



Conscious Life presents

TRAUMA SUPER CONFERENCE

Choosing a treatment modality for trauma

Guest: Dr Monica Vermani

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[00:00:10] Meagen Gibson

Hello and welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, co-host of the Trauma Super Conference.

Today I'm speaking with Dr Monica Vermani, a clinical psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress, mood and anxiety disorders.

In over 25 years of clinical practice, Dr Vermani has successfully treated thousands of patients through supportive psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing or EMDR, breath, body and mind practices, mindfulness meditation, mindfulness based stress reduction, and mindfulness based cognitive therapy.

Dr Vermani's latest book, *A Deeper Wellness Conquering Stress, Mood, Anxiety and Traumas*, is available now. Dr Vermani, thank you so much for being with us today.

Dr Monica Vermani

Thank you for having me on the show.

Meagen Gibson

So when someone is struggling, how do symptoms manifest in their life?

Dr Monica Vermani

And so, you know when it comes down to it, all human behavior has a purpose and all humans suffering and symptoms have a purpose.

Any problem in life, regardless of what you're going through, will manifest in your life in three distinct ways.

It shows up in physical or physiological symptoms, headaches, muscle aches, abdominal distress, constipation, diarrhea, heart palpitations, crying, sensitivity, irritability, angry outbursts, eating too much, eating too little, sleeping too much, sleeping too little, panic attacks, a number of physical symptoms, peaking and dropping, rumination, nightmares, flashbacks.

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So when it comes down to it, we first have physiological or physical symptoms. The second way symptoms manifest in your body is negative thoughts.

Negative thoughts of you, your world, your capabilities. Zero to ten were born in a household, so we are developing blueprints and narratives of life from our parents and what their marriage looks like and what family life looks like growing up.

And then as we grow, we go through a number of different experiences and we derive our own statements and narratives and belief systems about life.

What men are, what women are, what relationships look like, communication, love, avoidance, denial, thoughts about worthiness, am I good enough, smart enough, imposter syndrome.

All the wonderful thoughts that fly through our head and many times we ruminate on thinking about it over and over and over and affecting our health.

The third way symptoms show up is maladaptive behaviors, unhealthy lifestyle habits that we form, eating too much, eating too little, sleeping too much, sleeping too little. Alcohol and drugs numb the physical symptoms and the negative thoughts so we do it in our behaviors.

Porn addictions, video gaming, shopping addictions, food, comfort food, avoidance, denial, procrastination, staying in a relationship that's not healthy, avoiding confrontation, being too confrontational, angry outbursts, staying in an unhealthy family situation, staying with friends that are toxic, and the list goes on and on.

So physical symptoms, negative thoughts, negative behaviors usually keep your problems standing in life. And those are the symptoms that most of us are bothered by.

As I mentioned, I'm giving it to you in three concrete categories, but we live with all of them within us and so it can be quite overwhelming and stressful when we're dealing with traumas, mood, stress or just mood and anxiety symptoms.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. Like you said, it's not like we're a contained system in our physiology. We're just having physiological symptoms, right?

We're probably also experiencing rumination and thought patterns and they all go hand in hand, don't they?

Dr Monica Vermani

It's good to recognize we all have symptoms so that's normal. Many people ask me, well, when do I know my symptoms are a problem? And it's when they're holding you back in life.

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So I always tell patients sometimes if I have a magic wand, it can take away your problems. Where would life be?

In work, social intimacy, self care, spirituality. And many times spirituality is not religion.

And spirituality, from my definition, is you enjoy your own company, the content in your head and your own company with hobbies and interests and many times we don't like our time alone because we think about all the things we don't do well or negative self scrutiny and judgment.

So I always tell people, where would life be if your symptoms were gone or healthier?

And they'll give me these healthy versions of life and I'll say the purpose of therapy is to take you from where you are to where you want to go and the gap is just your physical, emotional, negative thoughts and your maladaptive behaviors.

And so when is a symptom a problem? When it's holding you back in life, when it's holding you back from having a healthy relationship, from working productivity wise, focused and feeling successful.

When you're able to take care of your health. If your symptoms are holding you back from managing life in a successful way, where you're proud of yourself and you're healthy in it, then we have to look at the problems there.

Meagen Gibson

And you actually took the words right out of my mouth that was going to be the next question I asked was, how do you know when to seek help?

But before people get to that point where everything's getting in the way, what are some of the signals that people might miss? Because we're using those mal, especially the maladaptive behaviors, seem to be the thing that we're using the most to crush the other two senses and avoid the other two senses and avoid kind of coming to terms and paying attention to it because it's either not convenient or it's not important enough.

We only have so much time in a day so before people get to that point, how do you recommend that they kind of take stock so that things don't get to the point where they're in the way?

Dr Monica Vermani

Yeah, it's a great question. We have to understand there's a reason why your coping mechanisms and your maladaptive behaviors are in play.

At one point in life they served you, they worked for you and so as a kid, it maybe worked for me not to speak up because there's so many family members and everybody else's voice is more important.

So I've learned to be more quiet or I've learned to just please and manage things a certain way. It might have worked for you at one point in your life to manage trauma, manage drama,

manage dysfunction in the household, or to cope well with that fight or flight or time that you just need to push through.

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The problem is that many times those coping skills that worked well, we hold on to and we continue using them and as an adult, you need to reflect, is that coping skill now holding me back somehow instead of being proactive and challenging?

Okay, I learned this once, it worked for me once, maybe I need to let it go now and reconceptualize, revamp, revise my coping skills.

And so the purpose of therapy or seeking self help is sometimes we realize we do the best we can with what we know.

What you knew once might not be what's going to be healthy for you today as you've evolved, grown, and maybe become more independent.

When we're out of our family background, some of the things that worked for us in our family unit might not be necessary to use anymore because you're on your own and you can set boundaries and you can walk away from things and you can speak up now.

You're not under the reliance of parents and being dependent on them for livelihood. And so it's important for us to recognize what are tools I have and what are tools maybe I need to bring forth or revise so that they're healthier for me and who I am today?

So we're constantly revolving, we do the best we can with what we know and sometimes we're such creatures of habit, we get stuck on that hamster on the wheel, that pattern of living the same way, and it starts becoming unfulfilling, it starts becoming problematic, where maybe symptoms get louder and louder.

And secondly, you might hit a plateau where you're not just growing the way you would like to grow. It's important for us to pause and reflect, what's working for me, what's not? What's stuck in the plateau?

Where am I just a hamster on the wheel, rat race of a life without challenging if I'm happy, if I'm fulfilled, am I just bogged down by responsibilities and roles I play?

And now I'm having symptoms that make those roles heavier, but I'm not making the time to address why is it heavy? Why is it unfulfilling, why have I hit a plateau?

And so each and every one of us, regardless of the responsibilities and pressures in life, need to pause and sometimes look at what's working, what's not, what do I need to reconceptualize and revise?

And that's where therapy sometimes comes in. Sometimes we can only take ourselves so far, and we need somebody else to mirror back, where we're excusing our behavior, we're rationalizing it.

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Plus, you don't always recognize your symptoms are unhealthy because you've been living with them for so long and so loved ones, conflicts, problems at work, being on probation or feeling exhausted all the time.

Sometimes our symptoms are the only way for you to know something's off course.

Meagen Gibson

Go ahead.

Dr Monica Vermani

Are your symptoms bothering you?

Meagen Gibson

Yeah, I love the way that you contextualize that too, because sometimes we think about trauma and trauma symptoms as being these things that kind of take us out of our lives, that people only get help or treatment when they're completely dysfunctional or they're in complete substance use disorder level things, right?

When really that piece of fulfillment that you were talking about is so important. Are you constantly exhausted? Are you resentful of all the roles that you play?

And do you know what you actually enjoy as a person? And all these ways that we've coped and developed over time, and especially in your early adulthood, coming to terms with who you are separate from your family system, all of those things can be very kind of enlightening and also disarming at the same time to realize, like, hey, wait a minute.

I've been doing the thing I've always done because it's familiar and therefore feels safe, but is it serving me anymore? Am I getting to where I want to go?

Dr Monica Vermani

You brought a really good point about alcohol and drugs. One reason why we use food, alcohol, drugs as comfort behaviors is to take the edge off the suffering we have. What's the suffering?

The physical symptoms, the negative thoughts racing in your head and the negative behaviors you do.

And so it's important for us to realize, how am I supposed to change my life if I'm constantly numbing it if I'm constantly taking the edge off things?

So after a long day of stress, if you go reaching out for that drink or a cocktail or a glass of wine, it's good for you to reflect sometimes that I'm using this substance to take the edge off a stressful day versus challenging and understanding why is my day so stressful that I need to take the edge off?

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And many of us get into habits and rationalize, oh, I just like to have a glass of wine at the end of the day, but all human behavior has a purpose.

There's a purpose, you're trying to numb something. You're trying to take the edge off. Is it muscle tension? Is it stress in your head where you're ruminating and you don't know how to take the edge off that?

Are you stressed out by your day that you need something like a depressant? And that's what alcohol and drugs do.

They depress your central nervous system. It's important for us to recognize, am I playing games with myself to cope and manage? Versus really solving the problem at hand, which might be overworking, which might be not managing relationships well and taking the edge off and silencing myself.

So if you're numbing so much are you ever addressing the symptoms that are problematic? And are you ever able to recognize the symptoms that you're constantly pushing down?

Meagen Gibson

Excellent. Yeah, I envision a car in a snowy state, right? Because all these things are signals and if you don't brush the snow off your car when you're driving, you might be able to do that a few times and nothing bad is going to happen.

But if you're muting all the signals from your headlights and your tail lights and you're going to get in an accident eventually, I don't know if the analogy works with people watching.

Dr Monica Vermani

You make a lot of sense. Symptoms get louder and louder until you address them and sometimes I have people in my office come in and say, I'm suffering so much, I'm going through so much.

Well, the fabric of life for all of us is suffering and suffering is always a catalyst for change. All it's doing is pushing you in a direction to shift something that's not working for you anymore.

But if you're numbing your suffering all the time, you'll never be able to make the change and the symptoms just get louder and louder and then you're in crises, showing up at an office, trying to really put out a fire.

And so it's important for us to recognize all human behavior has a purpose. But all suffering has a purpose, suffering is a catalyst for change. If I wasn't suffering in a relationship, I wouldn't go get counseling or address things or speak up.

If I wasn't suffering at my workplace, I might not go get that new job or look for other opportunities or speak up and ask for that raise or ask for changes at work. If I wasn't suffering in my body, I wouldn't go to the doctor and do preventative care or figure out what's wrong that I really need to address.

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And so each and every one of us have to sometimes reconceptualize the purpose of symptoms. Symptoms are there to help you shift for your betterment, not to cause pain and suffering only.

The pain and suffering is the way to shift you to change. Whether it's seeking help, it's changing dynamics, it's bettering a situation or leaving a situation like a toxic friendship or relationship or workplace.

Meagen Gibson

So moving into kind of treatment modalities. How do you know what treatment modality might be right for you? And is there a right order for people to do it in? Whether it's physiological or mental or depending on the symptoms, how do people approach treatment?

Dr Monica Vermani

So the key is understanding all symptoms have a purpose. The first step to treatment is awareness. Have awareness of your symptoms so that you can communicate them clearly to a professional.

And we can only do so much with self help books and self help modalities because sometimes we don't call ourselves on our stuff to really get to a place of change.

And so self help is wonderful, it's inspiring, it's knowledge provoking. It sometimes helps you get the words to communicate to a doctor what needs to be treated.

But then you have to go beyond yourself at some point to seek out help. Talk to your family doctor, it's the first line of treatment many of us go to. You go to your family doctor and say, hey, I've been reading this, I'm learning about this, about my symptoms, or I have these symptoms, physically negative thoughts, and where can I maybe possibly go for help?

Sometimes professionals have knowledge of the different modalities out there for treatment and they can guide you in the right direction, or they can guide you in a direction where you read more about it to see what fits. And so, as a psychologist, most of us have more than one modality of treatment.

And so as you come into my office and I assess your symptoms and I assess how it's working for you and not working for you, I also get a feel for your personality.

Some people need an active treatment plan, I'm not teaching meditation in silence to a person who has an ADD brain. Instead, I'm giving them an active meditation so they can actually do it and like to do it.

But if you're sitting in meditation, you're frustrated and you can't handle silence, why would I give that to you as a modality?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is oftentimes very effective to challenge negative thoughts. However, if your physical symptoms are so loud, then maybe we need to first put that fire down.

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We need to throw a blanket over your physical symptoms just to bring it down in intensity and maybe we need medication first, then you can focus on challenging thoughts.

And so your professionals are actually the people who you need to reach out to, to share your personality, to share your dilemmas, to share your symptoms and then they create a unique plan to your unique person and that will help.

So seeking out resources so that they can do a proper assessment, and that assessment helps us create a treatment plan that fits your needs versus just a one size fits all, because it doesn't.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. I love the validation you gave toward medication help. Medication Assisted Therapy is phenomenal in a lot of cases for the exact reason that you just said, which is if somebody doesn't have safety in their body, whether that's because of physiological pain or symptoms or the effects of stress, or the thought patterns or OCD, something like that. You can't access rational thought and feel safe in your body with all of that going on.

Dr Monica Vermani

And you can't execute healthy behavior then either, right? Your thoughts, your moods, and your behaviors but if the volume of my physiological symptoms are that loud, you won't do exposures.

You won't do the right healthy steps to reach out and say, hi, my name is if you're socially anxious, what we have to understand is many times people don't show up in my office for preventative care.

You show up when you're in crises and when you're in crises symptoms are super loud and if they're super loud, how do we bring them down so you can function?

Sometimes medication is just to bring down your symptoms so that you're able to function, go to work and manage things and then do therapy effectively.

Because many times people are like I want to do this without medication, but did you show up in my office where your symptoms were mediocre and manageable?

Are you showing up in my office where you're on fire and you're going to lose your job, you can't focus, you can't sleep. We got to look at the level of symptomology and how severe it is and there's got to be a level of humbleness, we're bodies with physiological things going on.

If you were diabetic and you needed insulin you would go for it. The same with mental health. We need to see it as chemical imbalances sometimes where we don't feel in charge of our body and if you're not sleeping and you're not eating and you're not managing conflict and your mind is constantly ruminating and racing, we need to sometimes understand chemistry within us and get medical help.

That medical help gives you the courage to do the right steps to change your lifestyle, to really absorb therapy and make concrete changes for success.

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Medication can be brought in and can be taken out. Many of us have stereotypes and thoughts about fears of staying on medication forever.

Well, if you use it as a form of treatment without changing anything else, yes, you're going to use it forever. But many times if you add medication and bring down your physical symptoms, bring in therapy, bring in resources, learn new tools, lifestyle changes and medication can leave and now you have a new way of living that is healthier for you.

What we have to understand is there's a process to everything. Trust your professionals, we're only as good as you allow us to be and to trust that people are giving you guidance with your highest and best not to get you addicted, not to get you stuck.

But you also have to be informed to understand medication has its place if you need it and therapy has its place and sometimes the comorbid dealing with both and adding them together adjunct helps you really succeed at therapy.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. It gives you a bit more capacity to integrate all of the improvements.

Dr Monica Vermani

And function without losing your job. Right? Function without losing your job or having conflict in your relationship where your partner leaves you or your kids hate your gut so you feel like you're dropping the ball, disappointing everybody and that worsens your self esteem.

By avoiding symptoms we just make a bigger mess of our life because we start feeling a disappointment not only for ourselves, but we feel like we're disappointing others.

Meagen Gibson

And I know that you've obviously got your book we can see displayed beautifully behind you in an online platform. So I know that those are both resources for helping people. So I would love it if you could tell us a little bit about those.

Dr Monica Vermani

Yeah, so many of us professionals during the pandemic realized that people need extra resources and even my own patient care found themselves having a lot of struggles.

So we're equipped and we're skilled to pay it forward and I created the online platform for people who can't afford therapy or have time for it that you can from the comfort of your home under the cost of one session, be able to have 18 life lessons of things to work on guilt, shame, boundaries, working through symptoms, understanding panic disorder, working through substance use and there's handouts and worksheets with that.

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And then as an adjunct I wrote the book *A Deeper Wellness* for people to again, it's a handbook that has worksheets and exercises, but it also gives you knowledge.

The first step to treatment is awareness. If you understand things better, you know how to deal with them. Otherwise you're constantly just racing with all those symptoms, feeling overwhelmed and feeling incapable to handle life.

The purpose of the book *A Deeper Wellness* is to take you from wherever you're at, to go deeper into your own healing and realize that again, we do the best we can with what we know, when we know better, we can change.

And your job is to be your highest, best version of you. Many of us want to see the world in a better place, it starts with you.

When you're in pain, you spill over on tethers and cause pain to your family members, your children, and role model the wrong things and affect your workplaces.

But when you're in health and you're working on yourself, you also have a ripple effect that is positive, that motivates people, supports others, becomes a better partner and member in society, as well as makes the world a better place, so let's try to really work on ourselves.

A Deeper Wellness is about starting where you're at and recognizing things and just doing concrete actionable steps. A lot of books that they bring in knowledge, but they don't give you actionable steps.

Throughout the pandemic I wrote articles every week. I've also read them out loud for people in chronic pain so that you can watch a video or listen to the article, read about it, and then bring in actionable steps to start now on betterment.

Each and every one of us want to be better, not only for others, but for ourselves and one of the quotes I love to live by is don't give from your well, give from your overflow.

If you don't take care of you, you're giving from an empty well. And so it's important for us to start building our own resources, taking care of us as I'm better, I'm better for everything around me because there's a ripple effect and *A Deeper Wellness* is written with that intent.

Great Christmas gift, great gift throughout the year for anybody who's struggling. And many times we want to be helpful to people. Sometimes the best help you can give is not just listening, it's sometimes guiding them towards resources that are helpful for them to work on an actionable level.

And the book is written in a way that it doesn't matter what age bracket you're in or what you're going through, you can apply the knowledge and work through things. You can get it on Amazon. And each of us have a responsibility to ourselves to be healthier.

[00:23:18] Meagen Gibson

I love all of that and I love that you just acknowledge that different people are going to need different levels of access, which is why we do this conference for free. And you've got the book and also the platform at different levels of investment, right? Because people have different abilities to access help but we all deserve it.

Dr Monica Vermani

And we all learn differently, somebody has to write it down, somebody wants to read, somebody wants to hear it and digest it and somebody needs to do all.

I've had people who bought the book and I've had patients then say, I've also bought your audiobook and I've listened to the audio version of the book as I was working on it and I find that I learn it differently and it's deeper.

It teaches me how different people need different things, but we need to take charge of our own treatment. Seeing somebody in person, like I said, can sometimes push self help another notch higher because I can call you on stuff that you don't want to see about yourself.

Many times we have defense mechanisms that kick in to kind of protect us. But those protective mechanisms also keep you stuck on a plateau to not grow and be your best version of you and many times if we have trauma, there's a lot of defense mechanisms that come in because there's fight, flight or freeze that kicks in in moments of stress and trauma and we're often triggered on a day to day basis and we don't recognize how our defense mechanisms are holding us back versus helping us.

Meagen Gibson

Dr, Vermani, I would also love if you would talk about, you've talked in a great way about how personal responsibility getting that self awareness through books and self help, then taking it to professional, getting the support that you need to kind of go deeper.

Look at your blind spots, look at the things that you're not aware of and kind of the shadow elements of your development that are holding you back.

But do you ever get into a situation where someone is kind of off putting the responsibility of their own self awareness and self development onto you as a professional? And then how do you manage that? Situation.

Dr Monica Vermani

Yes. So it's important for us to realize our treatment providers are only as good as you allow them to be.

And so, yes, trust your team, but they can't do the work for you. You literally have to start recognizing that the symptoms are within you and you're trying to work towards understanding the roots and the treatment modalities that will help you out.

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As a treatment provider, we're seasoned and we are experienced enough to hold you in love and compassion, hold you in a space of treatment to work at your pace and so it is important for that.

But some of us do, and I definitely do this, try to give you a little bit of a nudge and a push, but we're only as good as you allow us to be and so being transparent, being honest, being open about your symptoms, and also being open to trying new things.

And many times we want to stay stuck thinking, I know this, I know how to do that. I oftentimes encourage people to meditate or do breathing and they're like, I know how to do that.

But have you done it with a therapeutic approach? Have you done it the way I'm going to teach it to you?

Be open to trying things that you think might not work for you or you think you know enough that you don't need that refresher and let people really guide you on what they think can help you.

And be open to trusting the professional. Many of us out there know a lot and we read a lot, but it doesn't mean you know how to apply it to your life and a therapist or a practitioner or a clinical GP is experienced enough to teach you how to put it into your life and actually be able to function with it.

Many times we know a lot, we don't know how to absorb it and be able to put it in actionable steps.

Ask for help, be vulnerable, be open to a process. There is no magician out there who's going to take your symptoms away and it's gone, including medication.

You're going to have to do the work because at some point you have been avoiding the work and that's one reason why the symptoms are louder and louder. And now it's about taking charge, taking accountability, and just giving yourself gradual baby steps to a place of health.

Things don't change overnight. Have patience and compassion that it might be painful some sessions, it might be uplifting some sessions, but giving the process a chance allows you to have a new version of life that maybe you're more happier with.

Meagen Gibson

And I love that as well and I'm sure that you would agree, please tell me if I'm wrong. But then also as the individual, when you get that nudge from your practitioner and your support team, if you're not ready to voice that, but then it's not a I don't want to do that, it's a I don't want to do that right now, can we try this again at my next session or can I try this again? Can we revisit it again? I just don't feel like I have the capacity right now.

Dr Monica Vermani

Everybody's different. Realize that if one therapist didn't work for you, their style or their temperament is not a good fit. Don't give up.

[00:28:12]

An isolated event is not a never ending pattern. Give yourself a chance to go in trial and error and find the right person for you.

Sometimes we're at different stages, I've had people that need one form of therapist for a period of time and then when they hit a plateau, needed to change practitioners, to find somebody who takes them a notch higher.

We're service providers, we're not here for us, we're here for you and you have to educate us on what you like and don't like, for us to modify our style.

But sometimes as practitioners too, we have to be honest to realize this is in my capacity and this is not. And so realize if you're not happy with someone, no guilt, shame, blame.

You're here to help yourself. Make sure you're a priority and make sure to communicate. People can't read your mind and so oftentimes it's important for us to take charge of the energy in our space and take charge of the treatment, to look for what fits us and not give up just because one or two people didn't work out for you.

And also to hear the truth. Sometimes it's a very humbling process to be in therapy because you have an hour to speak about yourself and sometimes as you're speaking, you realize how much you carry.

Give yourself compassion and love to have a space to process what you're going through. Our friends and our family members, they can't handle it.

Many times, if you keep emotionally vomiting, as I call it, on your friends and family, you will deplete them and you will find yourself having conflict.

It is important for you to find the right avenues that can truly be skilled to hold you in a space to hear what you got to say and then help you sort it out and find actionable plans for treatment.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. I think many of us make the mistake of thinking our friends and family are going to be the ones that want to hear. And we want them to be able to receive and support and it's not within their capacity. That's not the nature of our relationship so that's why we turn to professionals.

Dr Monica Vermani

And our friends and family have to have the courage to also recognize they've got to stop enabling people who do that.

We sometimes try to be good people, want to hold people in love and compassion and always be there for people, but you can't.

You're enabling the person that you're always helping out, you're always revising their thoughts for them. Then they don't know how to do it on their own, they don't know how to self soothe.

[00:30:30]

And so many times I tell people and friends, when your friends call you and they're ready to go and you're having a sense of dread of that phone call, learn to say, I love you, but I'm not the right person to do this with.

You maybe need to get some help, and I'm here for you but I can't be the person you always rely on, I'm enabling you now.

And have a level of love and compassion to teach them to trust themselves. Many times we feel overwhelmed and we feel incapable to handle our stress and the truth is, life only gives you what you can handle. You handle things well, the self doubt kicks in.

And many times therapy is about feeling capable to manage things by bringing in new resources and treatment tools. Not about feeling incapable, but more feeling capable to manage whatever shows up.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. And each time I've set that boundary with somebody, they have stepped up when I've said, like, listen, I don't have the capacity for this, I'm not the person to help you. I love you unconditionally, like you said, but this is beyond me, the person has always taken responsibility for that.

Dr Monica Vermani

And it's important to sometimes when you call them on it, your friendship gets deeper and you don't dread that phone call or you don't avoid it.

Some of our relationships get toxic and unhealthy and we have a sense of dread for certain people.

You want to try to keep your relationships healthier by being honest and you've got to also call yourself on it. What's your guilt about? Why are you feeling guilty to set boundaries? Why are you feeling guilty to say no?

Why are you feeling sad or ashamed to speak up and say, I can't be here for you in that capacity? I got my own stuff going on. It is human nature as human fabric, life wise we all suffer, we all go through things, have a level of compassion that everybody's dealing with something that we don't recognize.

And it's not about judging each other's suffering, it's about recognizing everybody's got things, we're all perfect and a work in progress.

And so have compassion that people are working on the things when they want to hang out with you. Sometimes we want to support each other on a healthy front. Oftentimes when friends are struggling, I take them out for a walk, go for gelato.

I might talk to them a little bit, but also ask them, what are you doing to better yourself right now?

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Go to a movie, take the edge off in a healthy manner. Cook a meal together, go for a walk in nature. Learn to bring in healthy things to help people go through difficult times.

You can't change what they're going through. You can support them by being like a healthy edge off. If you want to call it and be there for them, it's also nice to guide them towards resources and treatment and places where they can get professional help sometimes if they are that overwhelmed and unable to manage on their own.

And I always remember this is a moment in time and the moment will pass. Oftentimes friends that I thought really needed my help, if I wasn't there, they somehow got through.

And I realized I don't have to have that oversensitive responsibility to be there for people who call me, because many times if I'm not there, someone else shows up or they're able to do it themselves.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely. We don't want to take that away from them, do we?

Dr Monica Vermani

No. I think we all have to have faith in each other that we're more capable than we show ourselves to be and even if we don't feel we're able to manage things that we're quite strong and resilient, we might not be able to change our circumstances, but we can definitely change how we cope, manage and deal with things in life.

Whether that's on a thought level by being more positive and bringing in affirmations and feeling capable to bring something in or someone in to help.

Or it's us managing our physical symptoms by doing sometimes the right things. When you're stressed out or you're triggered and you're dealing with a lot of burnout and other symptoms. Bring in the basics. Let's bring routine back in, structure back in, eating properly, sleeping enough, getting the rest we need.

Bringing in joy, little moments of joy to take the edge off a stressful day. Bring in hobbies, interests, people and pets and resources that just make you lift a little bit and start recognizing that what you focus on expands.

Whether you focus on negativity that expands and the stress expands, or you focus on positives and things that you're grateful for and things that are working, instead of always focusing on what's broken.

Meagen Gibson

Absolutely great advice. Dr Monica Vermani how can people find out more about you and your work?

[00:34:59] Dr Monica Vermani

You can go to my website, drmonicavermani.com and everything's there. My book *A Deeper Wellness* is on Amazon. Right now, I write articles every week that are also posted on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and you'll be able to see little tips on how to manage mental health a little bit easier.

Just short tips. Sometimes we need daily reminders just to keep us on track, we all do. We're all perfect and a work in progress and wherever you're at, just keep trying to make sure that you're a priority. You're a VIP, very important person. Don't lose you in the equation of your life.