

## In Therapy Day 7 - How to shift a negative state

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

Hi, Katie. Good to see you. It's been longer than we would have liked since between now and last time. And I know that you've been feeling a bit shut down. Should we just start there in terms of how you've been doing and how you've been feeling.

**Katie**

I can't actually remember when the last time we did speak was.

**Alex Howard**

The last time we spoke you were reading to me the letter you'd written to your parents and you had a letter back, and there was a process. It was a while ago.

**Katie**

Was it January or February?

**Alex Howard**

No, it was February.

**Katie**

February.

**Alex Howard**

It was sort of mid February time.

**Katie**

I think I just started to open up, to feel confident enough to kind of explore going back into those relationships. And what I found is that my feelings were very much on the surface with everything. I felt that I was allowing myself to be a bit more vulnerable because I felt a bit stronger inside to deal with it. I think not having that kind of regular check in... And to be honest, I stopped doing the work as well, because that's how I react to these things. I stopped doing the meditation and the exercising

and my eating has just gone a bit crazy, and it's because I have been having some therapy sessions with my husband as well, which has been interesting.

**[00:01:51] Alex Howard**

Interesting is always a complicated word. Can you say a bit more?

**Katie**

It's been really good. It's been really good on one hand. We're in a situation now where we're still apart but we're on pretty good terms, and the door isn't completely closed as it was on us trying to resolve things. It's not completely open either from my point of view, and it's a very kind of slow process to try. And there are still some real sticking points that I don't know how we're going to get over.

**Alex Howard**

But how do you feel about the fact that there's an opening where it was closed before?

**Katie**

I think that's why I'm so low, because I'm just so confused. I've been so used to in my life just knowing, being on this kind of, and it's not good because I've been so driven, I know where I'm going. I know where I'm aiming, and I'll do what I have to do to get there.

**Alex Howard**

Yes.

**Katie**

And now I don't know where I'm going. I don't know where I'm aiming for.

**Alex Howard**

One of the things that you do is you feel a sense of safety by the illusion of control. So when you feel like you're in control of things, even when it's often an illusion, but when you have that sense of this is where I am. This is where I'm going. This is the path that I'm going to take to get there. There's something that's quite comforting about that.

And the problem is when we approach life in that way, we're not necessarily going in the right direction, so we can have the sense of control and a sense of empowerment but actually, we may be forcing our life down the path which is actually not, because often the path we're choosing is the one that's chosen from our history of our issues are often unresolved. So where you are now in a place of less certainty, less control, more of a sense of, perhaps feeling a bit shaky and quite vulnerable, I would say is a step forward, but it probably doesn't feel like that to you right now.

**Katie**

I was pleased with the uncertainty when I felt safe, but I think I just don't feel safe now. I've gone into that kind of way of thinking that nothing ever works out for me. Just even small things like I had the

AstraZeneca vaccine and then obviously all this stuff has come up about the AstraZeneca, the blood clots.

**[00:04:16]**

And then the big thing that's happened this week, which I ought to mention, is that I went for a role in my current job, which I didn't get, and I realized I'd kind of reach the end of the road now. I wasn't making much progress. So I was thinking about looking, as a lockdown lifts, looking for something else. Anyway, this opportunity presented itself to me. And then they approached me and said that they have this job they thought I'd be quite suited to and they shortlisted me for it. Anyway, I interviewed and I got the job.

**Alex Howard**

Congratulations.

**Katie**

I accepted the job. On the same day I accepted the job I got an email saying that one of the campaigns I ran last year had been nominated for an award.

**Alex Howard**

Wow.

**Katie**

But I phoned my husband and he said, "That's amazing. That's amazing". And I couldn't have been, I was so low, I was crying. And I couldn't understand why I was so... It was all because my head went and I just thought what's my motivation? Why am I doing this? It's all about seeking validation to prove to the world I'm good enough. And actually it's a big load of shit because I'm really none of those things.

**Alex Howard**

It's a sign of the state that your system was already in. So you're already in a state of the kind of depressive perspective and a state of feeling fed up and frustrated. And then in that state, someone can say you won the lottery, and we say, "Have I got to go and collect the money?". The state we're in has such an effect on everything else that our wildest dreams can come true and we don't feel anything because we feel harm.

And so we need to take a step back and understand why were you in that state in the first place? And that tracks back a little bit to we had a longer gap than we would have liked to have had between our sessions. It sounds like there was an overwhelming...

What also can happen, I think as well is you've done some really great work about opening up, but often what happens is we open up and there's a point where it actually feels incredibly vulnerable. And I think that's part of where you were last time. There's a sort of inevitable ebbing and flowing where we open up and then almost as a way of protecting ourselves we close back down again. We don't often close back as far as we have historically. And that opening up isn't lost. And it doesn't

mean that we can't then open up again, perhaps a bit more easily because we've gone into that new territory. But it's not uncommon to have a contraction after that expansion.

**[00:06:56]**

So if we track back to around last time we spoke and you were in a really good place and you were on the path, you were sort of feeling a sense of, it wasn't easy, but you were feeling a sense of commitment and progress. And there were still some big bumps along the way but there was a holding that you had in place. How did that fall away? Can we kind of break that down a little bit?

**Katie**

I get stagnant. I get this kind of feeling, this is a really familiar feeling. And I've got this at the moment. I've had it for weeks. I wake up in the morning and I think not again. What's the point? I'm just really bored. I've got no purpose. I feel irritable and angry. I feel hard done by. What's the point? And then I kind of got no energy. I've got no motivation. I'm sitting at work doing the bare minimum.

**Alex Howard**

But I think that, because that isn't how you were feeling last time we spoke. So for me, that is a few steps beyond something else that happens. And I think that's something else that happens is something along the lines of, I can't do this or it's not working, or I can't be bothered.

Remember we talked about get into jail free cards, it's sort of that. There's some sort of "fuck it pattern" that comes in, self sabotage pattern like, what's the point? I can't be bothered. And then that's the jettisoning of all the things that you've been doing, which actually have been the foundations and the support, the progress. And that stuff is quite hard work. So when your motivation starts to erode, that's when that sort of whole thing starts to disintegrate.

**Katie**

Yeah. I just think I've got this idea that I can never sustain anything. I just start things and then you know. And I think actually, what's happening in my head now when I'm talking to you, is that I know that re-establishing these relationships with my family of origin are definitely triggers.

**Alex Howard**

Yes.

**Katie**

On my birthday, for example, I got a real resentment. That was the beginning of it I think, actually thinking back. My mom phoned, my dad didn't even bother to come to the phone to say Happy Birthday, which he never would anyway. Then the next day it was his birthday and I was like, fuck it I'm not sending him a message. And I did.

**Alex Howard**

I think what happens is the more hurt that you feel, the more you push away the world. It's not just them that you push away, you push them away but you also push I think everything else away. The place you would go for emotional holding, for psychological clarity, you stop doing the practices

which are the foundation. Because it's not that the daily meditation, the daily walks and those things are necessarily the source of all the change, but they're the things that get you in the state, get you in the place from which you can then do the other things which are creating the change.

**[00:10:15]**

I just wanted to pause the session for a moment just to really reinforce a point. If our mental and emotional state is constantly being shaped by conversations with family members, by events in the news, by things that are happening around us, we find ourselves the victim of our lives. Learning how our states are impacted, learning tools and strategies to stay connected to ourselves, to stay grounded in our body gives us a whole new level of freedom in our lives. Okay, back to the episode.

If you can, over the coming few weeks, proactively get yourself back into a different place, that's not just about you getting back on track in the next few weeks, that's about showing yourself that you are ultimately not at the mercy of this, that actually you have the capacity to do something to change it.

It's incredibly empowering to know that when you're in a bad place, actually, you're not the victim. That you can, it doesn't mean you're not going to have a bad few days or a week or two where it just feels hopeless, but there's a certain point where you're able to go, I'm going to do something to change this.

So I guess one of my questions is, what does the coming few weeks look like in terms of external stuff like?

**Katie**

I'm going to be starting this new job.

**Alex Howard**

So when do you start?

**Katie**

May the 10th.

**Alex Howard**

Okay. So you've got three weeks or so until then.

**Katie**

Yeah.

**Alex Howard**

So this is a perfect window of time, for the next three weeks, for you to really commit to you.

**Katie**

Yeah.

**[00:12:02] Alex Howard**

What could Katie committing to Katie look like?

**Katie**

My first reaction is, I haven't got time, but I do because I've got lunchtimes, I've got evenings.

**Alex Howard**

If we look at the cost of you being in a depressive, fed up, frustrated, hopeless mindset that is eroding and erasing so much of your energy. So finding and making the time is going to pay you back multiple times over in terms of your growth capacity.

**Katie**

It's 1+1=2 but I always come up with 5.

**Alex Howard**

Let me let you in on a secret. It's called being a human being. I can guarantee you that the people that are watching this, the vast majority are going, oh my God this is exactly what I do as well. So please don't feel that you're alone in this happening. I'm not just speaking to you, I'm also speaking to many other people because we all can do this in our own way.

So this is not about judging yourself or beating yourself up or criticizing yourself. It's about going, Alex is hopefully right. This is what I do. This is what I've done for years. I've trained myself to do this, but I've changed other things in my life. And if I train myself to do something different, this can also change.

What could you put in place as a daily practice? So meditation we know, some sort of movement we know. I think going back to the beginning of the RESET program and starting at module one and doing a module a day up to module five, I think would be helpful, or a module every other day.

**Katie**

I just think really recommitting to and reinforcing those principles and those ideas would be really helpful. I think the stop process in module four and getting some sense of reclaiming your mind a little bit because I think your mind is getting very used to spinning off and getting caught in all of these different places, and just bringing yourself back to your body. Bring yourself back to the moment will just help all of this stuff to calm and settle which I think is really important right now.

Yeah. I think the other thing that I should mention is that I just feel... Like I used to get really excited about... And this has been sort of over the last few years really, about going out. We've booked a table in a pub on Friday to go out for a meal...

**Alex Howard**

Okay, Katie, without wanting to feel like I'm an old record that keeps banging around the back of the head, it's the state that you're in.

**[00:14:50] Katie**

Yeah.

**Alex Howard**

You're in a state of overwhelm. You're in a state of feeling fed up and feeling hopeless. And in that state, as I said, you could be told you've won 100 million on the lottery and the response would be, do I have to get up and go and get the money? It's a symptom of the state. If we change the state everything starts to look and feel different.

**Katie**

Yeah. This first time I've cried, actually, for a while.

**Alex Howard**

What are the tears for?

**Katie**

A lot of it is exhaustion and just a sadness that I can't enjoy my life like everyone else seems to be able to. And there's some anger there. I just feel like sometimes I'm just, like you said, I'm just not seen or heard. I feel like I try so hard. I'm just not like other people. I just find life very challenging.

**Alex Howard**

I think part of the reason why I think people really connect to watching these episodes is most people find life challenging, but most people don't talk about the fact they find life challenging so we're left with the illusion thinking we're the only one that finds life challenging.

**Katie**

I was just looking at myself, I knew I had this appointment so I had a shower at 3. I didn't get dressed until then. That's where I'm at. I can't even be bothered to get out of my bed and get dressed.

**Alex Howard**

Based upon what we've talked about so far, do you feel that you're able to start committing to these practices again?

**Katie**

Yes. I'm going to definitely commit to it. I'll try my best. That's the thing, that's the hardest bit is when I'm so in this hole just pulling myself up. Once I start, I'll be fine.

**Alex Howard**

And focus on progress, not perfection. It's not about getting it perfectly right every minute of every day. It's about having a sense of progressing and moving in the right direction.

**[00:17:03] Katie**

Yeah.

**Alex Howard**

Do you have any questions before we finish?

**Katie**

No, I don't think so.

**Alex Howard**

Good Katie. That was perfect timing because the battery is dying on my camera. I left a charger in London. So it's really nice to be in touch again. And once again, my apologies for the amount of time in between, but I'm confident we can have regular support from here. So you've got your plan?

**Katie**

Yes.

**Alex Howard**

And we'll speak again in two weeks. Good to see you.

Thank you. Bye.