

[00:00:00] **John Moe:** I'm going to tell you about one of the most annoying things you can do. If you want to do this thing I'm talking about—and it's pretty fun. It's very annoying, but if you wanna do it, you'll need a couple of components. First, a person that you live with—partner, spouse, roommate, family member. Next, there needs to be a television show that they've been watching for a while, that they're currently watching in that moment, and it needs to be a show that you haven't watched before. Okay? So, now the trap is set, and here's what you do. You waltz into the room. You sit down on the couch next to your poor sucker, and you start asking little questions about what's going on in the show. “Who's that guy? Why is that lady so mad? Oh, no, they're fighting. Why is that guy so scared of the other guy? Where are they anyway? Is she the mom? Who—which one's the mom?”

Then, you wait to see how many questions you can get to before they stop explaining the answers to your questions and simply throw you out of the room. It'll depend on how saintly patient the person is, how annoyingly you ask, some other factors. You'll probably make it to like, I'm guessing, maybe four questions. The person then gets mad, because to unwrap everything about a character—while that character is also having new experiences—is impossible! Characters are complex. There's lots of backstory, seasons, and episodes. And that's just with fake people. Real people are so much more complicated than that and harder to understand. Weeks, months, years of experiences that go into each of us, way more to us than can be updated in a handful of annoying questions on the couch. People are so complicated that you'll never have time to understand very many of them—a spouse, perhaps. You have a shot at understanding a spouse. Maybe your kids to some extent, for a few years anyway. You could try to understand your parents on a deep, fundamental level, but I don't like your chances, quite honestly.

Maybe the best use of your time is to try to understand yourself: why you are the way you are. What happened to you earlier in life that explains who you became later in life? What issues that you have had all along that surfaced in decisions that you made later on? That's the kind of character exploration our guest this week has been doing. We'll talk about it here on the show. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

[00:02:37] **Music:** “It's Fine” from the album *Natural Disaster* by Bethany Cosentino, an upbeat rock record.

*Imagine if I handled this shit like I used to*

*Imagine if everyone knew the truth the way that I do*

*I am evolved, you've stayed the same*

*I am evolved, but I play the game*

*(Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.)*

[00:03:03] **John Moe:** That's Bethany Cosentino, with her song “It's Fine” off her new album *Natural Disaster*. It's Bethany's debut album as a solo artist after 14 years and four albums as one half of the acclaimed and popular band Best Coast. I spoke to Bethany from her home in California.

[00:03:21] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:03:32] **John Moe:** Bethany Cosentino, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

[00:03:35] **Bethany Cosentino:** Thanks for having me on the most geniusly named podcast of all time.

[00:03:41] **John Moe:** (*Laughs.*) You know, that's, uh—we've won so many awards in our own minds for the title of the show. Congratulations on the new album, *Natural Disaster*.

[00:03:51] **Bethany Cosentino:** Thank you.

[00:03:52] **John Moe:** What's it about?

[00:03:54] **Bethany Cosentino:** I would say, if I had to do like an elevator pitch, it is a coming-of-age story about a woman—a 36-year-old woman—reclaiming her life and what matters against the landscape of the world ending.

[00:04:16] **John Moe:** (*Chuckles.*) The world ending?

[00:04:16] **Bethany Cosentino:** That's a real light, real light story. No, this record was heavily influenced by my climate anxiety, to be honest with you.

[00:04:27] **John Moe:** Tell me about the climate. I mean, there's ample reason to have climate anxiety, but tell me about how that shows up in your life.

[00:04:36] **Bethany Cosentino:** I think that, you know, the inception of this record really did come—it was early days of the pandemic. Best Coast had just put a record out. And two weeks into it, you know, our tours got canceled, the world shut down. The record essentially got swept under the rug. And I started to spiral and panic and be like, “What am I gonna do?” And not only, you know, panic about myself, but the world at large. I was like, “What is happening?” You know, I've never lived through anything as terrifying and as uncertain as covid. And then, coupled with political unrest, racial unrest, police brutality, just the reminder of climate change and natural disasters—which is, you know, a little wink to the album title.

But I live in California, there were just horrible wildfires. There were floods, tornadoes. I mean, it was just like—I couldn't—I couldn't not attach to the insanity of what was happening in the world. And so, I just decided that I was like, “Okay, I think maybe it might be time for a little bit of a reinvention.” And sort of my answer to walking through all of the anxiety that I was really struggling with at the time was to just create something new. And I think that my answer to dealing with climate anxiety and just sort of the anxiety of being human in a world that oftentimes feels like it's collapsing (*chuckles*) is to really try to just find joy in mundane things, to reconnect with nature, to just take care of myself. Because I really do have an awareness of the fact that like I'm not gonna be here forever, nor is anybody else.

[00:06:31] **John Moe:** I was jotting down notes as I was listening to the album, and my notes say, “Lots of stuff in here about climate change and disaster and fire, but also about love and the importance of loving and being loved.” They're kind of two things happening simultaneously there.

[00:06:48] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah, I think that a huge awakening that I had within myself of making this album—and I think also in part just growing up and, you know, doing a lot of work on myself—I have softened sort of myself over the years. And I think making this record was a huge exercise in softening, you know—and what I mean by that is sort of leaning into vulnerability and things like love and, you know, working on my inner child and things that like, you know, not that long ago I would've cringed at and rolled my eyes and been like, “Ew, we don't—we don't talk about inner children in songs. Like, don't do that.”

*(They laugh.)*

[00:07:31] **John Moe:** Since we are *Depresh Mode*, I have to ask how far back do you go with anxiety and with depression?

[00:07:39] **Bethany Cosentino:** You know, it's interesting, because I've actually recently been evaluating sort of my own journey with mental health, because I have found that in more recent years, my anxiety feels like it goes—it feels like it's gone. Like sometimes, I'll walk; I'll be like, “I'm not anxious at all. Like, I don't feel anxious anymore.” And then, you know, you turn a corner and all of a sudden you're like, “Just kidding! Here I am more anxious than ever.” And I was thinking a lot about, when I was growing up, how I had a very difficult time in school. Like, I was really good at anything creative. So, you know, any sort of performance-based thing. I really thrived in writing. English was my favorite subject, but anything that required me to like sit still and sort of not use my imagination was almost impossible for me.

And I was diagnosed with ADHD like in my early 20s, but I just don't think I really ever like took it so seriously, but within the last like few months, I was re-diagnosed with ADHD. And I think that when I think about my “issues”, quote/unquote, it feels like it's always been very tethered to having ADHD. I just don't think I really ever had a word for it or a proper diagnosis, but I think back to being a kid, and like I literally could not sit still.

[00:09:13] **John Moe:** How long ago was that you remember that?

[00:09:16] **Bethany Cosentino:** I just—I think I remember it really intensely probably like elementary school age, because that's when I think I really started to notice—and my parents started to notice—that, you know. I mean like my teachers would call my mom and be like, “She never stops talking. She never—like she talks out of turn all the time. She interrupts people.” And I was just, you know, like a rambunctious little performer. So, I sort of was just like, “Well, this is just—you know, I'm an only child! Like this is just—you guys let me do whatever I want! This makes sense!”

But I think over the years I—when I got that ADHD diagnosis more recently and I started to do a lot more sort of research on it, I was like, “Oh my god, like this—” Suddenly my entire life made sense.

[00:10:06] **John Moe:** Mm. In your 20s or when you were a kid?

[00:10:08] **Bethany Cosentino:** Just all of it. Like, back when I was a kid, in my 20s. I mean, I've always been very good at—again, any sort of creative project I'm able to focus and I'm able to sit with, because it is obviously such a passion of mine. But like I just realized that—and I think I would always tell myself too, like, “Oh my god, there's something really, really wrong with me. Like, I can't, you know, finish things. I start a project, and then I don't finish it.” And, you know, as far as my music goes, it's my job. So, I think sometimes I'm like, “I have to do this. It's my work.” But yeah, I think back and I'm like, “Oh. Yeah.” The depression has also been there, but I think that the hamster wheel brain has also been there for a very long time. (*Laughs.*)

[00:11:00] **John Moe:** And you were—you were diagnosed as bipolar type two when you were a teenager also, is that right?

[00:11:07] **Bethany Cosentino:** I was, but I don't feel like that was right. I think—and I'm gonna be just real honest with you, like I was—when I was a teenager, my favorite author was one Miss Sylvia Plath. And I was like—I mentioned this a little bit, but like I was—or I am an only child, and I think that I had a very difficult time. My parents got divorced when I was 15, and you know, I was heavily like overprotected and guarded as a kid. But I didn't get a lot of—hopefully my parents never listen to this podcast, because they always—my mom is always like texting me, being like, “Why would you say that thing about us?”

And I'm like, “I love you! I love you. I love you. Like, you're the best.” But that's what parents do is they fuck up. Right? And I didn't get a lot of like emotional—I wouldn't say that I was really like—I wasn't really allowed to have my own autonomy emotionally. I think there was this thing of like my mom always kind of tried to come in and if I would like fall down and cry, it was like I wasn't allowed to like cry. It had to be like, “No, no, no. We're gonna fix this!” Very—a lot of codependency in my family. But I think that part of the way that I was acting out when I was a teen was really to try to get attention and be like, “Hey, I'm not doing well. Can somebody like actually listen to me and help me? Instead of like, you know, trying to fix it for me.”

[00:12:39] **John Moe:** I always thought the idea of “she's just trying to get attention” or you know, “he's just crying for help,” I always thought that got kind of a bad rap. Because like, yeah, they're trying to get attention! They're trying to get help.

[00:12:53] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah. Yeah, for sure. I mean, I think it was easy to diagnose me as that at that age, because I was experiencing, you know, a lot of ups and downs. I was 15, and my parents were getting a divorce, and everything I had ever known was falling apart. And you know, on top of it I was struggling in school, and I was wanting to drop out of school, and I was just—I was having a very hard time. And you know, I was reading Sylvia Plath, and was like, “Oh! I feel this way!” But also, it's like when you're 15, the world is a really—it feels—I have a line and a song on my record that says, “Growing up is easy when you're 17. Now I'm 35, and I don't quite know what it means.” And it's like, I think back to when I was a teenager and I'm like, “Oh my god, life is so hard!” And sometimes I roll my eyes at it, because I'm like, “What was so hard at the age of 15?!”

Like I didn't—you know, it's like, sure, when you're struggling with mental health stuff and you're just—I mean, to exist is difficult, but like I just think back to it sometimes and I'm like,

wow, I really thought that like life was so hard at that age. And now, I look back and I'm like, I would give. Anything to go back to the just innocence and freedom of being 15 years old and just talking to myself and being like, it doesn't have to be this hard. You can just go ride your bike and have fun with your friends. Go to the mall, you know? (*Laughs.*)

[00:14:19] **John Moe:** Right. But that 15-year-old doesn't have your wisdom, doesn't have your lived experience.

[00:14:23] **Bethany Cosentino:** Exactly. No. And that, my friend, is why I think inner child work is so important. (*Laughs.*)

[00:14:30] **John Moe:** Really? So, have you been doing inner child work?

[00:14:33] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yes, I do Jungian style therapy, and so I do a lot of work. I do a lot of like shadow work. I do a lot of trying to do connection with my inner child. I have photos. I'm literally sitting here looking at—I did commercials when I was a kid, so I have like headshots from then, and I hang them all up next to my desk. Because when I bully myself and beat myself up, I try to remember that I'm also bullying and beating up this innocent little kid who, you know, I just—we also are a product of our environments and what we grow up around. And my parents, god bless 'em, they were very dysfunctional. And I did not—I wasn't shown healthy coping mechanisms.

[00:15:19] **John Moe:** Hmm. Well, explain what happens in inner child work with a therapist. What do you do? And like what's the aim? What happens?

[00:15:28] **Bethany Cosentino:** Well, I think that the belief in, you know, the school of therapy that I do is that everything is connected and that we have all of these different sides of ourself. And the goal is not to eliminate, you know—it's not to like say, “Oh, well I have these demons, and I need to get rid of them, because they're horrible.” It's really to sort of integrate all of these sides of yourself and bring them to together so that everything can kind of exist as one. Because I think that when we start to see things in sort of a black and white space, we forget that there's so much gray area and nuance in the world. Right? And so, for me, it's sort of having this experience with a side of myself that while, no, I'm no longer six years old, I'm—you know—36 years old. That person still exists within me. And that those experiences still exist within me. And there's a lot of—it's very kind of—it's kind of corny, but I find it to be very helpful.

There's a lot of like, you know, talking to yourself and what would you have said to yourself, you know, if you could have held yourself when you fell down? And like, what would you—what do you wish your parents would've said to you? How do you wish that your parents would've parented you? How do you wish that, you know—maybe when you were 15 and you were really struggling and reading Sylvia Plath and finding, you know, connection with this very nihilistic viewpoint. Now, it's like I, with the wisdom that I have now, kind of get to go back in time and talk to that version of myself and say like, you know, the things that I feel that I need to say. And some of it I do actually with my therapist—like we talk about these things—but a lot of it is work that I do sort of, you know, with tools and practices that I've learned by way of therapy. But a lot of it is stuff I do at home. I journal a lot, and a lot of my journaling sometimes looks like writing letters to past versions of myself.

Again, sometimes I roll my eyes at it and I'm like, "Oh god, like I can't believe I'm talking to a picture of myself at six years old." But it's like what we do and the energy that we put out matters.

[00:17:44] **John Moe:** Yeah, I think the idea of the inner child—the phrase inner child gets such a bad rap, because people think it's a way of not living in the moment—of living in the past. And it's really about living in the present, but kind of recognizing who it is you're living with and getting that person equipped for the future.

[00:18:05] **Bethany Cosentino:** Sure, sure. Yeah. And I think—I mean, and even me, like before I even started doing inner child work or even, you know, had the understanding of what that meant, I was like, "Well, that seems weird. What do you mean you talk to your inner child? What do you mean you write letters to a past version of yourself?" Like, I don't know. I think as I get older, I really start to realize how much of my present is affected by my past. You know, I have friends that are deep in therapy that I ask them like, "Do you ever talk about your childhood? Or do you ever talk about—?" You know.

And a lot of them are like, "No, we don't really get into that kind of stuff."

And I'm like, "That's so interesting." 'Cause I do think that our past informs so much of who we are and especially in like things like relationships. I mean, again, I was raised in a—my parents fought a lot, and I did not see a healthy representation of love. And I will tell you what that meant for me in my 20s was just constantly being in just chaotic, toxic relationships, because that's what I saw. So, it's like you can't tell me that that didn't inform the way that I started to walk through the world. Right? At least, that's my belief.

[00:19:25] **John Moe:** Yeah. How long did it take for you to start finding healthier relationships?

[00:19:30] **Bethany Cosentino:** Oh my god. I mean...

[00:19:32] **Transition:** Cheerful guitar.

[00:19:34] **John Moe:** Will Bethany have healthy relationships? Tune in after the break.

*(Music fades out.)*

Here's a bit of Bethany's song "Easy" off the album *Natural Disaster*.

[00:19:44] **Music:** "Easy" from the album *Natural Disaster* by Bethany Cosentino.

*Growing up is easy when you're 17*

*Now, I'm 35, and I don't quite know what it means*

*I always thought I'd be a mother*

*With a purpose to discover*

*But the clouds cover me*

*We could build a garden in this city, baby...*

*(Volume decreases and continues under the dialogue then fades out.)*

[00:20:19] **Promo:**

**Music:** Bouncy synth.

**Jordan Morris:** I'm Jordan Morris.

**Jesse Thorn:** And I'm Jesse Thorn.

**Jordan:** On *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*, we make pure, delightful nonsense.

**Jesse:** We rope in awesome guests.

**Jordan:** And bring them down to our level.

**Jesse:** We got stupid with Judy Greer.

**Judy Greer:** My friend, Molly, and I call it "having the space weirds".

**Jordan:** Patton Oswalt.

**Patton Oswalt:** Could I get a Balrog burger and some Aragorn fries? Thank you.

**Jesse:** And Kumail Nanjiani.

**Kumail Nanjiani:** I've come back with cat toothbrushes, which is impossible to use.

**Jordan:** Come get stupider with us at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

**Jesse:** Look, your podcast app's already open. Just pull it out! Give *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* a try.

**Jordan:** Being smart is hard. Be dumb instead!

*(Music fades out.)*

[00:20:53] **Transition:** Thoughtful acoustic guitar.

[00:20:55] **John Moe:** Back with singer songwriter Bethany Cosentino. We were talking about whether she ultimately found healthy relationships.

*(Music ends.)*

[00:21:07] **Bethany Cosentino:** I am currently in a relationship. I actually just recently got engaged, which is still weird for me to say.

*(John congratulates her.)*

Thank you, but I—this is really the first healthy relationship that I've ever been in. Honestly, I would say that my early 20s is when my career was at its peak, and I didn't really have—I didn't have a lot of tools back then. Actually, I don't think I had any tools back then, and I was very addicted to chaos. I picked up on some of the codependency in my house, and I was very fixated on like, “Oh, I can fix them, I can fix them. I can make it work. I'm gonna be the person that they change for.” And it was, you know—it was also like a really convenient way of avoiding myself and avoiding like what's actually going on within me, what are things that maybe I need to look at?

So, I would say that it wasn't until—I've been with my partner now—we've been together like almost four years. So—or four and a half years? I don't—it's been a while. And it's been—like, it's challenging. Like, I didn't realize that healthy relationships are actually the hard relationships. *(Laughs.)*

[00:22:18] **John Moe:** Yeah.

[00:22:19] **Bethany Cosentino:** It's a lot of work.

[00:22:20] **John Moe:** It's a lot of work. It's constructive work. It's work that's building something solid instead of just the kind of labor that makes you lose your mind. But yeah.

[00:22:30] **Bethany Cosentino:** Exactly. Exactly.

[00:22:32] **John Moe:** How did that go during covid? During this sort of massive psychological crucible that we were all under?

[00:22:41] **Bethany Cosentino:** You know, it's interesting because my relationship actually, it sort of really took its roots in covid. I know so many people that, you know, broke up or got divorced. I think covid really did a number on a lot of us, and I think everybody is still trying to, you know, process the collective trauma that we lived through. But I would say that like during that time is when my relationship really started to flourish, because I was also going through so many changes, and that is when I decided that I wanted to make this record. And that is when I sort of had a realization within myself that I was like I think I've overly identified—my whole persona was wrapped up in Best Coast, my identity. I did not know who I was outside of Best Coast.

And so, I was going through all of these really big changes and sort of stripping away all the layers of the onion and sort of revealing a new thing and a new thing. And my partner was just so supportive throughout all of it. And I think that that was really the thing that made me realize that I was like, “All I've ever really needed is a person who actually loves me for who I am and supports me.” And I mean, it did make it difficult too, because there were moments where I was like, “Oh my god, what is happening? What is happening? What is happening?” But it was also, I think for he and I—and you know, as a couple, but also as autonomous human beings—like, it was a really beautiful experience of just getting to be ourselves and having someone as witness to it.



[00:24:16] **John Moe:** Mm. So, you figuring out who you were, is that what led to the end of Best Coast? Because that had been your identity for so long?

[00:24:28] **Bethany Cosentino:** It's interesting because when I—as I'm doing a lot of press around this record, I keep getting asked—you know, the number one question is like, “Why this and not Best Coast?” And it's so rooted in my identity as a person. And I think that when I realized that like—when I couldn't do my job as Best Coast, because the world was shut down, I really did like—it felt physical. Like, the pain of starting to feel like I was separating from something was like, “What the fuck is happening? Like, I don't understand why I feel this way. I've never felt this way before.” And you know, like Best Coast had taken breaks before, where we would have time off between albums and time off between tours. But I never really had the opportunity to just sit with myself. And I mean, literally sit with myself and sit with my thoughts.

And in the beginning of covid, I wasn't living with my partner. I was completely alone. And there were periods where I didn't see anybody. You know, it was like that thing where people would come visit in the backyard and I would, you know, be terrified to get close to them. It was the first time in my entire life I really, truly—I know that that might sound dramatic, but I really do think it was the first time in my entire life that I ever got to just be a fully autonomous human being as just Bethany. And it made me realize that I was like, “I've outgrown this thing that I've identified as for all these years,” slash “It's important for me to go out there and figure out who I am outside of this thing.”

[00:26:07] **John Moe:** When did you start playing music and writing music?

[00:26:10] **Bethany Cosentino:** I've been singing since I was—allegedly before I could even talk, is what my parents say. Which is—I'm always like, “Is that true?” But you know, my father is a musician, so I was raised around music, and I—it was—I was very, very, very supported by my parents in terms of my talents. Like, some of it was—it was very helpful, but I think also a lot of it was like my value felt very tethered to my talents, and it felt very tethered to like validation. You know, I was the kid that when I would walk into the room, like everyone would be like, “Perform! Sing, sing! Do the dance for us!” And I did it. But when everybody's clapping at you and is like, “Good job!” It's like you don't really—like, you're like, “Is this all that I am? Is this all I do?” So—

[00:26:57] **John Moe:** And didn't do this, would I be of any value at all?

[00:26:59] **Bethany Cosentino:** Bingo. Bingo. So, I think that, you know—for me, I've been doing it since—as long as I can remember. But when I first started writing music, I was like 13/14. My dad got me my first guitar when I was 13, so that's when I started writing. But then, when I was a bit older—like 19/20—I was like, “I don't wanna do this. Like, I wanna go to college like a regular person and go to school, and I wanna like be a writer.” Like, I wanted to be a journalist and a nonfiction writer. And I think that part of that, probably again with the wisdom I have now looking back—it probably is because even back then I was struggling with like, identity. Who am I without this thing that I've always been applauded for my whole life?

But at the end of the day, it's like I feel like it's the only thing that I actually can do and can consistently do. Especially going back to sort of the idea of the ADHD; it's like the one thing that I can sit still for.

[00:27:59] **John Moe:** Yeah, so has songwriting always been a way of exploring who you are and trying to get to the bottom—trying to solve your mysteries?

[00:28:09] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yes, I think so. I think it is definitely the way that I have always walked through the world and sort of the way in which I've attempted to navigate big feelings. I think with Best Coast, I used songwriting as—it was like therapy, because I didn't—I wasn't in therapy, and I didn't have time for therapy. I was, you know, on tour from the age of 22 to 30, literally. Like, I just went, went, went, went, went. And so, it was like sitting down on the floor and writing a song and talking about my feelings was—that was the only way that I could exercise that stuff outside of myself. And I think that now I still feel that I explore life by way of song, but I think the reason that I do it is different now. I don't feel like it's such a survival thing anymore. It feels more like something that just I enjoy and like doing. You know, it never dawned on me that like maybe I could find a therapist.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:29:12] **John Moe:** So, music and songwriting you say are a form of therapy. Is it good therapy?

[00:29:17] **Bethany Cosentino:** I think... yes and no. I don't believe in regret. Like, I believe that, you know, everything happens for a reason, and everything is always a learning lesson. You know, traumatic relationships, all that stuff in the past. I would write about stuff and looking back, like in hindsight, I'm like, “Did I really need to talk about that? Did I really need to share that? Maybe that could have just been between the privacy of me and my therapist or me and a journal or whatever.” But I think now my relationship to using song as quote/unquote “therapy”, I think with this record in particular, it feels very good. Because I felt—it felt very intentional about what I wanted to share.

I do think that the reason why people have always connected with my music though is because I just say it like I feel it, you know? I don't sugarcoat shit. I just say what I think. And I think that people—I think that's refreshing for people, and I think it makes people feel seen. And I think that the art that I have always connected with the most is the shit that feels relatable to me. The stuff that I can listen to and be like, “I've been there, like I have felt that exact same feeling.” So again, I don't regret it, but I also like sort of look at it now and I'm like, “Yeah, it is kind of funny to just, you know, make an entire record about how a person is literally driving you crazy, because you're so infatuated with them.”

*(John chuckles.)*

Like, you know, maybe—maybe a little, uh, *Codependent No More* book would've served me well back then.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:30:53] **John Moe:** Is there a song or a set of lyrics on the new album that that kind of make you feel like, “Oh crap, I can't believe I'm putting this out there. I'm putting my heart out on the line like this.”

[00:31:05] **Bethany Cosentino:** You know, there isn't. I think that this album, for me, was also a real exercise in softening myself and allowing myself to be vulnerable in a way that I've never been vulnerable before. I think that I've probably been known—you know, with Best Coast—was very known for sort of being the girl that wrote very openly about mental health and anxiety and feeling angsty and, you know, obsessive sort of love and chaos and all of these things. And I think that this vulnerable, softer side of myself has always been there, but I've been very afraid to like let it out. And also, part of that is I just wasn't really in touch with it. And I think that with this record, I just was like, “Fuck it, I'm gonna talk about all of these feelings.”

And some of them feel very big and, you know, at times a little cliché and cheesy, as I say in my song “Easy”. But just I am who I am and I'm gonna share who I am at any given moment. And if I look back 10 years from now and—the way I do sometimes with *Crazy for You*—and say like, “Why? Why did—why did I share that?” It's like it doesn't matter. It served its purpose at the time. It is who I was at the time. I mean, I think of my tattoos as that way too. Like, I started getting tattooed so young, and now I look around and I'm like, “I would not have chosen to do this to my body now at this time in my life, but—” And people ask me like, “Well, would you ever consider getting them removed?” And I'm like I don't think so! Because I think it's just like when I was 19 years old, I was like, “I like these feathers. I'm gonna tattoo 'em on my chest.” And it's just sort of—now I look down and I'm like 36-year-old me would not put feathers on my chest, but 19—it meant something to me at 19. Sure. Let's just go with it. You know? (*Laughs.*)

[00:32:49] **John Moe:** Yeah. Well, it's—at the very least, it's a memorial to feeling things when you were 19, to having strong convictions.

[00:32:58] **Bethany Cosentino:** Exactly. I think also it's like—you know, I think of the tattoo stuff. And you know, I think I could think of the songs this way, as well. It's like it's radical self-acceptance. It's accepting yourself as who you are, but also who you used to be. And I think that that is something that I've—you know, I have to work on every single day. I have a really mean inner critic, like a really mean inner critic, and I think that's part of why the inner child work is so important to me as well. And again, the integration of all the selves, because I don't need to shame myself for versions of myself that I've been. And I don't need to try to be a version of myself that doesn't feel authentic to who I am. Like, the world is hard enough as it is.

So, working on just really trying to like accept myself for who I am at any given moment is a, you know, a lifelong process but something that I feel very dedicated to working towards.

[00:33:57] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:33:59] **John Moe:** More with Bethany Cosentino in just a moment. We'll go to break with a little bit of her song, “I've Got News For You” from the album *Natural Disaster*.

[00:34:14] **Music:** “I’ve Got News for You” from the album *Natural Disaster* by Bethany Cosentino.

*Talking to myself in the mirror again*

*Practicing the words I never meant*

*To say out loud to someone else, ‘til there was you*

*If I try with all my might...*

*(Song fades out.)*

[00:34:45] **Promo:**

*(Sheep bleating; chickens clucking.)*

**Noah:** Okay, zebras. Orangutans. Oh!

**Carrie Poppy:** Uh, hello! Yes, sorry, hi.

**Noah:** I’m not used to the animals talking. Who are you?

**Carrie:** Uh, yes. My name’s Carrie Poppy. I co-host a podcast called *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*. This is my cohost, Ross, right here.

**Noah:** *(Unimpressed.)* Okay.

**Carrie:** We investigate spirituality, claims of the paranormal. And we were wondering if we could get on the ark?

**Noah:** You did come two-by-two. I appreciate that.

**Carrie:** Thank you!

**Noah:** Though, most of the things I’m letting on the ark don’t talk.

**Carrie:** I’m gonna be talking all up on this boat. Do you mind boat?

**Noah:** I prefer ark or barge.

**Carrie:** *(Talking over him.)* Okay, I’m not listening. But if you let me on, then I will make my really good podcast on your boat—barge.

**Noah:** Can you at least help clean up all the poop?

**Carrie:** I guess I don't see why not.

**Music:** “Oh No, Ross and Carrie Theme Song” by Brian Keith Dalton fades in.

**Noah:** Well, I'll check out the podcast. Where do I find it?

**Carrie:** It's on [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org).

*(Music ends.)*

[00:35:31] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:35:35] **John Moe:** Back with singer songwriter Bethany Cosentino.

*(Music ends.)*

On this album and in your work with Best Coast, there's a lot of brightness to the music. There's a lot of joy in it. Do you still feel that joy when you're—when you're making this music, even as you're kind of working through a lot of these issues? Is it still fun?

[00:35:58] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah, for sure! Making music is the funnest thing. I mean, I wouldn't—believe me, at this point in time, like the music industry is so wild. Like, I mean, I think all industries are wild right now. Everything feels like it's collapsing and being—you know, having to be evaluated and rebuilt. But like it is not easy anymore. I mean, it was never easy, but now especially. It's like the music industry at this level of music—if you're like a stadium rock artist, it's like, you know—it's still hard, but—you know what I'm saying.

*(John confirms.)*

I think now it's like the amount of work that I have to put into this, I would not do it unless it was fun and unless I felt like it's the thing that makes me feel the most alive. Because it's like, no. There are—on a daily basis, there are things I have to do and things I have to accept that I'm just like, “Why do I do this to myself?” And then I remember, “Oh, because this is the thing that I love to do the most. And it's a very gratifying experience. And again, like it makes me feel alive.” And I'm not gonna sacrifice that joy simply because, you know, they're like, “You gotta go promote your record 14 more times on TikTok.”

*(They laugh.)*

[00:37:12] **John Moe:** Or showing up to talk about your innermost vulnerabilities on *Depresh Mode*.

[00:37:16] **Bethany Cosentino:** No, I love talking about this shit!

*(John laughs.)*

I love—like, I will go deep with anyone. Like, I am that person that you meet at a party and you're like, “That girl just told me a lot of really intense stuff.” And I’m like—

[00:37:30] **John Moe:** “I know all about her parents' divorce now. Wow.”

[00:37:33] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah. My—I think my—again, I think my parents sometimes are like, “Can you keep some things private?!”

I'm like, “No, it's just not what I do.”

[00:37:41] **John Moe:** (*Laughs.*) Sorry, yeah. Well, getting back to the ADHD—is that something that you try to suppress in order to get work done? Is it something you manage? Is it something you try to cure? What's the—what's the, uh—how do you handle it?

[00:37:58] **Bethany Cosentino:** You know, it's a newer—it's a newer thing that I'm—that I'm really trying—I mean, I literally wasn't like—you know, as I mentioned, I got diagnosed with it in my 20s. But like, I didn't really—I was like, “Alright, cool. Whatever. Sounds good.” (*Chuckles.*) You know, now that I actually really like am committed to working on myself, I'm trying to take it as seriously as possible. But like it was—I only got this diagnosis like a month ago. I actually am seeing my psychiatrist on—

[00:38:25] **John Moe:** Oh! Welcome.

[00:38:27] **Bethany Cosentino:** (*Laughs.*) I'm actually seeing my psychiatrist on Friday for like a follow up about it all. But you know, sometimes I feel like my brain is a rabid dog that I have to try to keep on a leash, because it literally feels like that sometimes where I feel like my thoughts are escaping me or that I get super sidetracked. And I start one thing, and then I'm like, “Oh my god, wait! I just heard a noise outside. I have to go see what that is.” And then—you know, and I'm just sort of like, “Aaah!” But I try to—you know, I think something that I'm really trying to work on—my connection and this—you know, forgive me, I'm a girl who was born and raised in Los Angeles, so I am a little woo-woo, but I think my connection to like spirituality or my connection to like an entity or energy bigger than myself is sort of the thing that really like roots me and helps me.

And whether that is going for a very long walk with my dog and just like connecting with nature or—you know, I have these cards I really like that are called the Power of Surrender cards, and I'll just like randomly pull one, and it'll tell me like something to let go of. And then, throughout the day I'll actively try to like focus on letting go of that thing. My phone is the hardest thing though. I mean, I think the phone plus an ADHD brain is just—I mean the phone plus any brain is just a problem, but sometimes—I mean, hours of my day will go by and I'm like, “Wait a second. What? What am I doing? I'm literally just scrolling!”

And I don't—I think part of it is the dopamine that I get from it all. It's just like, “Oh, another thing! A thing! A notification! A this! Da, da, da, da, da.” And then finally, sometimes I'm just like, “I wanna throw this thing in the fucking ocean, because I can't stop looking at it!” You know? (*Laughs.*) So, a practice for that that I tried is I bought an old school alarm clock. And I'm trying to start my days now like with my phone opposite end of me, the alarm clock,

get out of bed, start my day, don't get sucked into the phone. And I'm happy to report it lasted one week, my friend!

*(John laughs.)*

And now here we are, back in the “waking up first thing in the morning looking at the phone”. But I'm trying to go easy on myself. This is all new to me.

[00:40:42] **John Moe:** Are you doing social media or are you just reading the news?

[00:40:45] **Bethany Cosentino:** I do both. It's a combination of like—you know, I look at—I look at social media, I go on Twitter, I read the news, and then I ask myself, “Well, why do you think you're so anxious?” Well, maybe it's because every day you wake up to a headline that's like, you know, “the polar ice caps are melting and you know, this thing”. It's like, maybe—it's important to not be, you know, naive to these things, because they're real. But I wonder if starting my day off with them is maybe not the best approach.

*(They laugh.)*

[00:41:17] **John Moe:** That might be something you kind of ease into rather than, uh, before the morning coffee.

[00:41:23] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah.

[00:41:24] **John Moe:** Yeah. That's—it can be a lot to process. Is it hard being a person who deals with anxiety and living in California? Because to the rest of us, in other parts of the country, we think, “Well, god, it sure is beautiful there, but everything always seems to be on fire or crumbling or drying up or like God is trying to kill you in some way.”

[00:41:45] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah. I mean, yes. Yes and no. I think that like I—again, I've been here my whole life, so it's really all I know. I mean, I remember like when the Northridge earthquake happened when I was a kid, that was like the first major earthquake I ever experienced. And it was terrifying. And you know, like my parents are both from the Midwest, so like all of their family in the Midwest I remember when that happened was like, “Oh my—like, are you gonna move?” And it's like, no, this is just where we live. This is just what happens. Like the earth just literally shakes and like the—you know, like the sidewalks crack in half and bridges collapse and it's just—you know, it's just what happens here!

But I think that for me, I will say that like living in a city like Los Angeles definitely doesn't help my anxiety at times, because it is a very fast-paced, big city. A lot of people, a lot of traffic. But I live like in a little pocket of LA that is, you know, close enough to the city, but also feels a little bit removed from things. I do most of my like errands and stuff in the suburbs. I try to just sort of like avoid the bigger, more crowded parts of the city. But yeah, I mean, when wildfire season starts—which, you know, we're now experiencing like our huge heat wave, so I'm—you know, fingers crossed we had a lot of rain this year. So, hopefully that'll be helpful. But yeah, I mean, when you're like in your living room watching the news

and the hillsides that you've seen your whole life are burning, it's definitely like, "Oh, fuck. This is real."

But I think that way about like tornadoes. And again, like I grew up going to the Midwest a lot because of my family. And I remember being in my grandparents' basement during a tornado watch, and the sirens were going off, and I was like, "This is the scariest thing I've ever experienced in my entire life!"

And then my cousins are literally like, "You live in a place where the ground shakes."

*(They laugh.)*

[00:43:46] **John Moe:** Yeah, I'm from Seattle and my wife is from Chicago, and we—neither of us can understand, like, "Why aren't you terrified all the time when we're in the place you didn't grow up in?"

[00:43:57] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah, I mean my—I'm so scared of earthquakes. Like, I wake up in the middle of the night sometimes and I'm like, "Why am I awake? Oh, I must be awake because an earthquake is coming." Like my brain will just—intrusive thoughts of like, you know, "take shelter". And like my mom was—is still—a bit of an alarmist. And so, I have like an earthquake preparation kit that my mother has, you know, made sure to tell me over and over again, "You need to make sure that you have this."

And I'm like, "Okay, it's in the closet." If a really bad earthquake comes, I don't know how I'm gonna get to the closet. You know, it's like I start to go to that place.

[00:44:34] **John Moe:** Be over by the time I get to the closet. *(Chuckles.)*

[00:44:35] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah, it's like—and then, the can of tuna is like what I'm gonna live off of if the—you know, it's just—I don't know.

*(John laughs.)*

I—but also, like California is such a beautiful place too.

*(John agrees.)*

Like, there's so many—you know, I love living here because of the idea that I can go to the beach, I can go to the desert, I can go to the mountains, I can go—you know, there's redwood forests. Like, it's just a—nature is a huge—I would say if I believe in any—you know, whatever God is to me, it's nature. I just—I can't not be in nature and connect to nature. And you know, my dream is to like even get out of—further out of the city and like go live somewhere, you know, where I'm an hour outside of anything and just be sort of like remote in the mountains.



Maybe once I get to like mid-40s, I'll do that. I think I have to stay put for right now, but I would love to just live somewhere where it was, you know, quiet.

[00:45:31] **John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah. You talked about the importance of Sylvia Plath as an author when you were a teenager. Are there other authors that have been equally important to you as you've gotten older?

[00:45:44] **Bethany Cosentino:** I love Mary Oliver, the poet. I have a several books of hers, but I have one that's just a collection of a lot of her different poems from different books. And I try to almost read that as if it's like a meditation. Like, you know, I try to sort of—on my days where I'm trying to be like, “Okay, namaste. No phone.” I try to just like flip to a random page and read a poem of hers, because I think that, you know, the way in which she viewed the world is very similar to the mindset that I try to live in. Which is like, you know, there is so much magic and beauty and joy to be experienced out there. And a lot of it does come from nature.

And I think when I think about it too long and hard, I get pissed because I'm like, “Yeah, here we are existing on this planet that just has so much magic and mystery and beauty and everyone just treats it like fucking shit.” Because humans are just, you know, god bless us, but we—

[00:46:41] **John Moe:** Monsters. Yeah.

[00:46:42] **Bethany Cosentino:** Yeah. You know? (*Laughs.*) So, I love her. She is definitely—I would say that like the thing that I probably read most is Mary Oliver. And then, I'm a—I love self-help books. Like, I am just a—I am like—whatever the like new self-help book is, I'm like, “Sign me up.” I love reading self-help. I love reading like nonfiction and people's sort of, you know, take on the world. I just—I'm very intrigued by the human experience. So, anything that sort of feels like it touches on that is sort of what I gravitate towards.

[00:47:19] **John Moe:** And then finally, what do you hope people come away with after listening to the new album?

[00:47:26] **Bethany Cosentino:** I hope that this album inspires people to lean into, you know, the—what I was just saying about what I love about Mary Oliver, like to lean into the magical sort of mystery beauty of life. I have a quote that I keep on my desk. I don't remember where I saw it, but I love it. And it says, “Look for daily evidence of magic.” And I love that, you know. It is so easy to get swirled up in the chaos of climate change and record temperatures and earthquakes and political unrest and racism and sexism and women's rights being taken away and trans rights and all of the fucking swamp shit that we wake up to on a daily basis. (*Chuckles.*) But you know, we can't stare at that darkness for too long, because if you stare at that darkness long enough, you just become the darkness.

And I don't think it's worth it to live our one, you know, God-given, Goddess-given, nature-given, whatever-you-wanna-call-it-given life on this earth ruminating on the horror show. So, I would hope that people can listen to this record and, you know, realize that these issues are very real and that they're not, you know, imaginary. But at the same time, to escape the

darkness by way of just opening your eyes and looking at what's in front of you, whether it's the love of a partner or, you know, the love of a pet or a child or a friend or, you know, a mentor. Or even just the love of the planet that you live on. I hope that it inspires people to just remember that there is a lot of good still out there.

[00:49:09] **John Moe:** The album is *Natural Disaster*. Bethany Cosentino, thank you so much for being with us.

[00:49:14] **Bethany Cosentino:** Thank you!

[00:49:17] **Music:** “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller, an up-tempo acoustic guitar song. The music continues quietly under the dialogue, then fades out.

[00:49:24] **John Moe:** Bethany Cosentino’s album, *Natural Disaster*, comes out on July 28th. A few songs are already available on streaming services. We'll go out with a little bit of the title track from *Natural Disaster*.

[00:49:37] **Music:** “Natural Disaster” from the album *Natural Disaster* by Bethany Cosentino.

*It's August 1<sup>st</sup> in a parking lot*

*And there's a guy with a radio*

*He's sure got a lot to say, got a lot to sell*

*So, I look the other way*

*And there's a girl with a cigarette in her mouth*

*She's on the phone*

*I can tell she's from the south*

*She's walking backwards*

*Wants to be an actor*

*Why am I listening?*

*(Song fades out.)*

[00:50:11] **Music:** “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller.

[00:50:16] **John Moe:** Next time on *Depresh Mode*: before she was a cast member on *Saturday Night Live*, Sasheer Zamata took her anxiety to infinity and beyond.

[00:50:25] **Sasheer Zamata:** I was working at Disney World, barely in the height range for the Buzz Lightyear costume. And I remember arguing with my manager before I got out in front of the kids and they were like, “Everyone hates this costume.” *(Laughs.)*

So, I was sobbing in this costume in front of the kids, just like lackadaisically stamping my signature onto their little books. My character attendant, who's like the eyes and ears of the character, saw how upset I was and was like, "Hey Buzz! How are you doing? Thumbs up, thumbs down." I gave a big thumbs down and they're like, "Okay, we gotta get you off stage." My lungs just stopped working, and I like started hyperventilating, and you could hear it outside my costume. And they just like picked me up and rushed me backstage and took off my costume. And they're like, "We think you had a panic attack."

And I hadn't had one at this point, so I didn't know what that even entailed. They finally were like, "We realize now you probably shouldn't wear that costume." And I was like, oh good! (*Laughs.*) Oh good. Glad my body had to break down for that to be the result.

[00:51:24] **John Moe:** Hey, our show exists because people donate to it. If you've already donated, that's wonderful. Thank you. We appreciate it. If you haven't donated yet, please do. 'Cause then we can keep existing. All you need to do is go to [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join), find a level that works for you, and then select *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows. Be sure to check out our merchandise store. We've got all sorts of things available there: mugs and shirts and sweatpants, many emblazoned with the "I'm glad you are here" phrase that a lot of people have found quite resonant in their lives. So, all sorts of things available there. Go to [MaxFunStore.com](https://MaxFunStore.com). Be sure to hit subscribe. Give us five stars, write rave reviews. All of that helps us get the show out into the world where it can help people.

The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline is available 24/7 for free in the United States by calling 988. The Crisis Text Line, also free and always available, text "home" to 741741.

Our Instagram and Twitter are both @DepreshPod. If you're on Facebook, look up our mental health discussion group, Preshies. A lot of good conversation happening over there. Our *Depresh Mode* newsletter is available on Substack. Search that up. I'm on Twitter and Instagram @JohnMoe. Our electric mail address is [depreshmode@maximumfun.org](mailto:depreshmode@maximumfun.org).

Hello, credits listeners. Scientists say that in one quadrillion years, stellar close-encounters will detach all the planets in our solar system from their orbits. And by this point, the sun will have cooled to five degrees above absolute zero. So, the lesson here: pack a sweater. *Depresh Mode* is made possible by your contributions. The show is produced by Gabe Mara. Our senior producer is Kevin Ferguson. Our production intern is Clara Flesher, and we get booking help from Mara Davis. Rhett Miller wrote and performed our theme song, "Building Wings".

[00:53:20] **Music:** "Building Wings" by Rhett Miller.

*I'm always falling off of cliffs, now*

*Building wings on the way down*

*I am figuring things out*

*Building wings, building wings, building wings*

*No one knows the reason*

*Maybe there's no reason*

*I just keep believing*

*No one knows the answer*

*Maybe there's no answer*

*I just keep on dancing*

[00:53:57] **Becky:** Hi, this is Becky from Cleveland. Depression lies. You are worth fighting for.

[00:54:04] **John Moe:** Hi. *Depresh Mode* is a production of Maximum Fun and Poputchik. I'm John Moe. Bye, now.

*(Music fades out.)*

[00:54:16] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:54:17] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:54:19] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:54:20] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:54:22] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:54:23] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:54:24] **Speaker 6:** —by you.