



Conscious Life presents

ANXIETY SUPER CONFERENCE

Self-compassion and roadblocks to recovery

Guest: Kimberley Quinlan

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[00:00:10] Meagen Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, cohost of the Anxiety Super Conference.

Today I'm speaking with Kimberley Quinlan, a licensed marriage and family therapist with a private practice in California specializing in anxiety, OCD and related disorders, and eating disorders.

Kimberley is also the founder of [cbtschool.com](https://www.cbtschool.com), an online psychoeducation platform that provides online courses for those with obsessive compulsive disorder and body focused repetitive behaviors.

Kimberley is the author of *The Self-Compassion Workbook for OCD*, and the host of *Your Anxiety Toolkit* podcast, providing mindfulness based tools for anxiety, OCD, depression, and BFRB's.

Kimberley Quinlan, thank you so much for being with us today.

Kimberley Quinlan

It's my pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Meagen Gibson

So, Kimberley, I'd love it if you could tell me if you think people can recover from anxiety.

Kimberley Quinlan

It's a great question. It's actually one that I get all the time. I am a believer that you can 100% recover. But the reason that I love this question is, I think it's important for us first to identify what is recovery?

Often when I see a patient, I have lots of students or maybe even social media followers, they get really stuck on this idea because they've been kind of misled. And I think social media has a reason for this misled mindset, is that recovery from anxiety means you never have anxiety, that you are just free from it.

And it's important to remember that every human has anxiety, particularly depending on when the world is struggling in certain areas and politics and family and holidays. We all have anxiety. But I consider recovery to be your relationship with your anxiety.

So if you have anxiety and your relationship with it is one of allowing and mindfulness and willingness and compassion so that you're not constantly running from it and fighting it, I believe that to be the perfect example of what recovery is, and that is 100% possible.

[00:02:21] Meagen Gibson

I love so much of what you said. And I found that lots of people, including myself, especially when you're on an anxiety journey, maybe coming to terms at the beginning that, oh, I have anxiety, or I might have an issue with anxiety that I'm trying to work with, is there's so much overwhelm that if you hear somebody say, you have to come to an acceptance or compassion about your anxiety, you spend so much energy and so much attention avoiding the anxiety that it feels like that sounds like a scary proposition for people, maybe.

So I would love it if you could just unpack just a little bit more about what you mean in that journey to acceptance and listening to your anxiety as a tool.

Kimberley Quinlan

Well, I think the first thing to remember is we all have anxiety and it's normal and human to have a response where when you feel anxious, you want to run away or fight it or freeze. We know that as the fight, flight and freeze.

But there's also one other which is fawning, which is where when you're anxious, you want to take care of other people and go into perfectionism.

So your instincts to do those things and those behaviors is completely human, and it's what kept us alive all these years. But as we've evolved, and I'm sure other talks have talked about this, as we've evolved, our brain starts to set off alarms just in case. And they can set off alarms in a disordered way. Meaning, just like the fire alarm, it sets off the fire alarm and there's no smoke.

So what we want to do here is, this is where we change the relationship with that, is when your brain sets off a fire alarm, when there's no real danger, if we respond to that as if it is danger, it reinforces our brain, assuming it's dangerous and it'll keep setting off the alarm.

However, if you respond and you make these, and these are just very tiny nuance shifts that you can make, teeny tiny ones, this doesn't have to be a grand gesture even, is just to shift your attention to going, oh, I see that my brain has set off an alarm. Or it might go, I see you brain, you're trying to get me to engage in that old stuff, and I'm choosing not to do that.

Or it might be, oh, yeah, this is really hard for me. Instead of responding in a negative, critical way. This is hard. Yeah, it's really hard when my brain does that. So just those small shifts can be huge.

In addition to that, if you can then, and this is where I sometimes lose people but end up getting them back once they hear my statement, is if you can actually then stare your fear in the face on purpose, which is a common tool for anxiety, you actually are now training your brain to not set the alarm off anymore. So you're actually helping yourself in the future so that this doesn't continue to be an ongoing problem.

Meagen Gibson

I love all of that. And the sophisticated systems at work that aren't in our control to keep us safe. And just acknowledging, I don't know if you even said this as a word, but what I'm hearing so much from you is just acknowledgement. Just self acknowledgement. Like, hey brain, I hear you've been trying to keep me safe. Hey, there's some messaging that's familiar to me. Just the pause and acknowledgement is so self validating.

[00:05:51]

But I understand these things that are going on that are largely out of my control in that initial stimulation and response. But then afterwards you get to decide, you get to choose how you're going to respond to that stimulus and the message that you're receiving about what's going on.

Kimberley Quinlan

And for me, a big piece of it is going, oh, okay, I see you fear. Let's go to the grocery store together. Meaning, I'm not going to fight you. You can come with me. You don't get to tell me what to do. You don't get to make my choices. I'll do what I like, but you get to come. It's cool. I'm going to make some space for you.

Meagen Gibson

And I love that you named all of them, including fawn, because I just learned recently during an interview with someone else, that the nervous system studies were initially all done on men, which is why they thought it was all fight and flight, because those are the, largely speaking, generalized speaking, those are male responses to anxiety and trauma, and stress responses and nervous system responses. Whereas women can tend more toward fawn or freeze.

And so a lot of people wouldn't look at fawning as being an anxiety or trauma response, but it very much is. When we're like, okay, the way that I'm going to deal with this uncomfortable feeling and cope with it, is to try to fix and caretake other people, because that's what's within my control. That's what my role is. That's what I'm good at. That's what maybe I did in my family system. So that's how I'm going to default to coping with this discomfort.

Kimberley Quinlan

And often fawning gets praised and celebrated. Oh, look how selfless she or he is. Look how on top of it they are. They've always got things worked out and are doing things so well and they have systems. So they praise that, but for the person who's fawning, they're just daily exhausted of trying to just get ahead of the anxiety.

Meagen Gibson

And I found that that's also, just to validate anybody watching, that was how I came into my journey with anxiety. And that was why it was so confusing for me, because I was like, I'm kicking ass. I'm super high functioning. I feel awful. My nervous system feels absolutely awful, but you would never know from the outside.

I was successful in my career, I have a wonderful family, no balls ever get dropped. I'm just over here killing it. But yet at the doctor, I can't sleep and my heart won't stop beating at 180 miles a minute. So what's going on?

Kimberley Quinlan

And that's where we talk about your relationship with it. Because you can seem not anxious at all, but in your body, you're having a fight with somebody all day long, the somebody being anxiety, fear, the stress response. That is, again, a lot of people end up getting a chronic illness because of them doing

that. And everyone's like, you're fine. I don't understand. Maybe you could work a little less maybe. But what they don't know is of this constant struggle internally.

[00:08:57] Meagen Gibson

So in talking about anxiety, there's a huge spectrum of how it looks. We've already talked through a lot of the different kinds of responses you can have as a result of anxiety through your nervous system. But there's also a lot of diagnosis and misdiagnosis that can be accompanied with anxiety.

So I would love it if you could talk through, is it important to get a diagnosis and what are anxiety disorders on the spectrum? What can that look like for people?

Kimberley Quinlan

Great question. I think it's, I will add, and people have probably heard this before, but when you go through your Masters or your PhD to become a therapist, you have to learn all these diagnosis if you're in America, which I am, even though I have this wacky accent. It's really hard because you read this diagnosis and you're like, yes, that one's me. And then you read the next one and be like, that one's me, too. You start to freak out.

So I think it's important that, number one, if you can, to seek another specialist or doctor or GP, therapist to help you with this diagnosis, because it is very easy to get misdiagnosed.

So for us, in my practice, and I have a dozen staff who help us, we're constantly trying to spend a lot of time during assessment making sure that the person is, number one, telling us all of their symptoms. And number two, they understand their symptoms so that they can get the correct care.

It's very common for people with, let's say, generalized anxiety to get a misdiagnosis of, let's say, ADHD. Because they're fidgeting and they can't stay concentrating, they're always feeling very irritable. And there's so many Ads about ADHD meds. You might hear a couple of those and be like, oh, I must have ADHD. That's a really common one.

And vice versa. A lot of people with ADHD diagnosis end up having either generalized anxiety disorder or another anxiety disorder, such as OCD, which is a very common one.

And then we have some other, again, generalized anxiety is usually fears associated with day to day life, finances, money, relationships, career, education and so forth. But that can also show up in forms of social anxiety, health anxiety, particularly if you have a chronic illness like we discussed before, panic disorder. It could also show up in the form of phobias. Needle phobias, blood phobias and so forth. So that's why it's important to zone in on what's specifically happening.

In addition, there are other disorders that people don't talk about at all. And people, I often hear people who will often say, I've been picking out my nails or my skin, picking my acne, pulling my hair my whole life. And I just thought that was what either anxious people do or, quote unquote, they'll say it's something "crazy people" do, which is absolutely not true, but they've kept it inside their whole life thinking, I must be the only one.

But there are actually diagnosis for people with skin picking and hair pulling that is separate to having an anxiety disorder. And I think once we can talk about those things, some people can go, okay, now it's going to make sense. I'm not as crazy as I thought I was.

[00:12:21] Meagen Gibson

And piecing those apart, because in the imaginary Venn diagram I always map out in front of my eyes that nobody can see, there's a lot of concentric circles and overlap between things.

So even though you might have anxiety, you might also have OCD, and you might also have a skin picking disorder, there might be a little bit of each of those. That doesn't mean that you're necessarily going to have all of them, but there might be a lot of concurring symptomologies going on. That is why it's important to disclose all of that to your practitioner so they can make a plan of support.

Kimberley Quinlan

In fact, I'll tell you a story. Yesterday, it's funny we're talking about this today, yesterday I posted on social media, I'm pretty present on Instagram, a carousel of every different anxiety disorder. And I numbered them. So number one, generalized anxiety, number two, OCD.

And then in the comments, I said comment the numbers that resonate with you. And a huge amount of people responded, and the majority were like 1, 5 and 7. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9. It was really cool and validating for people to see, oh, these do overlap and you can have more than one and that doesn't mean there's anything absolutely wrong with you or that you're broken at all.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And I think that's also why it becomes super tricky when trying to talk about it, because I think we're coming to terms with what anxiety and also trauma look like now, and how they can manifest and all of the different... Some of these things, especially the body focused repetitive behaviors that we've mentioned, weren't in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual that we use here in the United States until I think, very recently. Like five or something, five or six years ago.

And so those kinds of things weren't diagnosable conditions or behaviors that people were treating. They were just seen as character flaws or bad habits. They induced a lot of shame, I'm sure.

Kimberley Quinlan

They were actually under the impulse control category. So it was as if it was a weakness or something. Which is so not true. So, we do have a much better conceptualization now.

And the cool thing is, once you hear about it, then you will know, going back to the original question, is that recovery is possible for each of them. It may mean the treatment looks just a little different, but once you know what you have, you can get the correct treatment and then you're rolling in the right direction.

Meagen Gibson

And prioritize, I assume. If you might have a couple of different things going on, it's like okay, well, what is impacting, maybe my work and my personal life the most?

Kimberley Quinlan

Yeah.

[00:15:07] Meagen Gibson

If I've got some health concerns and over the last 2 years I've been afraid to leave my house, how can we get me outside? How can we manage and work with that anxiety? And then we'll deal with something else.

Kimberley Quinlan

Yeah, absolutely.

Meagen Gibson

So I would love it if we talked a little bit about that self-compassion piece and how it can support your recovery.

Kimberley Quinlan

So I am, just a little note about me, I'm a self-compassion geek. It is my favorite topic, mainly because for me, I had an eating disorder. It was a huge part of my recovery. In fact, I don't know if I would have recovered without it.

And at the time I was in recovery or early stages of recovery is when I was an intern. And it was funny because I was working at a center with severe, severe anxiety disorders, like people who are struggling and really struggling with their functioning.

And what I did find, and this isn't just me, I'm sure many clinicians have found this is, the ones who are beating themselves up, tended to do less homework. And we do a lot of homework in therapy. We set homework. We say if you just come once a week, your recovery will be quite slow. And so we're giving homework.

And the ones who beat themselves up, they would either beat themselves up, which would mean they didn't want to do their homework or they'd be struggling with the homework and then get into this spiral of beating themselves up and the homework wouldn't get done, so therefore, it was impacting their recovery.

And so this was a really interesting concept to me, in that the importance of homework and the importance of doing your daily practices. And so that was a huge part of the work that I've done.

The thing to know, though, and I'm sure a lot of people have maybe mentioned this, but I want to just really bring this in, is through my work with self-compassion, I wrote a book about it, and the whole time I wrote the book, it was during COVID, which was horrible, but I was interviewing people all the time. I'm like, what's getting in the way of you actually practicing these skills?

And a lot of the time people believed it, self-compassion, to be like letting yourself off the hook. That will make me lazy and selfish. And particularly, like we're talking about, when you're fighting anxiety all day, the last thing you want to do is let yourself off the hook and get worse. You're already fighting to be well.

But the interesting thing here is, self-compassion is not just candles and bubble baths. It's not. In fact, for the person with anxiety, I have found self-compassion is that, but it's also setting boundaries with

your anxiety. It's saying no. Just like, no anxiety. No, you don't get to tell me what to do. I'm taking care of me. I've got my eyes set on the long-term here, so I'm not doing what you tell me today.

[00:18:14]

And that was a shift for people because a lot of people thought it was just saying kind things. And so I really talk a lot about, like you said, the diagram of it's both kind and nurturing, but also fierce and boundary setting. And when you can combine those, you actually have this perfect environment to manage anxiety.

Meagen Gibson

Everything you said is fantastic. And I feel like sometimes people assume that through working on their anxiety, they will develop self-compassion. And what I'm hearing you say is that that's actually the first step to that accountability and recovery, is the actual self-compassion piece. Is that fair?

Kimberley Quinlan

Very true. I think that that is the case, particularly if you are hard on yourself and you have high expectations, you say, there's this conditional relationship. I'll be kind to you when you fix this. When you do something, I'll give you the reward of kindness. But it's the actual opposite. You do the kindness on the front end, and it actually helps you get better. It helps you recover.

And we have so much science now in the last decade that people who criticize themselves, procrastinate more. They have less motivation, they have less long-term stamina to do hard things. And so it's a superpower if you can develop that skill.

Meagen Gibson

And also, I'm compassionate toward people who, that voice of a lack of self-compassion and criticism, you don't develop it alone. That's developed in social systems and family systems and becomes your own over time.

And so I'm super compassionate to people at the beginning of their self-compassion journey. How many times can I say compassion? But that are struggling with that voice, the critical voice, that won't allow them to rest, that won't allow them to accept what's difficult, that won't allow them a bit of rest, because rest has been so hard to come by.

And so it's difficult work to change those inside voices that are the ones that you've got to cultivate the most.

And a small anecdote for anybody, that helps. When I record these interviews, I record an intro, and sometimes I screw up the intro and have to do it again. But one of the components of that, that I noticed probably a year and a half ago, was that when I would be reading the intro, this really awful voice would go in my head and just be like, you're going to screw it up. I can't believe you sound terrible. Your voice is dumb. Just a really self critical voice.

And I finally developed this practice where I could have an argument with myself while reading an intro, which sounds exactly crazy, but it's not. But I would just be like, I reject that. Thank you. I hear you. And developed the sense that this voice was trying to keep me from looking stupid.

[00:21:19]

It was trying to keep me safe, it was trying to keep me from screwing up my job. I was trying to understand what the wisdom of that critical voice was trying to tell me. And the minute I did that and listened, it stopped.

Kimberley Quinlan

Yeah. And that is what it's trying to do. It's just trying to alert you to the many possible problems. That's all it's doing.

Meagen Gibson

Exactly. I just wanted to send the flag up.

Kimberley Quinlan

Just in case. These are the 27 things that may go wrong in this introduction.

Meagen Gibson

And that's about how many intros I had to record today.

But it was fine. And we were both okay in the discomfort of me doing the intro three or four times.

I just like to tell those stories because, even as somebody that has access to all the tools and all the teachers and all of the resources, I would consider myself in recovery from anxiety. And it's a lifelong process.

And the way I am now, the way I show up in the world now, 6 years into this process, is so much better and so much different and just so much more sustainable than it was 6 years ago. So it's not some finish line. I never want to tell anybody there's a finish line coming. More of just an ongoing process, as I'm sure you know.

Kimberley Quinlan

One thing I will just add, and this was taught to me many years ago. I was on a mindfulness retreat and the leader was talking about, we were doing a self-compassion practice, and one of the people literally got up and walked out the door like no, not doing self-compassion today. No, thank you.

And when they returned back, the leader said, I just want to remind you that your wish to be compassionate is a compassionate act. Because if you're there and you're trying to be kind and the voice is so loud and you don't feel like you're winning that fight, and you're just getting beat down, just your intention and wish to be compassionate is a win.

And so that was always really powerful for me. I wanted to share that.

Meagen Gibson

I love that. I'm so glad you added it. Thank you.

[00:23:24]

So I would love to shift into, and we've been talking around it, but let's talk specifically, the roadblocks to anxiety recovery and how people can avoid those in their journey.

Kimberley Quinlan

So this is really, I believe, to be the most important conversation. When I'm supervising my staff, we spend a lot of time, they will bring cases and say, I'm stuck, what do I do? And really, a lot of what we're doing is we're like, we don't really need to add in anything grand and different. We need to look at what's getting in the way of what they've already been taught.

Now, the biggest one that I see is people's belief that they shouldn't have anxiety. It shouldn't be here, that something must be wrong. We start to interpret it, something must be wrong if I'm having it.

And it's important to know that if you have anxiety or even an anxiety disorder, your brain will set up alarms for reasons that make zero sense, and that's okay.

So sometimes the job is, and I'll always give these little ways to talk back, is to go, hi, anxiety, thank you for showing up but right here, I got this. So you're taking away this whole mentality that this shouldn't be here and that something wrong is happening because it is. So that's huge.

The other huge one is willingness. So willingness to be anxious is probably the biggest outcome for recovery when we see my patients. So here's an example. When I first started treating, we always used to do a SUDs scale, which was, we'd be checking in with our clients, because, let me first preface, 99% of the work we do with clients is to help them face their fears. It's the best job in the world.

We're like, what are you afraid of? Are you afraid of dogs? Let's go to the dog park. Oh, you're afraid of hurting someone's feelings, let's practice communicating without fawning, that kind of thing. You're afraid of doing your taxes, let's do your taxes.

And as we do that, we used to do this SUDs scale where we would check in, what's your anxiety at? Out of 10, where is it? And that's helpful because it helps people to have awareness. But what it actually does is it teaches them to be hyper aware of how their anxiety is.

Meagen Gibson

Always scanning.

Kimberley Quinlan

Hypervigilant. Where is it? Is it coming? Is it going? What's it doing?

So we shifted it to, on the scale of 10, how willing are you to be anxious? How willing are you to let this discomfort rise and fall on its own? And that is a game changer for people to shift towards. Often they'll be like, well, I'm at like a 4. I don't want to feel it. And you'll say, can you bring it up just a couple? Can you be willing a little more? What would that be like for you?

[00:26:22]

And then we start to get into the juice of things, too. What would happen if you allowed that discomfort? Well, I would have to feel this pain in my chest or this tummy ache. And then we have an opportunity to practice kindness. So what's wrong with having a pain in your chest? When I have it, I don't want it, and I resist it, and I get annoyed with myself. So let's actually practice allowing it. And instead, let's just be super gentle and kind with yourself or even maybe stand up to anxiety.

Or what do you value? And let's do that instead. So you really value playing with your kids, get down on the floor and get down in there and really notice the Lego. Is it green or red? Is it square? Is it a triangle? Is it soft? Is it hard? What does it smell like? What does the air feel like against your skin? What do you hear? What are your kids or your friends' expressions? That kind of thing. So you're getting really down into it instead of trying to find a way not to feel it.

Is this following so far?

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, absolutely.

Kimberley Quinlan

Another huge roadblock to anxiety and towards recovery is the idea that it's something that should go away quickly. Like only strange people have anxiety. The majority of Americans have anxiety. It's just a fact.

And so what we can do here is if you can incorporate and allow that, and then practice, how can I, again, we want to look at values. Maybe I should slow down just for a second.

Let's pose a question. So you're woken up in the day, something has happened and it's created anxiety for you. What we can do, as we've talked about in the beginning, is often we focus on the content of our thoughts, thinking that if we solve the content, then the anxiety will go away and we can get going with our day.

But the problem with that is, for every moment that you're giving attention to your fear, you're not doing something you really love and value, which then builds your self esteem.

We've raised the millennial generation to believe that if we tell them they're really good people, they'll have good self esteem, but that's not how we build self esteem. Self esteem is by doing hard stuff, really crappy hard stuff and seeing the finish. That's how we build self esteem.

The reason anxiety takes away our self esteem is because we put our attention on it and we stop doing things that feel rewarding, so it keeps us stuck in the cycle.

So we always, at the beginning of therapy, will be like, what did you do before your anxiety started? What did you enjoy doing? What brought you a sense of creativity and playfulness? What values did you use to engage in? You still have the same values, but did you go to Church on Sunday or Saturday? Did you sew? Did you walk? Did you get exercise? What are the things you used to do that aligned with your values, and go do those things. It's so key.

[00:29:56] Meagen Gibson

I'm so glad you named it, because I know for a fact that creativity and play are the first thing to go when you start to get in an anxious cycle. They're the first things that drop off because your world views just starts to get more and more narrow and all of those things drop off.

And so just naming that and your ability to remind yourself that you used to be able to be creative and fun and you used to enjoy doing things, what would that look like? What would you be willing to try to get back into that? It's such a great reminder.

Kimberley Quinlan

And meaning it's not going to cure you, it's not going to make your anxiety go away, but it allows you to get back to being you instead of being anxious and only having to focus on your anxiety.

Again, we try to take away anxiety, but while doing that, we also want to add in, what did you used to enjoy and so forth. It's so important.

Meagen Gibson

Building on what you said a little bit earlier, you had mentioned thoughts and then body sensations. And I think part of the recovery journey, and what makes anxiety journeys difficult, is that we as human beings, whether we've been taught or we just do this as part of our survival mechanism, is we separate thoughts and feelings.

Like, I have a thought I might connect that when I have anxiety, my stomach hurts, my heart starts to go faster. These sensations in my stomach, I need to go to the bathroom or something like that.

But those are just things to be managed. They're not necessarily directly connected to the thoughts. My thoughts are in my control entirely and it's my job, and a personal character flaw that I can't get control of these thoughts. And in the meantime, I'm going to go over and deal with these body symptoms. And integrating those symptoms, connecting all of that stimulus and response and then finding a way to work through it and work around it and listen to it and respect it.

Kimberley Quinlan

A lot of the time with anxiety is, we have anxiety, but then we have anxiety about having anxiety. And the fear of fear is a huge thing. It's a huge part of panic disorder treatment.

And so this is where we joke, and I joke with my clients. I actually make fun of my clients a lot in a playful, very kind way. We joke a lot about, like I'll say, you're all heavy right now. Drop into your body. If you're trying to think your way out of this, chances are you're not going to win. If you can actually step in, and again, I really want to emphasize, if you drop down into anxiety, it's really simply a collection of sensations.

And the interesting thing is, and I always think this is so mind blowing, is some people, I'll say to a client, what is so uncomfortable about your fear? Pretend I'm an alien, pretend I've never had fear. Explain it to me. And they'll say, I have shortness of breath and I've got butterflies in my tummy and my heart rate is going really high. That's the sensations.

[00:33:13]

And then we explore, what are some other things when those symptoms show up? Like arousal, like intimacy, love, falling in love, butterflies in your tummy, shortness of breath, increased heart rate. They're very similar, but how we perceive them gets us into trouble.

And so that's so interesting to me. We could be like, yes, I want that. No, I don't want that. If we can drop down into our body and then, once you observe the feelings and sensations, remind yourself it is like a wave. You just ride the wave. They will come and go on their own with time, particularly if you don't get up in there and try and mess with them to get them to go away.

Meagen Gibson

And I just want to assert that, the sooner you can teach kids about that, the better. The sooner you can learn it for yourself and then embody that into any kids in your life it's... I've seen it happen several times just in the last year.

And the resilience that it builds in kids when they can hold scared and excited as two simultaneously happening emotions, and then just be through that, for whatever reason it's coming up, it's just so empowering. I've seen it empower kids when they understand what you just said.

Kimberley Quinlan

Yes. And for kids, but for adults, too, a lot of riding that wave is having that, again, that relationship with fear. A lot of times with kids we'll draw, what does your anxiety look like? And they're like, it's like a purple little gremlin and it's got fur all over it. And what do you call it? And they might say it's Mr. Meanie or something.

And so as they're riding the fear, and adults can do this, too, as they're riding that wave, they can be saying, no, Mr. Meanie, you don't get to tell me not to play with my friends or I'm going to do this because I want to go to camp. That can really be a huge piece of it.

The one other thing I'll say really quickly about this is, I want to validate, it's hard to stay motivated, to stand up to fear. Because if you've already got a fulltime job and probably some people to take care of and yourself to take care of, and so motivation is tough when you're managing anxiety.

So what I would encourage you to do is, at least once during the day, but you may just want to put up a sticky note, remind yourself why you're changing your relationship to fear. Fear will convince you that it's out to help you feel great. It's here to tell you, if you do the responsible thing and take care of my concerns, then you will be fine.

And it's really hard to turn your head away from that because we're like, responsibility? You said responsibility. That doesn't sound very good. I don't want to be irresponsible.

And so if you're struggling with motivation to do this work, just jot down what would life look like if anxiety wasn't here? What would life look like if you didn't let fear make your decisions? Just keep that in your mind because that will help generate motivation as you go.

[00:36:46] Meagen Gibson

I'm so glad that you named that because, as we've said, coping with anxiety can be extremely, it takes a lot of energy, it can be exhausting. And so then to try to resist fear, work with fear, just yet another thing to manage.

But having that reminder of, but this is why. This is what I want to have access to. Because, especially if you're on an anxiety journey, your goal is like, I just want to feel this less. Instead of, I want to feel joy, I want to have access to play, I want to have a less burdensome feeling in my soul, I want to have some space. Those are the things that we can latch onto and take with us. And, okay, and that's going to require this much work on a committed basis, and it will get easier the more I do it.

Kimberley Quinlan

Yeah. I often say, I have the podcast, and at the end of every podcast, we all say, it's a beautiful day to do hard things. The reason that stuck with so many people, so many people tell me they use it, is it flips the idea that it's a beautiful day to get through without pain. It's like, no, today is a beautiful day. We'll just go do the hard things. And that's so empowering. It's so empowering and freeing.

Meagen Gibson

I love that. Well, Kimberley, where can people find out more about you, your book, your products, your podcast? Tell me all about it.

Kimberley Quinlan

Sure. So we have, of course, one-on-one therapy at my practice, it's kimberleyquinlan-lmft.com, but my goal is to have tons of free resources for people who don't have access because it's a privilege to have access to one-on-one therapy.

So we have a free podcast called *Your Anxiety Toolkit*. Everything you've heard from me so far, you'll hear during the podcast. That's the whole vibe. So if you like that you'll love the podcast.

At cbtschool.com, we have tons of free trainings, we also have paid trainings, but they're longer, really dropping into, if you don't have therapy, this is exactly what I would say to you in my sessions. So there's that. We also have some for generalized anxiety and panic as well.

And then, if you have OCD, I have a book on self compassion called, *The Self-Compassion Workbook for OCD*.

And if you want to follow me on Instagram, it's [@youranxietytoolkit](https://www.instagram.com/youranxietytoolkit).

Meagen Gibson

Fantastic. Kimberley, thank you so much for being with us today.

Kimberley Quinlan

My pleasure. Thank you so much for having me.