



## Conscious Life presents

### Life After Loss | Q&A

#### In Therapy with Paul

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

Welcome, everyone, to this session. Just going to let people come in and join us. I have no idea how many people are going to show up, but it's looking promising, which is good.

Let me say a little bit about what's going to happen in the session, and then we'll get into it. Really, the primary purpose of this session is to give some space to questions, reflections that have come up from this week's season of *In Therapy*.

I'm very mindful that we've put out some very impactful content, and it just felt important to have some space to... I should probably turn off my WhatsApp. To have some space to just be in that a little bit together, to answer questions that people have got.

And then as I was talking with the team and talking with Paul about the fact that we were going to do this, Paul was keen to join us for this exploration. I'm going to talk a little bit at the start, and then I'm going to say a few words about some things we have coming up. And then Paul is going to join us and is really happy to answer questions that people have as well.

I think what's nice at the start, it's nice to get a sense of where people are in the world. Maybe you can just post in the chat your city or country... I need to enable the chat. I get this wrong every time. Let me just... Okay, alright, chat is enabled. If you want to post in the chat, whereabouts in the world you're joining us from for this session.

We got Brighton, Swindon, Cambridge in the UK. We've got Finland, Boston, Massachusetts, Birmingham, Coventry, Worcestershire, Oregon, Johannesburg, South Africa, Sweden, London, Canada, San Francisco, Chennai in India, Shropshire, Croatia, San Francisco again, Gosport, New England, Midlands, Colorado.

So quite a lot of those just come in to host some panelists, which is fine, but not everyone sees those.

[00:02:32]

South of France, Massachusetts, Netherlands. I always love how global our audience is, and I love the fact that we get to... Someone saying "Not far from our office in London". There we go. That's very cool. Canada as well.

So yeah, it always touches and impacts me how global an audience that we have and also that we can do something as raw and intimate as particularly this series that we made with Paul, where it's Paul and myself and Oliver and Jeremiah in the production team, and then sometimes one extra person, going on this super vulnerable journey, and then that gets to be seen by thousands of people. It's a really strange transition from intimacy to this very wide and broad sharing.

I wanted to say a few words as well around some of the evolutions and changes with this series, because for those of you that have been following *In Therapy* from the start, for about the last three and a half years, we've been filming a range of different people's therapeutic journeys. If you go back on the channel, you can see some of the history and some of the iterations, we've been finding our way within that.

Paul's is the first story where we filmed from beginning to end before we started editing. We did this for a few reasons. One of the reasons was we decided to move away from just filming the moment by moment, step by step of therapy, to instead focusing on the key moments and themes and reflections. The recognition that hopefully that then lands more impactfully and therefore, in a way, is more powerful than being overloaded by lots of pieces that are happening along the way. In a way, letting the story drive the editing rather than trying to pack everything into a relatively short period of time.

We also felt it was interesting in Paul's story, and Paul and I will get into this, I'm sure, together in a little bit. But we also, Oliver and I, particularly felt as we got into the story, I felt that therapeutically, at some of the the key moments, what was needed was not just Paul and I sat in two chairs in a therapy room together. What was needed was to get out of that room. It was an interesting part of the reason why we ended up in the woods was, the beady-eyed amongst you will notice, that when we come back after the woods, we're in a different studio.

We were moving offices and we literally had nowhere to film. It was spring and I was like, "Well, let's..." It felt like the thing that was needed to get out and to have more space to be able to let things move. Some of this series we went in knowing we were going to change how we were doing things, but all of it emerged as we were going through the series. Particularly, as the trust built between Paul and I, it also felt that there was a potential to be able to be a little bit more creative in the way that we were working. I'm sure we'll talk about some of that as we come to it.

To say a few words about how you can ask questions, if you're on a desktop, you'll see below the video of me, there's a little button that says Q&A. If you press Q&A, you'll be able to write questions in there. That will keep questions anonymous. If you want to ask questions, but you don't want people to know your name, I won't read out your name. It also means as the chat moves, you don't have to scroll back and find questions.

We will keep an eye on the chat, but I think it's easier if we use the Q&A function. If you're joining on a mobile, you might need to go to the three buttons at the bottom where it says 'More', and you

can click on that, and then you can find your way to the Q&A function there as well. Really happy to answer questions about, I guess, the production of the series, questions about the themes in the series. If there's things that you found yourself reflecting on and found yourself wanting to know more about, I'm really happy to answer questions about that.

**[00:07:07]**

Paul is also happy, of course, to answer questions. We'll talk a bit about, in a minute, Paul's journey to finding the series and also we'll talk a bit about his journey since we finished filming. I know people have been wondering how he's doing at this point now.

Before we come to that, I have a couple of announcements. I was going to do these at the end, and I was just talking to Paul, and he told me that I should do them now, so this is Paul's fault.

You will have noticed in the email which came out with this link that I've just launched the launch of, if that makes sense, a brand new program, which is called the Awakening Program, which at the core of it is a three-day in-person event, either in London or New York, also with the option for live stream if you're not able to travel for either energy reasons, physical health reasons, or just distances and so on.

Someone's just asking if you can invite other people to the webinar. Yeah, you can share the link with other people, that's fine. I'm going to post in the chat the link for the Awakening Program.

I will talk more about it a bit later. I will also answer questions about it if we have a bit later as well. But really, if you want to have the opportunity to go deeper into a therapeutic journey working with me, this program is the best way to be able to do that.

I also am going to post a link to something called Mentorship, which is an opportunity to work in the same way that Paul did, but without the cameras, working with me one-on-one directly, but also having access to all of my historical programs and to have access to all of the programs coming up in the next year, both the Awakening Program and also a five-day in-person residential. I'm going to post those links there.

We can come back to questions on that a little bit later. Okay, let me bring Paul in there with me. Hey, Paul.

**Paul**

How are you doing?

**Alex Howard**

I'm doing well. I can hear you. I just saw a very glamorous photo of you at the moment. There we go.

**Paul**

That was in the garage on my indoor bike.

**[00:09:35] Alex Howard**

It's probably interesting for people that where you're sitting is exactly with the same background in the guitar where you filmed your video before you came in.

I'm just going to say a few words before Paul comes in a little bit. This week, actually, Tuesday, the second day we were releasing episodes, was the one year anniversary story of Zoey's passing. To commemorate that and also, in a way for Paul to have somewhere to put his focus, Paul... Well, maybe Paul, you want to tell everyone what you did, and I'm going to post a link to that.

**Paul**

Yeah, lovely. Thank you very much. It was back end of last year. It's funny, I've got my journal here, and I remember writing in that journal back on the 28th of February.

"Today, I will try and function normally, and I want to be better". I remember walking out of my house, and you kindly read out part of Zoey's letter where it said that, "If anyone can take a shit situation in turning it into something worth fighting for. That's my dad." I was literally running that through my brain as I was walking the dog, as a mantra. That was the beginning of me coming from the very lowest point and making a decision.

I was thinking while I was walking, "What can I do to give myself some focus, to get out of this mire, to get out of this really dark place I was in?" I thought, Well, Zoey's life was fraught with mental health issues from the time she came out as Zoey, because she used to be called Harry before that. She came out in Canterbury, where she lived, and she was at Uni, and that was her first attempt at suicide.

She did get her life together towards the end, and she got herself a job as a software engineer. She'd self-taught software engineer in 2020 during lockdown, she sat in my dining room and taught herself to code.

I was so proud of her. She got herself a job over in Reading, and she got herself a flat, and she moved into that flat. That was the flat where she passed away. She felt very comfortable there. I thought, Well, I'm a keen cyclist, and I need to keep myself fit. I need to get myself back on the bike because I hadn't ridden a bike for ages. I started documenting that journey of saying, "Okay, today I'm going to do 10K". The first day after that, on the 29th, I went out and rode 10K. I thought, Well, what better way to... I don't know what word I would describe, but stating, "I'm going to do this for Zoey", was to ride from Canterbury to Reading.

Those who don't know the distance between the two, it's 128 miles. And I'm going to do it in one hit. I'm not going to do it in two days, three days. It's going to be just one hit. That was my journey, really, to get myself back to fitness because I am a very fit cyclist. I've cycled to Paris before, London to Paris in 24 hours. So I'm an avid fitness freak.

So this was a way to get me back to fitness, to commemorate her memory on the anniversary of her death. And so at seven o'clock on Tuesday, we went past your office, as you know.

**[00:13:42] Alex Howard**

I'll tell that story in a minute.

**Paul**

On the canals. It's all in aid, because there was another thing to this as well. Which charity do I attach this to? Because I wanted to do it for charity, and I decided to do it for Papyrus which is prevention of suicide in younger people. They do a great job. That's something that's very dear to my heart because obviously deeply affected by it.

We've raised about £3,600 so far, and I've got a target in my head of £5,000.

**Alex Howard**

I've posted the link in the chat, so people that have been impacted by the story and they want to support it. Even £5, £10, whatever would be great.

**Paul**

That would be fantastic. But that's how that came out on her on her memorial day of Tuesday. It kept my mind off of her, the negatives. I had a little tear when I finished at Reading, but it was a massive achievement.

**Alex Howard**

Paul and his wife came to the office on Monday night. We sent Paul on, I think, the Friday or the Saturday. Oliver was at the office until midnight on Friday night editing. I was in bed by the time he was sending me the episodes. We sent Paul the first two episodes, I think on Friday night or Saturday. Then Paul and his wife came to the office on Monday evening and we screened episodes three and four, which I felt would just be nice to do in person. My wife was also there as well. Then Paul said he was doing this cycle, and so he was going to come past the office.

Unfortunately, the hour window he was coming past, I was already pre-booked in a live interview that I couldn't get out of. Oliver and the team decided to go down and be on the canal and give Paul some celebration.

Got the wrong moment and Oliver went wild celebrating for the wrong person. Of course, this cyclist was quite distressed, I think, by someone going, "Yeah!", in their face. And then, of course, they then went back into the office in about two minutes later, Paul, I think you went past and...

**Paul**

That's right.

**Alex Howard**

Oliver had disgraced himself and embarrassed himself.

**[00:15:50]**

Do you want to say, Paul, a few words... Firstly, fundraisers there, please do support it. Do you want to say, Paul, a few words about how you found... Well, let me say about how we find people, then maybe you can say a few words about how you found the series.

Oliver's just messaging me saying, "Thanks for throwing me under the bus".

One of the real challenges for us with this series is finding the right people. And what I mean by the right people is finding people that want to do it for the right reason. And the right reason for us is not someone, although I completely understand the motivation, that is not able, for example, to afford therapy and things. "I'll pay with my story to get access to therapy", because although I want to help as many people as we can, that's in a way, us exploiting someone's vulnerability to come into it.

And then there are people that apply because they want to be on camera. Again, I get that, but that's obviously not the heart of what we're trying to do here. It's really finding people with the right motivation. It's then also finding people who have stories that feel like the right connection for the story. There are stories that come in that are great, but we feel we've already told that story in *In Therapy* before, and so we're trying to find stories that are fresh.

It's also really finding someone who is at that moment where I feel, and the team feel, they're really ready to do the work. We've all had points in our lives where we think "I need to sort these. I need to change", but that's different to those moments when there's that real sense of urgency and commitment.

Two or three seasons back, we decided to start using a casting person to get the net wider and to give us a broader reach of potential people. Matt, who did the casting on this series, did an amazing job and a hard job. In five weeks, I think he generated about, I think it was about 60 people that were interested, and I think about a dozen or 15 or so that came to the video application.

Paul, do you want to say a few words about how Matt connected with you? Because I think that was quite an interesting little story.

## **Paul**

When I made that decision in the back end of last year, I slowly started documenting what I was going to be doing. I'm a great believer in accountability. In order for me to start riding my bike, to do the ride, I was posting on Instagram and Facebook saying, "I'm doing this right", because most people by that stage knew that I'd lost my daughter.

I thought, If I post something out, it's going to make me more accountable to go and ride. I started off with a 10K ride, which I did 25 that day, and I always hashtagged for some reason. I don't normally hashtag, and I don't really normally get so involved with social media. I was hashtagging #grief, #loss, #mentalhealth. Then I got, in my DM message via Instagram, I got a message from Matt saying that they're doing this therapy, and would I be interested? I said to him, when we

started chatting, "Why did you pick me?" He said, "Because he was using the hashtags, #loss, #grief, and he picked up my thread and he was reading the thread and he just approached me.

**[00:19:38]**

There are times in your life when things are just, everything's right. I was, at that point, I'd already made that decision that I wanted to get back. And this is a slow process. This didn't happen overnight. The decision was made, but this didn't happen overnight, it took some time. This must have been early February, I said, "Okay, fair enough", and he said, "Would you do a video for an application?" And that's the video I shot you. I didn't edit it. I just sent it off. I just shot it and sent it off. I even thought to myself, "This is a complete waste of time. I'll probably never hear back from it".

I think I told you, all the way through this, I just didn't think it was going to happen. I just think, "Oh, well, we're going to do this, and you'll probably bin it or something". That was my inner critic.

**Alex Howard**

I'll come back to that in a minute.

**Paul**

But he was very good, Matt. We had quite a few calls before I got to speak to Oliver then yourself. But it was an easy process, but I was ready. I needed... Because I've got quite a broad breadth of experience in personal development and NLP and certain other things that I've done. I think I said on the video, I could do some techniques and change the way I felt, but I didn't want to. I needed to go through that process, and I needed someone, and this is really important, I needed someone who was strong enough to say, "Look, Paul, you need to do this. I'm not going to allow you to take control of the narrative". Because any therapy I had before, I'd always control the narrative.

When he said to me your name, I looked through your YouTube account and I thought, "I think this guy can help me". I think there was a sense that you were the right person to be able to guide me through this and not take no bullshit from me because trust me, I can give some bullshit.

**Alex Howard**

It was interesting. That video came in and Matt sent it. We have an internal group Oliver, Jeremiah, my assistant Anna, and I think that's just us. I was filming in the studio and I came back up to my office and walked past Anna's office, which is next to my office. And she says, "Have you seen the application?" I was like, "I've been pretty busy working". She says, "I had to go and walk around the block afterwards". She was like, "It really hit me".

And so, of course, we watched it. And I remember thinking that... Obviously, I knew at that point there's still quite a few steps to go through. So there's the conversation with Oliver, then the psych assessment with Dr Terry. There's a series of things that have to happen. But I remember thinking, not only is this what we're looking for, and this may sound slightly grandiose, I don't mean it that way, but I also remember thinking this is one of those cases that I feel like I can impact in a way that I think a lot of therapists probably can't impact.

**[00:23:01]**

Because I realized that one of the things that mattered to you was someone that had gone to those dark places themselves and someone that could meet you and hold you in those places. I've never experienced what you experienced, and of course, I deeply hope I never will. But I do know what it is like to go to those very dark places in yourself.

In a way, there was a... It's hard to find the right words here because this could sound really strange, but in a way, there was an excitement in me that I knew that if we got through the first session, and I'll come back to that in a second, I knew that we would do some really, really powerful work together, because I knew that you didn't want bullshit. I knew that where you needed to go was the place where it was going to happen. But I remember saying to Oliver, I remember saying before the first session, "How are you feeling about it?" And I was like, "Well, basically, the outcome of this session is Paul comes out and realizes he's not in control".

I think I even might have gone as far as to say "I might have to slap him around a little bit just to make sure that he knows". It was funny when we had that moment. I remember really well that moment in the session, which obviously Oliver pulled out in the edit, where I said, we were talking about your inner child. "I don't think he's the problem. I think you're the problem". I said it with a little bit of a cheek in my face, but I also, at the moment, I was like, I remember thinking, "This is it." How Paul responds to this is going to define everything. Because if Paul bats me back or he defends too much, then this is going to be tricky. But then the way that you laughed, you took it on. I remember thinking, "We're on."

## **Paul**

That was probably the moment where I realized that I allowed you that space and you called me out. I think Yvette said to you, my wife said the other day, not many people call me out. Not many people can get the better of me. We'll go into that a bit more.

## **Alex Howard**

I want to remind people there's a few questions coming. I'm going to hold those for a minute, but also let people know if they want to ask questions, there's a bunch of people that have joined since we started. If you click on the Q&A function below the video, or if you're on mobile, you go to the three dots where it says 'More', and then you'll get to the Q&A function. Feel free to post questions for Paul and I. They will be anonymous, so I won't read your name out, and we'll come to those in a little bit.

But before we do that, I think Paul, particularly the piece in the four episodes that I've certainly had the most comments about from other people, and sharing it with a few trusted people before we screened it, was the session we did together in the woods. People can't see Paul's face now because the camera's on me. I think that was about two hours that we filmed for that then edited down to probably about 15-20 minutes. But the thing that people have most commented on to me was the trust that was there between us and the way that you let me push you to places that were obviously very uncomfortable to go to.



**[00:26:13]**

I know that people would be keen to hear from you about what that was like for you, and what helped you go there, what was difficult about that. Just to hear your reflection a bit on that session.

**Paul**

Yeah, I suppose the overriding thing for me was I knew you had to take me there. I knew that you were going to push me, and I trusted you from the start. I said, in the episode, that I was a bit apprehensive about that day. I wasn't looking forward to seeing you, that's for sure. But I knew there's a part of me, that child, that pushes back and can get very aggressive.

It's funny because when I was a kid at school, that was the overriding theme from my teachers, I was aggressive and immature. You could see that in that filming, how immature I was getting. I was very dismissive, very non-compliant, as you put it. But all the time I was aware, I've got to get to that point to break it, to break that cycle. Does that make sense?

It's like, if I didn't break the cycle, then I was still caged, effectively, because that's what it felt like. I was caged, and you just pulled the bars out. Then once you got through, that was it. I was just a quivering mess. But it wasn't a nice place to be, I can assure you, it wasn't a nice place to be. And looking back at it and watching it back, that anger, kicking the tree and swearing. It was really tough. Really tough. I'm so glad I went through it.

**Alex Howard**

What do you think helped you go through it? If someone's watching this, they know that part of the work they need to do is to start to make space for and move those feelings. But like you've done, and like many of us have done, and like I'd done for many, many years before learning to go to those places, do everything they can to avoid going there, what do you think helped? What made it possible to go there, do you think?

**Paul**

I think two things, the willingness to go there, and the fact that I knew who was going to take me there. Secondly, I think someone you trust to stop you from running from it. Does that make sense? I've been close many times to that point, but not gone through the other side, not got rid of those bars. It would just be like a caged animal. But it's that willingness to surrender to it effectively and say, "No, this has got to happen".

Everything in life, I suppose, is a choice, isn't it? You got to make a choice. And that choice was, I can either waste this fucking opportunity that you've given me, because it was an opportunity that was presented to me at the right time, or waste it. I wasn't prepared to waste it. No. I was at that place, I knew it was that important to me. I had to do it. It shows in the filming, and people don't see the whole picture.

You were very patient with me. There were lots of times when there was awkwardness, and I didn't want to go there. You just kept pushing, pushing, pushing, gently, gently, pushing, patient. It was that willingness to go there.

### **[00:30:23] Alex Howard**

I was going to say, I think in a way, what the film shows is the moments I push you, and actually what the film probably doesn't show is the moments that I let you have space because it's less interesting.... I'm sorry, it's not necessarily less important, but it's like that's a hard job to cut two hours down. At some point, maybe we'll put out a much less edited version, that might be interesting, of that session.

It's interesting from my point of view, and I mentioned it in the voiceover in the episode, that it's that real balance of pushing to the point of driving the breakthrough, but not pushing so much that the person shuts down or runs away.

There's an interesting moment that I wanted to comment on from a trauma perspective as well. A clip of it's actually in the trailer, when Paul starts running. If you watch it in episode 3, which must be 10 minutes from the end of episode 3 or something, there's a point where... Part of the trauma research, and particularly, Peter Levine's work has spoken very elegantly to this, that as children, when we experience trauma, we can't fight or flight. We can't fight with the people who are treating us in less than desirable ways, and we can't flight, we can't get away. So what happens is we freeze. One of the ways that in a way we survived childhood is we freeze and we shut down.

But what that does is it traps in all that fight-or-flight energy. My reflection on that moment when Paul runs, is it's the coming out of freeze, and it's that fight-or-flight energy then being freed up. And then that's actually part of the resolution of that, that energy gets to move.

Although a few people have asked me, was I worried that you were just going to keep running? There was certainly a point with the crew where I was like... You see in the film that you run, and then I go to head off because I was like, "I'm figuring he's going to come round on that circle", but I wasn't sure if you were going to stop when you got to me or not.

### **Paul**

I didn't have a clue what was going on, I just started running. I don't know what it was. I just started running. I did a couple of times think, "I want to get out of here". I did think that, "This is no good". I suppose that was my way of taking control of it, I suppose, in a way. It's like, okay, all right, I'm in for a penny, in for a pound. That was like me letting off a bit of steam. You're right, it's probably you broke through that. You're not trapped in with all that energy anymore. It had to come out, but it was interesting.

There were times when there were a couple of comments, I think, in the comment section, certainly one, about, weren't you worried about me striking you? I had no intention of striking you whatsoever. I did go like this. I'm not a violent person. I've not had any fights in my adult life. So I'm not one for striking out at people. I would be more likely to hurt myself, and I think I said that, headbutting the tree or something of that nature would have been something I would have done, and you were acutely aware of that, as I explained to you.

### **Alex Howard**

Yeah, it's funny. I was talking with my wife after we had that screening on Monday night. She was like, "Paul never would have hit you. He's such an honorable man". That was her response. But in a

way, it's... All I can remember is my nervous system didn't activate. I didn't feel afraid. I didn't think you were going to. But I also, in a way, there's a place that I go into when I'm working in that way, where in a way, you say you're in for a penny, in for a pound, I'm in for a penny in for a pound as well.

**[00:34:31]**

I said to the crew, I was like, "I have no idea. Just make sure you get spare batteries and spare SD cards, because I don't know how long this is going to go for. I know where we need to get to, and I don't know if that's going to take one hour, two hours, five hours, or we're going to be here when the sun goes down. But as long as Paul is willing, we're not leaving here until what needs to happen has happened."

**Paul**

I think also the other thing, throughout all the episodes, that was probably the only time I was really aware of the cameras around me because I remember telling them to fuck off.

**Alex Howard**

People don't know it was actually the crew that Paul was telling to fuck off.

**Paul**

Because I was like... Every time. And I was walking away from you and they're spinning around. "For goodness' sake", everywhere I went, they were there, and that was hard.

**Alex Howard**

Well, it was also, as people will see in the film as well, part of my strategy was I was getting up in your face as well. You'd walk away and I'd walk around and I'd block you, which was also part of the energetic container that I was trying to build that you could move around, but there was also an edge and I was going to hold that edge. That's part of building the safety, but it's also part of the boundary that can trigger that stuff.

Let me come to some of the questions. Just to make people aware, there's a few comments in the chat that I'll pick up, but also if you post in the Q&A, if you've got questions for me, questions for Paul.

The first question someone says, "I'd love to know how Paul is feeling and getting on following his therapy". So Paul, I think we finished... I think we filmed Zoey's Memorial in, was it late May, early June, maybe early June, something like that?

**Paul**

Well into June. I think it was latter June, I think.

**[00:36:20] Alex Howard**

Okay, so that's what, about three and a half months ago. Do you want to share a little bit of how you've been since then?

**Paul**

I'm not going to say I feel great because there's still days where I'm a little bit down, but I don't... There's a moment in episode four when I start talking about a letter to my mother. Before I even read it, there is a smile on my face. That tells me everything I need to know about that trauma from a child, that grieving process I never had. Reading that letter as her son, the man, not the little Pauli, was huge.

I don't look at my past now as a poor little kid who got stuck under the table because, even though I didn't use that analogy, it's only through revealing the little child in me that I tell the story about that little kid under the table. But that little kid under the table, it's been set free now. I don't look at my past and think, "Oh, I lost my mom. Poor me". It's not a sob story anymore. That is a massive shift.

As I said to you earlier, on the memorial day, I shed a tear when I got to her flat, but it didn't... I was down at the crematorium the following day, there were no tears. I can deal with her grief a lot easier now. It's not as raw, it's not as... It's softer. This sums it up, last Christmas, I canceled Christmas. I said, "I don't want any Christmas presents". The only Christmas present I've got was this, which has Zoey, Charlotte, and Vicky on, which are my two daughters and my granddaughter. That's the only present I got. I wouldn't have anything.

This year, I'm looking forward to Christmas. That in itself is huge, absolutely huge. I'm a lot calmer, I'm not angry anymore. Even walking the dog down the road, I used to get cheesed off if he didn't go to the toilet on his last walk out at half nine. I'd think, "You've just dragged me out. What's the matter with you, dog?" I'm chilled, super chilled. There's a lot of facets to this that come together. But yeah, I'm in a much better place.

I equated it to a friend of mine where I say that if you look at sections, this section over here is the darkest place you could be. When you asked me about getting up in the morning, that's that place. Then there's this place in the middle where you're functioning. That's all I was doing was functioning. Then you got this part of the end where you're living again. That's where I am. I'm a lot better, thanks to the work that you did with me.

**Alex Howard**

That's beautiful. I think it's important to say that the goal here is not, as I know you know Paul, I'm saying to people watching, the goal here is not that Paul doesn't feel sadness and the heartbreak and the loss of Zoey. The goal here in a way is the opposite. The goal is that Paul can feel those feelings and emotions because we don't heal by circumnavigating, or trying to flip our way out, or trying to get to another place. We heal by healing, by making space. In a way, at the heart of what we did together was allowing the feelings. But in doing that, that healing then can happen.

It's not a binary place of: in grief, not in grief. It's how we're in relationship with those feelings, which is also part of how Zoey lives within you. It's not about trying to get rid of that.

### **[00:40:49] Paul**

It's just having a different relationship with that. I use some of the techniques and some of the things you did with me, I still use to this day, the little things that we did. I thought, I'll use that. Let's re-evaluate that. It's life-changing, absolutely life-changing.

### **Alex Howard**

I'm going to pick a few quick ones that I'm going to answer. One was, "Does this therapeutic approach use the IFS, the Internal Family Systems model?"

It has shared elements. This model was developed over the last 20 years, and IFS also had its, I think maybe it has some slightly older origins, but there's also particularly had its fruition in those years. But I think both models have some similar underpinnings. I'd say it's less of a "We integrate IFS", and more of, "Therapeutic coaching and IFS integrate some of the same underlying influences".

Someone else saying, "Are you aware of John Bradshaw and his work, *Healing the Inner Child*?"

Yes, aware of the work. I tend not to use the words inner child, although in the work with Paul, we talked a lot about child within, partly just because some of the popularization of inner child work is a little different to what it is the way that I tend to work. I tend to work with the inner child in a much more immediate way, like I was with Paul. Around the relationship and the feelings and the emotions, and less about some models, which not so much John Bradshaw's work, particularly, but some models where it's an enabling of the inner child in ways that actually, I think, can cause a bit more confusion.

Someone asks, "Who do you feel needs to see this, and how might you get it to them? Excuse the directness, bereavement counselor here".

Our job was to... My job was to do the best I could. Paul was to show up the best he could. Oliver and Jeremiah's job was to make the best series we could. It's now on YouTube. It's everyone else's job to help us get this out to people, is what I would say. I'm not trying to abdicate, it's also our job, but please share this series with people. My hope is that this is something that will, over time, grow through word of mouth and people sharing it. Actually, Paul and I spoke briefly on the phone before we jumped on here. Paul, you said something to me about if it could just help one person, maybe you just want to say a couple of words on that.

### **Paul**

Yeah, I was looking through the comments, and in fact, I'll just try and pull it up while we're talking. In session four. This is what it says, and this is what it's all about for me.

"Thank you, Paul, for showing me the other side of the coin. I've been sobbing since watching this last episode. I've been through a very dark time in my life. I had planned to commit suicide several years ago. It's not been easy carrying on, and I will say the thought still creeps in occasionally. Seeing what your daughter's suicide did to you has made me realize what it would do to my parents. I believe, I can honestly say this now, after witnessing your pain, I will find another way to

deal with my troubles. I will not put my family through the anguish you've endured. I am sorry you lost your baby girl. Your bravery and vulnerability is appreciated by me".

**[00:44:21]**

And that really says it all for me because if that one person has a shift, then me being vulnerable on camera was worth every minute we spent together. Sorry.

### **Alex Howard**

No need to apologize. But I think, to me, it's sometimes in the most difficult moments that we have. And that's why I said to Paul, when we were messaging back and forth last weekend. The final message from me in the film, which people recognize as " I've got it in the background, filmed here in the cabin at the end of my garden, it's about a 60-second piece. It took 2 hours, about 30 takes, because where I talk about how hope is something we find one step at a time, because to me, that message is so important.

I think sometimes in our most difficult moments, we think because we don't feel hope in that moment, we think there isn't hope. In a way, I framed it as Paul's lesson, it's also in my message to people as well, that courage isn't that we don't feel afraid, and hope is not something that just turns up. Courage is something we find through stepping forward, and hope is something we discover along the way.

If someone can watch this film that can be in a place they think there's no hope, and to realize that hope is something that can be discovered, that really means something.

I also know there's someone that shared, I'm just going to read out, mentioned a couple of times. The question was, "Do either of you have any advice on how I can deal with the feelings of losing my young son this year to suicide? Do you recommend that I write a letter, or go to the woods and shout and scream. He took his life in the woods. I can't get my head around it and deal with it and have been bed-bound with M.E ever since. I've just joined your three-month fatigue program to hopefully help me. You're both a massive inspiration."

Firstly, I'm really pleased this person has joined that program because I know they're going to get a lot of help and support as part of that. In a way, there's a lot of tools and also one-on-one support this person I know is going to be getting, which is great.

I don't know, Paul, if you could summarize the journey that you've been on here and put into a couple of your key reflections. I know there's lots of pieces to it, but is there anything you particularly want to say?

### **Paul**

My thoughts are with him. But one of the first things I did, when Zoey went, I was looking for something positive I could take from it. I was fortunate that she was very thorough with her passing, and she left me that letter and a few other things. But I was looking for something I could grasp and say, well... Because how can you find something positive in someone passing?

**[00:47:38]**

It's a bizarre thing to think about, but their, whether it's something that you can take about the relationship that you had, or memories or something just to hold on to because it's been ripped from you and sometimes we have to try and fill that void with something that we can look back on and say... I remember things with Zoey, memories, that letter. I read that letter every four, five, six times a day for a month.

But that's what I would say, try and find something positive, something that you can cling to, because it's not easy. You're going through it, I've been there. Not many people will know how you feel. Only someone who's been through it. Try to make sense of it, and try and ask yourself, or stop asking, I don't know if you do, don't ask questions you're not going to get answers to.

It's easy to go down that rabbit hole of why, or try to find and piece together things that you're not going to find, because that's a definition of madness in a way, because you're trying to find things that you're never going to get answers to. I felt guilt when Zoey went because I'd said to her that I could understand why she was going to go, and then I let her go back to her flat, and she did it. Then I realized that she was going to do it anyway, I couldn't have stopped it. I could not have stopped what she was going to do.

The last part is accepting something. How can you accept it in a way where... Because, again, this doesn't sound normal, but trying to find some acceptance of what's gone on and the fact that that's what they wanted. It's not what you wanted, it's what they wanted. I hope that helps.

### **Alex Howard**

I hope it does. I'm sure it will. Again, I can't know the experience that you both, unfortunately, know. But I do know the experience, another part of this person's experience with severe ME/CFS, that place of, how can you accept something which is so painful and how can you surrender to a God, or a universe, or a life, whatever it may be, that is causing such pain and suffering?

The definition, in a way, of acceptance is finding peace with something that you don't like. You don't have to find acceptance with something that you do like. In a way, acceptance is finding that peace even when it's not something that you like or you want. But there's a place of deep peace that also can come in that place of acceptance. But the journey to that is not a journey of avoidance and getting away from what we're feeling. It's a journey through what we're feeling.

I'm going to come back. It's another question someone's asking, "How do you keep the boundaries of empathy? Sometimes it's so overwhelming and tends to get into the emotions of the client."

For me, and this is something we talk a lot about actually when we're training therapists on our therapeutic coaching practitioner training, that where is that balance of caring and empathy, but not at the end of every day in clinic, coming away, having taken on all the feelings and all the things that are happening there.

My realization many years ago was that, of course, I'm going to feel empathy in my heart for someone that I'm working with, but I'm at my most potent in being able to help that person when I don't get sucked into their feelings and emotions about it. In a way, the question I'm asking myself

is, "How do I need to show up, and who do I need to be for this person to take this journey forward?"

**[00:52:19]**

And some people, their issue is they're not... They need that place of softness and leaning in. And there are places where, of course, I was doing that with you, Paul. But what you actually needed was to feel someone that could meet you in your strength, that actually you could push up against and could hold the edges of that. That was the quality more than then was... And then in that place, I'm still feeling, but they're your feelings, they're not my feelings. And I can't heal your feelings by feeling them. I can help you heal your feelings by providing what's needed in that moment.

Although I find myself impacted, of course, working with people, I come out of a session like the sessions that we were doing together, and I'd come out feeling impacted, but also energized, like feeling the... Because also what I definitively don't do with people is just sit with them wallowing in their pain and suffering that doesn't go anywhere.

I will hold people where they are, but I'm there because they want things to change and want things to be different. What I pick up on is the energy of the movement, not a more traditional psychotherapeutic counseling model, where you're just sitting in the wallowing of the pain because that's draining. My experience, that often isn't what people actually need.

Someone else is also asking about homeworks, except that of writing the letter. I don't know, Paul, you can if you remember any of these things, but after most sessions, there would be some homework or reflection. Paul was also watching some of the videos of the Reset Program, as we were going through as well. We were backing up what we were doing in the sessions with that supplementary video material and exercises and so on. I don't know if there's anything particular that comes to your mind, Paul, of things you did outside the sessions that you found helpful.

## **Paul**

Journaling. My journal is just full of entries. That's just a personal journal. I've got other things, I've always been writing. I think the homework, I think the one I do remember well was you asking me about how I dealt with things. What techniques, or not techniques, what things I've used in the past to get away from the pain. I can't remember how you phrased it, but distraction was one of my big ones. Distraction being... I called it pressing the 'Fuck It' button, which would go down some seriously... I don't drink. I used to, and I used alcohol for many years to escape. Then when I didn't drink alcohol, then I'd be finding other things.

The good thing is my escapism today, my distractions are good for me, not bad for me. It would be riding my bike, I might go out for a whole day on my bike or something, or I've got a classic car in the garage, I'll be tinkering with that, or I'll be writing or something like that. I found the homework there quite interesting, and so journaling was another one, and vlogging, because that's something that Oliver encouraged me a great deal to say, "Look, when you've had a session, then the following day, just put out what you felt. It doesn't matter. Just send it through to me. It doesn't matter. I don't care what it is."



**[00:56:19]**

I sent lots through, lots through. That helped because it reflected after the event, because coming out, I think that first one, the very first session, I came out and when you pulled me up and said, "I don't think it's his fault, it's yours. He's to blame, it's me." I realized that I had hope. There was hope, actually. If I'm in control of that, I'm putting him down, then there's hope that I can control it.

The second one, I remember coming back from that, where we were talking about that little kid under the table and integrating him back into me and seeing it, and getting him out. Then the third one was the inner critic, where I realized how incessant it was. All those things I was taking from that each... I've written it down somewhere. I don't know where I've written it down. I should have pulled it up. But every time I was writing down, "This is what I got out of this session. This is what I got out of that session. This is what I've got." So I piece it together because...

I do remember that, after session four, you hadn't said anything. You said it in the edit, but we had a point at which Oliver turned around and said, "That's all well and good. We've done all this great stuff". And I was feeling quite euphoric, all plussed up. And he went, "We've got to speak about Zoey". "Oh Fuck, oh, no". And then I remembered why I was really there. For the first four weeks, you'd set me right up.

**Alex Howard**

Bless you

**Paul**

So then I was, "Oh, shit". I wasn't feeling good then. There were lots of things that went on behind the scenes where I did a lot of reflection, a lot of reflection. I think, again, it comes down to whatever you do, whether you go on that program you were talking about, the new program, the thing I would jump at the chance, because that would be something that when you've got that immersion. If you're going to do something, you're going to go into it, get the most out of it, because if you don't get the most of it, you wasted that. That's why I was very fastidious on making sure that I got something out of each session or I reflected back on it, which is important.

**Alex Howard**

I think part of it as well is that we always felt... So Oliver and Jeremiah and I used to say between sessions that we always felt that you knew that we were Team Paul, that our number one priority was you, not the film. Because although the film was, in a way, important, it was only ever going to be something worth watching if we kept you front and center. But that also meant that I think you trusted us, but you were also willing to let us push you in the ways that needed to happen as well. I think that was a big part of it.

We're going to finish in a minute. I'm going to say a few words about the upcoming programs. Before I do that, just something that I thought was quite funny on Monday night was after we watched the film, and you said to your wife, because it had taken so long between finishing filming and putting it out... Tell people what you thought was going on.

**[01:00:07] Paul**

I thought he'd binned it. I thought it was like, "No, they don't like it. They thought it was crap. He's not going to put it out."

**Alex Howard**

Of course, the opposite was true. This was like Oliver's Sistine Chapel. It was endless late nights in the office crafting this. In a way, the delay was because really we felt, and I know particularly Oliver felt, because he's the person that drives the editing side of it, that you showed up so significantly that we had to match that in the story, in the way that the film was made.

**Paul**

Do it justice, yeah.

**Alex Howard**

It's like you didn't go half measure, so we weren't going to go half measure.

**Paul**

Before you go into any other thing else, I've noticed in the comments that someone said about building rapport, and it was so important. I want to touch on that because it's really important for people to understand this because I think it is so evident the trust between us. But you didn't build rapport. You built a bond. And bonds are built with trust.

I'm a great believer in that, because you should have rapport with everybody. You should have a rapport with the waitress in the restaurant, or the binman, or anybody. It's a prerequisite to any communication, but a bond is built by trust. Even just that first, "Actually, I don't think it's his fault, you can't blame him, I blame you". That cheeky smile, that grin, and I just knew then I could trust you. I knew I was in safe hands because there was a bond built, not rapport, and I think that's a really important distinction.

**Alex Howard**

It's so funny you say that, Paul, because in one of the first videos in our practitioner training, there's a session on rapport. So I go through, "This is how you're supposed to build rapport". And I go, "But I don't do any of that. I just be myself with people and tell them the truth". They'll either like it or they don't like it. There's something about... It's maybe a message to therapists out there, that I think so many therapists have an idea of who they need to be to be a good therapist. Of course, there has to be boundaries. There are things that are appropriate, things that aren't appropriate, and so on. But ultimately, people need to feel your heart, and they need to feel your truth.

I don't think I always get it right. In fact, it's a little bit like a plane from London to New York, I'm a little bit off track the whole time when I'm working with someone. But I find the more truthful I am with people, when I'm not right, I get the correction. I might have said that, and you might have

been defensive, or you might have said, "Actually, it's not me, it's the..." and we could be going down a different path.

**[01:03:10]**

But I needed to know we could spar together, and I needed to know I could push you, and you would push me, and we would... In a way that we build, therapist and client build that bond between them. The more the therapist shows up, the more it hopefully invites the client. But also, as you showed up, it goes back to what I was saying about the production team. In a way, we were all, I think, setting the bar between us.

I felt, I think I said this to you at the memorial, that when I read Zoey's letter, which I read a few days after the first session, I really felt her. Of course, I've never met her, but I felt the presence. And because she wrote so beautifully and so eloquently and so articulately, and I could feel who she was in the words of the letter. I also felt, beyond the series, we'd already had our first session together at this point, but I felt this extra sense in a way of it wasn't just you and I, it was also she was there in that journey.

**Paul**

I think the word I would use is authentic. Your authenticity, my authenticity. I think we were both authentic in this process, and I think that showed in the end production, I think, because I've watched it plenty of times. I think the first one is up to 5,000. I think that's 5,000 of my views.

**Alex Howard**

4,999 of you. That's funny. Is there anything else you want to say, Paul, in finishing?

**Paul**

Just thank you very much. Thank you so much. I'm forever grateful. If people are, this is not scripted. If anyone has a chance to go on, what was the program called?

**Alex Howard**

There's the Awakening Program. I've got it ready to go in the link.

**Paul**

Honestly, jump on it. I think working with you, people see it. They can see your work, and it's, as I say, you're authentic, and I think people get a lot out of it. So it's important.

**Alex Howard**

Thanks, Paul. I've just shared in the chat, firstly, the link to Paul's fundraiser. If you want to support the suicide prevention charity that Paul was cycling for, please do support that. Even just... Some people think, "Oh, £5 won't make a difference". It does. Whatever someone feels they can give to that, please do support that.

**[01:05:53]**

Then the next link you'll see there is the Awakening Program. This is a brand new program. It's happening in London in February with a livestream option, then New York in March with a livestream option. It's an opportunity to work with me in person. What I've realized in recent time is, I've been very fortunate enough to be very successful with online programs that I've reached many, many thousands of people. But the piece that I'm most, it's partly selfish, the piece that I most miss, but I also know the work that Paul and I did together wouldn't have been possible just working online.

There's something about what happens coming together in person, or if people are on livestream, coming together in a collective field and space that we have together. That's the link to the Awakening Program. There's a discount that people register now. There are limited spaces, both the in-person, the live stream. There's a cap by the venue and then by the number of people we can support on the live stream because there will be online support for that as well. If you want to join us, please do register.

There's also been people asking about sessions with me. The reality of sessions with me is that the only clients that I've taken on the last few years have been people that I've been filming *In Therapy* with.

I am taking on a handful more, literally a handful more people, but it's in a more similar way to how I worked with Paul, which is a bit more intensive, but also people accessing all of my other programs and the Awakening Program and the Immersion, which is a five-day residential that's not been open for registration yet. People that want to work in that way, there's information on that. It's going to be out of a lot of people's financial reach, I recognize that.

The thing that I want to say is the money we generate from mentorship is what comes in and funds *In Therapy*. People can imagine with *In Therapy*, with paying the salaries with Oliver, Jeremiah, with the studio and all of that.

My commitment with *In Therapy* is that it's free to everyone on YouTube, the way we put it out there. But things like mentorship help us invest in, and make that happen. What I love about it is those that can afford that can have that access, but by doing that, they're actually supporting this work coming out to a lot more people. There'll be information coming out via email on those bits as well.

**Paul**

Whereabouts are you doing the Awakening Program? Whereabouts?

**Alex Howard**

London.

**Paul**

London? If you're doing that, I might pop along at lunchtime or something like that.

**[01:08:16]**

That would be cool. Well, maybe we can do a little live Q&A and people can get to meet you in person if you want to join.

Yeah, it'd be fantastic.

**Alex Howard**

That'd be really cool. Someone just put in the chat. I love it, I'm going to use it as my final piece. This is from Enako. "Healing is not a solo act. Together, we are stronger no matter where we are." That's great.

**Paul**

Wonderful.

**Alex Howard**

Paul, bless you. Thank you for trusting me. Thank you for coming on this journey together. Thank you also for being so willing to come on this session this afternoon as well. I know it's impacted some people, and I really appreciate you being willing.

**Paul**

I think, hopefully, people can see how far I've come. That's important to me, I think, that people see that.

**Alex Howard**

Bless you. Thank you, Paul. Thank you, people, for joining, and we look forward to talking in the future.

**Paul**

Thank you very much. Good night.