



Conscious Life presents
**HEALING TOXIC
RELATIONSHIPS**

Rupture, Repair and Release

Guest: Ken Page

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] Meagen Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, your conference Co-host. Today, I'm speaking with Ken Page, a renowned psychotherapist and a leading voice of hope and wisdom for everyone seeking to find and cultivate healthy, lasting love. He's the host of the Deeper Dating podcast and the author of the best selling book *Deeper Dating: How to Drop the Games of Seduction and Discover the Power of Intimacy*. Ken is passionate about helping people understand the search for love as one of the greatest spiritual adventures in life, and he celebrates the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in the banquet of wiser relationship advice. Ken lives in Long Beach, New York with his husband, children, and their pets. Ken Page, thank you so much for being with us today.

Ken Page

I am so glad to be here. Thanks for inviting me.

Meagen Gibson

So, recently I read your words that said, when we ignore signs of a toxic partner, we marry misery, and that really got my attention. So I'd like to start with, what are the signs of a toxic partner?

Ken Page

So the first thing I want to say about that is I want to differentiate between toxic and abusive, because abusive is always toxic, but toxic is not always abusive and it can be subjective. But some of the signs are... The biggest sign is that your well being feels hurt, feels chipped at in an ongoing way. In a toxic relationship, signs are competitiveness, jealousy, emotional unsafety, a lack of feeling nurtured, in fact, the opposite feeling kind of cut down, put down, diminished, controlled, punished. These are all signs, and we know best by the way we're feeling in the relationship. When we feel those things diminished, put down, somehow less than... Somehow having to prove ourselves in an ongoing way, drained. These are all signs of a toxic dynamic and potentially a toxic relationship because they say that all love is a journey of rupture and repair. We have to do that work. We're tasked with doing that work. So whether you're single and looking for a relationship or you're in a relationship already, the constant question is, do I feel nourished? Do I feel seen? Most important, do I feel emotionally safe? This is something I teach people to make their primary number one question as they navigate through all the relationships of their life.

[00:02:57]

Does my soul feel safe at this moment? And if it doesn't, some work needs to be done. Some of you might say, does my heart feel safe? But I'm trying to get to those deeper and subtler feelings that we have a right to keep asking. And if the answer is no, things have to be fixed. And if they chronically can't be fixed or they keep going back to that situation, that's a toxic relationship.

Meagen Gibson

What a fantastic kickoff. I was furiously writing notes because there's a bunch of things that you said I want to come back to. Okay, so I'm so glad that you set the framework for us of abusive versus toxic because it's an incredibly important distinction, right? Toxic are... I'm going to put words in your mouth, please correct me if I'm wrong, but toxic from what you're describing are things that can be addressed. Rupture repair. We can bring this out in the light. We can look at it and say, how can we fix this dynamic, possibly. Abusive, this is not a relationship you should try to amend, change, fix, like, this is a situation you need to hightail it out of. Is that what I'm hearing?

Ken Page

That is really true. I mean, there are situations where you might want to fix an abusive relationship, but if there is physical violence, if there is chronic emotional cruelty, you want to get out of there. You just want to get out of there, and you have a right to get out of there. Now, if you try to fix things in a toxic relationship and they don't fix and both of you are not doing the deep work of getting help, then you really, really should consider getting out of there, because the costs are so profound. The costs not only to your well being, your health, your future, but the costs to who you can be in the world, to what you're meant to be here for, to your sense of self love, to your sense of contribution, all those things will be diminished. And that's not what we want in this precious life that we have.

Meagen Gibson

And you're speaking to my soul. I transcribe everything you're saying, it's so true and so beautiful and really drives the point of this entire conference and why we wanted to make it is because difficult relationships, toxic relationships, abusive relationships are hard, but that's not even the point. It's that they're chipping away from the purpose that you're here to live. It's like anything that's going to diminish your light and your ability to live fully as yourself in the world and give the gifts you're meant to give to others in the world is what we don't want. We want to do what we can to repair or change that dynamic.

Ken Page

Absolutely. And that is why this constant question of what's the state of my heart at this moment? And if it's not right, it needs fixing. And that's kind of an ongoing thing anywhere and everywhere in our life, and the fabulous thing is when we make that our question, we emanate a sense of dignity and people feel that because we've made that our goal. We've made that the way that we're organizing ourselves. If we're not feeling generative and nourished, something needs to be fixed, and when you live that way, there is a beauty to your life that people feel, and there is a dignity and self protection that people also feel.

[00:06:31] Meagen Gibson

We're going to spend all day together, I can tell right now.

Ken Page

It's such exciting stuff, it really is. Because the way that we handle this, just like the way that we handle intimate relationships needs to be healing our life. If it doesn't, we need to make a shift. And the way that that healing happens is so exciting. I mean, that's what I've devoted my life work to, and I just think that it's not just fixing, it is healing, and that's an exciting thing.

Meagen Gibson

And speaking of healing, I want to come back to something else I wrote down that you said, and it's this idea of that we're all because we're all individual human beings who have lived our own lives, we're all capable of possessing some of this toxicity under stress or as a result of the patterns of behavior in relationship that we established as children, our family systems and things like that. So I also want to kind of put into context that toxicity is not something, like other people are dealing with and I'm a victim of all the time. Toxic dynamics, if this is true to you, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but can be we're all capable of being a little bit toxic in our relationships, under stress, under duress, under grief, under loss, at these extreme, under illness, right? Under a diminishment of what we're usually like. So circumstances can put us in these situations where we're displaying toxic behaviors as well. And if I'm hearing you right, it's our job and relationship to point that out to one another and to say, I want to grow in this way. And I realize that there's a rupture here, that you're under an extreme amount of circumstances or I'm under an extreme amount of circumstances and haven't been my best self. And now let's do the work to repair and grow together.

Ken Page

Absolutely. That is an ongoing journey. That's an ongoing journey, and, you know, John Gottman did really interesting research. He studied couples who had a low negativity threshold, meaning, like, if things didn't feel right, they felt kind of pressured to deal with it. They really needed to deal with it up front, even if it was subtle. And then couples who were like, I know this person loves me, and I love them, like, I'm going to let it roll off my back. Well, it's the people who had the low negativity threshold that were, like, saying, oh, this doesn't feel right, we got to do something about it, those were the happiest, longest lasting couples, not the ones who let all the stuff roll off their back. So that exquisite work of healing and repair is so important and when you could do that with your partner, that's like a sense of solidity and foundation that is just huge. That feeling of looking in your partner's eyes and them looking in yours and both of you saying, we can fix this. We're going to fix this. That's just one of the greatest feelings that exists.

Meagen Gibson

And I love that you mentioned repair earlier, too, because... I just learned about this concept of repair probably three years ago, and it absolved me of this self imposed expectation of perfection that I didn't realize I had been carrying for so long in all my relationships, whether they be from my family of origin, in my romantic relationship or with my kids. And just the idea of self accountability and repair was so... It just relieved me of this burden I didn't realize I was carrying, so I would love if you could talk just a little bit about repair and relationship and what that looks like.

[00:10:13] Ken Page

Absolutely. I have so much to say about that because I've had to do so much of it and continually do. I am constantly humbled by my clay feet when it comes to love as a dad, as a married man, my husband is wonderful, we have a great relationship, essentially, but I'm always humbled by how much I have to learn. And all of us have fear of intimacy. I think if you're breathing, you've got fear of intimacy because love is the most precious thing, so it's the most valuable thing, so it is the riskiest thing, the fear of losing it is the most profound. So yeah, I want to offer just a few ideas for how we can do the work of repair and kind of like some ways that each one of us can inject some simple wisdom into our relationship life, and I want to talk about that for single people and for coupled people. So I'll start with that. So this is one really, really big thing, which is we cannot lift ourselves up by our bootstraps when we're stuck in a pattern. Yes, sometimes we can work it through and change, but usually that is really the arduous slow path.

Whereas if we go to someone outside the relationship who knows us, loves us, it doesn't have to be a therapist, but three cheers for therapists, but someone who knows us and loves us, where we can just kind of bring our struggle and this person has wisdom and kindness and caring, we will break through that toxic situation infinitely quicker than if we try to just keep changing our thinking. It's like waking up in the morning and like, okay, I'm not going to get out of bed until I figure out such and such, well, that's a way to just stay in bed! So figuring this stuff out ourselves for too long wastes vast amounts of time.

Another thing that we can do is some kind of practice to soften our hearts on a regular basis. Our hearts, our human hearts become flinty and toughened at the drop of a hat in day to day life. And if you have some kind of practice that brings you back to your tenderness, to your softness, to remembering the goodness of you and your partner makes all the difference in the world. We can't assume that our daily mode of operation is going to lead us to the healing that we want. We have to be shifting, inspiring and reminding ourselves of the importance of love, the importance of our relationship, our own self worth. We got to do the work, and it's foundational work, it's not just dealing with the conflict at hand because that's the hardest part, because we're hardwired and our partner is hardwired in our own ways around these toxic elements. But I do also just want to say one more thing, which is a lot of us have patterns where we are attracted to toxic relationships and I want to talk about that too. And I actually want to offer a gorgeous, gorgeous exercise that everyone can do to identify their patterns of being drawn to toxic relationships.

Meagen Gibson

Please. I was like, by all means, don't let me stop you! Go right ahead.

Ken Page

Yeah, so this is an amazing, amazing thing. And in my intensives and in my work, we spend a lot of time on this. There's such a focus and I'm going to talk about single people now a bit, there's such a focus on the way to find love is to make yourself more attractive in the way that you look, in the way that you act. And to some degree those things are good, but you get a really big bang from your buck when you actually focus on your attractions, not just your attractiveness. What are your patterns of attraction? And this is important for a number of reasons, and this is where I'm going to... I guess I'll take a little detour and talk about a very central concept. This is something that Oprah excerpted from my book *Deeper Dating* and used in many different of her outlets, and it's this... In some way, we all have kind of two circuitries of attraction. One is what I call attractions of

deprivation, and that's when the excitement and the passion and the despair and the compulsion comes from again and again, trying to get your partner to love you right. They almost do, but they don't. They almost treat you well, but then they don't. They honor you sometimes, but then other times they chip away at you. Now these relationships tap into our deepest insecurities and we feel like the only way we're going to become worthy is to get this person to love us right. They feel like love, but they're the path to hell. And those are toxic relationships, but they feel like love. So those are attractions of deprivation and for most of us, it's kind of where we start out because they just look so sexy. And we have to learn that we have another circuitry of attraction, which I call attractions of inspiration. And that's where, yeah, you have to be attracted to the person physically, emotionally, but your attraction comes from their goodness. Your attraction grows by their generosity of spirit, by the fact that in some deep essential way they're safe and they love you and they're available and they're willing to do the work. When you have those kind of inspiring feelings combined with physical attraction, that's X marks the spot for where you want to build your home in the world. That's this kind of peaceful explosion of excitement. That's where you want to live. So those are two different circuitries of attraction. Some people know this automatically and they go for the attractions of inspiration. The rest of us smash our heads into the wall again and again and again, and I raised my hand because I did that for a really long time until we learn that we can do this differently. So I want to start with that concept that we have two different circuitries and we can cultivate one. So I feel like I'm going on for a long time here and if you have any questions, feel free to ask, but otherwise I'll go into the exercise.

[00:17:15] Meagen Gibson

Yeah, and I was very familiar with this concept from you and it resonated so deeply with me, and I think we can all... Anybody who's dated more than one person can recall their relationships that were attractions of deprivation, because when you earn the light of that person's attention, that intermittent reward, there's no better feeling on Earth, right? But then it goes away and then you spend your whole time chasing it again.

Ken Page

Exactly. It's like that gambling kind of metaphor. It's like slot machines. Intermittent reward. Exactly.

Meagen Gibson

Right? And so I think we can all relate to that. And this thing that has happened to me just in the last five years is that once I was kind of aware of that dynamic and stopped chasing one and just focused on the other one, it felt really, really, really lonely at first, right? It feels like there's not anybody out there that's going to fall into the attractions of inspiration category. But when you've done all that self work and self accountability and self awareness, all of a sudden it's like the right kind of magnets all of a sudden start to attract into your life and the polarity of your development in inspiration types, all of a sudden you're like, oh, they were there all along I just wasn't giving them any attention or love or water, so I just want to give people kind of some hope and inspiration there.

Ken Page

Everything you're saying is so, so true. And in my decades of doing this work, this is this kind of very long cycle that it took me decades to actually see. And there are three kind of stages that we go through when we choose to do this work. And the first stage is we lose our taste for attractions

of deprivation. The third stage is we actually find ourselves magnetized to and magnetizing attractions of inspiration and there's fascinating research on how that happens. But the second stage is this gravity free zone that for many of us lasts way too long, and it's like we don't want the other kind of attractions, but the new ones are not there yet, and it's a weird kind of space and we need to ride that. But, when you're in that space, when you've made that choice, and in the work that I do, people actually create a pledge, and it's a really important pledge, like, no matter how sexy attractions of deprivation might look, I am going to say no to them. And I am fiercely and ambitiously going to look for attractions of inspiration and pursue those only. This is one of the greatest acts of like, one of the greatest milestones we can make and when we do, there's this period where it doesn't start to happen and then it does start to happen. Those three stages really do happen and that second one is a doozy. It's like, well, I made this change, why is it not coming yet? So, yes.

[00:20:28] Meagen Gibson

Absolutely, and I know that you said that there was more to the exercise or more to your example, so I want you to keep going.

Ken Page

Okay, fabulous. So this is an exercise that I want to offer everybody, and it's one that everybody who cares about their intimacy journey should do. And it's one that, amazingly, we're not taught. It's just so important. And here's what it is, essentially. You take a bunch of pieces of paper or you take like an online document and you make a list. This is because you want to know your attractions of deprivation and your attractions of inspiration. So I'm going to start with the hard one, your attractions of deprivation. So take your paper and you write down all the names of your toxic or negative attractions. They might be romantic, some of them might be a parent figure, a sibling who really was influential in this negative way, you can write them down too. You leave five lines between each person and you make a complete list, and for this exercise, I want to ask you to externalize responsibility. Even if you were partly to blame, put it on the other person. If you're in doubt, write that person's name down because there's something really big that you're going to learn.

Okay, so you write down all these names, five spaces between each person, and then in those five spaces, you write down every negative quality that person had. Every quality that you might think is toxic, every quality that didn't support you, that didn't make you feel seen and understood and treasured. You get to do this here. You're not going to take any responsibility at this point. You're just going to write this down. And when you've got your amazing list of negative qualities from all of your past relationships, you look through it and you see which is the quality that came up the most. It might have different names, like in one guy you might say, or person, you might say they were cocky, another person you might say they were arrogant, for example. But all of those qualities that appeared again and again you count. And you count the one that appeared the most and you put a circle around that quality. And then if you want to go further, you can take the second most quality and put a triangle around that quality. And then you look at what you wrote and you are going to see something, this is kind of mind blowing for people, because you will see your patterns of attraction more clearly than ever before.

Everyone should do that exercise, even if you're in a relationship because those kind of patterns will still show up. So then there you see it, these are your two biggest attraction patterns. So then what do you do with it?

Well, there's three things here that are gold. The minute you know your patterns, you have gold. Why? Because you can look out for them and say no in the future. But also they're like a rosetta stone, they will teach you to understand your inner workings because every one of those negative qualities represents a part of yourself that you have not yet learned to dignify and treasure and honor enough yet. So there's valuable, valuable, rich work. So you do that, you'll be blown away and you will learn things that you absolutely should know.

[00:24:10]

Now you can do the same thing for your attractions of inspiration, you write down all your attractions of inspiration, you leave five spaces and you write down all of the beautiful qualities and then you can see, wow, I am attracted to qualities of inspiration. Look at this person, I was attracted to their humility not their arrogance. And you look at this and you do the same kind of thing of seeing which are the qualities that show up the most and that helps you begin to see how you actually already are attracted to those good qualities. They're harder to look for in romantic relationships because we get drawn in so much. So this is an exercise that I think everybody who cares about intimacy should do.

Meagen Gibson

I love that exercise. I know all the characters, I've already done this. Trust me, it works. It's glaringly obvious. And I love that you said that when you're making this list, absolve yourself of responsibility. And then what I think I hear you saying though is that but then once you have the list and you have the glaringly obvious characteristics of what you do not want in your life, now that's your responsibility, to see and take accountability going forward, right?

Ken Page

Absolutely. This is a self love act because that represents a treasured part of yourself, a part that I call a core gift, part of the innermost part of your being that you have not yet learned to honor. And your work right now in your life, relationship and not relationship, is to name that part of you. To allow it to emerge, to parent it, to enjoy it, to understand its quirky, uniqueness and to live it and to learn to navigate life from that center. And when you do, something absolutely amazing happens, and it really does. Your attractions begin to change. You really will start to lose your attraction to those people.

Meagen Gibson

It's absolutely true. And, tell me if this is true for you, but for me it was like once I identified all those characteristics it was also so clear how there was a part of me very, not to get too woo woo, but very inner child, wounded child, part of me that was trying to get what I deserved as a child in my adult relationships, in attracting to those same characteristics that I didn't get my needs met when I was a kid, and once I was like I was like, oh, jeez, this is enough of this. We're not doing this anymore, and resolved it within myself spent, and it took a couple of years, it's not instantaneous, but resolved in myself like, okay, these are the needs I'm going to get met for myself and then start seeking them in other people, and I think that's what you were inferring when you were saying it starts with self love.

[00:27:04] Ken Page

It does start with self love, and just to say that that process of facing that stuff, the author Vito Russo said it really well. He said, the truth will set you free, but first it'll make you miserable. It's not easy to face this stuff, it is a hero's journey, it's very, very brave. But, you know, what you just said I just want to say one other piece about this. Like, if you want to speed up your journey, spend as much time as you can with the people already in your life who treasure those very parts of you because it's an inner job, but it's also infinitely sped up by having those precious people, and if you just try to do it in your head, it's not going to work because when we've been traumatized, and we're continually getting retraumatized, it's going to be impossible or almost impossible to get out of that situation. So you want to be with as many people who don't retraumatize you, but detraumatize you by the way that they are with you.

Meagen Gibson

100% true. I'm so glad you said it. I want to come back to one thing from the very beginning as kind of a way to almost, not wrap this up, because we can go forever, like I said, we're going to be together all day. But the difference between feeling safe in your relationships and experiencing discomfort and how are we in this journey as we're navigating what's toxic, what's abusive, what feels safe? But safe doesn't always mean comfortable, does it?

Ken Page

No, that's a really good point. That's a really good point, and I just want to think about that for a minute.

There's so much in what you're saying, and absolutely there is like a discomfort that we experience again and again. This is intimacy. We hit these crossroads that are complicated, and these ideas are like almost like a map where an inch equals 100 miles. It all looks really easy, you take this road to there, but when you're down and an inch equals an inch and a mile equals a mile, roads are blocked, there are detours, there are rainstorms. So this map works but when it gets down to the nitty gritty, it's hard, and it's hard when we're faced with our stuff again and again and again and that act of being able to admit I wasn't there for you, it's really uncomfortable. It's really uncomfortable to face, there's a lot of hard work here, but on the other side of that, when we love someone and we essentially feel safe with them and we can admit what we didn't give, what we didn't do, and apologize for that, there is like a melting that happens in that. We see it in our partner's eyes. We see them go from anger or fear to the love kind of comes back in. We give a great gift to them, and we give a great gift to ourselves. Or, maybe in our journey to really speak our truth, we've got some asks that we need to do. And they're scary asks, and they're hard asks. Maybe they're sexual. Maybe... That we need to ask for a level of caring and sensitivity that is extreme because we're feeling really vulnerable. For example, I can tend to feel a lot of vulnerable feelings, and my life is like this, every day is a journey of like, oh, I noticed this issue and I moved through this issue, and it's all like, I'm the feelings channel, and my husband's an IT guy and a finance guy, he is not the feelings channel. I could have something very intimate that I want to share with him, it's very rare that he'll come home from work and have something intimate that he wants to share with me. But so I'll have like five things. But if it's really important when he's washing the dishes, in the old days, I would have tried to say it while he was washing the dishes, and I either would shut down, I'd get resentful. So I had to do a bigger ask. I would have to say, honey, can we sit down? And just no other activities, but this is really important to me, and I just want to share it with you. And he's great, he's great. We go sit on the couch and he does that. If I

didn't do that, I would have been resentful. So we can stretch out in terms of the asks that we do. And let me say one thing for everybody in a new relationship, if you want to find out if this is going to be a toxic relationship, don't withhold your bigger asks. Go for them and see how your partner responds. Because it could take years before we do those bigger asks, or we never do them and feel resentful. And then when we do them, we kind of see who our partner is made of. So that's uncomfortable, too, doing our bigger asks, but it's precious. It really is. And all of you could take a minute now and think, all right, in my relationship with my sister, with my partner, with whoever it is, what might be some of those big asks that I feel timid to ask for? And doing it is a breakthrough.

[00:32:32] Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And also, I just want to say for anybody that's thinking about this at home, I've been with my partner almost 20 years, and we're constantly growing into the adults we are, right, even in relationship. And I think about who we were when we met and how little we knew about ourselves. And so sometimes, if you're dating, especially when you're younger, it's like, I barely know who I am. And those big asks when we got together weren't actually probably that clear to me. There were some of them that were really obvious, very neon light, like, here are my needs. Here are my deal breakers. But then kind of as you go on, as circumstances, as you add circumstances, whether it's career ambitions or financial ambitions or family ambitions, children, like, all of these things that you add that you're surprised, you're like, oh, I didn't realize this was a big ask for me, but it turns out it is. Like, I know a couple who's in their 70s who have lived in separate houses for like, 30 years. But they didn't start that way, right? And it works for them, and they thrive. So just the journey of discovery of what your big asks are, and then when you are in partnership, you get to learn a lot about your partner and how deeply invested they are in you by how they handle those surprise big asks, right?

Ken Page

That's right. Yeah. And that's, like, one way to really determine, is this a toxic relationship? Because if you do those big asks and your partner just gaslights you or minimizes you or degrades you, that's bad. That is really not okay. They get to hear from you that this is your experience, and if they don't stop or they blame you and that doesn't go away, get help. And if getting help doesn't work, then this might not be the best place for you and leaving a toxic relationship is really hard. It's really hard.

Meagen Gibson

Very, very, very hard.

Ken Page

Yeah. And we need help. One step at a time, and we need help to do that. We need real help to do that.

Meagen Gibson

And what is that? Let's be really explicit, too, because I don't want people wondering, what does real help look like? What can the scope of real help look like?

[00:34:51] Ken Page

Well, first, first, first is couples therapy. And I really believe in that so strongly. Like, if you consistently hit the same obstacles and they're important and you end up in a situation where you don't feel safe or you feel like it's toxic, get help. What happens really often if it really is a toxic relationship is that your therapist will see it and hold your partner accountable, and it's very possible your partner will not, if they're really toxic, they won't be able to bear that. They will leave. Their relationship will end and it'll end kind of with like a sense of revelation. They were not available. So therapy is one really big way. The other way is friends because your friends will tell you in a New York minute what they're seeing that they don't like. And you need to hear that. We really, really need to hear that. The other piece is personal therapy, because in a toxic relationship there are parts of yourself that are precious that you're going to have to give up, ignore, or suppress. And if you're in a really good therapy you're going to cultivate those parts, you're going to honor them, you're going to realize how valuable they are and it's going to become less and less bearable.

Now, if you're in an abusive relationship you might want to get help from a domestic violence program which, those are wonderful, wonderful programs that offer free counseling, free help, free housing if you need it. And if you're in a dangerous situation, your children are in a dangerous situation, get out of there and don't do it alone. Don't do it alone. Do it with the help of an agency, an organization, or a counselor who specializes in that kind of work because these are very, very particular dynamics. And in this caveat section of things, another thing that I want to say is, if your partner has an active substance addiction, that's not so good. That's a real problem. And I encourage people, for example, who are single, if your partner has an unstabilized serious psychiatric disorder, or an active addiction, or your potential partner, do not enter into that relationship until they have solid sobriety under their belt or they're stabilized in an ongoing way. That's really important. If you're in a relationship and those things are happening, the same thing applies. Those are things that you're going to ultimately need. How that happens is really a journey. People who are in a relationship with someone who has an addiction I really encourage Alanon Naranon, one of those programs for partner, twelve step programs for people whose partners are active addicts. But that is a really toxic space and you're going to need to do so much work and get so much help to be able to know what to do and take care of yourself.

Meagen Gibson

And I just want to thank you from the deepest part of my heart for naming that. I've been in those types of relationships and have a tremendous amount of empathy for people in them because what you see before you is a person in pain who's doing everything they can to treat their pain. And what you don't want to do is, what you feel like you're doing is abandoning them, right? By taking care of yourself and by requiring them to take care of themselves. And I just want to assure people that that's not what you're doing and that you really need to take care of yourself and that you can't rescue them, you didn't... What's the Alanon saying? I can't remember right now.

Ken Page

I didn't cause this. I didn't create it and I can't cure it. I can't control it or cure it.

Meagen Gibson

Yeah. All of those C words.

[00:38:50] Ken Page

Yes, there are three of them, but I think I said four. Yeah. And another thing is, in those relationships, you find yourself making up for the ways that your partner might not go to work or might do something really inappropriate. You hide it, you cover it, because you don't want them to experience that fall. But then what happens is you let them climb higher. Their fall is going to be deeper and more dangerous and more precipitous. That's why we got to have help, because if you love someone who's in an addiction, do not even try to figure this out alone. Get help and get support.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. Ken Page, I have loved spending time with you today. How can people find out more about you and your work?

Ken Page

Well, I have loved this talk also, and I just wish we could keep going on. So thank you so much for your wonderful insightful, warm, compassionate questions. This was a joy.

Ken Page

So people can find out about my work, the easiest way is to go to deeperdatingpodcast.com, which has had over a million downloads and has like 167 episodes and has so much rich, rich work in it, and there you can actually get a free gift or you can go to deeperdatinggifts.com and you get a beautiful audio meditation, a journal and an ebook that kind of teaches these things. You could learn about my intensives, which are powerful events for very small groups of people. And there's my book, *Deeper Dating*, which is a beautiful way to do this. There's an audiobook, so there are all these different ways. But what I would say is that if you want to do this work, try to find somebody that you can do it with because it is so much more fun, so much less painful and so much more empowering to do this with a buddy, with a learning partner.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely.

Ken Page

Oh, and of course, in all the social media yes, excuse me.

Meagen Gibson

Of course, we're all there, whether we like it or not. Ken Page, thanks again for being with us today.

Ken Page

Thank you so much.