

Toxic Connectivity: How To Break the Trauma Bond

Guest: Ronia Fraser

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[00:00:09] Meagan Gibson

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagan Gibson, your conference co-host. Today I'm speaking with Ronia Fraser, a multi-award winning trauma recovery coach and clinical hypnotherapist, and one of the world's leading experts in the field of narcissistic abuse recovery. Since 2017, she's helped abuse survivors from all over the world get back on their feet, regain their mental health, and recover who they were always meant to be. Ronia's pioneering approach is widely recognized as one of the most effective, structured and masterful models to recovery from complex trauma. Ronia Fraser, thank you so much for being with us today.

Ronia Fraser

Thank you for having me.

Meagan Gibson

I know that we're talking about trauma bonding and how to safely and effectively disconnect today. So how did you end up working in this field?

Ronia Fraser

Well, needless to say, you don't end up working in this line of work unless it has happened to you. I'm a survivor of narcissistic abuse myself, which a few years ago, literally cost me everything, almost my life, and I had to rebuild, and find a way to get myself out of it. Even today, it's still a challenge to find the right support, the right resources. But a few years ago, it was even worse.

I got really frustrated by the lack of results that I was getting from the therapies that were available at the time. And when my therapist basically told me there wasn't really anything I could do, I got really frustrated by the lack of results. I'm German, I need results. And if you're anything like me, and you put your time, and your money, and your tears, and your effort, and everything into getting better, and nothing ever changes, that's incredibly frustrating. I was told, well, this is just how it is now, something happened and this is your life going forward. It's just something you need to accept and we need to find ways to manage it.

And for me, that wasn't an option because the life that I was living at that particular point in time, it wasn't worth living, because I was struggling with my mental health a lot, as a consequence of the

abuse. To be honest, I couldn't have even promised you I'd still be alive the next day, I can't just accept that. I knew very well that something had happened to me. I didn't know what it was at that time, but I knew something had happened. In my head, it was like, well, if something can turn me into this mess, there's got to be a way to undo the damage, because it literally happened overnight.

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I went on this mission to find something that would reverse the damage as effectively as it was caused. Once I did, I was post-traumatic stress symptoms free within five months compared to a lifetime, what I was told. That's basically what brought me to where I am today.

Meagan Gibson

You had to do the work the hard way, and find your own path. I'm assuming that you just don't want anybody to ever feel like that again, where they don't know how to undo the damage that's been done.

Ronia Fraser

It's also important to just share the word that there is something that you can do about it, because even though the narrative is changing, the common narrative still is, well, you're just messed up, just deal with it. Here is your medication and just figure a way out to manage it. But it actually couldn't be further from the truth, because there are tools that we can use that get us back on our feet. We can regain our mental health, we can upgrade ourselves, and actually use all of this adversity for good.

The thing with us as abuse survivors is we all have a big heart. We are all really good people, if we weren't, we would have never ended up in that situation in the first place. A lot of abuse survivors want to use their own experience to help other people. But to be able to do that, of course, we need to do the work first. I'm very, very passionate about sharing the word, not necessarily just raising the awareness that narcissistic abuse actually is a thing. But even more importantly, listen, there is actually something you can do about it for yourself, and you can get out of this nightmare.

Meagan Gibson

Absolutely. These types of relationships take all kinds of different forms. They can be familial and romantic, they could even be a boss, and they're direct report. What I would love is if you could illustrate for us what it might feel like to be in one of these toxic relationships, because I don't think often at the beginning of your journey, as you just stated, you knew that your mental health was bad. And you felt a certain way, but you didn't know, you didn't have a label for what had happened to you. So how might you feel if you're in one of these toxic relationships?

Ronia Fraser

Yeah, I didn't even realize I was being abused, I thought I was the problem. I was living in LA at the time, I just figured, well, LA has gotten to me after all, because LA has a lot of fallen angels. So that was the story that I was telling myself, I didn't even realize.

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I actually really appreciate how you asked that question because oftentimes I get asked by the media, it's like, so what are the red flags? We all know the red flags, but we go for it anyway. What's really important, and that's why I really appreciate how you asked, is how does it actually feel? Because we can find excuses for everybody's behavior. What we can't find excuses for is what is actually going on for ourselves. There is no explaining away because those are actually sensations, and they are here, and they are valid.

One of the most common indications that something isn't really right here in that relationship, as you said, whether it's at work, in a family, or in a romantic relationship. It's just that constantly walking on eggshells, because what happens is the mask goes off, the mask comes on, you never know who you deal with. And what do we do? Because we want to keep up the good things that they showed us, we accommodate them and we completely neglect our needs, our values and compromise ourselves.

So there is always this anxious undercurrent that's running, and you may not even be able to put your finger on it, why that is, but you can feel it in your gut. You can feel it, there is always walking on eggshells. So when somebody tells you, or you've said it yourself, I walk on eggshells all the time, that's a very big indication that something is off here.

Also, if you look in the mirror and you literally do not recognize the person looking back at you, that's a very high indication that there is some identity erosion happening. And again, it's because when it happens, we don't even know that something like that exists. So it's not on our radar to go, oh, my identity is being eroded, we just happen to look in the mirror and go, who are you? I don't know, I don't recognize you. Some people don't even see anything at all anymore.

And maybe you were like this kick ass person and running the boardroom, or whatever, and all of a sudden it's just a shadow that's left. So that's a very high indication as well.

What other things? There are certain things that all people that survive toxic relationships say. It's literally a list of quotes that you can tick off. Nobody understands what I'm going through. So if you're suffering, and you're trying to explain to your family and your friends, or maybe even a therapist, or coach, what is happening, and everybody just stares at you really blankly. That also is an indication because narcissistic relationships are nothing like normal relationships. So people that haven't experienced it, their brains literally can't comprehend what it is that you're up against.

Another one that everybody says at some point, especially when you don't have the language just yet to explain what's going on, is I don't know what's wrong with me, I feel like an addict. I remember I used to say that because it was the only way that I could somehow put into words how I was feeling. Or maybe they are my drug, they are my heroin, they are my Kryptonite, things like that.

And what's very important to understand is that it doesn't only feel that way, we're dealing with an addiction. That's basically what brings us here today to talk about trauma bonding and that's a very real thing.

[00:09:25] Meagan Gibson

Absolutely, I want to get to that in a sec because I want to circle back to several things that you said. Which is when we're talking about walking on eggshells, and that you can't recognize yourself in the mirror, and also when you're trying to explain things to somebody, I don't know what's going on with me.

Perhaps you have somebody trusted in your life, and you try to explain an interaction, and it just doesn't convey what the felt experience is like, because it's one single sliver of an entire relationship. So your loved one, or somebody might be like, yeah, that sounds like it was unfortunate, or tough, but I don't really understand the scope of what we're talking about here. So you might often not get the validation that you're seeking from explaining how you're feeling, and the interactions, because it doesn't happen... It's not about stepping on one eggshell, and it's not about... You get dug at slowly over time.

Ronia Fraser

Yeah, absolutely.

Meagan Gibson

It's not like you go on one date and all of a sudden you're walking on eggshells, and don't recognise yourself the next day.

Ronia Fraser

It can, however, happen very quickly, actually. One analogy that I use to explain what's actually happening there is the game, Jenga. That's how I explain it to people who just don't get it either, because everybody pretty much knows Jenga.

You have this tower block that consists of all those building blocks and you pull out one building block after the other, and then eventually the tower collapses, and you lost. Toxic relationships work in exactly the same way because we all have those building blocks that make up who we are. And that can be anything, it can be professional, financial, reputational, social, aspirational, anything that makes up the person who we think we are.

And then the Narcissist comes in and pulls out one building block after the other, and plays Jenga with our reality. And needless to say, you pull out the building blocks, the tower collapses, our life comes crashing down. That's how all of a sudden, people that were really highly functioning, all of a sudden overnight become non-functioning at all. And some of the Narcissists are so sophisticated, so skilled in what they do, they will pull out your most fundamental building block all at once, right at the beginning.

That's why in those relationships, time isn't necessarily of the essence because it can happen one day you are fine, and the next day you are walking on those eggshells. You obviously have no idea what has hit you. But time isn't necessarily of the essence. It doesn't have to be a very long and drawn out process. It depends on the person you're dealing with. And some of them are very skilled.

[00:12:28] Meagan Gibson

Absolutely. I don't want to spend too much more time talking about the narcissists themselves. I want to talk about how to help people heal. But one thing that was really revolutionary for me to understand was that I had this misunderstanding about the consciousness of the Narcissist. And most of what they're doing, even though it's sophisticated, isn't necessarily conscious. It's not like they're planning and plotting, and they're trying to make sure you hate yourself as much as they hate themselves. It's all unconscious action, right?

Ronia Fraser

Yeah, it can be, most of the time it is, but then obviously we're talking about the spectrum. So the higher up you go, the more calculated it becomes. But the majority of people that we refer to as Narcissists, they don't set out intentionally, they can possibly. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter because it's not about them, it's about you. And if anybody treats you badly, it doesn't matter whether they do it intentionally or not. They treat you badly, and that's not acceptable, and they have to go.

I think that's one important thing to understand when we talk about those relationships. It has never been about them, this is something that shows you... Basically it opens a door to really deep self-development, but of course it's a very painful door that opens up there.

But at the end of the day, it's not about them, it's about you. What does it show you? How did you actually end up in this situation? Because there are people that don't, they just walk away, I'm not being treated that way. But clearly they offer something that we are desperate for, and that's where the healing work, the deep healing work then obviously comes into play. But it's not about them. It's really everything about you.

Meagan Gibson

Absolutely. That's a great segue, thank you. Let's talk about trauma bonding. What is it? What does it feel like? What is that invitation that you were just referring to, that once you recognize what's going on, to go within and figure out why it is you needed this relationship?

Ronia Fraser

Understanding trauma bonding is the key to understanding any abuse survivor. Whether we are the abuse survivor ourselves, and it finally helps us to put a puzzle piece together, and explain so many things that just don't make sense. Or whether we are working with abuse survivors. It really, I believe, is the key because if we understand how trauma bonding works, and what we are dealing with, that actually helps us to then do something about it, rather than just trying to mitigate the circumstances.

Trauma bonding is a very, incredibly strong emotional bond between the abuser and the abused, which arises through a recurring cyclical pattern of abuse. It basically consists of this intermittent reinforcement between reward and punishment. And if you think about narcissistic abuse, just as an example, it's not exclusive to narcissistic abuse, but if you think of narcissistic abuse, for example, the mask goes off, the mask comes on. So one moment they are loving, and caring, and affectionate, and supportive, and the next moment they are this cruel, cold monster that we don't recognize. Because of that it causes a lot of confusion and cognitive dissonance in the brain.

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As I said, trauma bonding isn't exclusive to narcissistic abuse. It can literally happen in any relationship where the power dynamic is off. It can be a romantic relationship, it can also be between a parent and a child, or between a caregiver and an elderly person. We've all heard Stockholm syndrome, that's a trauma bond. In hostage situations, prisoners of war, trafficking, all those dynamics where one person holds all the power, where the power dynamic is skewed, that's where the trauma bonding actually happens.

Meagan Gibson

I love that you mentioned the power dynamic too, because that's what gets us ensnared, is that power dynamic, whether it's implicit or explicit, even if it's just a power dynamic that's felt, it doesn't have to be boss and report, for that matter. But if you're feeling less powerful, and the other person can take advantage of that.

Meagan

Is trauma bonding and love addiction the same thing to you?

Ronia Fraser

To me, yes. I don't know if anybody makes a distinction, it also depends on what your definition of trauma bonding is. But if you think about what happens in the brain with the trauma bonding, and obviously we just talked about the mask coming on and off. You never know who you deal with, you obviously try to not unleash the wrath, that's where the eggshells come in again.

But what happens for us in that situation is that our body goes into a very natural fight or flight situation, because you constantly walk on eggshells, you don't know who you're dealing with. There is a lot of adrenaline, there is a lot of cortisol, that is like a flash flood in your body. When that happens the first time, when the mask comes off the first time, pretty much everybody wants to walk away.

But then what happens? The mask comes back on, and it's that perfect person again, that soulmate, all this loveliness, and all of a sudden we feel special again. We feel heard, and seen, and understood again. And now what happens is the cortisol and adrenaline disappears. But instead all the oxytocin comes in, the dopamine comes in, the happy chemicals, that bonding chemicals which under normal circumstances would be a good thing. Because those hormones obviously help us connect with people, help us bond with people.

But in those toxic cycles, what happens is that the brain becomes overexposed because all those hormones are misregulated, and that's how we develop a chemical dependency. And that's why for me, love addiction and trauma bonding is absolutely the same thing. Because if you think about it, what are we addicted to? We are addicted to love. And everybody who's ever been in love knows that love is the highest high there is. And that's what makes it so powerful because that's the hook. We want those five minutes back, that they were nice to us, and when they gave us exactly what we were looking for.

[00:19:34] Meagan Gibson

Yeah, and that swing. I'm thinking of Ron Siegel, one of my favorite Trauma Super Conference contributors, who always, he says it with a giant smile, and he's got this wonderful mustache, and he always says, "we didn't evolve to be happy, we evolved to stay safe." And that was what I was thinking of when you were talking about the flood of hormones, the adrenaline, and all of these things that we respond with to keep ourselves safe.

And then once that mask goes back on, our perceived safety is back in check. So we can release all of the oxytocin, and the endorphins, and we're going to go after that, now that we feel safe, now that we've walked on eggshells appropriately. It's safe for us to now get all the affection that we feel like we deserve, and that we want, and that we need, and that we're entitled to as human beings. But that's always the second nature, right?

Ronia Fraser

Yeah. We all want to be loved, we all want to belong, but then obviously if we have a faulty program running in the background, like feeling not good enough, which actually is a very universal faulty conditioning for both men and women that run, stay in the background. Or maybe not feeling lovable or unworthy. Those are the things where the abuser then obviously can hook in because that's what they pretend to show us.

And those chemical reactions in the brain, they will happen, it's not something that we choose. Those are actual biological responses in the body, and that's what makes it so powerful. If you think about how the brain works, we very naturally will latch onto anything, or anyone, that helps us through trauma.

We connect that with safety, as you just said, so even if the person who has caused all this harm, this pain, this trauma, all of a sudden is affectionate again, and apologizes and is caring, our brain naturally will latch onto this positive reinforcement. Rather than thinking through what the long term consequences are of staying with that person. Because we go from a very acute fight or flight mode into this safety space, even though it's the same person who caused it, and then who relieves it.

Also talking about addiction very clearly shows they are not just a drug, or the Kryptonite, a heroin, they are actually the drug dealer at the same time. Which gives them every power and control, because they are in complete control how we are allowed to feel.

Meagan Gibson

I'm glad that you made that connection because it's so true. We're all chasing that good five minutes, or the person we dated the first few times, or the boss that we interviewed with, that made this work environment sound like a magical place of possibility.

And especially for anybody who suffered any kind of abuse or neglect in childhood. We were naturally conditioned to experience this as normal, this up and down of safe, unsafe, affectionate, non-affectionate. We're so wired in this pivotal part of our development to chase connection and to stay part of our family system in order to keep ourselves safe.

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I'm so glad that you also named that all the chemical reactions are happening out of our control. That's why they call it the autonomic nervous system. I think that it provides people with such a relief when they understand that you don't have to be a neuroscientist to understand all of this stuff is happening automatically. And that you can give yourself a little bit of slack knowing that a lot of these reactions and chemical bonding, and all of it, is out of your control.

But once you become aware of it and aware of everything that's going on, then what is your course of action? How do you get yourself extricated from this situation?

Ronia Fraser

And then that's the key because what you also hear a lot, especially when we talk about mental health challenges, is when people say, well, there's nothing I can do, I have a chemical imbalance. Well, yes, that may be correct. However, we have the capability and the capacity to create chemical reactions in our brains ourselves.

So it really is about becoming aware that, okay, this is actually not my fault. This is biology, this is what happens in my body. However, I also have the power to change things. And there are little things that we can do that really shift that hormonal balance in the brain, where we don't need medication for it. We just need to become aware of it and put it into action. So taking action is really the key of coming out the other side. Just having theoretical knowledge won't be enough.

Meagan Gibson

So what do those actions look like? I know that you've got a model for recovery that you've talked about. So I would love to hear a little bit about what that looks like for somebody if as part of this conference, they've realized they're in one of these toxic relationships and they hear themselves being described in these conversations. What is the first step and then what can they expect for the journey of healing?

Ronia Fraser

The first step, and there is no ifs or buts, has to be no contact. And everybody, me included when I was at that stage as well, finds excuses why no contact can't apply to their situation. And I'm here to tell you it still does apply and no matter what your situation is, it is possible. Now obviously, if somebody has children, maybe legal proceedings going on where the no contact isn't possible at this stage, there are still ways to modify the contact to such an extent where you still are able to create a safe space for yourself.

Because if you want to heal from this, your responsibility is to create a safe, trigger free environment. And the reality of the matter is, as long as you are in contact, you will not heal. And that's what you get a lot with therapies when people really want to get better, however, either they still live with their abuser, or they are still in touch with them. You can have the best therapist in the world, you're not going to get the results that you're looking for, simply because you're putting all this work in, and then you receive that text message, or you go home and all this hard work is undone.

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So no contact is really important because you need to create a safe space for yourself. And thinking about the whole addiction aspect, that we've just talked about, if you consider yourself as an addict in this case. And I know we don't necessarily want to hear that, but in this particular situation, it's what we're dealing with. So hopefully understanding that makes it easier to accept the fact that actually they are bad for me, they are a drug.

Obviously we need to cut off our supply. Because remember, they are in control, as long as you are in touch, they are in control of how you're allowed to feel, and no contact really serves the purpose to cut off that supply, and it's the hardest thing to do on the whole journey, there is no doubt about it.

One thing to consider is the illusion that's created in the first place because when we are trauma bonded we believe 100% that we can't survive without the other person. That's the story that we were told. That was the illusion, the brainwash that we've undergone. It is not actually reality even though it feels 100% real. So that's part of pushing through the excuses that we find for not going no contact. But it's super important.

And the thing is, once you do, and again I want to acknowledge that it really isn't an easy step to do, but a necessary one. Once you do, the impact is instant. And to me, the way it always feels to me is, and I've got no contact with various people over the years. It also becomes easier once you get really solid in what's acceptable, and what's not acceptable. But to me, it always felt as if you were shot with a poisonous dart or something, and then you go, no contact. And it's pulling out that dart, and all of a sudden your body starts regulating itself again.

And that happens very quickly. And then the brain fog lifts and all of a sudden there is so much more clarity, and you can start navigating in a very different way. So to break the trauma bond, no ifs, no buts, no contact, is an absolute must. So that's very important.

And then, we also touched on that actually, is shifting the focus because it really isn't about them at all. You will notice as you go through your healing work that at the end of the day they have no relevance whatsoever. So shifting the focus away from them, and onto yourself and your healing, that's a very practical step that you can take instantly. And you're the only one who can make that decision. It's an executive decision.

From now on, I'm going to shift the focus about the healing, or whatever moves you forward, rather than reading everything about the narcissist, engaging in all those forums, and watching all the YouTube. Because it's very important to understand your brain can't distinguish whether something's happening for real, or whether you're imagining it. The chemical responses in your brain are exactly the same.

So as you continue to focus on everything about them, as you continue to tell your story to everybody who will, or will not listen, for your mind, for your body, it's as if it's happening again, and again, and again. So it is very important to shift the focus, stop telling your story.

And that's very important. I want to make clear, I'm not saying you don't have the right to tell your story, because you absolutely do, 100%. What I'm saying is there is a time, and there is a place. And if you keep in mind the whole crazy person illusion that they create intentionally, through all the gaslighting and everything. When we talk about our story, which is very natural, it's a very

natural thing that we want to do that very simply, because what we have experienced is so out of this world. It's so horrific. We want to be heard, we want to be validated, we want to be believed.

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But because if you are in this very active situation where you are very activated yourself, when you get triggered, when you have those difficult to control emotions, which is completely understandable. But when we tell our story out of that energetic space, people won't listen, and people will look at us as if we were crazy, because if we are emotionally unstable, we look and sound like a crazy person.

And again your brain can't distinguish whether that's happening for real or whether it's not. So stop telling your story for now, shift the focus onto yourself and away from them. Really focus on your healing, and then you will see that actually once you start telling your story from that space, people will listen and it's a very magical thing. Unfortunately, there's a little bit of a time delay to it, and of course, if we are in this traumatized situation, we want to have this validation, but we need a little patience with that.

Meagan Gibson

Everything you said resonated so much, I was thinking about, in the pairings that happened between abusive people and narcissists. And on the other side of that, the pairing is normally somebody who has a lot of empathy. And often in this cut off period when we go no contact, our empathetic parts, that make us great are really activated, worrying about the narcissist, and worrying about their welfare. And they might do a lot of hijinks in order to get us to be worried about their welfare. But that's why that no contact is so important.

And from what I hear you saying it's like turn all of that empathetic energy, all of those empathetic superpowers, just turn them inward. Give yourself what you're trying to project outward. Give yourself as much care, and concern, and protection as you're trying to give to the Narcissist, so that you can receive that love back. You can give it to yourself, right?

Ronia Fraser

Yeah. All this love you have to give, and there is so much of it. This is the time where the direction needs to go inwards. And again, it's easier said than done. I know that from my own experience, but it is absolutely vital. There is no way around it. So now is the time. And the beautiful thing about it is that it's something that we can learn, and we have to, but we can learn it. And how do we do that? It's really allowing ourselves to engage in the beautiful art of self-care.

Naturally you may be going like oh no, uncomfortable, and whatever those thoughts, and actually it was quite interesting to listen to what might come up when you hear the word self-care for yourself. There may be a lot of resistance because abuse survivors usually have never put themselves first, always put other people's needs in front of their own. Now is the time to change that, and without self-care there is no way of coming out the other side. But as I said, a beautiful thing is that it can be learned. And, it's designed to make us feel good.

So the learning curve is very steep. And through self-care you very quickly can shift the focus and that then obviously also helps breaking the trauma bond. Because if you start looking forward, and

proactively moving forward with healing work, whatever modality you may choose, and it's always a mix and match of different things anyway.

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But once you start moving forward, you create new experiences, you really focus on yourself, and you leave the rest behind. And that will help with the trauma bond because energy flows where the attention goes. That's a little mantra that you can repeat for yourself every now and then, because it's the truth. Energy flows where the attention goes. That's how it works. And that's how we really easily can shift, and basically catapult ourselves forward.

It's remarkable, isn't it, the difference between day 1 and day 60, let's say because day 1, depending on how bad your situation was, you might not know what you like to eat. You might not like every single thought in your head. You might not have confidence in the words that come out of your mouth, or your ability to just speak whatever it is you're thinking, or feeling because you're in such self-doubt, and such hurt and pain. And that first day, as you said, is the toughest. And I just want everybody to hear what you're saying, which is that it's exponential, and that day 2 will be easier, and day 4 will be way easier. And it just builds on itself as you get quiet and take care of yourself, and listen to your own needs, and try to meet them.

It is uncomfortable, without a doubt, and we need to learn it. So whatever it is that comes up for you, and whatever you are feeling in this, I just want you to know that it's actually okay. Because considering what you have experienced, and obviously we are emotional beings, and yes, there may be emotional overwhelm right now, but at the end of the day, this is your mind and your body's normal reaction to an incredibly abnormal situation.

And when we talk about mental health, that's oftentimes seen as this really bad thing, this red flag, this emotional overwhelm, but actually, you're just trying to cope with this really horrendous situation. So be kind and gentle with yourself, and just know that it's okay, and really focus on moving forward, and then it will be exponentially better very quickly.

Meagan Gibson

Yeah, because you're awesome.

Ronia Fraser

Exactly.

Meagan Gibson

Getting to know yourself is going to be so much fun.

Ronia Fraser

Yeah, it is fun, it really is fun. And I give you the permission to start exploring and treat yourself kindly. Just treat yourself how you treat everybody else, and you deserve to feel good. And I would really like to invite you to give yourself that permission as well, and just see where it takes you. And as I said, self-care is beautiful.

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No contact, by the way, is your self-care decision number one. Without a no contact, it doesn't matter what you put in place, it's not going to get you the results that you're looking for. So that's that number one self-care decision that stands above everything. Then once you put that in place, everything else will be much easier as well.

Meagan Gibson

100%. Ronia, I really deeply appreciate you, and I think everybody that watches this is going to get something from this. And how can people find out more about you and your work.

Ronia Fraser

You can find me online. You can find me on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), it's @rocknrollcoachroni. And my website is roniafraser.com.

I have a free ebook on the website, if you want to swing by. It's actually a framework that I built for the recovery from narcissistic abuse. It's the timeline, because one thing that I've noticed in all those years of doing this work, is even though all of our stories are straight out of the movies, and the tactics that were used by the abuser are all the same, the symptoms that we experience as survivors are all the same. And I've noticed that the recovery also follows the same pattern. Obviously, everybody in their own time, but there is a structure to it.

So if you feel a little bit lost right now, that framework is really something for you to hold onto in this whirlwind of big black nothingness. Where you will be able to see where you're at, how far you've already come, I bet it's so much further than you think. And it will also give you a bit of an idea what lies ahead, so it's not all uncertain anymore.

And I have a new book. We just talked about that 1st day versus the 60th day. I actually have, it's called *Me, Myself and I*, it's designed to break the trauma bond. And it's 28 days, and within 28 days, you can transform your mindset and your life, and find a way back to you after abuse. Where every single day for 28 days I will teach you a little tool for you to try out. And if you like it, you put it in your toolbox, you keep it. If not, just come back later when you're ready. And if you will, you can call it a little self-care buffet. I dish out what I got, you come and try it out, and build your toolbox on the way. *Me, Myself and I*. I'm very excited about this.

Meagan Gibson

Congratulations. I'm excited for people to have it too, because this type of relationship and getting out of one is something that you don't understand until you've been in it. It feels really isolating and really isolated to be trying to extricate yourself from it if nobody around you understands. So it's great that people like you build resources like this for them.

Ronia Fraser

Whatever it is that you're going through right now, I just want you to hear you're not alone. It may feel that way, but there are tools, there are resources, there is support available. And there are so many people that won't understand what you're going through, but there are also plenty that do. And sometimes we just need to stop talking about certain things to people that just don't get it.

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Because everybody looks at the world through their glasses, and if they have a different prescription, they're not going to see it. But then just redirect the conversation in the right direction, and people that do get it. Because that's also how you can preserve your energy, rather than having it drained by endlessly trying to make yourself understood to somebody who just doesn't get it. After all, that doesn't make them a bad person. They just don't have the capability, they may want to help, and they may want to understand. So maybe, as a little tip, become a little selective who you talk about with who. That was a weird sentence, but you know what I mean.

Meagan Gibson

Yes, we're following along. Ronia Fraser, thank you so much again for being with us today.

Ronia Fraser

Thanks for having me.