

-- Speaker 1 00:00:27 Welcome to today's episode of Dr. EMC's Self Care Cabaret podcast. This is not a Bitesize episode. This is a full size episode, maybe even a queen size episode. You be the judge. But I'm your host, Theresa Melito-Conners, a PhD level self-care expert in the greater Boston area, with a passion of helping others recognize the importance of caring for themselves. I was going to do a whole long intro about the definition of self-care, but I just keep coming back to my favorite Adre Lord quote from 1988. As it is timeless, caring for myself is not self-indulgent, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare. That quote is very apropro. When I tell you about today's guest, we are very excited to welcome Amie Sica back by popular Demand to the Self care cabaret. You may recall Amy from her previous episode, Compassion Over Perfection, which happens to be our number one most downloaded episode to date.

Speaker 1 00:01:32 Amie is a certified lead peer specialist doing community outreach for individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness. She is passionate about honoring the individual's right to self-determination and finding their own path to recovery. Amie is back with us having recently divorced and practicing self-care during an extremely challenging time. Such a great topic as we tend to ignore our needs when the heat is on, but we cannot spiral out of control and must still care for ourselves even in the bad times. I am thrilled to have Amie share her perspective as she navigates this new chapter of her life as a newly divorced mom of two. Here is our conversation. Welcome back, Amie, to the Dr. Mc podcast.

Speaker 2 00:02:24 Hey, it is so good to see you again.

Speaker 1 00:02:26 I know, likewise, you've had, um, well, you know, your first episode, Compassion Over Perfection still ranks as my number one episode, which is pretty awesome. <laugh>, we wanted to bring you back cuz you've actually had kind of a lot going on recently and you're willing to share.

Speaker 2 00:02:42 Yeah, and I, I must say it's so wild to hear that that's like the number one ranked episode because it's just me talking about kind of being a hot mess mom.

Speaker 1 00:02:51 Yeah. But, uh, people can relate to that <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:02:54 It's, it's, it always kind of makes me sit back and reflect of the things that if I'm in a bad head space I can really judge myself on. But this is why I do what I do when I'm so open and I'm vocal because at the end of the day, more people relate <laugh> than not, you know? And

Speaker 1 00:03:14 Absolutely

Speaker 2 00:03:15 I would love to put on a mask and pretend my life is perfect, but I like to live a pretty, you know, semi honest life nowadays. <laugh>. No, I like to live honest life nowadays, but yeah. So, and I'm so happy that you invited me back. I've been thinking a lot about being open, Right. About life challenges, whether it's being a mom or a working mom or even when I was a stay at home mom. Right. There's always these balances. And I recently actually just finalized my divorce with the father of my children and we were together. It's actually funny we used to joke about it cause we, neither of us ever remembered when, like when we met <laugh>, but we been together for a really long time. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:03:58 Okay, fair enough.

Speaker 2 00:04:00 Um, and it's just, it's been wild. But as I've gone through this process, which I know we'll get into more, I just realized how the topic of divorce is so taboo still, you know, and it's whispered about of like, Oh, did you hear about them? Or, I wonder what happened there. And I think one of the best experiences I had was I was with an old coworker who was now a coworker again at a different agency. But, um, I just kind of informed him what was going on and he said, Congratulations.

Speaker 1 00:04:35 Oh. And

Speaker 2 00:04:36 I was just like, Oh, oh, I've never had that response before

Speaker 1 00:04:40 <laugh>. And

Speaker 2 00:04:40 He was just like, Well it's obviously what you want. I'm not gonna have pity on you. Congratulations for being able to do what you feel you need to do in your life. And I was just like, Wow. Out of everyone that I've talked to, only one looked at it as like this, not that it's positive right. But they didn't have this sense of --

-- pity or ooh, I don't know what to say. Response.

Speaker 1 00:05:07 Yeah. It's a nice reframe, really. Yeah. When you think about it, cuz I mean, what's the alternative? You obviously for whatever reason it wasn't working right? So do you keep battling against something that's not working and you know, run out another 10 years, may 20 years, and then just be, continue to be miserable. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I mean that, I guess that would've been your alternative,

Speaker 2 00:05:29 Right? Yeah. And I think that's part of kind of what got me to where I was. You know, I won't, I won't talk badly about my ex. He's a wonderful dad. He loves his kids to pieces and I know that he loved me, but sometimes we reached this level of complacency in life and I was doing some self reflection of like, you know, we both deserve more. It wasn't even just me like you do as well. I am not the one for you. I was able to identify that. It wasn't easy to admit, but you know, we obviously have two kids and that's such a hard age cuz they're in like the middle school years for hormones and

Speaker 1 00:06:10 Those are hard no matter what. Exactly. Middle school's just a hot mess no matter what.

Speaker 2 00:06:14 It's bad. But it was just like, do we wait longer? And as I would like play this out my head, I knew if anyone that I ever supported at work came to me and was like, Here's how I'm feeling. I knew that I wasn't following the advice I would give others. Sure. And what I knew was like the, you know, I don't think there's ever a right answer, but I know like, I was like, well, you know, you can't stay together for other people or this or that. I wasn't following it. And so again, it's, it's divorce doesn't have to be this nasty thing. Did it turn nasty? Yes, of

Speaker 1 00:06:52 Course. Well and they, I mean they often do. I mean, it's just, yeah. It's an ugly thing. Feelings or hurt things, you know, things happen and whatnot. But yeah, for sure.

Speaker 2 00:07:03 Yeah, for me, thinking about like the self care aspect, it's funny. So, so I trained for the state of Massachusetts for, for peer specialists who for people with lived experience with mental health challenges mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, and I identify as one and there's a worksheet that we do or I don't know if it's a worksheet, but it's an exercise that we do. I was taking the training myself years ago and the question is, what would you do if you were not afraid?

Speaker 1 00:07:33 Hmm.

Speaker 2 00:07:34 And so the idea behind this is that you get to put your fears aside and explore like your hopes and your dreams or where you wanna be in life, all from the safety of your comfort zone. There's no sure like immediate pressure to make the next step or to make changes. It's just like that, that spot to daydream. And that's when I would first had that like aha moment of, you know, change is scary. It's hard. Yeah. You know, there's financial stressors, emotional stressors, family stressors, all of these stressors that come into play to making such a huge decision. But that was just like this light bulb moment in a training for work <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:08:16 Yeah. No, that's a really powerful thing though, to just think for a moment. Yeah. And even for our listeners too, to just, So what would you do if you were no longer afraid? Is that

Speaker 2 00:08:27 Yeah. What would you do if you weren't afraid?

Speaker 1 00:08:29 If you weren't afraid? It's almost like I, I've seen something similar. Like what would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Yeah. Very similar. Kind of like you, you almost feel those questions like in your bones. It's like, ooh, I don't know. I do so many things. Right. <laugh> because, well, we can be our own worst enemies. Right. We we're constantly, like you said, you opened up as saying you're, you're so hard on yourself. You can't believe your episode is, has been listened to however many hundreds of times and you're just like, Oh my God, I'm resonating with people. Like cuz we're so hard on ourselves. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:08:59 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:08:59 So we need to practice more self-compassion.

Speaker 2 00:09:01 Mm. Over perfection or something. Right.

Speaker 1 00:09:04 Compassion over perfection. Hmm. Who came down with that title? Is that you <laugh>?

Speaker 2 00:09:10 I think I had a solid assist fr --

-- om you though, Theresa.

Speaker 1 00:09:12 I think so. I think I called it out. But it was your language, but it's really, I think it's really important to think about and I know that, and I'm so grateful that you're willing to share this really vulnerable, difficult time and kind of think about, you know, the steps that are, are helping you get through it. Cuz it's, it's a pretty fresh wound at this point. Yeah. And, but yet being able to step back and be like, this is what's best for both of us. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And probably for your children in the long run too. I mean, I grew up in a house where it was not a healthy relationship and that wasn't, that's not good. That's not good either. <laugh>. So, you know, keeping that going and being in that type of toxic environment and my mom was not able to divorce my dad until I was 20. And there's a whole, we don't need to go into all those reasons why and whatnot. But, you know, that was hard. It was really hard. So I really commend you for, and him for being able to take the steps and be like, Okay, this isn't working.

Speaker 2 00:10:07 Yeah. I, And I think we have moments where <laugh> like you see that glimmer of like the friendship because he was my best friend Of course. And so I think that's the hardest part is that at least where we are right now, I had lost my best friend. Yeah. But you see those glimmers of hope. And maybe I'm naive, you know, I know I still get spicy at times too with it because it's fresh for me too. And I have feelings with how certain things played out. But I just can only hold onto that hope that at the end of the day, some remnants of what was there will still be able to come together. Not just for our kids, but for ourselves as well. Sure. When you're together that long, you go through a lot of stuff together. Yeah. That should never really be ignored.

Speaker 2 00:10:47 But it's, it's wild though because although I knew I was taking the steps to be happy. Right. And not to say I wasn't happy, but I, I just, I needed, I wasn't fulfilled. Like I wasn't, you know, there was just, I don't even know how to describe it. I'm not gonna try to put a term on it because it's just impossible. But, so even though I knew I was taking the steps that were right for me, let's put it that way, it's still so hard. And it's, it's funny. So I talk about having self-compassion and when I was doing direct support work in the mental health and, and substance use field, I would teach people about self care and self checks and you know, be patient with yourself and allow yourself to process all of life stressors. And I think I, I tried to put on a brave face for a very long time, but then my body started to show the signs. I at one point was living off of insure shakes because my appetite was gone so much that I wasn't eating at all. I think I lost 20 pounds in like a matter of three months. My menstrual cycles were messed up. I was like constantly fatigued back in the day when my kids were little, I loved microwave dinners and then I was just like, we're gonna eat real food. I'm on awful cook, but like real food is like three different options. But at least I would cook it. But thank God for microwavable dinners, <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:12:19 Like, they saved you

Speaker 2 00:12:21 And my kids too, so they didn't starve. Cause I would just be on that PO and be like, okay, there's three cheese pasta, marinara, <laugh>. Aww. You know? But I mean they were pumped cuz to them it was just like, Oh cool. Like what, what are we having to freeze her today? So I was able to like at least make it fun. But this is where like that whole self-compassion thing comes in of, for a while I was like, Oh my gosh, how did I not notice <laugh>? Like my mental health was going downhill with all of this stuff happening. But I eventually got there and I was just like, damn, I am stressed out. Like I knew I was stressed out. Yeah. But it wasn't until it was like one physical symptom after another just building up that it was like, okay, like I am allowed to feel my feelings. I mean, I started smoking cigarettes again after not smoking for two years and then I would beat myself up over that. But again, where is my self-compassion?

Speaker 1 00:13:16 Right.

Speaker 2 00:13:17 But it took a little while for me to get there and I'm, I'm still definitely not perfect <laugh>, you know, but Well

Speaker 1 00:13:24 Tha --

-- t's okay. You recognize it. <laugh> and what's striving for compassion over perfection. So that's good. But I mean, you bring up so many good points. So when we think about stress, I mean stress will kill you. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I mean you started talking about already the physical manifestations of it in your body, uh, pretty intensely. Right? So, I mean, your nervous system was all sorts of out of whack. But you need to be able to get to a place where you recognize that. So I'm very proud of you to commend you again for recognizing that and then being able to, you know, give yourself the space that you need. And it might take a while. Yeah. But at least you're taking the steps to do it. And I was even when, as you were talking and somewhat related, so earlier the end of last school year really felt like for me, <laugh> getting over a traumatic experience because like the end of the school, it was just wild.

Speaker 1 00:14:17 There was just so many things happening in the outside world within the school community. Just a really difficult time. So I found myself, like when summer vacation started, I couldn't like function and I was just like, I need space. Yeah. I need to rest. But then of course as that other part of me that's like, um, you have 9 million things to do all these projects you wanted to get done, all the Dr. Mc stuff you wanted to do, you got podcasts to record, like get it together kid, act like a champion and like that like nasty voice going off. But luckily I was able to listen to the other voice, the self-compassion voice and be like, no. Like I don't have, like, I need to give myself time to just literally be lazy, be outside in the sun, take a nap, sleep sleeping late, like do nothing. And I did. And it took till, probably took a couple of weeks, like I would say maybe like after the 4th of July and like what school get out like the end of June where I was finally like, okay, I feel like I can human again. Like <laugh>. And, but being able to, I'm really proud of myself for being able to give myself that space. Cuz there's a version of Dr. Mc Long before she was Dr. Mc, where I would not have done that and I would not have given myself that space.

Speaker 2 00:15:31 And I think that's, I I know we talked about this on the, on the last episode too, but how much of that comes from internally Right. But, and then society too. Absolutely. Like, well you gotta keep going. Just pick yourself up, hustle,

Speaker 1 00:15:44 Culture,

Speaker 2 00:15:45 Get it done and yeah. Then make sure you're just still, you know, grinding and burning the candle at both ends. And that was what mm-hmm. <affirmative> was really hard as me. Like I don't nap or I didn't nap, let me rephrase. <laugh>, I napped. I would be up the whole night and I would be miserable and everything else. I am like a, a habitual naper now. Nice. I'll still have those moments where I like beat myself up over it. But it's just like learning to listen to my body and allowing myself to reset but also heal. Yes. You know, like you said, like stress can kill you and like I was able to see my body falling apart. I need to heal. And it's still a constantly like, you know, I was joking around with a friend of mine earlier about just dinners and stuff. I was like, I should start cooking more. Like I cook more than I was. But I, I found myself immediately beating myself up and they're like, But why are my kids fed? Yes. <laugh> are they, are they happy? I sure as heck hope so, you know, are

Speaker 1 00:16:49 They healthy? Well

Speaker 2 00:16:49 Good.

Speaker 1 00:16:50 Yeah. It's okay.

Speaker 2 00:16:51 But allowing yourself to have that space for whatever it is. I mean I never watched tv. I can't tell you how many shows I have binge watched on Netflix

Speaker 1 00:17:02 <laugh>

Speaker 2 00:17:03 In the last year. Like, I am invested <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:17:07 Nice.

Speaker 2 00:17:08 It's just, it's, it's, I won't say it's bad, but it's just, for me it's different.

Speaker 1 00:17:13 It's different. But you're giving yourself the space that you need to kind of reset. Like you'll get there. Cuz I know you're gonna keep fighting and keep doing the work Yeah. To heal. But I mean at the end of the day, divorce is a traumatic experience. I know that some people don't agree with that statement. I a hundred percent agree with that stat --

-- ement. So you have to, and you can't just flip a switch. It's like, oh, and I'm over it. Like that would be crazy if that was the case. So you ha like, especially you know, when there's a lot of feelings and kids involved and, and lots of things and you guys have been together for so long. Like there's so much, so many layers to that and like just healing that has to happen. Yeah. So I'm wondering how has like we, we've done self-compassion. So we got what, one of the 10 domains. I'm wondering how though, like other areas, I know you had a, a weekend of Amie at one point. Yeah I did. But so we were this, we had the summer of George, the weekend of Amie <laugh>. So how else have you been doing this healing?

Speaker 2 00:18:13 Yeah. You know, so the weekend of Amie, um, so Theresa probably started on Facebook, but you know, as a mom we don't always do things for ourselves and I, I can't remember if the divorce was finalized but the custody was at least in motion. So I didn't have my kids at that moment. And one thing I've noticed is that's actually where it's the hardest time for me. It's weird like somebody's like, Okay, yes I'm gonna walk around the house and clean everything and trash isn't gonna be trailing me from children <laugh>. But then I'm like, oh, where's all the trash <laugh>? Weird balance. But that's what I did. I went out, I tried oysters recently. Oh I don't know why. Convinced they were gonna be absolutely disgusting cuz I'm in my unas for opinion. They look disgusting.

Speaker 1 00:19:02 I gotta be honest, I haven't ha ever eaten one.

Speaker 2 00:19:04 Oh. So we have to go because uh, they're delicious. And I was like so shocked and I'm like, like I'm not rich. Like I can't afford oysters every week. Aw. But you know what, I'm gonna try. And so that's what I did. I went out with a friend and I mean like we ate so many, like we were about to burst some oysters. I got a tattoo and I just like spent

Speaker 1 00:19:28 Of an oyster. Who'd

Speaker 2 00:19:29 You guys <laugh>? I got a tattoo of a red panda. Why? I have no idea. Because it was <laugh>, a tattoo artist who does amazing work put it up and I'm like, yes, I want that. So when you stand on a tattoo chair for like five hours, like weird conversations happen. Aww. And so his name is Mr. Death Skittles. And then his nickname is Sanur Santiago. But you know what, he brings me happiness and he's cute. He like, looks like he wants to give you a high five. And it's just like, I love you and

Speaker 1 00:19:59 I still, So you got oysters, you got a tattoo. So you did things you wanted to do and you wanted to try.

Speaker 2 00:20:04 Yeah. And I think back to, for like the tattoo piece, I haven't had gotten a tattoo and gosh, probably 2015, I don't do the math. Math isn't my strong

Speaker 1 00:20:15 Seven or eight years

Speaker 2 00:20:17 <laugh>. So I train other people, I actually share with them cuz so many things are looked down upon. Right. And there was at one point in my life where I didn't have the best coping strategies and tattoos replace that. So I remember like going back to like when my mom passed away, God, it was like the very next day I was in a tattoo chair. Because let me tell you, tattoos are like a more society accepted sense of like, like self harm in a way. When I am in my feelings I enjoy the pain. Like it feels good. It it, it lets my

Speaker 1 00:20:53 It's a release.

Speaker 2 00:20:54 Yes. But it's, I mean some people do looked down on them and okay fine, maybe we won't be best friends friends. But so I got that release cuz I went back to what I did like it <laugh> tattoos got me through my mom passing away and my grandmother passing away and doing all this stuff. So I was like, you know what, yeah I'm gonna go, I wanna sit down for five hours and zone out and listen to good music and have good conversation and get a random red panda. You

Speaker 1 00:21:20 Know, <laugh>, why not? Why

Speaker 2 00:21:22 Not? You know, it's just like being able to joke around with it even, or just have fun or just not overwhelm myself. I'm an overthinker by nature. It's a blessing, a curse. But for me I have to find those ways. And that's maybe why like the binge watching TV happens too. Cuz it makes me stop thinking I'm able to put my focus onto something else.

Speaker 1 00:21:47 You can zone out like whatever. Yeah, no --

-- , I see that. And actually like even, you know, what I'm ex was experiencing is is different but like still like the same, like we definitely like bingeing. Like when I'm kind of, you know, not being, feeling super motivated, needing to give myself space. Like that's what we do. And then it's like, all right, you know what the Doctor mc stuff's gonna happen on its own timeline. Like when I'm ready to revisit it, it's gonna be there for me. Like it's okay if I take a couple weeks off. And like being able to be okay with that though has taken a long time to not then beat myself up about it. And I still like, this is not like, I'm not perfect. I, as you were describing, like beating yourself up about the TV dinners mm-hmm. <affirmative> and the frozen dinners, I beat myself up about takeout.

Speaker 1 00:22:32 Like we'll do takeout. Mm. My husband and I and we'll be like, oh we've had like, we just, we've done so much takeout this week and then I start like beating myself up about, because those old sneaky eating disorder voices start like, Ooh, are we back? Yeah. What's going on here? And then I have go through that whole process and then, you know, and Jeff will even say to me, he'll be like, um, why are we beating ourselves up? What are we doing here? What's the problem? So what we're having takeout, like it's not our big deal and like he's right. Like it's not a big deal. But then I'll sometimes try to slide back into that place of dis-ease and just chaos and it's not, it's fine. Like it's fine. Like we're fed <laugh>. Yeah. We're happy. Like that's the most important thing you have to eat. Right. And you know, whatever. Like, so okay, so you do better the next night or you do better the next week. Some weeks are better than others. Mm-hmm.

Speaker 2 00:23:19 <affirmative> it, it's funny too, so much if it's like a learning process.

Speaker 1 00:23:23 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:23:23 You know of like, all right, well what things work and what things don't. And then I love, it's always cuz I'm obviously like the queen of self checks. So it's like where I can tell where I am <laugh> mentally.

Speaker 1 00:23:34 That's great. That's a great

Speaker 2 00:23:36 Practice. So while I did a lot of the things at home, there was certain things that I didn't do like mow them lawn. Okay. So we have a ride on lawn mower and I'm looking at my lawn and I'm like, oh crap <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:23:52 <laugh> does look like Fern Gully out there. This is

Speaker 2 00:23:56 Oh yeah, yeah. I hear. Yeah. And I mean, anyone who knows me and tries to picture me on a ride on lawn mower, I'm sure you're laughing while you're listening to this, but first the battery was dead and then so I had a wonderful friend come and help her fix the battery and then like I'm driving around, I could see like my neighbors watching me and I'm like, oh my, oh. And then there was like one spot where I had to like pull up and you have to back up and there's like a reverse option and the reverse option would not work. So I,

Speaker 1 00:24:21 I

Speaker 2 00:24:21 FaceTimed one of my best friends' husbands because I always joke with him that he's my renta husband <laugh>. And so I was just like on FaceTime and I was like, reverse isn't working. And I was just like slowly inching into like my house

Speaker 1 00:24:35 <laugh>. Oh no. And

Speaker 2 00:24:36 He just started dying laughing and that's what I needed. You know what I mean? Cause I was just like sitting here, I'm like, Oh my gosh, I don't know how to go on reverse. I just wanna blah, blah. And he

Speaker 1 00:24:45 Just, everything's a failure.

Speaker 2 00:24:46 Yeah. And I was just like, what am I doing <laugh> doing this is I wish I could be watching myself right now. And I just be like, grant myself those learning moments or that time to reset or even, you know what, like there's been times I've like, I've acted it out. I've said mean things. I own that. Like I said, I want to be honest, like I haven't made the best like all of the right decisions. I can't sit here and say like, Oh yeah, we all navigated this perfectly.

Speaker 1 00:25:15 Yeah. But who can

Speaker 2 00:25:16 Exactly. And and to allow myself to be able to be like, you know what, maybe I could have said that nicer <laugh>. You know? Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:25:23 I mean that's just in life, right? Like --

-- sometimes we have those moments where we're just like not the best version of ourselves. Yeah. For whatever reason. Yeah. And then, but that goes back to the self-compassion. Like life is hard. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> life is hard under the best circumstances and you're gonna have challenges and you're gonna face setbacks and you're gonna face failures. But the good news is like everybody else is human too. And we're all gonna do it at some point. Like not every day is, you know, butterflies and sunshine. Like sometimes it sucks.

Speaker 2 00:25:51 It would be cooler if it was <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:25:53 Yeah. I know it would be cool if it was, but that's not gonna happen.

Yeah. So I wonder, and you know, you mentioned your children. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So now you know you are navigating single mom life. Mm. And I know from what you shared in the first episode talking about, you know, not shielding them from things and kind of like when your mom passed and having like letting them see you cry and letting them like feel that pain with you and understand things. So I'm wondering like how has this experience been in that regard?

Speaker 2 00:26:25 I think this is one of the biggest areas where my ex and I probably don't see eye to eye and that's okay. He has his reasons I have mine. And so while I want to be open, I didn't initially wanna tell them until like, like I had concrete answers for any questions that they gave me, you know? Sure.

Speaker 2 00:26:49 So I think back to my own parents' divorce, it was ugly, it was nasty. Got restful <laugh> my mother, like she overshared with us. Yeah. And, and it was because she was hurting and she was heartbroken, you know, because she just wanted to keep the family together even though she was not happy. I can say for a fact my mother was not happy, but she was, you know, you put your family's happiness before yours or whatever. Right. And so I wanna break that cycle first of all. But, so that's something I'm always kind of balancing out of. Like how much do you share with children? Hmm. Because I want to promote a good relationship with their father while also like <laugh>, you

Speaker 1 00:27:37 Know, we don't wanna be like, you don't wanna be trash talking. Like that's not, that gets mm-hmm. <affirmative> so ugly. Like we don't wanna do that.

Speaker 2 00:27:42 But they do know that like this was my choice. So it's like how do I, that's something I'm still kind of figuring out every day of like how do I let them know that like I'm not this awful person because grands scheme of things, I'm the one who made the choice to break our family up. Sure. And at the ages that they're at right now, I don't think that that's a concept you can genuinely understand. You might be a little to an extent, Right. I'm personally in the mindset that I don't wanna overshare with them because I want them to be worried about like my daughter's starting middle school, her biggest ma right now should be like, Oh my gosh, I'm going to a new school. I don't know how to get around.

Speaker 1 00:28:28 Or like what color binder am I gonna use for science? Like that's like,

Speaker 2 00:28:32 You

Speaker 1 00:28:33 Know, where am I gonna have matching? Yeah. That yeah. A hundred percent.

Speaker 2 00:28:36 So it's kind of like one of those, I'm figuring it out as I go moments. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:28:42 And you bring up some good points though when you think about you wanna break that cycle. I wanna go back to that for just a second. You are breaking that cycle and you are healing the generational trauma. Yeah. <laugh> and I'm sure your mom, I mean I do remember your mom as a, as a person, but I didn't know her super well. But anyway she may have overshared as a crutch too. Like you said, she was healing and she was hurt. So you guys, her children were her little best friends. So she was going to like overshare. That is a really fine line to walk. Like what is too much? And you had that lived experience where like that, you know, what too much was for you. So the fact that you are aware of that and not putting up a boundary to be like, No I'm not gonna do that. That didn't work for me. So I'm not gonna put that on my kids. Yeah. I think in time they'll come around to it and they may start asking questions mm-hmm. <affirmative> or, and you know, you can choose to, you know, be open and honest at that time wit --

-- h what feels right and where they are at and and why they're asking the questions. But I think that's really, you know, it's a powerful thing for you to keep exploring thinking about like not continuing that cycle because of what that put on you.

Speaker 2 00:29:51 Yeah. And it's like kind of like, at least for me, what's age appropriate.

Speaker 1 00:29:57 Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:29:58 You know, and cuz there's a reason and I, I know just from other people I've talked to that it's not unique in mind that like courts will literally share, like don't talk to your kids about what happened in court <laugh> or something. And there's a reason why, you know, And so I, I personally don't think that they need to know the ins and outs of everything. But how does that help?

Speaker 1 00:30:22 No, it doesn't. And you, at the end of the day, you want them to have a relationship with their father. Yes. And you don't want to tarnish that and you want them to be able to have obviously have a relationship with you and to be open and honest with you. So I would imagine that, you know, over time this will present itself. You know, I think it's rather powerful of you to be able though to reflect and know that you're figuring out where the line is instead of just jumping the line <laugh> and just diving. Right. Which I feel like is a natural thing to want to do. Mm-hmm <affirmative> that you're actually like, no, let me take this back. They don't need to know all the gory details of the relationship. They, you know, they need to know like whatever they need to know. Like they're gonna figure it out or they're gonna ask,

Speaker 2 00:31:08 They need to know that they have two parents that love them. That's my view, you know, and don't get me wrong, there's definitely been times that I've had said little one-liners or something here and there and I'm like, oh I didn't have to do that.

Speaker 1 00:31:19 Yeah. That's not helping <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:31:21 Yeah. But like I'm human and and it's funny because like when me and their dad were together it was cause we never fought when we were married. I almost wish we did. Cause maybe there were passion or something you

Speaker 1 00:31:34 And they would understand

Speaker 2 00:31:35 <laugh>. It's just like so now that like we actually fight and stuff, it's just like this is like a whole new territory but, but it's just like, yeah I'm gonna make mistakes as we go through this. He's definitely gonna make mistakes as we go through this. But at the end of the day, like my biggest goal right now is, well one, obviously I still am a firm believer that you can't be a good mom until you put yourself first. Um, so I wanna be

Speaker 1 00:32:01 Happy. I wanna say that again. Say that again. You can't be a good mom.

Speaker 2 00:32:05 So Yeah. I am a firm believer that to be a good mom you gotta put yourself first.

Speaker 1 00:32:11 Wow. What a concept. Self care comes first even when you're a mom.

Speaker 2 00:32:15 Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And it's free in many different ways. <laugh>, I

Speaker 1 00:32:19 Got cute. It is a hundred percent practice that self care. It's almost like it's important or something. <laugh>,

Speaker 2 00:32:25 You should make a podcast about it.

Speaker 1 00:32:27 Oh my god. If only somebody would <laugh>. Oh my god.

Speaker 2 00:32:32 Right. That sticking out.

Speaker 1 00:32:35 Seriously. No but like you're right. You do have to put yourself first. And so I, I love everything that you are, you know, that you're being willing to share and that you're reflecting on and going through. It's, it's pretty cool. And I'm thinking about too, you made me, you made me think about my own parents' divorce and my parents did fight a lot and things were not pleasant at times, shall we say. And when my parents got divorced, you know, it was never a question. I would go live with my mom. Like not a question. And I don't have a relationship with my father currently. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. But when they first got divorced we kind of tried, we played the game a little bit and I remember at um, you know, at one point I think it was my dad, like he, we were went to lunch or something and he, you know, would make some little snide comments about my mom.

Speaker 1 00:33:21 And then I remember my mom like made a little comment about my da

--

-- d and like, cause I was 20 though, when you think about like your kids, like I'm much old. I was much older than your kids are right now. And I remember being like, oh no, no, no we're not playing this game. Mm-hmm <affirmative> like if I'm gonna like said to my dad, I'm like, if I'm, we're gonna spend time together, we're gonna spend time together and I don't want any comments about mom and you're not asking me questions, you're not needling me for information. And then I said the same thing to my mom like, Hey I'm gonna hang out with daddy sometimes and like I don't really appreciate And like they both were actually in very respectful of that boundary. Unfortunately my father still wasn't able to hold it together to keep a relationship going. Mm-hmm <affirmative> going for much, much past that time. But I do remember being like, oh no this is not gonna work. Yep. So like being really mindful of that too and making sure you know, not to put your kiddos in that situation either cuz that's not fair.

Speaker 2 00:34:13 I love to how you mentioned how you don't have a relationship with your dad. So I was like instinctually, I wanna say I'm sorry but I also don't have a relationship with my dad and he's my one remaining parent Right. Through this whole process that has been probably not one of my biggest lessons, but it was something that actually really helped. And I still don't, I'm not perfect at it. Right. But there could be many reasons why my ex is a very quiet, go with the flow type of guy and then there's me, <laugh>. You know what I mean? Some people are probably like, Oh yeah Amie, you know, but I don't talk to anybody in my immediate family anymore. And guess what, this is probably the happiest I've ever been. I always used to say it before that my mom and my grandmother and my family, they passed away and we played like the game <laugh>. Right. Like my dad would come up like once or twice a year usually if everybody wanted to get like wood for his fireplace. Cuz I got a court of wood when I moved up thinking I was gonna be like New Hampshire, I'm not New Hampshire, I don't like fires. They scare me. So it just sat my garage.

Speaker 1 00:35:27 She couldn't put the lawnmower in her. I'm not saying I could, that was not throwing shade <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:35:33 I'm not cut over this life. And it's so, and I bring this to work with me every day too because we'll talk about the importance of family and, and supports and natural supports or whatever. And I will be the first person cause it's all online meetings now. Right. I will be the first person to unmute my mic. Define family <laugh> because does family need to be blood relatives? I'm here to say it does not have, in my opinion the best family I have ever had in a very long time. And I am blood related to I think one of them who is a cousin of mine.

Speaker 1 00:36:12 No, I, I'm a hundred percent on board. And when you said, you know the instinct when you go back to like divorce too, the instinct is to want a pity. Like, and people have done this to me too. Like when I, I say it kind of casually like well I don't have a relationship with my dad. And they're like, Oh you need to fix that. I'm like no I don't. Yeah, no

Speaker 2 00:36:28 I

Speaker 1 00:36:29 Fix it by not

Speaker 2 00:36:29 Having a relationship

Speaker 1 00:36:30 With Yeah. I'm like, no I'm actually pretty sure I tried and that went nowhere. And actually this is a really firm boundary that I have to set for myself in order to function the way that I function. Yeah. And does it suck? Sure. But you know what is worse is allowing that toxicity mm-hmm. <affirmative> into your life and allowing someone with a constant victim mentality and a narcissist mm-hmm <affirmative> to be in your orbit. That's actually much worse.

Speaker 2 00:36:59 Yes.

Speaker 1 00:37:00 Nobody's congratulated me yet on it, but congrats. But I hope to someday <laugh> thank Well thank you <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:37:05 You're very welcome. <laugh>. You know it's so funny as you sh as we sit here and we talk about like, you know, personal supports and and self care and how it all matters, it makes me think back. So you recently came to my work to do a self care workshop, right?

Speaker 1 00:37:23 I did. That was so much fun. It

Speaker 2 00:37:25 Was amazing. And the feedback that we got was incredible. Awesome.

F --

-- eel free to correct me wherever I mess this up because you are the self care guru, not me. But so we went over the 10 domains of self care and I remember the first few, I was just like, Oh, oh no

Speaker 1 00:37:44 <laugh>, your scores were low cause I kept calling you out. I was like on the chat I'm like, oh okay Amie, we got room to <laugh>. Yes. No worries.

Speaker 2 00:37:52 But is there one about like supports or, or like

Speaker 1 00:37:57 Relationships? The relationship. Great.

Speaker 2 00:37:59 And that's where I was able to bounce back.

Speaker 1 00:38:01 You did actually. Yeah. I remember that. And so that's funny too. Like when we think about the self care domains and great plug for the Dr. Mc uh, workshops by the way. I think we could actually um, we'll cut to commercial now.

Speaker 2 00:38:13 Absolutely.

Speaker 1 00:38:16 Are you looking for exciting, engaging, and useful professional development and workshops for your school business or organization? Well look no further. Dr. Mc offers a variety of options and topics related to self-care and renewal. Trauma recovery, building resilience, developing a growth mindset, stress management, and more completely customizable to fit every need. And coming soon is a new program to help high school students manage the challenges they are facing today and the increasing concerns around mental health. Visit doctor mc self-care dot com to learn more and request a session

Speaker 1 00:38:55 And we're back. But when we think about the domains of self care, as Amy was just talking about, you know, and you talked about like family, like does family, what does that mean? How do you define that? But you actually look at that research and the domains of self care and relate it's relationships, it's not family. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So I think that you're allowed to define it for yourself and it's what it says is to spend time and make time with people who are good to you that might not be your blood relatives. Yeah. That might not be your dad or your brother or your sister or your mom. Like that might not be those people. But you do need to find those people. And it sounds like you have found them, which is awesome and you know, and it's okay that there isn't space for other people that don't bring that into your life.

Speaker 2 00:39:44 Yeah. You know, if we go back to how it's such like a taboo topic and no one talks about it. So I teach people <laugh> and train and my career is based off of using your lived experience to let other people know that they're not alone. So I remember a little while ago, I put something out on Facebook, people can have their thoughts on that, that's fine. And then doing it for myself maybe a little bit. But this is what I do every day and, and it's like ingrained in me at this point, you know, of like, I wish I had someone else write something or post something so I could be like, Oh my gosh, can I just process this with you? And let me tell you it was like overwhelming how many people reached out in Facebook messenger. Not say not looking for dirty details or anything like that of more of like how, how did you do it? Were you scared? Are you scared? Now what does it actually look like? What does the process actually look like? Cause we know what the TV tells us. Or you know, even me sometimes like the SCO ex wife like ah, this is awful. But I was actually able to be like, hey, this is what it looks like. This is what it costs. You know, all of that

Speaker 1 00:41:03 Well. And I think a lot of people are scared. Yeah. You know, and they're even, and I'm not saying just of divorce, but of change of really doing what they wanna do in life and taking that leap and not just settling. Cuz sometimes it's just easier to just settle. Sometimes you pick up other things that help you numb out. Yep. Sometimes you just kind of, you know, you, you adapt or adopt other, you know, coping mechanisms, whatever that might look like. Or you find yourself, you know, people have affairs, people do all kinds of things to help mask what is really going on. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and what is really at the root of the problem. And so I think, I think that's really cool that people were wanting to know. Yeah. Just because they're, I mean who knows Could be many reasons why. Maybe it was curiosity or maybe they are also, you know, thinking in their own mind like, is this it for --

-- me? Like what is the rest of my life gonna look like? And am I, am I happy?

Speaker 2 00:42:04 Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:42:05 And what would you do if you weren't afraid? <laugh>. I love that. Isn't

Speaker 2 00:42:09 It amazing? Is it's like when Yeah, I know. Favorite part of this. It's a two week training and that one part is like my favorite part. <laugh>, I mean all of it is my favorite. And I don't even teach that part <laugh>. It's not even one of the new modules, but it's That's awesome. So powerful. Like I'll, I'll never forget how I felt when I heard it and, and had to explore and it's, you know, and that doesn't have to remain just to people in mental health services or substance use services. That's something I think anyone can ask themselves.

Speaker 1 00:42:41 Human services. Yeah. Just in general. <laugh>. Well it reminds me actually of another like question that like sometimes those little, like one line like questions are just so powerful in a, in a much earlier podcast episode with another guest she was talking about when was the last time you were truly happy? Mm. And like thinking about that. Like how do you define your own happiness and what does that look like for you? And if you're finding yourself like not happy right now, like how can you get back to that place? Like what changed? Yeah. What happened? What are you not doing anymore? Who you not seeing any. Like what is it? And like I remember that like really stuck with me too. Cause it's like yeah when was, when am I my happiest? Yeah. It tends to be when I'm doing my doctor Mc stuff. Spoiler. But

Speaker 2 00:43:25 <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:43:26 Cause I like helping people. Right. But yeah. Cool. No, and I loved the workshop, um, at your business was your agency was awesome. There was such a um, a lively bunch <laugh> and very dedicated and involved and you could tell like when you present to, to people when they're really like eating it up. Yeah. And it felt to me even through Zoom that their energy and they were eating it up. Um, so that's pretty, um, pretty cool. So thank you for giving me that opportunity.

Speaker 2 00:43:54 Of course. I mean it was, it was so funny. So I'm um, the executive sponsor of one of our employee resources resource groups. It's, we call it poll people have lived experience. But if it's for all team members, does that mean I'm gonna let you in on a secret

Speaker 1 00:44:10 Okay.

Speaker 2 00:44:11 Of what? Of people who work in the mental health field have had their own lived experience of some kind <laugh>. Whether it's themselves, their family member. So weird. Right. <laugh>. We definitely don't enter this line of work to become billionaires.

Speaker 1 00:44:26 Yeah, absolutely.

Speaker 2 00:44:27 And so this has been a reoccurring theme of Selfcare Self care. Self care. And then I joined and I was just like, what's that you talk of? Because I know somebody <laugh>. But I think it's just amazing to be able to see that. I mean obviously I'm very proud of my agency and other agencies that are doing the same. Especially in like the line of work where we do, where what we do, we're constantly supporting other people. Right. You know, burnout is real. Compassion fatigue is real. And then so you go home and then what are you facing when you get home? You know, when do you ever get that time to just pause and take care of yourself? Yeah. And that's why like the workshop like yours when you came and going over those different domains, like for me that was wildly eye opening because even though I knew I was taking the steps to get back on track, you know, is it the physical domain that has the exercise piece? Like

Speaker 1 00:45:24 Well there's exercise where like just not, you know, there's that domain but then there's also the physical medical. But that one's more about like going to the doctor. Okay. And the dentist and the, Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:45:33 So there was one member talking about exercise and I remember not that long ago I woke up, I did yoga, I would lift weights later. Right. But I would go to bed, I would do yoga before bed. Now my yoga mat is used as a jumping point for my dog to get on my bed so she doesn't slip on the wood floor. Nice.

Speaker 1 00:45:50 <laugh>. It's okay. Yeah. But it, that's okay. Exactly. You'll get back to it. And you can start small when you start to invite, Thi --

-- s is the thing too, like beat yourself up and be like, uh, I'm the worst my dog's using my yoga mat. But then like to be intentional about it, but also to start small. So like, you know what, maybe you can't do yoga in the morning and the weights and then yoga again at night. Maybe you just start with like five minutes in the morning. Yeah. So you start to like get back into your body and see like I'll be honest, like movement for me has kind of been a little out the window these days also. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> like exercise. And I have a tricky relationship with exercises. It was one of my purging methods in my eating disorder days. So sometimes I like am like uh, you know, even just the word exercise, I prefer to use movement.

Speaker 1 00:46:35 Yeah. But so now I'm like, okay, well I'm obviously not gonna like run a marathon tomorrow, but we can start to, I can go make myself up to the second floor at my school once a day. I can go like I can have a five minute dance party again. Like I can start to just bring it back in and I know that very soon I'll start to feel better. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and feel good and then it'll become part of the routine again. But being able to be okay with that. Yeah. And not beat myself up about it. Like it's okay. So you might have to get the dog something else for a pause. So you can have a yoga mat back <laugh> or get a new yoga mat, whatever it takes.

Speaker 2 00:47:08 It has like five. But of course they're there for decorative purposes.

Speaker 1 00:47:11 Oh, alright. Well that's a

Speaker 2 00:47:13 Whole other pillows that I don't use. But they look really, really cute under all of the plants.

Speaker 1 00:47:18 They really do. But you know what I mean, You'll find, you'll figure out the ways to get that back.

Speaker 2 00:47:23 Exactly. And I think again, it came down to like that self check. So as much as I pride myself, I'm like being on top of it. It was when you had the workshop and you went over the different things and we scored up each domain that I, it was kind of like that eye opening. And I know I was joking around when we were doing it in the chat with my work, but I was just like, oh wow. <laugh> scored out there who were sometimes, at least for me, I can also put the blinders on right at a, you're like, same with like the health stuff that I was experiencing at the beginning. Okay. Weight loss, I'll recognize it, but I'm gonna put the blinders on menstrual stuff. I'm gonna recognize it, talk to my doctor cause this isn't fun. But I'm gonna put the blinders on. And but once it was like five or six things added up, those blinders had to come off. Right. Like, something is wrong, you're not okay. What can you do to get back? And it was a mix of personal stuff and reaching out to my inner circle and and talking to doctors, numerous doctors, you know, and to be able to do what I had to do to get back to just being okay. Yeah. And being okay with Okay.

Speaker 1 00:48:32 Right. Awesome. Now you so much to like <laugh> to talk about and to unpack. I'm just like, wow, we could talk all night. I think <laugh>.

Speaker 2 00:48:40 Seriously.

Speaker 1 00:48:41 Which is awesome. No, and I love how, just thank you because um, I really appreciate your openness and your honesty and I know like you're a helping professional. Like that's what you were born to do. And that's I am also, and that's why like a lot of my work is, is in the education arena because I love helping teachers. Yeah. Because teachers the same thing, like that compassion fatigue, that burnout, that like just, ugh, it's so real. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. But and these are the people, like the helping professionals, nurses, doctors, like they're the last ones to do it for themselves. Yeah. But they're the ones that have to do it first because self care is other care. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, when you are able to put yourself first, you're a better mom, you're a better teacher, you're a better peer counselor and mental health professional, like all these things, you're a better nurse, you're a better doctor. Like whatever, you're just a better person. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> when you can shift that narrative and put yourself first

Speaker 2 00:49:36 Yeah. And not feeling guilty about it, that

Speaker 1 00:49:39 Is not feeling guilty. Yeah. Cuz if you're beating yourself up about it, that's just, that's just counter co --

-- unproductive <laugh>. It's not working. Yeah. But awesome. Well thank you so much Amie for coming back and say, you know, sharing so much with us and I just, I, I love it. I think it's really cool and I do wanna say, cuz I didn't say it earlier, but congrats on the divorce and on everything else in life that you're doing. I think it's awesome. It's an honor to watch you and I mean, we've known each other since we were like five. Yeah. So I think it's just really cool, you know, to kind of see where people are at now and, and what they got going on and how good they're doing. And um, so just

Speaker 2 00:50:19 Thank you Of course. And thank you so much for the opportunity to continue to share my life experiences, right? Who, who knew that they could maybe help other people and myself by being able to share it and unpack it. Right.

Speaker 1 00:50:39 Amie gives us so much to think about in how we perceive our setbacks and our challenges. And I love the idea about what would you do if you were not afraid. I so appreciate her willingness to be open and vulnerable as she navigates these new chapters and prioritizes her needs. Thanks for listening to this episode. Can you believe we're back for season three? How exciting. Remember to subscribe and rate this podcast on your preferred player. The ratings help us grow and share the message of self-care. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions, reach out directly by emailing podcast@drmcselfcare.com and come join the cast party at Dr. MCs Selfcare Cabaret on Facebook and Instagram at [dr mc self selfcare](https://www.instagram.com/drmcselfselfcare). That's Dr. Mc Selfcare. Or on my website, doctor mc selfcare.com. Be sure to like, subscribe and love me across all my social media platforms for the most UpToDate information on Selfcare. See you next time. Stay well and do good.

Speaker 5 00:52:53 You have one problem though before you stop the recording. What? There's no episode title is there? New thing Now if you don't do an episode title, I'm calling it out. So Dr. Emc, what are we calling this episode?

Speaker 1 00:53:03 Self

Speaker 5 00:53:04 Care for divorce

Speaker 1 00:53:04 Days. Self Care through divorce or Self care for Divorce Days. I don't know. That sounds, that sounds awful. Hoy Toy Self care for divorce. A eating oysters. I dunno. Self

Speaker 2 00:53:14 Care Red. Dan is tattooed on.

Speaker 1 00:53:16 Oh my god, you're such a nut that can be entitled Meat. I

Speaker 2 00:53:19 Love it. Mr. Death. Skittles.

Speaker 1 00:53:21 Oh my god, I love it. That's so funny. You're such a nut. Didn't that hurt? Like sitting the healing process?

Speaker 2 00:53:26 No, no, no. It was so funny because I haven't gotten one done in forever and I went to a new guy. So there's nothing like going to a new tattoo artist. Isn't he adorable?

Speaker 1 00:53:35 Oh, okay. It's on your hip. All right. It's cute though. The still side cheek. That's

Speaker 2 00:53:40 So, I said hip too, when people are like, you need to stop buying to yourself.

Speaker 1 00:53:44 No, I figured like full on cheek, like, And when Andy Bern, Bernard did it in the, in the office. Like that's what I

Speaker 2 00:53:50 <laugh>.

Speaker 1 00:53:52 No, that's cute. He's wicked cute. Oh,

Speaker 2 00:53:55 Okay. So what's the of the title gonna be?

Speaker 1 00:53:57 I don't know, Self care through challenging times? Self care through divorce. Divorce and self care. I kind of liked the what could you, what would you do if you couldn't fail or if you wouldn't fail? But I feel like we need to, because we talked so much about divorce, I feel like that needs to be in the title

Speaker 5 00:54:15 Selfcare for Divorce

Speaker 1 00:54:16 Days. You like that one might as well,

Speaker 5 00:54:18 Right? Is it not

Speaker 1 00:54:19 True? It's all I know. It is selfcare for divorce days. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2 00:54:23 I don't even know if I really gave much self care help. More of just like the compassion thing, but

Speaker 5 00:54:32 That doesn't help.

Speaker 1 00:54:34 Yeah. Yeah, that's true. Well, compassion through divorce or

Speaker 5 00:54:38 Compassion over divorce

-- yeah. Compassion over perfection. Compassion over divorce. --