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00:01

interject one thing, please. All this devastation we're talking about, everybody within the sound of my voice have been hearing all these negativities. So there's something before they turn us off. I want to say that when you suppress for your whole adult life, when you first start, you feel it is impossible. It's so impossible. I'm here to tell you. After two years, it is easy. You'll kick yourself for not starting years ago. But you do need help, and you do need support. But it is not hopeless. You just need to know that people often throw their goodies away and try to turn their back on who they really are. Were hopelessly bound to our gender dysphoria. Sooner or later, it does come intolerable. Before you get to the point of in tolerability, or whatever point you're at, I wish she would contact to tents or cats. Because you are not alone. There are a lot of us and we care.



01:20

You know, every time I see a group try to divide us as a community than that. I mean, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community, I am reminded of stuff like this, because what you're talking about has happened to every gay and lesbian and bisexual person, right? Right now I've been depressed. I have, I've contemplated suicide. And I until I came, no, I didn't know how to attempt it. But until I came out, and it was the easiest thing in the world, it was the easiest thing to like, came out. I was a mess. But one thing I want to ask you talked about clinical depression. Now I know I've been depressed. And I've heard the term clinical depression. And I don't know exactly what that means.



02:09

Okay, clinical depression, they've actually found that there is physical deformation, instead of all in your imagination, the electrical impulses to the neuro receptors in your brain have dwindled to a larger percentage or a smaller percentage than what it originally was. Clinical depression can be basically they think it could be genetic. It also can and is, based on traumatic experiences that have happened to you in your life, they did find that for a fact. Clinical depression affects you in many profound ways. It affects your appetite, either you don't eat, or you overeat. It affects your sleep, your restless, when you go to bed, so much worries and thoughts go through your mind. You're up all hours of the night, or you compensate for your emotional distress by oversleeping. Some tried to sleep as much as they can to hide from

their emotions. Concentration is a very, very, very good telltale sign you cannot read aloud or to yourself, they just can't concentrate. Your self esteem diminishes to nothing. You feel that you're worthless. That's just some of the symptoms. A perfect mid it affects us so profoundly, that you just feel like you can't cope. You just don't have any of the tools or mechanisms or abilities or even the will to do even minor chores around the house or hobbies and you turn within yourself. And after so much time of being inside yourself isolated, you start to feel as if you can never get better.



04:25

What does it take to turn you around



04:28

counseling, therapeutic counseling with a psychiatrist psychologist. Also there are very many good antidepressant drugs. When you do take your antidepressant drugs, it takes four to six weeks for to start working. And you actually find yourself happy again. Ambition, energy, a lot of your old things that she used to like, come back To you, you just feel happy again. And after being depressed for so long, it is just a wonderful relief. But more than that, when you do start feeling better most people try to, to get off the antidepressants. You need to continue antidepressants for up to a year. Oh, I didn't know that. Yes. Because once you start feeling better, most people will say, Well, I don't need these anymore. And that's not true, because you can and oftentimes do relapse. Wow,



05:36

I guess. Check with Jessica, I don't think we ever actually got around to you.



05:42

I've had a really interesting case. I've been at this for a long time. I Yep. About seven years ago, I came out. At that time I weighed 225 pounds. You mentioned, I might also mention that I am a very proud father of four beautiful children. I was born intersex. I was born with both genders. So I'm a real match. Or was a real man show in itself.



06:12

But you seem pretty together today? Well,



06:15

my story, my story is really interesting. I, I lost my job twice, because of my gender dysphoria. And basically, as Phil said, it's very true. When they find out what you are and how you are, and you really can't hide this. When your breasts begin to grow and your hips begin to swell. And

your hair gets long, people start to wonder because you look a little funny. And what happens is, they notice and then they start saying, Oh well, gee, this is not applicable, or this doesn't fit with your job. So twice, yes, I lost my job. Wow. And with when you're supporting children, it's a major stress because you're gonna feed those kids, as a parent, you have a responsibility to take care of them. So I mean, it got so bad a couple of times that I sold my plasma to feed my kids. Wow. So yeah, that's you talk about depression, you talk about stress, you talk about suicide, been there done that. And I would guarantee that I would say 80 to 90% of the transgender individuals in this country have been there. Because it's not something you can hide from. But you're right and give us Donna makes an excellent point. You know, we talk about depression. And we talk about how difficult it is. But when the answer comes to you one day, and you realize I can't do this anymore, I've got to be who and what I am. There's a beautiful prayer attributed to St. Francis Assisi that says, you know, to my own self hatred, let me change. Let me change the things I can change. Let me you know, have the wisdom to know what I can change and when I can't, and the courage to be able to do the things I can. And that happened to me one day, and I said, Fine. This is where I draw the line in the sand. I've lived my whole life for everybody else, trying to make people happy. And I began begun my transition. It was very hard. I loved my ex wife, unbelievably, was the hardest thing I ever did, to break up with her. And basically walk away from my family for about two years, and called my kids every night, every night faithfully at nine o'clock. But didn't see them. Because Gee, Daddy was becoming a co parent, which is what I am now. And it's hard. I mean, I was living in Nuevo Laredo making Hispanic TV commercials. That was fun. That's what I do for a living. I'm in television production. Wow. And now, my life has turned around 100% I'm full time. I love what I am. I'm proud of what I am. And you know what? Life couldn't be better. I'm a very happy girl more happy than I've ever been before. So yeah, things are great. But that's after five years. My ex and I now go shopping together. We buy clothes for each other. It's fabulous. We're best girlfriends. But it took five hard years. And I guess the one thing I had to tell anybody going through transition is never give up. Absolutely. It is. It's easy to stand there and say, Well, gee, you know, this is it. I'm going to ask myself. Well, the thing is, we've all been there. I mean, I wrapped my car around polls because I was so drunk, I shouldn't have been driving and I was and I got out of the car and electric wines are all laying all over the ground and I'm walking through them. And gee, you know, I survived there was a reason for that. So I can do the things I'm doing now to help our community he bet I mean, that's my goal. But that's that's the thing. Don't give up. If you're out there listening and you hear this broadcast. Please don't give up call one of the groups get help get Support. Absolutely, cuz it'll make a big difference.



10:03

I just want to say that 409 number, that's, that's open 24 hours a day, if you ever need to call 24 hour care if it's three o'clock in the morning, that's fine. Feel free to call. If you call the toll free number, it might be maybe up to a day before we get back to you. But we will, we will. And I appreciate what Jessie is saying. Talking about finding her joy, doing whatever it takes to be who she is. And one thing that I found in the past six months. It feels like for the first time, I'm really, really living. And I've never experienced that before. It feels like it feels like six months ago, I just started to breathe. I don't know if that makes a lot of sense. But that's I've been kind of riding on a high for the past six months. And she was right. She, she talked about going through a lot of work to get where she is and and I did too, but just, you know realized courage doesn't mean that you don't have fear. It means that you face the fear and do it anyway.



11:34

Wow. Would you repeat that? That was a great, great sentence there about courage doesn't mean that you don't have fear. Right?



11:43

Right. Courage isn't. Lack of fear. Courage is mastery of fear. It's. For the past, I've been working on transitioning. And actually for the past year, I've been full time. But for the biggest thing that's come up for me time and time and time, again, is dealing with fear. Whenever the first time that walked out the house, the first time that I went to a store, the first time that I tried to talk to someone, it's just fear comes up over and over and over and over. You know, and I dealt with that urine, you're out for a couple of years. And the result of that is that I have self confidence. The result of that is that I have a voice and I'm okay with speaking my truth. I'm okay with other people having differing opinions, opinions. And so,



12:48

gosh, let me jump in here and say that you're listening to after hours, queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston, and ke O 's College Station. Wow. heavy subject. Yes, it is. But much needed. Much needed. Actually, it



13:09

was something that I kind of came up with immediately after finding out about Karen Picard I was going in a different direction. But this is actually something that dogs virtually all aspects of society. And just because one of the things I did want to mention is just because we transition that does not allay any problems with depression afterwards, oh, no, that will still arise from time to time. It's just, it's probably not as intense as it was before. But yes, you still have the same modern pressures that everyone else does. And even then some you've got the pressures of having to deal with going out on a day to day basis. And once you do have your, your job, Once you successfully transition, then it's a matter of keeping up appearances on a daily basis or a matter of trying to keep the employers from finding out if, by chance you've gotten the job via cellphone. It's it's something that everyone worries about constantly. It's always on the back of our minds. And of course, you know, being a visual image, we tend to be out a little bit more so



14:22

you can't hide this under a bush.



14:24

No, no, no. You know, if you're gay or lesbian, you could you can kind of pass some some of us can not be particularly but some people can, but not not if you're transitioning.



14:41

Fortunately, that's something that puts a lot of people at risk for hate crimes, obviously bad but even lesser things beyond the hate crimes, just verbal. Tons of these are things that really don't I guess physically affect someone, but there are things that 10 to build up over time, Kyrgyzstan had mentioned that before that these are things that even though it's not something that's going to shatter your world immediately, if you get two or three or four of those every time you go out, it's a cumulative effect.



15:15

Chris mentioned that too. And it's really important. You know, I've gotten to the point, I guess I've been at this for so long, maybe that's it. But I've gotten to the point where, frankly, my dear, I don't give a darn. And the best part of that is that, you know, it's okay to be red, it's okay to have somebody say, Well, gee, I bet she used to be a guy. But you know, it's so funny about that doesn't happen. Once you develop the attitude that you don't care, you don't get rid anymore, because it's like, animals, you notice, they can always smell fear. People are animals. And that's where you really get to know that because once you get over the fear, like Chris was talking about, once you get over that, there is no more problem. The fear is inside of each one of us. And we put that we put that out to people. They sense Oh, my God, this person is different. Let's go look at them closer. And when that happens, that's when you have a problem. So, you know, there is no simple cure. But it's a day to day process. I think what I was doing during my entire transition was saying to myself, and I still say this every morning when I get up, it's like today, I'm gonna get a little closer to the dream.



16:29

How important is support groups?



16:33

There there it without them, you couldn't do it? I mean, I moved to Houston, simply for the fact that when I wasn't, well, I was not able to write Oh, and then I moved back to Dallas. And I moved to Houston two years ago, because of one reason. We have community here. And we have a very strong community. Not only do we have five gender groups working together, but we also have our entire community working together, the gender community, the gay and lesbian community, the BI community, they're all together. Working.



17:06

Well. We're working towards it. We're not there yet. Well, it's getting stronger. Every Yeah, it really is. And that's not to say we're not going to have squabbles with among ourselves. That's part



17:16

of the resistance.



17:18

You're right. That's going to happen. It's like a family. Families squabble. It's gonna happen.



17:26

It's true. Well, these are things that we all get over. But this isn't just particular to the the transgender war, the gay and lesbian No. Well, yeah, they get fun. But it's, again, it's so one of the things that everyone copes with, on some level. And in pressure, of course, just societal, nowadays, everybody has a lot more pressures on them. And of course, even in the transgender community, we tend to put a lot of pressure on ourselves as well, to try in accomplish as much as some of the others that have that have done successfully. And we can actually kind of undermine ourselves by trying too hard at times, doing too much. Whatever you do, be comfortable with yourself, just be natural. And the more you accept yourself for what you are regardless, the much easier you you wrote is



18:23

your day when we take a break. Jessica, you brought some music.



18:27

Yes, you did. This first song is by the pretenders. And it's I'll stand by you and talks about our community.



18:37

And you're listening to it on after hours on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station



18:48

well, that last one, there was another one by Dudley Saunders, who's going to be here Monday night, March the 13th. This Monday night at chances at eight o'clock live singing his his folk music. And I know that had his country and western flavor to it, which is, which is different from anything else he has done. But I like the the words of this, it was called trying not to disappear. And I think that that kind of fits well with what we're talking about tonight. And the one before that, Jessica?



19:21

Well, that's a very important song. And that's kind of our theme song for the unity banquet this year. It's I'll stand by you, because quite honestly, as you may have heard was we were talking about before, we always can't intervene. And we've lost a lot of very close and dear friends through the years just because of suicide because of the fact that they couldn't cope. And there wasn't somebody to stand by them. Our whole banquet this year is going to be dedicated to standing by each other as one unified community. Cool.



19:55

Okay, so where are we going from here?



19:57

Our next thing is all of the things I wanted to Bring up the group, and it's really important is the fact that we work together. And you've heard from the cast group. And I was like, again, I can't tell them enough how what proud we are of what they've done in such a short time. It's amazing. These girls have put their heads together and achieve more in the short period of time. And they've done this that we should have done a long time ago. It was a real eye opener for those of us who've been in the community for a long time to watch some of their beauty beautiful things they've done. Well,



20:28

I was I was taken by some. And I want to hear more about how you find people. I love that idea of putting pamphlets and books in the library. That's incredible. Oops, wait a minute.



20:44

Mike's you did



20:47

a lot of the different Oh, god. I love the different people live. Come to the meetings recently, we have been referred to by the different doctors, Dr. Meyer or Dr. Cole. We Dr. Meyer was very. He really, really wants some materials, some pamphlets and things like that to hand out to his patients. Dr. Cole every three months, it has six months now. Has a get together into one of those. Yeah. Yeah. And actually, that's where we met a couple of them have our new group members. Actually, there was one who who called I guess about three months, and I have no idea where she got the phone number. But she called and she's been coming to meetings. And actually, one of the things that we really stress in in the cats group is the idea of anonymity. The idea of, you know, whenever you come to a meeting, we're not going no one's going to say that. Oh, so and so was there or, you know, get on the internet and talk about who was there what they said, and things like that very important. Y'all were talking about fear earlier. And

one of the things you know, being on this program, I can't believe I'm sitting here talking to y'all on the radio, I can't believe it. You know, a couple of years ago, I did. It was just all I could do to go to the store and buy groceries. That's That's it?



22:44

You seem to be a pretty together gal now.



22:48

It's a facade. Yeah, I have all these mirrors that I carry around with me and yes, yeah. No, truthfully. I lean on my friends a lot, a whole lot to get me through the different things that I've gone through. And again, having cats down there, where I'm at, has, oh, God, it's helped me so much to be able to talk to people. You had asked how people get a hold of us and things like that we had started kind of, I guess you would call it a daily newsletter over the internet that has, well, we call it a daily affirmation. It's kind of like a quote, and some, just some thoughts about that particular topic. And then some news and some announcements and things like that and steadily over the past. I guess we've been doing it now for about a month and a half. Yeah, about God about every other day or so I get someone emailing, wanting to be on the list and things like that. So that's really neat.



24:20

Wow.



24:23

Because I said there's some of the things they've done that are so smart. Mm



24:27

hmm. You know, I think also just just being out there, and and people knowing you, I've had somebody come up to me and say they know somebody that does not have any support group. And they wanted to know how they could get them in touch with me or with our group. And so hopefully, they'll be coming to a soon because they're, you know, I just gave them the information the other day, and that's one of the ways that's happened. You know, support group has been so important for me || I think it's true of many of our girls, our families reject us. Sure, when we come out our families rejected. So when we are on the break, I was mentioning about how, when I first came out a couple years ago, my sister was very supportive of me. In fact, she had been talking with one of her girlfriends, and she shared it with me that you know, now that now that she's come out to you now, you know why, why all these things? You always had questions about her were no. But then, when I was planning to go down and visit down in Florida, where she lives, all of a sudden now, if I come there, I'm out of her life. So it's okay, if you're 1000 miles away. Exactly. It's very common.



25:48

Yeah. Oh, my father, whenever he felt my mother was very supportive. You know, she knew about it from God years. Whenever I was three, four years old, she knew something was up. My father found out about three years ago, whenever I sat him down, had the talk. He, I remember about six months later, he came to me and said, so you're not. You don't like men, right? And I was like, yeah, that's, that's true. I'm not into guys. I like women. They said, Well, thank God, you're not gay. And then he sat down and went, Wait a second, but you're becoming a woman. And you could just see his eyes glaze over. So that would make you a lesbian. So



26:50

funny, you say that? My mom said just the opposite. When I told her, it was like, couldn't you just be gay?



27:04

We laugh at it now. But at the time. Sure, yeah.



27:10

And just the just the, I don't know what it took to just sit down with a parent and say, Hey, this is what's going on. That must have been tough.



27:20

Well, actually, the way I kind of went into it, I asked him all these absurd questions. Well, would you love me if I left my family and went to Montana to raise ostriches? It's like, Yeah, but what you know, and I finally worked in there. Well, you know, what if I was one of those people, like you say, on the talk shows that want to, you know, have sex change, and said, Well, I'd still love you. But I'd ask you why you want to mutilate your body. So he's had a very difficult time with this. He, every time I see him or talk to him, he's still go, refers me as he and him and his son and things like that. He tries he really, really tries it's



28:07

a parent. Yes, it is, you know, if you're gay or lesbian or bisexual, you know, you're just coming out with your sexuality. But when you're when you're transgendered, you're killing a child,



28:20

that you actually do die. And that's, that's for everybody in your life. Because you change completely. I mean, right? As I mentioned before, my ex and I were so close. We were still we still love each other to this day. But literally, she had to watch me die and he couldn't... You...

still love each other to this day. But literally, she had to watch me die and be reborn there. You bet. I'm your parents. It is so much easier for somebody who meets me now to accept me as when I am sure. Anybody you knew before, because quite honestly, there's baggage. And you know, you lose, I would say at least 90% of your friends, because they can't handle it. It's a lot. It's very hard for a lot of them.

28:58

In essence, what you're doing is creating a new persona. You are some

29:02

and you gain a lot more a lot more new friends.

29:06

That's true. But I guess in the meantime, you have to build.

29:11

Yeah, what do you do in the meantime? That's got to be tough, and that's why groups like cats is very difficult. Yes, yes. Yes.

29:19

Just out of curiosity, if I can ask him a couple more questions regarding the depression issue. One thing I did one task just very briefly, how did y'all individually get beyond the darkest times? Uh, what was it that you did specifically just you know, a very shortly that pulled you out of the nosedives?

29:47

Well, my self, I'm one of the ones that Chris mentioned, where, instead of turning to drugs and alcohol, I turned to work and activities and things besides going to school, getting electronics degrees and things like that, involving myself and many other organizations, that hobbies and I was looking through, I've got enough hobbies for about a crew of people. I don't have time to do that much anymore. So I'm having to be selective on what I still want to pursue. And a lot of that was just getting so involved, I didn't have time to think about it. Activities,

30:31

called burying yourself. So you don't have to deal with yourself.



30:35

Exactly. Yeah.



30:37

Sometimes actually, it's a very good diversion, though to one of the things that is very important is, when you are in, I guess, the throes of the deepest, deepest, the deepest portions of depression, you have to do something to in essence, divert your attention. Because what you're on is pretty much kind of a one way track, that's leading you to a dead end. And unless you pull off onto a different track, you're headed for the crash. And unfortunately, that's something that a lot of people are not able to pull out of. Yes, sir. Or any other, I guess aspects, any other specific things you do to pull out



31:20

I'm sorry, Jane. And for me, over the years, I turned to not only work but also the alcohol. And alcohol was the thing that kept me from committing suicide for many, many years. And then, finally, what helped me there was, I did turn to a 12 step program. And that, that helped me



31:47

that helped you with just the alcoholism.



31:51

That helps me with my whole life, it got me to the point, it took me 10 years be in that program, before I was able to finally admit to myself who I really was and what I really was, and to do something about it. So it became very, very important to me. And you know, for many, many years, I used to say, Oh, I have a lot of friends. But really I didn't I I've been an amateur radio operator for 40 some odd years. I'm used to talking in front of a microphone, but that's the way I had friends they were always a way way never face to face, you know. And that was way of my coping. See, I continue to drink and not have to feel emotions or anything. Just talk with people on the air. It was so different, you know, and safe.



32:39

Yeah, when what you're talking about, whenever I first started transition, definitely what would help me pull out of some of the depression is talking to other people. And thank God for the internet. Thank God for the internet. back whenever they had the gazebo on AOL, that helped a lot, talking to different people. And I found that a lot of the things that I were I was struggling with feeling other people had gone through that and worse and made it and just I just held on to the belief that this too shall pass. It's not permanent, that III you know, somewhere somehow during some way it'll get better and and it did. And absolutely did.



33:34

You have done a wonderful job and I hate to kind of cut this short but again, I guess that's why they call it the quickest hour and a half on radio. It is it is it is actually come to that time. Yes. But I do want to thank each and every one of you from the Cannes group for coming up here for this special show. Sarah Jane Connell, Melanie blank Charisse, Donna Douglas, Chris Duffy, and Sheila Appleton she's back there somewhere. And also Jessica Redmond spokesperson for the unity committee. Yes. Thank you very much.



34:06

Thank you. Now, Jessica, you've got some outgoing music.



34:09

Yes, I do. As a matter of fact, this song is by a group called velvet hammer. And the song is called B. It's very, very key to everything we've talked about tonight. It's a great wrap up song. It'll just remind everybody of what it's like to be different.



34:27

And you're being different on after hours on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station.