



Conscious Life presents

Recognize and Break Free From Psychological Abuse

Guest: Avery Neal

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[00:00:09] Alex Howard

Welcome everyone to this interview, where I'm super excited to be talking with Avery Neal. We're talking about psychological abuse, and particularly the more subtle forms of abuse, and how when we've normalized certain experiences in childhood, we don't necessarily recognize and label abuse as abuse, but the impacts are still there.

We'll be talking about what psychological abuse is and those more subtle forms of abuse, and some of the pieces that can really help us to see it, to separate and to really move away and then move towards much healthier ways of being.

To give people a bit of Avery's background, Avery Neal is a practicing psychotherapist, international author, and speaker. In 2012, she opened Women's Therapy Clinic, which offers psychiatric and counseling support to women.

Avery is the author of *If He's So Great, Why Do I Feel So Bad?: Recognizing and Overcoming Subtle Abuse*, which has been translated and published in twelve languages. Her articles and interviews have been published by Oprah.com, American Counseling Association, DailyOM, Best Self Magazine, Hitched Magazine, Bustle, PopSugar, PKWY Magazine, and her courses have been taken by over 18,000 people worldwide.

So, firstly, Avery, welcome. Thank you for joining me again. I really enjoyed our interview last time, and I'm really happy to have you back.

Avery Neal

Thank you. Likewise, I'm very happy to be here.

Alex Howard

Let's start off with giving a little bit of context to what we're talking about. I was reflecting before this conversation that a lot of the talk around abuse will fall in the language of adverse childhood experiences and these very clearly identifiable forms of, say, physical abuse or sexual abuse.

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One of the things that I really appreciated from our conversation last time was the more nuanced distinctions around things that may not necessarily fall in those categories, but can have enormous impact in terms of how they shape us. I'd love you to talk a little bit about how you define psychological abuse and what would really fall within that definition.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. I'm really glad to start with this, because what you just mentioned is really common for most people. When we hear the word abuse, we think of physical violence, typically, and sometimes even verbal abuse with the name calling. But it really is so much more than that. It's actually the more subtle forms of psychological abuse that we know do more damage to a person's self-esteem and sense of worth than the more overt forms of abuse.

What's important to know here, too, is that psychological abuse exists in all abusive relationships, whether it's a physically abusive relationship, a sexually abusive relationship, or a financially abusive relationship. There is psychological abuse occurring in all of those dynamics. Psychological abuse can actually occur completely on its own without those other forms of abuse.

It's really imperative that we understand what it is, what it looks like, and how to identify it. Actually, the World Health Organization has said that it is a global crisis. It's huge. It's prevalent. Over half of American men and women have experienced it in their lifetime, and those are the people that can identify it and report it. You can imagine how much bigger those numbers really are.

Psychological abuse can happen in any type of relationship. It can happen from parent to child. It can happen in friendships and romantic relationships, sibling relationships, in the workplace. It is basically when one person exerts their power over another person using force, intimidation, threats, put downs, anything to demean the other person or degrade them in some type of way, intimidate them or make them feel like there's going to be harm or significant consequences if they don't do what that person says. This puts that person in a position of power to dominate and control the other person.

Alex Howard

I'd love to dive a bit more into something that you mentioned, that these forms of subtle abuse can sometimes be more harmful. In my work, I talk about overt and covert. That's just the way I'm mapping it. What struck me is that when we know something is wrong, that's happened, in a way, I guess it's easier to reject it and whether some subtler isn't. Maybe you can speak to that a bit more.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. I get very excited talking about this piece. This actually is at the heart of a lot of my research because it is actually the more subtle forms of the abuse that keep us questioning ourselves. It's the piece that makes us think, am I going crazy, or is this just me, or am I really a terrible person? That this is how this person is reacting to me or responds to me.

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It's these subtle, less overt mechanisms that keep us questioning and second guessing ourselves and make us more easy to manipulate and to control and give the other person all the power. We're also more likely to stay in the relationship or allow ourselves to continue to be treated this way because we can't quite put our finger on what's going on, or we start to feel really bad about ourselves.

We think, oh, well, I'm just lucky this person puts up with me, or, oh, I am really this terrible. This is what I get, or I'm creating this. Often, if we're empathetic and we take a lot of responsibility for our behavior, we're constantly apologizing and feeling like we're in the wrong. So we become more and more dependent and less and less confident as time goes on.

This actually puts the abuser in a much more powerful position to continue the abuse, and not only to continue it, but actually to escalate the abuse so that as we're more and more committed in the relationship and we feel worse and worse about ourselves, we'll tolerate more and more mistreatment.

Alex Howard

Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? Because I think we can all think about times that we've been in, maybe intimate relationships, but also even just friendship or workplace relationships, where we hadn't realized how much something was impacting us until it ended. And then we get this resurgence of our life force that comes and we realize how much it has been wearing us down.

Avery Neal

That's exactly right. It's often only when we get out of it that we can look back and see the situation or the person and the relationship more objectively. Because when we're in it, we're often working so hard to fix it or make it better or make the whole thing work, even if it's in the workplace to hold on to our job or to get the promotion or whatever it is. We're so invested in the whole thing and making it work that it makes it harder to take a step back and look at what's happening objectively and over time.

Alex Howard

I guess also, how I think about it, particularly in terms of childhood and trauma, is that our ability to normalize, in a way, is a blessing because it's how we survive. If we're aware of how damaging something is minute after minute, it's almost like it's impossible to cope. But that normalization also then means that we normalize something later in our life that isn't healthy.

I'd love to hear you speak a bit about - It's a weird one, isn't it? Because on one hand, it helps us survive, and on the other hand, it's what keeps us trapped.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. That's well said. That's exactly right. So if we experience abuse in childhood, psychological abuse in childhood, this does, in fact, really shape our perception of ourselves and the world around us. We look to our parents as our first mirrors for who we are. If we have parents

that validate us and give us lots of praise and really love and accept us for who we are, we begin to develop confidence in ourselves.

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We begin to feel like, okay, whatever comes up in the world, I know who I am. I have a strong foundation and I can handle it. On the contrary, if we have abusive parents or critical parents who put us down, make us feel bad about ourselves or make us question and second guess ourselves, then we begin to have lower confidence and self-esteem, which certainly sets us up for continuing that pattern into other relationships.

We will not only have lower self-esteem and believe that we deserve less and that we deserve to be mistreated, or we may not even recognize the mistreatment. Also, we don't know what it should feel like and what it's supposed to be like. There's no frame of reference. I've heard so many people say, well, this is what I know. There's some security in that. However, it doesn't mean that it's right.

Alex Howard

Yeah. It's almost like someone is being put down by someone and that's their reference point for connection. They think they're in a connected relationship when actually they're in an abusive relationship.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. Especially because a lot of times in these abusive relationships the good can be really intoxicating and feel really good because there's so much relief when the person that's been hurting us is kind to us. We're flooded with gratitude toward that person. That's where we get that traumatic bonding occurring, where it's a stronger bond than a lot of connections because of the abusive dynamic.

It can feel really like a roller coaster and like there's this intense connection with this person because of the abusive cycle and how the whole attachment piece plays out in the relationship.

Alex Howard

Could you give a few examples of more subtle examples of psychological abuse? Because I think in a way, as we're talking about it, I'm putting myself in the eyes of the audience and I can imagine them taking the more obvious examples that we referenced at the start. But I'd love you just to give a few examples, things that people may not initially think of as being abuse just to give a bit more amplification to this.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. One of the biggest things to look out for is using humor as a weapon. Somebody that's putting you down even under the mask of humor or can't you just take a joke type of thing. If somebody's putting you down either directly or in front of others. That public humiliation happens a lot in psychologically abusive relationships, but it's all done in a ha-ha way, so that if you take offense or it hurts your feelings, the person says, oh, you're just sensitive, or, oh, you can't take a joke or whatever.

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But little by little, that chips away at our self-esteem and our sense of worth. Humor is a big one. I think the distinction here, that's important to understand between, okay, what's somebody being. Trying to be funny, but they're just a little bit insensitive versus abuse. You've got to look at the motivation behind the person. Is there a pattern of this person trying to make you down here so that they are up here?

Alex Howard

Can they take the joke back? I guess that's part of it.

Avery Neal

Yes, that too. When you say, hey, this is hurtful, please don't do that, do they make an effort to not do that again? Are they able to say, hey, look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I'll try to do better next time?

That's an appropriate response when we hurt somebody's feelings, when it's unintentional. But with psychological abuse, there's an agenda there. The agenda is to have more power over the other person. That's why it's so important to look at the overall pattern.

Alex Howard

Yeah, that's really interesting. When you're learning yourself and the penny dropped for me. It's the power dynamic. I really hear what you're saying. It's like when there's an inflating and there's a diminishing. That's really interesting.

Avery Neal

Yes. In terms of some of the more subtle aspects, too, if somebody's subtly undermining you or your accomplishments or your happiness. If it feels like the person is always playing devil's advocate or often playing devil's advocate with you or making you feel like your achievements or the good things in your life are less than or not quite good enough, that's something else to really pay attention to.

Because often in these psychologically abusive relationships, there's a competitive vibe in the relationship where one person is just taking you down a notch or two. It makes us feel bad. Over time, what happens is we shut down more and more in that relationship to where we don't even want to really talk to that person or tell them what's going on in our lives.

Same goes for our other relationships, if our partner, if somebody's putting down our other friends or family members, even just making fun of them, but we feel like we have to hide our relationships or not fully disclose when we're getting together with friends or family members. That's important, too, to pay attention to. That can be a subtle sign.

Certainly, that happens in more overtly abusive relationships as well. But it can happen in some of these more subtly abusive relationships where we just don't feel like it's safe to fully be ourselves in the relationship or with that person because we're afraid of their reaction. We're afraid of how

they might respond, or we feel uneasy that they may take offense or make us feel bad for engaging in other things that make us happier, that build us up.

[00:15:54] Alex Howard

It also struck me, Avery, as you were talking as well, that in a way, if there's that power imbalance, that as we start to try to reclaim some of our power and we try to lift ourselves up, how that person is in response to that. If they allow us to take that space or if there's a pushing back down that happens.

Avery Neal

Exactly. Because in a healthy relationship, both people want what's best for the other person. You both want to be your best fully-formed selves, and you're supportive of one another in that growth. It's not a threat to the relationship. That's a healthy relationship where you're both free to grow and have your own individuality and also come together and be supportive of one another in that. You want your partner to be happy. The happier your partner is, the better off the relationship is.

Alex Howard

Yeah. Can you say a bit about the relationship between psychological abuse and chronic levels of stress and some of the ways that it can manifest in the physical body?

Avery Neal

Absolutely. This is a huge piece that a lot of us are unaware of. We may have various physical health conditions or mental health conditions, and we're not recognizing that there may be a link to abuse that can come from childhood or in a primary relationship, and it really affects our physical or emotional health and well-being.

When we're looking at psychological abuse and any type of abuse, that creates a lot of fear, ongoing fear, and fear and worry about your primary person's reaction to things. It creates this chronic level of stress in the body. What we know about chronic stress is that it increases inflammation, and it can lead to a whole host of physical conditions.

Psychological abuse is strongly linked to gynecological problems in women. It's strongly linked to different pain syndromes, physical injuries, migraines, sleep disorders. A lot of the physical symptoms that are associated with chronic health conditions are linked to psychological abuse, whether it's in childhood or a primary relationship.

Also there's the whole mental health side as well. Psychological abuse is also associated with addiction issues, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder. Again, insomnia and sleep issues, and it can even be associated with other addictions, eating disorders, OCD, things like that. Also suicidal thoughts are common.

Alex Howard

I guess one of the challenges here, going back to what we were saying a little bit earlier around normalization, that one can have a highly dysregulated nervous system as a result of psychological abuse, and then they normalize to that, and then it starts to manifest in physical symptoms.

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I think often then, people are surprised when they hear that those real physical symptoms they're experiencing are a product of the abuse that's happened. You talked about inflammation as being the manifestation of that, maybe you can just say a few more words around how that mechanism is working.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. A great example of this would be a case study where there's somebody in childhood who was abused. In this particular case study, there was physical abuse and a lot of psychological and emotional abuse. This person grows up, is highly functioning, very successful, Type A by anybody's standards. This person is making it in the world. But this person also is, despite their high functioning, is also anxious and has OCD and ADHD.

This is someone that claimed not to have anxiety at all, didn't recognize it because they were so accustomed to feeling that way. They're on autopilot. They did not recognize anxiety cues in their body, even though they had ADHD, anxiety and OCD. So when you look at that chronic level of stress or fear or worry that we become accustomed to living within our bodies, it's easy to override those feelings and those sensations because we had to, to survive in childhood. We have to cope.

But what happens is we stay on autopilot, and we don't really necessarily address what's happened to us, or we don't take the time to heal from it. But it manifests then in other ways, like the OCD, for instance. That's an attempt to control and manage the environment in order to reduce the internal stress that the person is feeling.

Alex Howard

You mentioned ADHD in the case study. I'm interested in what you see as a relationship between psychological abuse and some of the different forms of neurodiversity, particularly, for example, ASD and ADHD. Is there a link? Obviously, there's ways they interact, but I'm interested in your observations and your thoughts on that.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. There is absolutely a link. Clearly not everybody who has these diagnoses has experienced abuse or psychological abuse. But for those people who have experienced abuse in childhood, often these different conditions will present themselves. Again, it relates back to the chronic levels of stress, and particularly in children, a lot of times anxiety and stress show up as ADHD symptoms.

Think about it. None of us can focus when we're under huge amounts of stress. And so children especially tend to get fidgety. They tend to get a little bit spacey and or have a difficult time paying attention. Certainly there are a whole bunch of reasons why someone can have ADHD, autism, OCD, some of these different things.

But when somebody's experienced abuse in childhood, it's very agitating. There are some ramifications for that. Typically people start to present with a cluster of symptoms as a result of that level of stress.

[00:23:03] Alex Howard

I'm just thinking out loud here, but I guess also some of these things can make one more vulnerable to psychological abuse as well.

Avery Neal

Absolutely it can. When you think about if we've experienced abuse in childhood and we have a diminished view of ourselves and lower self-esteem, that can certainly lead us into other relationship dynamics, even in the workplace where we just expect that type of treatment. Because we don't have anything to compare it to, we just may think that that's normal.

Certainly if we feel poorly about ourselves because maybe we have anxiety or we have ADHD or some of these things, we may feel like, oh, well, I'm just difficult, or this is just me and I need to just tolerate this. So it is important to look at all of that. Absolutely.

Alex Howard

Yeah. I'd love to talk a bit more about how we can break free of the normalization to abuse, because one of the things that really strikes me, and I think I reflect back on my own therapeutic journey, that there are times that we see things more clearly. Now I see it. I got it now. And then we continue on the journey, and a few years later we look back and go, oh, shit, I didn't really see it, now I see it. There's like a gradual deepening of discovery.

I think what that does is a couple of things. I think, firstly, what I find at least is I hold my own truth more lightly because so many times I thought I've seen things clearly, and I wasn't. I find it hard then to buy the narrative that holds now in some ways, but also in a way, the problem becomes the rigidity and the protectionism that we have about the way that we see things.

I'm really interested in your clinical work, when you're working with people, what helps loosen the grip and the rigidity around one's perception, where often we're even defending the abusers because that's the story that we have. What helps get through some of that?

Avery Neal

Yeah, this is a beautiful and insightful question. When we've experienced abuse in childhood or when it's in a primary relationship, there is the tendency often to defend the person. We know that person well. If it's a parent, there's of course an attachment there. Often by the time we've grown into adulthood, we see our parents' weaknesses and probably have an understanding of why they are the way that they are. Maybe abuse in their background and history.

Often there's a level of compassion or understanding around why our parents behaved the way that they did. Same thing goes for a romantic partner. Often there's enough intimacy and closeness there that we may understand why our partner behaves the way that they do. So what I always tell people, and I think it's important to acknowledge, is this is not about bashing the other person. It's not about dehumanizing them. It's not about blaming them.

This is about understanding your own experiences and how some of their wounds have affected you and your experience, and how to heal from that so you're your best, strongest self, and you

don't continue to repeat the same pattern or pass that along to your children or give your children the message that some of this is okay.

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That's really what it's about. Certainly people who abuse, there's a reason for that. They have their own wounds. This isn't about blaming and attacking, but it is about understanding and educating ourselves so that we know how to better protect ourselves. If we have to stay in a relationship with someone who's abusive because they are our parent, or we have a child with that person and we have to co-parent or for whatever reason, or we're in a marriage that we can't get out of for whatever reason, maybe even because we're too afraid for various reasons and we believe that we have to stay in contact with that person, it's still important to educate ourselves on the abuse and the dynamics so that we can strengthen ourselves and not take some of this so personally.

Because when we're the victim of abuse, the whole issue is that it degrades us and we start feeling worse and worse about ourselves, and it affects us and our bodies on every level. The more we understand abuse and what's happening to us, and the more we can see it objectively, then the better equipped we are to not take it quite so personally, if that's possible. But we recognize it and see that this is this person's issue, it's their wound, and I'm not going to take it on so much. And then you can learn tactics for dealing with that.

Alex Howard

Yeah, because I think one of the really tricky places around this, and I think particularly in the context of what we're talking about here, if we've had a family member that has physically or sexually abused us, it's relatively more simple. Unless there's enormous remorse and narrative and story around that, there's a likely very clear boundary of distance and so on.

Avery Neal

No contact, yes.

Alex Howard

When it's more subtle and when there are elements where we can really understand that person's, their own, trauma history and there is goodness in that person. In a way, I think it makes it so much more tricky, like where those edges are. I think about some of my own family members and where there are comments that they'll say in a situation where it's just very clearly not aligned with my values and not really okay.

These days, it's really okay for me to give someone a boundary. Sometimes I'm perhaps a little bit too strong in doing that. But it's also wanting to act from a place of kindness and recognition that the behavior is not the intention of the behavior. I'm really interested in any guiding principles that can help navigate that territory and where we figure out where to place those edges and not.

Avery Neal

Absolutely. Well, I love the phrase detach with empathy so you can appreciate where somebody is coming from, have compassion for what has led them to behave in the way that they do, without serving yourself up on a silver platter to be harmed by those behaviors. Certainly with abuse, and

you mentioned sexual abuse, and this is very common with sexual abuse. There's a lot of manipulation happening in those relationships, and there are a lot of conflicting feelings.

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And so it can become very tangled in terms of setting a clear boundary and having no contact. But it is important for people to understand that you cannot allow that person to have access to you, to harm you. There has got to be a very clear boundary there. When I say detach with empathy, I'm not saying, have compassion for this person and try to heal them or rescue them or anything like that, because that's a very dangerous position to take. You can't heal that other person. It doesn't happen. You cannot rescue someone who's abusive. You can't.

Alex Howard

That's a hard thing to hear because I know a lot of people, they think they can. It's a really important point you're making.

Avery Neal

Yeah, it is. That's a very dangerous path to go down, and that path can even lead to loss of life. It's important to understand that you cannot rehabilitate an abuser. Those wounds are deep, and the person has to take responsibility for their behavior and their own healing, which often the very personality structure that allows the person to abuse also keeps that person from taking responsibility for their behavior.

It's rare that somebody that's abusive actually does, in fact, truly change for more than just a short period of time. When you're looking at protecting yourself, you need to focus more on what do you need to do, what boundaries need to be set for you to feel safe in your body, for you to not have a nervous stomach, for your shoulders not to be up here with tension and anxiety, for you not to give that person access to mistreat you or say hurtful things.

What you do is you figure out, what do you need to feel safe? What does this relationship need to look like for you to feel like you can take a deep breath and feel protected and okay. And then work backwards from there with a plan for how to set those boundaries with that person.

Alex Howard

There's something in here, I think that in a way, the more someone gets ground down, as we talked about a bit earlier in the dynamic of that relationship, it's like the very resource that they need to use to give the boundary is the resource that's being eaten away. I'm curious as to when you're working with people, because how I experience it is I'm working with someone and I'm like, you have no idea how powerful you actually are.

You're with someone that's tolerated years of abuse and is still getting up with a smile on their face. It's like a Rottweiler power inside of them, but it's not owned. I want people to see them as I see them in that situation. I'm curious as to how you bring people on that journey to really reclaim the power that's there.

[00:33:46] Avery Neal

Absolutely. Well, of course, the first step is for them to understand and really see what's happening and that the patterns are harmful and destructive and that they can't rehabilitate the other person. That psychoeducation piece is really the first step. And then, like you said, it is helping to support the person in understanding how powerful they actually are and what steps they need to take to feel that power.

So even in work with people suffering from PTSD, clinically, what is the most helpful is not to keep going over the trauma, but to actually help the person figure out who they fully are, separate and aside from the trauma, what feels right to them, what feels good to them, and how to start taking action to claim that life that they want and they deserve.

And to your point about somebody not seeing themselves as powerful after years and years and years of being worn down, it's understandable why it would feel scary to come into our own power. We spend so much time worrying about the person's reaction, being afraid of the person's reaction and how we can tiptoe and manage everything in order to have the best reaction possible from that person. That to move away from that and not try to manage the person's reaction, but to just fully be ourselves and let the chips fall where they may, that feels so terrifying to somebody that's been abused.

And so it is about confronting, okay, what are those fears about that person's reactions, and what will you do if that happens. What steps will you take so that we start to feel like, okay, wait, I am capable, and if this person does react poorly, that's not on me. These are the steps that I can take.

Alex Howard

I want to backtrack to something you said a few minutes ago, which is a personal, professional developing thing in my own thinking. You said that when someone has PTSD, that actually the more helpful thing is not necessarily to identify with the suffering, but it's to focus on the building up. They weren't quite the words you used, and I'm paraphrasing.

But one of the things that I've been thinking a lot about recently is how a lot of more traditional psychotherapeutic approaches work to heal, to use the words wounded child, one way of talking about it, by constantly focusing on the wounded child. What I notice is people become so identified with that place, that actually the thing that the wounded child needs is the capable adult.

In a way, it's like they get more and more identified with the broken place and less identified with the resourceful place. I'd love to hear you speak a bit more about that, because to me, that feels like a really important piece.

Avery Neal

It is hugely important because inner child work is, I believe, some of the most powerful healing work that you can do. And so when I talk about not focusing on the trauma, it is important to look at the trauma and to heal from it. The inner child work is an incredibly meaningful and powerful tool to do that. But it's just like you said, if we identify with that wounded child so much to where we don't fully develop the capable adult who can see that child through this, then we become stuck there.

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For those of you listening that maybe don't know what we're talking about with the whole inner child stuff, when something happens to us that's traumatic, we often revert back to the emotional state that we were in when the trauma initially occurred. And so it's all about going back and reparenting ourselves and giving ourselves things that we needed and didn't get emotionally.

When we're able to really recognize, okay, here's what I needed and didn't get. And then we really make an active effort to give ourselves those things now, in the present moment, that's when we can really emotionally heal and move past some of this feeling of powerlessness and get into a more empowered space.

Alex Howard

So, Avery, someone who's watching this, we're going to come in a minute to how people can find out more about your work and your books and so on. But I'm interested for someone that's watching this that perhaps is for the first time recognizing, wow, there's these relationships in my life that I hadn't really labeled as abusive.

Now I'm seeing the abusive elements that are there. What are some of the early next steps that person might take to start to move that awareness that's coming out of this conversation into some steps of action to move forwards?

Avery Neal

Yes. Well, again, I think the first step is psychoeducation. Really do what you can to arm yourself with knowledge so that you objectively understand the dynamics that are occurring in the relationship, because it's so easy when you're in one of these relationships to get sucked into the other person's manipulation and to believe all of that. What's really important is for you to be able to call out in your own mind what's actually occurring and the patterns that are actually happening in the relationship so that you don't get pulled back into it. So you don't get sucked into it, not only literally, but mentally and emotionally as well.

The psychoeducation piece is huge, and then it's the emotional healing. So recognizing what you've been through and the toll that it's taken, understanding what healthy relationships look like and how they should feel. This is extremely important if you've had an unhealthy childhood and have never experienced what a healthy, loving relationship feels like. People who've had loving, supportive childhoods have a leg up because there's a measuring stick there. But those of us who haven't experienced that don't have that.

And so really taking some time to understand what that looks like and what are just basic requirements in a relationship, basic expectations, and then learning how to set healthy, appropriate boundaries so that you no longer allow yourself to be mistreated. As you do that, you'll notice that those unhealthy relationships fall by the wayside. That makes more room for healthy, new relationships with people who treat you the way you really deserve to be.

Alex Howard

Beautiful, Avery, for people who would like to find out more about you and your work, tell people where they can go and some of what they can find.

[00:41:18] Avery Neal

Absolutely. The best place to go is to my website, which is AveryNeal.com A-V-E-R-Y-N-E-A-L.com. There's a link to it. You can go to it. There are links to the book. There are links to courses, some relaxation training, a bunch of different articles to read through. There's even actually a free gift when you go on the website and put in your email, you'll actually get a flowchart to ask yourself some preliminary questions to determine if your relationship is psychologically abusive. Hopefully that will be a helpful tool for anybody who's wondering and is in that gray area where they're not quite sure.

Alex Howard

Amazing. Avery, thank you so much. I really appreciate you, and I think this is a really important conversation so thank you.

Avery Neal

Thank you so much.