. We've done a few conversations previously around looking at your body of work, particularly in the context of trauma. But of course, when people are in abusive relationships, we're going to get into much more what we mean by psychological abuse in a little bit.

**[00:01:52]**

But one of the big symptoms of that is anxiety. And I'd love you to speak a little bit to... When you think of anxiety showing up in those relationships, what is that? And maybe what are some of the symptoms of that manifesting?

**Avery Neal**

Absolutely. So there are so many reasons we can experience anxiety. And most of us are aware there can be genetic components. There can be all kinds of different issues that can contribute to it.

But certainly my take on anxiety is that when we experience a lot of chronic stress over time or we experience a particularly traumatic event, that stress accumulates, and over time, it becomes something that we maybe can no longer effectively manage ourselves.

You see this a lot in childhood trauma, for instance, or childhood extreme stress. It may be prolonged, and the child lives with this fear or overwhelming stress for a long period of time. And so the child may develop some coping strategies to deal with that stress or manage that fear.

But then as the child continues throughout their life, more and more stressful events happen. And even though the child has maybe intellectually come to terms with whatever happened in childhood or whatever trauma that child experienced, intellectually, they've overcome that.

But emotionally and in their body, the child is still holding on to that stress response. And so as more and more life events accumulate that are stressful, it can get to the point where it's beyond what we can effectively manage.

**Alex Howard**

A lot of your work, both in terms of writing and your research and your clinical work, is looking at this idea of psychological abuse. So maybe we can introduce what you mean by that, and then we can connect that to anxiety.

**Avery Neal**

Absolutely, yes. So psychological abuse exists in all abusive relationships, whether we're talking about physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse. Narcissistic abuse is the big buzzword now. So any type of abusive relationship has at the core, psychological abuse.

And psychological abuse is really what allows the abuser to gain more power and the victim of the abuse to feel more and more helpless in the whole dynamic. And so when we look at that feeling and that belief that we're helpless, that is associated strongly with anxiety.

It's also associated with depression and a whole host of mental and physical health conditions are associated with psychological abuse, addiction issues, suicidal thoughts, insomnia, gynecological problems in women, IBS, migraines, other pain syndromes. All of these things are our body's reaction to acute trauma and stress.

**[00:05:09]**

And so when we're dealing with a psychologically abusive relationship, that's going to be a significant amount of stress over a pretty prolonged period of time.

And the other thing that I think is important, talking about psychological abuse in general, is that it's way more predominant than most of us realize. So in America, over half of men and women have reported that they have been in a psychologically abusive relationship with an intimate partner.

And when you think about that, those are the people who can recognize it and report it, and those are just intimate partner relationships. That's not even getting into familial relationships, work relationships, friendships, all of that.

And so when we have unhealthy dynamics and psychologically abusive dynamics in a primary relationship, that is a significant amount of stress that we're trying to navigate, and it can absolutely create and exacerbate any anxiety.

### **Alex Howard**

One of the things that really struck me in one of our previous conversations was how you pointed to those more subtle forms of abuse that we may not identify as abuse. And as you were talking, I was thinking that often... It's not the only piece of the jigsaw, but often, anxiety can be a symptom.

And it struck me that people may not be identifying the abuse. They may identify the symptom of anxiety which actually is an expression of that abuse. Maybe you could just unpack that and build that connection a little bit.

### **Avery Neal**

Absolutely. I think this is a great point. Absolutely. Especially when we're talking about psychological abuse, a lot of times there are not the overt markers that abuse is occurring like you get, let's say, with physical abuse. And so it can leave the victim of abuse completely confused and often blaming themselves.

They've been told things like, "You're just too sensitive. This is all you. You're crazy. You're lucky to have me," etcetera. And so what happens is the person's self-esteem and sense of worth becomes more and more diminished with time.

And that, of course, leads to higher levels of anxiety when we don't have a lot of confidence in ourselves that we're okay, that we're strong, that we're capable, that we're of clear mind. And so these things start to contribute to this overwhelming sense of anxiety.

And then there's the ongoing fear of how your partner, or whoever is behaving abusively, is going to respond or react to different things. And that creates this low-grade chronic fear that the person becomes accustomed to. I mean, so much so that a lot of times the person may not even identify it because they're so used to it, especially if they experienced any type of abusive dynamic in childhood.

**[00:08:22]**

So then you get the reduced confidence and self-esteem and feeling small and helpless, like you can't handle whatever comes your way or that there's something wrong with you and you're not going to be strong enough to deal with it.

And you combine that with also the fear of somebody else's reaction and how they are going to handle things. And that's a lot of ongoing fear and stress to manage. And of course, anxiety is inevitable.

### **Alex Howard**

It's almost like the person that goes... That enters into what becomes the abusive relationship. I think it's an important point to make that abusive relationships often don't always start that way. They gradually become that way, right?

So the person that goes into that relationship may have been resourceful enough to leave fairly easily if it had been there at the start, but with the helplessness that you're speaking to and then the inevitable rise in anxiety that becomes a symptom of that.

I think often the place that people get to is, as you just spoke to, "I don't have what it takes to leave. I'm too anxious." And then it almost becomes like there's an anxious attachment where it's like, "But I feel safer with this person, even though the dynamic is toxic."

### **Avery Neal**

That's exactly right. That is completely right. And so then the person starts to see themselves as very small and helpless, and the abusive person is all powerful and becomes completely overwhelming. And particularly if there are children involved, that can become extremely overwhelming to think about ending the relationship.

If there's any fear for physical safety or safety for the children. All of these are very real factors that a lot of people just say, "Okay, I'd rather just live with this situation because at least I feel like I can manage it somehow rather than confronting it. And I know there's going to be a big battle or some horrible thing that is to come with actually confronting this person."

So it's a very difficult situation to navigate. And a lot of times, that's also when there is more overt abuse occurring. But in the case of more subtle psychological abuse, before the person even gets to that point where they recognize they may need to end the relationship. They're living with a very long period of time where there's a lot of confusion, a lot of self-blame, a lot of attempts to try to make the relationship better, and those attempts fail.

And so then that feels terrible to the person. And what's wrong with me, that I can't get this relationship back on track. So there are certainly a lot of components that lead up to the extreme anxiety that a lot of people experience when they're in a psychologically abusive dynamic.

**[00:11:36] Alex Howard**

Could you unpack a little bit more of some of the examples of subtle abuse? Because you talked about the headlines. It could be psychological, it could be financial, it could be being controlling.

But could you maybe give a few tangible examples? Because I'm just mindful that, as you've been touching on... People often normalize to these things and therefore don't necessarily identify it as being abusive. So I think just getting a few tangible examples might help bring this to life even more.

**Avery Neal**

Absolutely. So one of the things to really pay attention to, I would say more than anything else, is how you feel in the relationship. Because often we override our own feelings and we make excuses or justifications for things, but we're actually feeling very, very poorly in the relationship.

So if you're feeling routinely diminished in the relationship or afraid of your partner's reaction... Not even physically afraid, but just emotionally afraid of your partner's reaction, that is something really important to pay attention to.

So we should all feel really safe to have conversations with our partners, no matter the topic. Even if it's not a pleasant topic, there's an underlying trust that it's emotionally safe to explore things and discuss things, and it's not going to go into an area that's disrespectful.

So I think that that's something really important to pay attention to, is your intuition, your feelings in the relationship, and how you feel when you're around that person. Some of the patterns, I guess, to look for are, is the person controlling?

So do you feel like you can fully be yourself as an individual in the relationship, or do you feel like you have to hide parts of yourself or not let your partner know about certain parts about yourself because you're afraid of your partner's reaction?

So this can even be things like getting a promotion at work or something really wonderful happening to you, and you're afraid of your partner's reaction to that. Maybe your partner gets jealous, or maybe your partner gets angry whenever you are happy.

And so you try to manage your emotions in order to not set your partner off. That's really something to pay attention to. So does your partner support you in your individuality, or do you feel like you have to hold yourself back or suppress yourself in the relationship. So that's a huge one.

Another big one is, does your partner put you down or use humor to put you down a lot? All of these can be tricky because there are certainly exceptions to certain things. Maybe your partner didn't mean to hurt your feelings, but your partner is willing to take responsibility for their behavior and then works extra hard not to do that the next time.

That's all normal healthy stuff in a relationship. But what we're talking about when we're looking at more subtly abusive tactics. The humor that's used to put you down is a way to diminish you and to keep you down a notch and leave your partner up here.

**[00:15:09]**

And that's the pattern we're looking for. And this can be done in private, but also it's often seen when you're out in public around people. Your partner making comments that are belittling or humiliating or degrading in some way. And it's disguised in humor so that if you confront your partner, it's, "Oh, you're just overreacting," kind of a thing.

**Alex Howard**

That's an interesting point because something you said a bit earlier... I thought it was an interesting point about how we feel small in a relationship. Then it struck me that sometimes it's not that the relationship is making someone feel small, that that's their object relation and the place they've normalized to.

But I think what you just said is really important, if that relationship dynamic is keeping that person small, like they tried to challenge that status and express themselves and take more space. And then that's not allowed, I guess that's the hallmark that there's something abusive that's going on here.

**Avery Neal**

That's exactly right. And that is exactly when I'm working with someone in a relationship that is off balance, let's say, and there's the potential for psychological abuse.

As the person, as the individual, gains strength in their autonomy and in their voice and in their own individuality, I always ask them to just observe how their partner responds to that because that is very, very helpful information.

Now, it's always going to be uncomfortable in a relationship dynamic when there's a change and everybody has a period of adjustment. But generally speaking, your partner should be supportive of you and your growth.

And even if it's uncomfortable, they want to work with you and to figure out what needs to happen to keep the relationship intact and thriving. If your partner is threatened enough to where your partner punishes you for your newfound confidence or trying to strengthen yourself, then that is a red flag, and that's certainly something you should pay attention to.

**Alex Howard**

You were saying a bit earlier that one of the challenges becomes this almost like learned helplessness, that we start to believe that we don't have what it takes to change. We don't have what it takes to leave the situation.

A lot of that anxiety, it's not just in the mind, it's physical anxiety in the body. I think this is one of the things that's really important to me in the dialogs in this conference to make this point that if anxiety is just in the mind...

Not that anxiety in the mind is easy, that's also its own challenge. But if anxiety is just in the mind, yes, you can work primarily on a cognitive level, and you can have an impact on changing that.

**[00:18:02]**

But what you're describing feels like to me a lot of physically held and stored anxiety, particularly when you spoke to trauma from the past. So I'd love you to speak a bit to that, but also then we can open up... Well, then what do we do then to work with that?

### **Avery Neal**

Yes. So I think it's imperative. If we're going to talk about anxiety, it's imperative that we talk about our bodies. And so most of conventional wisdom is around relaxing the mind and the body will follow. And what I have found is that when somebody is highly anxious, and there's literally almost this survival mode that is being triggered, they can't calm their mind.

It's like if we're looking at hierarchy of needs, we can't get to those higher level needs if our basic needs aren't getting met. And so what's really, really important is to help the body to come out of that stress response.

So instead of trying to intellectually calm the mind, calm the thoughts, and then the body will follow. That leads people to get frustrated with the practice, to believe that something's wrong with them when it doesn't work, and then really cut themselves off from really helpful healing tools that may actually be helpful down the road.

So instead, it's really important, I believe, to look at the body first and help the body get out of this stress response. So when we have a traumatic event or prolonged exposure to a stressful event, we have this visceral response to it.

Our adrenaline is heightened. We may experience panic attack symptoms, increase in heart rate, sweaty palms, shaking, troubling, all of those things. And so when the actual acute threat is over, our bodies can come down from that somewhat. But a lot of times, they don't fully come out of that stress response.

And so what has to happen is we have to help our bodies to release that stress and get to a deeper state of relaxation in order... Because that's really the way we're meant to be. We're really meant to have this relaxed, calm internal state.

And then when stressful situations arise, it increases our stress level, but it's not to the point where we can't manage it. So as we relax our bodies, as we calm our bodies, what happens... And it's a beautiful thing to watch unfold.

What happens is our minds begin to slow down, or our thoughts begin to slow down. Our minds begin to clear, and then we can get into some of the mindfulness and the meditation and those types of practices, which are amazingly profound. But we have to first start with our bodies.

### **Alex Howard**

I've got an inner question, an inquiry that's happening as you're talking, so I'm going to throw it out between the two of us. I was thinking about this, so often the thing that people will say when

they're in a toxic relationship dynamic or they're in an abusive relationship is, "I can't calm my system because I don't feel safe in the environment that I'm in."

### **[00:21:39]**

It's like the chicken and egg situation because then it's like, but to be able to leave the situation, one needs to also find that place of resourcefulness in themselves. I'm curious as to what your response is when you're working with, let's say it's a woman that's in an abusive relationship with a man.

And she says, "Well, I just can't feel safe in my own home. I can't relax in my own home." And let's say it's a relationship where it's not physically abusive. So it's not necessarily that she needs to leave right now. But she needs to leave, and you're working on resourcing her over time to get to the point she feels able to do that. I'm super-curious as to how you navigate that territory.

### **Avery Neal**

Absolutely. And it's very difficult because certainly my position is not to ever tell someone what to do. And so the work that we do together is really around helping that individual decrease their stress level and connect with their body. At least in the office, where it's a safe space or in the session where it's a safe space, and then begin the work of strengthening themselves.

So helping with the belief that you are capable, you can do hard things. Let's address your fears, and let's confront them, and let's walk through and figure out how you would navigate each one of those fears, were they to materialize.

So we take it step by step, and often, some of the most healing work is helping a person to go back in time and figure out, when was the last time you did feel safe? When was the last time your body felt like it could truly relax and that it was safe to do so?

And that's often incredibly emotional and healing work to identify what's happened to the person over time to get farther and farther away from that. And then we make plans around what the person wants, what goals that they have for themselves.

But really it's about... In the individual session, it's about strengthening the person and supporting the person starting from where they are and then growing beyond that and allowing them to feel the strength to confront any fears.

### **Alex Howard**

I feel like another piece of this anxiety jigsaw in toxic relationship dynamics is, if we think about it like a continuum where on one end is... Not that I'm sure this actually exists, but like the perfect relationship.

And then at the other end of the continuum, there's the most dysfunctional relationship. And so at the extremes, it's really clear. Someone's in a clearly dysfunctional relationship. Clearly, the work is to get to leave. But there's a middle ground.

**[00:24:46]**

There's a lot of relationships that sit in this territory where it's like, they're not awful, they're not great, there's potential to change. I think those relationships can often themselves be a big source of anxiety. It's like, should I stay? Should I go? Will they really change? Will they do the work with me? And I think in a way, it can get really difficult.

Or they start to do the work, then they stop doing the work. So I'm interested as well... I really appreciate the point you just made. It's not your job to make the decision. It's your job is to help them find their own clarity.

But I'm curious as to how you work with that and that almost existential anxiety around, should I be here? Should I not? Yeah. Am I making sense?

### **Avery Neal**

Absolutely. You're making perfect sense. And I think one of the things to really pay attention to is the person's pattern. So is the person's partner fitting a pattern of unhealthy behaviors, because the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. So looking at that.

And then in my view, my experience... The degree to which a person is willing to take responsibility for their behavior and to be accountable to their partner really determines if change is going to occur and if it's going to be permanent.

So a lot of times in those dynamics that you're describing, let's say one person says, "I'm done. I'm leaving the relationship", and then the other person says, "Oh, I'm so caught off guard. Let me do all this work to give you what you finally need."

And then this person who initiated the divorce or the end of the relationship has emotionally moved on, or there's been so much hurt there that they've given up on trying to fix the relationship.

This is a really, really common dynamic. So really, it has to be up to the couple how long they're willing to make the effort to make the relationship work and to what degree they're willing to put forth that effort.

But I would say, generally speaking, in my experience, the best predictors of success are how much is each person willing to take responsibility for their behavior and to be accountable? And that means fully accountable. Not blaming the other person, but fully accountable for their own behavior.

And then to what degree is the partner or is each person empathetic to one another's needs. So empathy is directly correlated with relationship satisfaction. The more empathetic our partner is, the more satisfied we are likely to be in that relationship.

So empathy and a sense of responsibility or accountability are the two biggest factors, in my opinion, for determining the success of a relationship, the happiness of a relationship, and if some of these patterns that are problematic can actually change consistently.

**[00:28:06] Alex Howard**

It feels like a good point to briefly bring in narcissistic tendencies, because, of course, in a way, narcissism is the absence of empathy, is one way to think about it. I know, it's much more complex. But maybe you want to just make a few... Someone is in a relationship where...

And again, "narcissist" is a big word. There's a few spectrums in this. But do you want to just speak to how that dynamic, and particularly the gaslighting and the dynamics that go on, that can actually, again, increase anxiety because one starts to question their own truth.

**Avery Neal**

Yes, Absolutely. So psychological abuse exists in all narcissistic relationships. So it's the psychological abuse component that actually allows the dynamic to keep going and allows the power differentiation to become greater and greater. So certainly this is the case in a narcissistic relationship as well.

And what's confusing to the person that's experiencing the narcissistic relationship is that it didn't start out that way. You spoke to it a few minutes ago. These relationships start out really wonderfully. And so it's not until with time that you start to see your partner lacking empathy and not responding in a loving and respectful way.

And so that's confusing because that's not what you knew them to be before. So then you work harder and harder and harder to try to get things back to where they were before and to try to reach your partner. And the empathy only becomes more and more diminished in the relationship, and the abuse begins to escalate. So it's a very difficult situation.

And certainly, those are ones that unless... Narcissism certainly falls on a spectrum. And if somebody that's narcissistic is on a lower end of that spectrum, and they have that accountability piece and that willingness to take responsibility for their behavior and learn what their partner needs, then there's more hope for the relationship's success long term.

As we move down the spectrum, it's more on the other side of the spectrum where there is really complete lack of empathy and lack of responsibility. Well, the writing is on the wall. I mean, the person can stay in that relationship, but they've got to know that that pattern is not going to change because this is a personality disorder. It's a structural issue.

**Alex Howard**

I was just thinking as you were speaking there. In a way, it's like, of course, toxic relationships and abusive relationships can be a massive cause of anxiety.

But it also struck me that as one really works on calming their anxiety and finding that regulation in their nervous system, one can also really inquire into, "Why am I in this relationship? Am I in this relationship because I have anxiety about being on my own?"

"Or am I in this relationship because I have anxiety about the process of leaving the relationship? Or am I in this relationship because actually I love this person, this person loves me, and we have our bustles, but that's the glue." But it's hard to get to that truth when we're in this anxious state.

**[00:31:47] Avery Neal**

Absolutely. And a lot of these different feelings and emotions become very tangled and confusing. And so that's why it takes some time, typically, to explore what is what and confronting the fears.

Is the fear around being alone? Is that the ultimate fear? Or having no money and the financial distress of that situation? Or fear of my partner will take my children, or my partner will kill me, or whatever it is.

Every person's fears are different, and it's extremely important to identify what those particular fears are, if there's any hope of overcoming them and really moving beyond that feeling of helplessness into a more empowered state where you can make those healthy decisions for yourself.

**Alex Howard**

So let's bring it back to some practical takeaways. So someone that is watching or listening to this conversation and is identifying these two key things. One, it's a toxic relationship. There is psychological abuse. Maybe it's quite subtle, but there's abuse happening in the relationship, and they can really resonate with this anxiety piece. What would be some good next steps?

**Avery Neal**

Well, I think the first thing is to make a commitment to yourself or make a promise to yourself that you will keep educating yourself on anxiety and on toxic relationships, because that education is so empowering. It informs us.

And so I think that we all owe it to ourselves to stay informed and learn what we can so that we can figure out the right combination of things to support ourselves. And of course, this only benefits not just ourselves, but those around us.

The second thing that I think is really important for anyone experiencing anxiety, whether they're in a toxic relationship or not, is to connect with their body.

And so there are a lot of ways to do this. I've got a recording that's a free download on the website, but certainly any movement therapies or muscle tension exercises help the body to actually release some of that stress and tension.

And then it preps the body for going into the more mindfulness, meditative aspect of things. So I think focusing on the body first, helping the body to actually truly deeply relax, and then going into the more intellectual mindfulness practice. That's also really important.

And then the last thing I would say is that it's important to identify, what was the last time you felt deeply relaxed and safe? When you felt like you could fully feel safe. This is going to be a very emotional question for people to ask themselves, because for some, they may say, "I don't remember a time."

**[00:35:13]**

And so that's then worth exploring. But figuring out what it is that brought your body into this heightened stress response and looking at that and doing some work around that. Inner child work and healing work around that is really important.

And then asking yourself where you feel that stress and where you feel that fear in your body. These are all really important things to be asking ourselves and to be working through as we connect with some of this. With our bodies, with our circumstances, with our environment, with our relationships.

### **Alex Howard**

I'm going to ask you in a minute how people can find out more about you and your work. But just before we do that, I'm just also... I think a really helpful piece in closing would be for people that are watching this that feel like they don't have what it takes, I'd love you to challenge that. I'd love you to speak to...

You've worked with a lot of people over the years. Speak to the potential people do have to change these dynamics. I'm sure that day in, day out, your clinical work...

Of course, I'm sure there's lots of very challenging stories, but I bet there's also a lot of stories of inspiration and hope. I know we can't go into clinical specifics of people you work with, but that general feeling of possibility. I'd love you to speak to that.

### **Avery Neal**

Absolutely. Well, I think it's really important to talk about this because it does feel, and it can feel, very hopeless when you're suffering with anxiety, especially when it's very severe anxiety, day in and day out. It can be debilitating.

And so people lose hope. I mean, it begins to feel like there is no quality of life here, and I've tried all these things and they haven't worked, and I don't know what else to do. And of course, it affects so many aspects of our lives when we're experiencing anxiety to that degree.

So what I want everyone to know is that it absolutely can and will get better when you find the right combination of things to support yourself. And for each person, that combination of things is different.

So we're learning more and more about how our gut microbiome influences our mood and our overall health. We're learning more and more about trauma and how that impacts the brain and the various techniques that can be helped to really heal that trauma.

We're learning about all kinds of things about how past experiences affect our bodies, and how we hold on to that and how to release that, and how to let go of some of that, and then how to support ourselves in an empowered way to move forward.

**[00:38:04]**

So every person's journey with anxiety can look a little different in terms of what works and what's going to click into place to make a difference. But I will say that I see all the time, clients that have had years and years and years, even a lifetime, dealing with hopelessness, that the anxiety is not going to ever get better.

And then to watch them unfold in their journey and develop this love for life and actually go out and do the things that maybe didn't feel possible before and see the benefit and their relationship strengthening. It's an incredible thing to see. It's a very profound thing to watch, and it's possible for everyone. It's just a matter of being patient and not giving up.

**Alex Howard**

Beautiful. Very beautiful. Avery, tell people how they can find out more about you, about your work. And you mentioned on your website, you have a download, so speak a bit to that.

**Avery Neal**

Yes, absolutely. So two websites, [averyneal.com](http://averyneal.com), and that has the download to the... There's a free gift, and there's a download for the relaxation exercise, as well as a flow chart to determine if your relationship is, in fact, psychologically abusive.

Those are both free resources for people that will hopefully be helpful. And then the Women's Therapy Clinic. We've got some wonderful therapists, and for those in need looking for individual therapy, we're happy to meet with you and talk with you. So that's [womenstherapyclinic.com](http://womenstherapyclinic.com).

**Alex Howard**

Fantastic. Avery, thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

**Avery Neal**

Thank you so much.