



## Conscious Life presents

### Healing Through Memoir Writing

**Guest: Dr Frank Anderson**

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#### **[00:00:09] Meagen Gibson**

Welcome to this interview. I'm Meagen Gibson, your conference co-host. Today I'm speaking with Dr Frank Anderson, a psychiatrist and psychotherapist. He specializes in the treatment of trauma and dissociation and is passionate about teaching brain based psychotherapy and integrating current neuroscience knowledge with the IFS model of therapy. Dr Anderson is a lead trainer at the IFS Institute with Richard Schwartz and maintains a long affiliation with, and trains for, Bessel Van Der Kolk's trauma center. He serves as an advisor on the International Association of Trauma Professionals and was the former chair and director of the foundation for Self Leadership. His memoir, *To Be Loved*, is set to be released in May of 2024. Dr Frank Anderson, thank you so much for being with us today.

#### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Thank you for having me. It's always a pleasure.

#### **Meagen Gibson**

Frank, we've spoken before about trauma, but from the strictly professional lens of a psychiatrist and therapist and you've recently finished your memoir, and it gives such a rare opportunity to learn about the life experiences that inspired you to help people through their trauma, so I'd love to start by asking you to share with us the story of your neighbor and how he inspired your work and your specialty in trauma.

#### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Yeah. So thank you so much. It's really interesting because this is such a new phase of trauma healing. There is this divide between us and them, the professionals, the experts who are helping the clients. And I really was encouraged, and gratefully so, to kind of teach and share from the personal experience. We all learn so much from stories. So it was a big undertaking, and I really hope it has the impact that you're talking about.

But in regards to diving right into the memoir content, which is great, talking about.... So my neighbor's family has many components attached to it. So are you interested in the neighbor child

or the neighbor father is what I would say, because two different components. Right? So there's Albert, and then there's his son Mateo and they both have significant meanings for me in regards to my history. So I'm open to talk about both. But just which one are you thinking about?

**[00:02:42] Meagen Gibson**

And my apologies for not being specific, but I was specifically talking about Mateo and kind of that moment and I think, correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it was in your medical residency when you had a moment with Mateo and that kind of swayed your career in a direction.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, yeah, so a couple things. So he was part of the family, like, he was kind of the neighbor and part of the family. He played with my sisters all the time. So he was at our house, he was like another sibling, really, so he really grew up with us. And there was the first moment when he had his kind of first psychotic break was at our kitchen table.

**Meagen Gibson**

When you guys were children?

**Dr Frank Anderson**

When we were children, yeah. He was like six or seven years younger than me. He was kind of more the age of my sister. So he was always there. And so we were sitting at the table, maybe Sunday afternoon dinner or something like this. Oh, my gosh. There are spiders crawling all over my face. Help me. Help me. Which was shocking for all of us, right? There were no spiders crawling all over his face. But he was clearly terrorized and traumatized by this experience, and so were all of us. We didn't know what in the world was going on.

And my mom was like, honey, nothing's happening. She ran next door and got his parents to come over. And that started this whole journey of what's wrong? What's going on? Trying to figure it out. Because that kind of mental illness was nothing that I was familiar with as a kid. My parents weren't, and certainly our neighbors weren't either. So it was really traumatic. It was a traumatic event for our family and our extended family and our neighbors. And my parents, my dad being a pharmacist, my mom being a nurse by trade, were very instrumental in helping them sort through this dilemma.

So that started the ball rolling. And even at that moment, I felt something so powerful and had no idea what it was. It's like, oh, my goodness, I have to do something about this because the pain was so intolerable. It was devastating. I was 12 or 13, I don't know what, but it was so devastating that I just knew I had to do something. But it was so ill formed at that time, and I had no idea what that meant. And then my life went on. I went to high school and college, and they finally got him diagnosed with bipolar, and he got on some medicines. We went to visit him in the hospital. Like, being a kid and going into these psych wards was really scary and terrifying. It was like a whole new world I was exposed to.

### **[00:05:32] Meagen Gibson**

Sorry, I don't want to interrupt, but I want to pause just for a minute, because you bring up a good point, which is that and I actually just recently learned this, which is like, if you're seeing things, hearing things, there's all sorts of ways, intrusive thoughts, things like that, there isn't one distinct, I think when I was a kid or when my parents were a kid, it was like there were only two things, you just called somebody with visions or that heard things or anomalies or intrusive voices, like they were schizophrenic, and that was it. Right?

And there's so many things that can contribute, cause, some of them curable, some of them treatable, some of them less so, so I just wanted to kind of name that as we were there talking about it, that we know so much more now. And the fact that your parents, as medical professionals, were able to assist. Because I put myself in his parents shoes, and I'm, like, completely overwhelmed. I have no idea where to start, where to begin, how to even start. So it makes sense how intertwined, not only in heart space, but in professional assistance your family was in helping them.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, there was this at the time, and I remember this clearly because it was like this wild goose chase. Do you have any family members who have mental illness? What was your pregnancy like? They were checking with her all the time. And the whole schizophrenogenic mother thing, there was this blaming of her that was really painful and powerful. And so my parents were, is there some rare genetic disorder? Is there an enzyme deficiency? They were looking at everything, trying to grasp for what is the cause of this. And like you say, some of it's reversible, some of it's dietary, some of its genetics, some of its trauma.

There's all this complexity. And so back then, it was even more primitive than it is now. And the stigma was certainly enormous for them. And I remember feeling the shame. We were protective of them in regards to all the shame. And so Mateo ended up getting stable enough. He was a very smart kid, was able to get through high school, was able to graduate high school, and got into college, in a local college in Illinois, downtown Chicago, like an hour away from his parents.

And then I got a call. This was, like, the second time. It was his first semester, freshman year, and he went missing, had some kind of psychotic episode, and he went missing. And he was missing for three or four days, I think, in total. And again, devastating for our family, devastating for the O'Connors. I ran home. I was in medical school at the time, so I ran home. And I will never forget the paralysis of them sitting at their kitchen table, utterly helpless and frozen. They were frozen. They didn't know what to do. They couldn't do anything. They were just so devastated. And it really is a moment, right?

And I, in this medical, I get shit done, I do stuff, you know what I mean? So I was, like, in high gear, and I looked at my parents, I'm like, can I go here? And they're like, go, Frank. And so I jumped into high gear, and I'm like, we've got to rescue this kid. We've got to find this kid. Went to the police station, filled out a missing person report, get signs, posted it all up, all over. I got into hyperaction mode, again, not knowing why yet for my own personal history.

But I was so driven by saving him. And we ended up, he did get found, he had a traumatic experience, for sure. I was the only one he was able to talk to when he was hospitalized then, which was powerful around. I could reach him inside of his kind of decompensation. And it was

there, it was like, I'm going to be a psychiatrist. I thought I was going to be a pediatrician because I love kids. And I was like, no, this is what I'm doing. And that was at that moment when we ended up finding him.

**[00:09:51]**

And again, I didn't even know then that this was really all about me also, because I had suppressed so much of my history, because I was in therapy to suppress it. It was like a perfect storm of learning how to repress all of your feelings and emotions in order to be normal in the world.

### **Meagen Gibson**

And you've teed up my next question perfectly, which is that many of our conference attendees and Conscious Life members will be watching this interview while they're going through big trials in life, or they're chipping away at huge, overwhelming goals, just trying to keep their chin up day in and day out. And the reason I bring that up is because in your memoir, you talk about how two things can be true at once.

You can be working really hard on goals like medical school and studying under some of the best trauma therapists in the world, while also coming to terms with your own history and your own wounds. So can you describe to me kind of what you were just kind of teasing for us about your history and what you were going through and what it was like to do both things at once?

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, this is where, for any people who have written books or know about the book writing process, the title comes to you after the book is written. Okay? So we had all these book proposal titles, and as writing this memoir and unfolding the story, *To Be Loved* is the title of the memoir, and to be loved was what it was all about. And I wasn't aware of that at the time. Right? I wasn't aware of that at the time. So I had this drive to be successful, to be loved. I had this drive to be smart and competent to keep away my pain and my trauma.

There was so much involved in this striving and, like, excuse me, you don't become a trauma expert without a trauma history. Sorry, I'm just...

### **Meagen Gibson**

Spoilers.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

I'm going to call myself out and everybody out there who's, like, all over Instagram, all over TikTok, I'm going to speak for myself, you do you people. Like, you do you but I was driven to learn everything about this and be an expert to help others without yet still knowing that it was really all about me. But the drive was so powerful. I got into Harvard, I got into medical school. I was so driven to be loved and to keep the pain away. And I think that's more common than we like to admit, honestly.

**[00:12:42] Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, absolutely. And all the ways in which you did what was expected of you to be loved. Right? I'm thinking about your first marriage.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, I'll share this, because the book opens and the first chapter is you're not going to school today. Frankie, you're not going to school. Like, that's how the book opens. That's how this story unfolds. I was six years old, and I loved school already. I went to my parents' bedroom and they said, you're not going to school. I'm like, why? I'm not sick. It's not summer vacation. Why am I not going to school? And they didn't tell me why at all. And they sent me to, at that time, it was psych testing to figure out what was wrong with me.

And then I ended up spending five or six years, from first grade to 6th grade, once a week in therapy to make me normal, basically, to make me like a normal boy. So it was a form of conversion therapy. I didn't know that, but I was a smart, precocious little kid, and I learned all the messaging that was thrust upon me. I used to look at my uncles like, oh, act like that, look like that, do this and say that. So I was a master at repression because of what I was taught of how to be like other people so you can be loved and so you can fit in and not get hurt. So it was real... Brainwashing might be too strong of a word, but not for a kid. That's what it felt like. I was forced to learn to be this way in order to be acceptable and to fit in.

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah. What occurs to me as you're talking is just how the best of tools can be used as weapons in the wrong circumstances. And the incredibly loving intention that your parents had, but the impact was traumatic, right? Is that fair?

**Dr Frank Anderson**

I totally am glad you brought that up, because that's exactly the truth. Okay? And I talked to my mom about this. She watched a movie recently. She's like, oh, my goodness, Frank. It's called Boy Erased. Nicole Kidman was in this movie, and she said, oh, my goodness, honey, we did that to you. Like, she felt so bad. She's like, we only wanted what was best for you. At the time, being a little boy who played with a doll was a disorder. Like, it was literally in the DSM, right? I'm old enough for that to have been my experience.

And so they saw this abnormal behavior, and they wanted the best for me. So their intention was really pure, interestingly enough, and I can get that now. I can fully appreciate that they were not, like, hating me. Separate from kind of the stuff that happened with my dad around abuse. Their intention to send me to therapy was good. We want the best for Frankie. We want him to have a good, safe life. So back then, that was what you did. So there it was well intended, and it had a profound effect on my whole life, in many ways.

**Meagen Gibson**

Absolutely. And there's a line in the book, and forgive me, I don't remember exactly where you say, but it stuck out, and it was where you say often we either repress, repeat, or learn from our experiences in life. And you were in repeat mode. And so why is this human nature? And how do

we break ourselves out of the patterns and cycles that keep us from healing when we finally see the pattern?

**[00:16:44] Dr Frank Anderson**

Right. Well, for me, particularly, there was all this taught repression in order to be normal. But most people have a version of that, and it's mostly around keeping our pain away. So we exile our pain. We push our pain away. We push our pain away to survive, to be loved, to do all the things. So when we suppress our wounding, when we suppress our early trauma, there is this natural tendency for redemption. We're wanting to fix the ailments of our past, but we're doing it largely unconsciously.

And so we seek people who are going to help us fix our pain, but we're doing it unconsciously. And what we end up seeking is someone who's familiar, who might be a slightly upgraded model, but has the same characteristics associated with them, because it's what we know, it's what's familiar, and it's what we seek. So, again, well intended. I want to find somebody who will love me. But when I'm searching from my wound, I'm going to find a slightly upgraded model.

There was this play in Boston when I first moved here. I love you, you're perfect, now change. And I just always, I was like, perfect. I didn't ever see the play, but it was like, that's what we do. We reach out to these people. Oh, my God. Like, phase one of a relationship, it's like, you're everything I've never had and always wanted, right? But it's an unconscious draw. And then in phase two of a relationship, like, the bumps start coming up and you're like, holy shit, wait a minute here. This ain't what I thought it was.

But that is the process of our wounding. Choosing redemption, a chance at healing but it's unconscious. And healthy relationships are like, okay, I'm going to stop having you fix this. It's time to do the work. It's time to look inward. I need to start doing this because having, I'll say this now, like, having had the luxury of being with a man and a woman, I was fortunate enough to replay being my father with my wife and then being my mother with my first boyfriend. You know what I mean? I was like, I'll do both sides. Like, what the hell, right?

It was like, holy cow. But it was all repeating in this desperate desire for redemption, for healing. So we all do that, and eventually you get to, and this is what happened to me in my residency, it's like, okay, can't do this anymore. This ain't working. I got to start doing the work. And that's where things totally change when I start, like, oh, this isn't about me saving the world. This is about me trying to heal from my own trauma. And that's when things really shifted.

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, it's so interesting because I think it's Terry Real that says, we get into relationships at the place where we're trying to get healing. We marry our problems. I think. I'm totally misquoting him out of the air.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

I agree.

**[00:20:17] Meagen Gibson**

But it occurs to me as you're talking about this that it's not just our romantic relationships. We choose our relationships with our careers. Everywhere that we show up is showing us a place, an edge, a friction that we can, if we choose to and we don't want to, just repeat and turn away, there's an edge there that we get to kind of file down or work on or look at or examine or move around a bit. So there's an opportunity in all those different aspects.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

I'm going to add a dimension to that that most people probably aren't aware of, and they certainly don't have to agree with me around this. I would also say we choose our children in the same way.

**Meagen Gibson**

I was just going to... You're literally, like, psychic. Here we go.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Beautiful. We are in sync here, right?

**Meagen Gibson**

We are. He didn't get the questions ahead of time. He's not cheating. I promise.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

I believe there's a soul contract. This is my belief and again, I'm not imposing my belief on anyone out there, but I believe we choose our relationships in a soul contract kind of way. And I think with children, we get what we need, not what we want. My husband and I wanted a girl so badly, we had the name of the girl picked out when we started our whole pregnancy journey. Now we have a little dog named Maya instead of a daughter named Maya. It was so clear to us. We both had abusive relationships, complicated relationships with our fathers.

So we're like, why do we want to do men? Like, let's do women. They're so much better, right? Can't wait to put little bows in her hair, right? We were so clear. And when we saw that ultrasound, like, there's the penis. We were like, uh oh, what do we do with this? Like, oh, no. And we ended up having two boys, which was exactly what we needed. I did so much healing. I'd never grown so much as I'd grown in my relationships with my two sons, in all of working through the transgenerational trauma that occurs for all of us, whether we're conscious of it or not.

**Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, absolutely. And you actually wrote in the book, there's no worse feeling for the trauma survivor than when you connect with the perpetrator within yourself. So how did you manage through those moments, and what kind of support did you get? And what would you recommend to somebody who resonates with that feeling? Like, we do our own trauma healing, and then we're parents, and we're like, oh, I wasn't nearly as healed, and here's all these crevices I hadn't examined.

### **[00:23:08] Dr Frank Anderson**

Yeah, I mean, that's probably the second most important message in *To Be Loved*. First is, I want everybody out there to know that trauma healing is possible no matter what you've been through. And I fully believe that, and I'm kind of my version of living proof of that. The second thing is, anybody who has been victimized also internalizes perpetrator energy. We are all both, and that was the second most important message for me in this book. It's too easy to stay polarized in victim. You're the bad person. I'm the good person. I'm innocent, you're guilty. Our world is fighting with this right now, politically, economically, socially. We're a big, huge polarity of us and them.

And for me, personally as well as the message to the world is that I don't think we're going to be able to heal unless we can acknowledge the ways we've been victimized and the ways we've perpetrated. And I did a lot of therapy and got into a really healthy relationship with my husband. And then we start, let's have kids and let's have girls, and we had these two boys, and I ended up as primitive little kids are, they're primitive. And a lot of their behavior, yelling, screaming, fighting, activated my trauma history in a way that my husband never did.

And so there was this perpetrator energy in me that I absorbed because of my history. And that perpetrator energy started poking out to stop my kids so my wounds would not be activated. And like any victim who identifies and recognizes their perpetrator energy, in my personal as well as clinical experience, there's nothing more devastating. That was the moment for me. I'd rather kill myself than perpetrate. To do to somebody else what was done to me was utterly devastating for most of us. And that was an important message for me here.

I don't look pretty and perfect in this book because it's not true, it's real. And there were things I did, many things I did that I'm not proud of. And I don't think for me, true healing can occur for us unless we acknowledge both sides in us, the ways we've been victimized and are helpless, betrayed, and the ways we've perpetrated, whether it's to ourselves or to others, because it happens both ways. So that was a painful but important realization around writing this book and getting that message out.

### **Meagen Gibson**

I think it's, yeah, it was really powerful to me and it also highlights just that we can't, again, like you were taught to suppress and true healing is an example of not suppressing even the hardest parts of yourself when they come up as that perpetrator energy. And that's like the healing of dismissing all of that suppressive programming. To me, it was the recognition, not that you're imperfect, because who isn't? It's like, okay, I'm going to deal with my horrible feelings about having represented all the things that I loathe that cause me so much pain, and I'm going to sit with that and I'm going to deal with that, because that's what big kids do.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, and I think that's why as a culture, in a society, from my view, we're stuck in the polarity is we are exiling our shadows and we're dumping it on the other side, the other view. And if we continue to stay in exiling our shadows and projecting it on somebody else, we're not going to heal as a culture, as a society, or as an individual. So it was very painful. And look, at that time, I was already becoming a well known psychiatrist who did workshops and I'm doing this shit. It was really painful to be like, I'm the expert and I'm supposed to know this. People are coming to me for advice and



here I am enacting my history in my family of origin. Talk about bringing me to my knees. It really did. More than anything else, honestly.

### **[00:28:06] Meagen Gibson**

Yeah, I totally resonate with that. And kind of on the flip side of that too, I want to talk about when you've done healing work, when you're teaching other people how to be good parents. I've had the situation in the last two years where I know, everybody is clear when they see bad parenting, bad parenting is pretty obvious, right? But I know, especially in the last three years, I know several great families with great parents and great dynamics and supportive families where the children are suffering and dealing with incredibly difficult emotions or mental illness. And when you've done a ton of healing work or you're in the healing community and you're teaching other people that there's a ton of guilt and shame and it can be super triggering when we've worked so hard to prevent our children from suffering and then they're just experiencing suffering because not everything is in our control.

And you detail some experiences with your sons. So what would you tell parents who've worked really hard to heal their own trauma and break cycles and create conditions that will avoid their children having trauma and then their children are still having mental health issues?

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, the key here is stop trying to avoid it. Speaking from experience, like, hello. I was like, oh, the whole purpose of having children was to have a corrective experience. I'm going to love them and then it's going to be so corrective for me. Like, I do a lot of work with parenting. Like, what are your expectations and dreams? Why did you even do this? Because it's loaded for people around why you even have kids in the first place. There's so much energy that goes into why we have kids that it's not even conscious.

So there's such energy around what we're trying to correct or fix from our histories or perpetuate the gifts. Because it's a combination. There's lovely things that happened in my family also that I wanted to perpetuate. But the reality is, and this is, again, a view of mine, is that, I love talking about this, by the way, because it brings a spiritual dimension into trauma healing, I think we all come from source energy and love, every person, even the bad people.

And I think when we choose to come down here in human form, we've separated from source energy and love to some degree as we inhabit our human bodies. And I think the goal here is to work through things in human form with free will and choice. And I think we're here to learn and grow. I think I've changed my view to say trauma and adversity is the normal part of this human experience. And that that is exactly what we're here for, is to go through adversity, hopefully not repress and repeat, but to learn and grow on a soul level.

I think our human experience is an opportunity for soul evolution, and so that when we die and go back to source, we have evolved on a soul level. So for me, this idea that I'm going to raise kids in a loving, supportive environment with no adversity is not even part of the contract or the agreement. And I'm not a pessimist at all. I'm actually quite optimistic. So it's not a pessimistic view. It's for me, it's a, yeah, we're here to experience adversity. That's like part of the contract, the job, the goal.

Because I don't know anybody who hasn't in whatever form, whatever form, I've never met, I always get into these kinds of funny discussions around secure attachment. I'm like, what the hell

is secure attachment? Like, yes, parts of us can be securely attached to parts of other people, totally get that. But nobody's securely attached in total. Nobody doesn't have any adversity. I think it's part of why we're here. And so for me, avoiding it is not the end game. It's learning and growing from each opportunity to evolve as a human.

### **[00:32:57] Meagen Gibson**

I resonated with so much of what you said. And I was actually laughing because I was thinking about my day yesterday and how just like my hormone levels go up and down all day long as they should, your melatonin and your cortisol, everything goes up and down all day long, my attachment level also went like this all day long. What hour are we talking about? Right?

And so in principle, in the big principle, we know, I think it's incredibly important to teach people what secure attachment looks and feels like because I don't think we get enough education on that. But at the same time, this, like, you can't be healed, like, no one's done healing. Nobody's fixed and absolved of hurt, and nobody's just like, I've arrived at secure attachments and nothing will ever interrupt that ever again.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

When you read some of the attachment literature, and again, I am not against attachment theory. I'm not. But when I was reading it, I was like, the first two years are so important around self regulation, self awareness, affect, attunement. I'm like, good. I'm going to be an awesome parent for two years, and then I'm done. It's quality, like, I arrived at creating secure attachment. See you later, honey. Good job. Have a good life.

It's as if it ends. The first two years are what it is, and then you get this thing forever, and then you're good to go. I was like, I could be a good parent for two years. I'll devote two years and then my kids on their own. Not what happens for any of us, of course, right? It's this ongoing process, and we have a range of different types of relationships with different types of people, including our children and our partners and our friends and our colleagues.

The other thing is, for me, nothing is fixed. I am so different than I was 30 years ago. Sometimes I'm surprised, I'm surprised and grateful, that my husband and I have kind of stayed together through all the iterations of both of us. I'm like, if we look at each other 25 years ago, we're totally different, so nobody stays. We evolve, sometimes for the best, sometimes not so good, right? But it's an evolution for sure, for all of us.

### **Meagen Gibson**

Yeah. And all real secure relationships are ones where you could just grow in the company of someone else.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Yes, who's going through their struggles. I mean, I can say my relationship with my husband is the definition of relational healing for me. And that does not mean it's been all smooth sailing by any means. Right?

**[00:35:53] Meagen Gibson**

So I want to talk about memoir in general as kind of like my wrap up question, because I think many trauma survivors feel compelled to tell their story. And there's tons of research and science around narrative healing. But for those who are contemplating memoir specifically, what would you say that you've learned about yourself healing, storytelling through this experience as all parts of you kind of converged in this book as psychiatrist, husband, father, and son?

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Beautiful. Oh, my God. That's so great. Talk about alignment. So I was on the phone yesterday with Lissa Rankin, who's an author, a friend, and she and I are actually doing a memoir writing class for trauma. Like we've created, it's going to be coming out in January, and we're doing this course on memoir writing as a way of healing trauma. So it's funny that you mentioned that. I don't even think you knew that.

**Meagen Gibson**

No, I didn't.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Right. And this is part of what I have learned because I've been a therapy lifer, and I healed a level and degree of my trauma through memoir writing in a way that I have not and couldn't have through psychotherapy in any kind of traditional way. IFS EMDR. I've been through it all. So there is something different, not better or worse, around this process of reviewing one's life. And the writing process is very different from speaking. It's very different from listening.

So it activates different parts of the brain, and it activates different neural networks in our bodies from my perspective, that I access this awareness of my... I always thought I was sexually abused, but I never understood it. And I didn't have a memory, and I never wanted to assign it to anything without knowing. But through the process of writing this memoir, I understood these overexposure to sexuality and how that got encoded in my system in a way that created a violation for me sexually.

So it's like, oh, my goodness, that's what it was. Because writing is slower. It makes you separate. It was interesting because I wrote the memoir first, blended in my parts. So the first version was I'm six years old, I'm in the closet, and I wrote it from the first person, and then I rewrote it because I wanted people to experience it firsthand. But then I rewrote it from my adult present perspective. And that's something that memoir writing offers people is this built in capacity to be with instead of be in and things... It slows it down because you can't write as fast as you think.

I'm such a fan, and I'm excited to be teaching courses on this now because I think it's a huge way that isn't the cost of psychotherapy that people can really move their healing journey forward in this venue, because there's more than one way to heal trauma. So I'm very excited, and that was a surprise bonus for me. I had no idea. I was writing a story so other people can learn about healing. And I did a level of healing through this journey that I would have never been able to do without it.

### **[00:39:29] Meagen Gibson**

I love that, and I'm so glad that you shared it. And it's wonderful that you're putting together a narrative writing program. And you'll have to make sure to let me know so that I can let people know when they watch this, how to engage with that, and also for people, because we didn't actually talk about parts work at all in this yet, but Internal Family Systems, which you studied under Richard Schwartz and are a total rock star in and published author in in your own right, talking about these parts of ourselves and what occurs to me, too, is that when you have childhood trauma, a lot of the way that you're relating to it, unless you do the process that you just named is from the adult shame that you're projecting on the child.

Like, why didn't you speak up for yourself? Or why didn't you do this? Or why didn't you...? And an adult, a fully and capable seated adult might be capable of doing that, but to project that onto a child, or you do the other thing, which is that first version of the draft where you're totally enmeshed in the child part and feeling not the right size, as my friend Britt Frank would say, like, you're not the right age, not the right size, not the right emotional development that you're speaking from and embodying it in. And so to be able to do both, separate yourself, then objectively look at it, have your adult self. I'm paraphrasing your work. So tell us a little bit, kind of, about that process and how that integrates into parts work.

### **Dr Frank Anderson**

Well, that's great, because that is where I'm moving in my career, because I've been a lead trainer at the IFS Institute for many years. I teach the trauma training there. And what I've been aware of as I'm writing a memoir, as my purpose is bringing trauma healing to the world, that, for me, implies outside psychotherapy, like psychotherapy is one way, one such way. So I am translating a lot of the work. I'm translating a lot of neuroscience knowledge. I'm trying to translate this, and the memoir is a piece of that, is, how do I teach people how to do this outside of psychotherapy?

And so I'm using a lot of the principles, I'm using a lot of neuroscience knowledge. I'm using a lot of other modalities too, around how do I get this message? How do I translate this message so that the average person who might not be able to afford therapy can be in some form of journey toward healing? And to know when it's okay to proceed and when you do need to get help. That's another thing that I feel is important to teach people. And for me, that's one of the distinctions is when you're in it, you need to get help.

When you're with it, you can proceed. And so that's one of the things that I'm teaching people to learn the differences, what it feels like to I can't stand you versus a part of me is so mad right now. First is in it, second is with it, and then how to navigate those waters. I'm working with a lot of people in the general public now. Nicole Lepera is one of them, the holistic psychologist. And she's got her method of helping people heal.

So I just came back from China and worked with a group in China, 3000 therapists who are doing peer support healing. So I'm learning different models of how to bring this to the world in a safe way with education. So that is part of my mission now, which feels really important and needed as we're all struggling.

**[00:43:23] Meagen Gibson**

Absolutely. Frank, this has been fantastic. How can people find out more about you and your work and the book and all the upcoming stuff you have going on?

**Dr Frank Anderson**

Yeah. So the book *To Be Loved* is out now on preorder so people can go to Amazon and preorder the book. It's coming out, the official release date is May 7, 2024. And you can get that through [pesi.com](https://www.pesi.com). That's a publisher, and/or through Amazon. And also through my website, which is [frankandersonmd.com](https://www.frankandersonmd.com). I have a newsletter. People can sign up for my newsletter, see all the workshops that I'm doing there and the other kind of, I'm all over social media now as it goes.

And probably the one that's most active for me is Instagram. And so my Instagram is [@frank\\_andersonmd](https://www.instagram.com/frank_andersonmd) on Instagram, but I'm on all the other socials. It's part of an integrated community right now, and there's a lot of ways for us to connect. So thank you for doing the work that you're doing and connecting so many people to healing trauma because we all need it.

**Meagen Gibson**

Absolutely. Thanks again, Frank. Have a great day.

**Dr Frank Anderson**

You too.