

[00:00:00] **John Moe:** A note to our listeners: this episode contains discussions of sexual violence that some may find upsetting.

When the writer Roxane Gay speaks, a lot of people—myself included—lean in to listen as closely as possible. Well, she's going to speak on this show today. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here!

[00:00:20] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:00:28] **John Moe:** I'm going to mention this in the interview that you're about to hear, but in preparing for it—in watching and reading various talks and interviews with Roxane Gay—the issue of trauma kept coming up, and she had a lot of interesting things to say about trauma. Particularly the shared, complex, societal trauma of the pandemic, and the trauma for many people of living through the Trump presidency. And I lean in closely when Roxane Gay talks about trauma. She's been open in talking about trauma in her own life, including a rape by a group of boys when she was 12 years old, what that has meant for her.

Roxane Gay is a writer, social commentator, editor, and university professor. She's the author of numerous books, both fiction and nonfiction, including *Bad Feminist* and *Hunger*. Her latest is *Opinions: A Decade of Arguments, Criticism, and Minding Other People's Business*, which collects many opinion pieces she's written for the *New York Times* and other publications. Lean in, let's listen to my talk with Roxane Gay.

[00:01:28] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:01:32] **John Moe:** Roxane Gay, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

[00:01:34] **Roxane Gay:** Thank you for having me. I'm looking forward to our conversation.

[00:01:38] **John Moe:** Congratulations on the book, *Opinions: A Decade of Arguments, Criticism, and Minding Other People's Business*. Beyond being a compilation of opinion columns you've written, what is the book about? About with a capital A. What is this About?

[00:01:55] **Roxane Gay:** Really, it's about opinions and the reality that everyone has them, of course, some better than others. And everyone has a right to their opinions and a right to articulate their understanding or experience of the world. And so, as I was compiling this book, I was looking through my work and looking for pieces that I felt would work together well, thematically and tonally. And this is what I came up with.

[00:02:23] **John Moe:** A lot of people—like you say, everybody has opinions. A lot of people I think who listen to our show kind of wish they could assert their opinions a little clearer, a little bit louder and feel good about doing so. How did you enter into this space? How did you find the nerve to start presenting your opinions to the world?

[00:02:43] **Roxane Gay:** I don't know that I did find my nerve. I just did it despite being terrified. I would always—and I still do—tell myself, “Oh, girl, don't worry, no one's going to read it.” And for a long time, that was true. (*Chuckles.*) And so, it was fine. But I know that a

lot of writers wait and think that there's going to be some moment where they finally have the courage to do it. And for some of us, that moment doesn't come. I've simply learned to tolerate the discomfort of vulnerability and feeling exposed and understanding that my ideas and sometimes even who I am is going to be criticized. And I started really writing an opinion seriously in around 2009 when a young girl was gang raped in Cleveland, Texas. And the *New York Times* wrote this article about how the town was suffering.

And it was so stunning to me that that was their reportage. And they were like, “Why was this 11-year-old girl—” Or I mean, she was 10 or 11—“Why was she out at this time of night?” Et cetera, et cetera, when there were like more than 30 perpetrators. Like, who cares? Why were 30+ men, over days, willing to assault this girl, videotape it, and then act like nothing was wrong? And so, I wrote this essay called “The Careless Language of Sexual Violence” and was looking at the ways in which we talk about sexual violence in our culture. And when we're careless, I think it leads to reportage that focuses on the wrong thing. Ultimately, the *New York Times* ended up rereporting the story with a better perspective, focusing on, you know, the horror of the crime. And that was the beginning of where I am today.

[00:04:31] **John Moe:** You've talked publicly about your own assault when you were 12 years old. How do you go about keeping that kindness to yourself while also speaking up on so loud of a platform and taking on the *New York Times* and doing this kind of thing? How do you maintain your humanity and protect yourself while also being as assertive as is necessary in a situation like that?

[00:04:59] **Roxane Gay:** Well, I have very firm boundaries over what I will and won't put on the page. I'm actually a very private person, despite what people think they know about me. They know what I'm willing for them to know. And I'll never—also, I never think about it as like taking something on unless it's, you know, Donald Trump or something evil like that. When I was writing that first essay—or it wasn't really my first, but that particular essay, I was just taking on this horrific notion that we should focus on the town. Like, who cares about the town?! And you know, one of the parts was like the basketball team may not be able to finish the season. Which it's just like you're missing the plot.

[00:05:42] **John Moe:** I want to talk a little bit about the depression and anxiety and traumatic stress that are in society today. I've been watching interviews with you, watching talks that you've given, and you've talked about the traumatic stress of living in a covid world, living in a Donald Trump world. Are depression and anxiety rational responses to the world that we inhabit right now?

[00:06:13] **Roxane Gay:** 1000%. When you look at the things going on in the world now and always, they can be pretty horrific. And if you've already been traumatized, if you are already—you know—depressed or stressed out, that only exacerbates those conditions when you think about the precarity that so many people around the world are living in. And if you are coming to current events from a place of sound mind and body. Which, I mean, who? (*Chuckles.*) These things can be very alarming, and it makes perfect sense, again, that people would be traumatized and would succumb to—not succumb but would experience depression and would experience anxiety and/or a combination of all kinds of mental health challenges.

[00:07:12] **John Moe:** Yeah. I mean, that's something that I often struggle with is can we see these as illnesses? Can we see these as disorders? Or you know, when we think of a mental illness as being a sort of warping of reality or a sort of skewed look at reality, is that really the case when we're confronted with horrors like 1,000,000+ Americans dead from covid?

[00:07:40] **Roxane Gay:** I personally think that our response is completely normal and fine. And I don't know that I would categorize it as mental illness, but not because there's a stigma. And not to—I mean, if some people feel like it's mental illness, I totally respect that, but I just think we're all being pretty rational right now when saying this is terrible, and this is affecting me and my outlook. This is affecting my spirit, my willingness to be awake.

[00:08:10] **John Moe:** Where do you see—where do you see the trauma in our society right now as a result of—let's say, of the covid pandemic?

[00:08:21] **Roxane Gay:** I don't know that many people have processed that trauma. More than 1,000,000 people in this country alone died. And we've never had much of a cultural space to address that. Biden did this one ceremony. I think it was about a year ago with like a bunch of candles. And I think Kamala Harris was there too, Vice President Kamala Harris. And that was kind of it. And there are some communities, of course, that are doing more that are, you know, trying to sit with the sorrow, the grief, and the anger over an inadequate response and at times a deeply flawed response to covid—and the fact that it's still ongoing, actually. And for people who are immunocompromised, they feel left behind.

So, how do we grapple with that? So many people are completely disinterested in that conversation. And I think that's to our detriment collectively.

[00:09:23] **John Moe:** Yeah, I mean, I see reports—I follow mental health stories for the newsletter that our show puts out. And I see a lot of reports on medical personnel, especially—the rates at which they are reporting mental health crises and problems just in their daily work is exponentially larger than even the general public. Which, you know, the numbers are pretty high there as well. Where do you think this is going then, for our society in dealing with the aftermath of covid?

[00:10:01] **Roxane Gay:** I'm not sure, but I don't think it's going anywhere good. I think that this is going to set a precedent for the next pandemic—and there will be one—where some people will be living in a pandemic, and other people will be living in denial, and we will experience another round of just mass death. And we'll continue—I think many of us will continue to harden and feel less and less and less. Because that's the only way to cope with this kind of loss.

[00:10:39] **John Moe:** And then—you've talked about covid. You've talked about the, about Donald Trump as well. And that's a case where there was what was, for many people, a very traumatic period in our history that is now threatening to return. You know, that it is not just a matter—you know, covid is... covid is not over, of course. But the height of the pandemic is something that we look back as an era, but there is the possibility of a future Donald Trump era. What do you think—what do you think that is—? I mean, first of all, what's that doing for you?

[00:11:19] **Roxane Gay:** Well, I'm simply staggered by the fact that here we are again, and that not only is Trump running and that there are no laws to prevent that—despite the 91 indictments that he's facing, the 91 counts that he's facing—but that he's a viable candidate in many states and that he's leading in some states. Now, it's too early to poll, and pollsters know that, and they do it anyway. And then that shifts the conversation in ways that are completely unproductive. But we also can't deny that he's a very real threat. And after what he did the first time, it's really frustrating to see so many people talking about how they don't feel inclined to vote in 2024.

And I get why, in some cases. But the idea that not voting would somehow send a message to make the Democrats act better when what that would actually do is put Donald Trump and the Republicans in power—and they would certainly be worse. It's just horrifying. And I really struggle with it, while also understanding that we all have a right to do as we choose with our votes. No one is obligated to vote for one party or the other, no matter what. And that people do deserve better choices. We deserve better than bad or worse.

[00:12:44] **John Moe:** You know, not to return to trauma too much, but it is a subject that you've talked about quite a bit, and it's of very much interest to me and to our show. Do you think that—do you see—in the electorate and in the sort of political coverage, do you see a post traumatic response to the first Trump administration that's still out there?

[00:13:09] **Roxane Gay:** I don't know that I see a post traumatic response, but what I do see is—I remember in the second year after Trump was—after Biden was elected, a lot of journalists of all political persuasions were saying that they missed the Trump administration, because there was always something sort of... not exciting, but just there was always something sort of wild to report on. And the Biden administration has been relatively sedate, because Joe Biden's a career politician. He's a centrist, and he does most of what he does quietly. And so, I can see why people wouldn't find that exciting, but I think that's a trauma response. Because when you're used to always sort of being at a 10 and then you have to function at a 3, you miss the sort of—you get accustomed to that sort of energy of the 10, the constant buzzing. And then it goes away, and what do you do?

And so, I feel like that is 100% not only a trauma response, but also just a... sort of greed response. Like, how much more do you want? And also, I think it has forced people to overlook the very real things that Joe Biden has done that are very good. And he's done them quietly. But they're exciting things. The prescription drug caps. That's actually a really big deal! And that is exciting, because medicine is so extraordinarily expensive. But nobody cares, because it's not scandalous.

[00:14:48] **Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

[00:14:51] **John Moe:** More with Roxane Gay, including boundaries, and how to have them, just ahead.

(Music ends.)

[00:15:02] **Transition:** Relaxed acoustic guitar.

[00:15:05] **John Moe:** Back with writer Roxane Gay.

Have we always—when you consider American history, when you consider the racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia that's endemic to the American power structure, have we always been in a traumatic situation in this country? And we're just sometimes—with modern vocabulary—thinking about it more in recent years?

[00:15:33] **Roxane Gay:** I don't know. I think some people—I think people of color, Black people in this country have been functioning from a place of trauma for 200 years. I would say the same for almost any other minority. I think the queer community has been acting from a place of trauma, especially as we continue to grapple with the AIDS pandemic and what it did—the way it decimated the gay community. And now there are very few gay elders. So, I think it just depends on who you are and your subject position and your relationship to power.

[00:16:11] **John Moe:** Well, what about who you are and your position and your relationship to power?

[00:16:16] **Roxane Gay:** Well, you know. I mean, like everyone, I have many privileges. And there are also ways in which I'm marginalized, so it's always a balancing act. I don't think that my life is entirely shaped by trauma. For the most part, especially now, I live a pretty good life. And I'm even more mindful of that pretty good life, because of the challenges that I've experienced. I know what the other side looks like, and so I'm able to appreciate bounty all the more.

[00:16:50] **John Moe:** How do you do that?

[00:16:53] **Roxane Gay:** I try to just remind myself of all of the privileges that I get to enjoy and that—you know, even like sometimes I feel like, “Oh my god, I'm having a terrible day. Everything is terrible.” But I know that not everything is terrible. For one, I'm in the United States, so I am not living under an iron dome, and I'm not living in Gaza. I'm not living in Sudan, where millions of people are currently being displaced. So. It's not that our problems don't matter, but I am able to put them in perspective.

[00:17:26] **John Moe:** Okay. Is that a thing that you can do unconsciously, or does that require conscious effort?

[00:17:34] **Roxane Gay:** Depends on the day. (*Chuckles.*) But most of the time, it does require conscious effort.

[00:17:39] **John Moe:** Okay. What form does that take, that conscious effort?

[00:17:45] **Roxane Gay:** Just reminding myself like, oftentimes—you know, I'm naturally prone to depression, so it doesn't take much for me to sink into a dark and morose place. And I have to often just remind myself, yes, okay, you're feeling this way. It's fine. Acknowledge it, feel it, but also know it's okay. There are—you know, you have resources. You have an amazing, you know, partner. I have a therapist. I have a shrink. I have access to medication. I

have health insurance. And so, I am most of the time able to remind myself of all these tools at my disposal to help me through and also recognize that I live a life of relative comfort and safety.

[00:18:35] **John Moe:** You say that you've dealt with depression for a long time. When did that first come into your life?

[00:18:41] **Roxane Gay:** I think it—oh, god, when I was 12. (*Chuckles.*) But you know, I started actively allowing myself to be treated for depression in my early 20s, I would say.

[00:18:54] **John Moe:** What happened in your early 20s then?

[00:18:58] **Roxane Gay:** Well, I was on my own for the first time and able to—you know, I come from a culture that—it's not that there's stigma around mental health. It's just not discussed. And antidepressants and the things like that are not encouraged. They're always sort of looked down on like you don't need that. (*Chuckling.*) The hell I don't! It was when I was on my own and able to access that kind of healthcare without having to deal with the pressure of like, “What will my parents think?” that I was able to, you know, finally get on Prozac for a long time. And then I went off it.

[00:19:38] **John Moe:** Are you off it now?

[00:19:40] **Roxane Gay:** Yeah, I'm off it and onto something different. (*Laughs.*) I'm on Wellbutrin now.

[00:19:43] **John Moe:** You're on Wellbutrin. Alright. So, when you were on your own and decided to deal with your mental health in a more active way, was that a combination of meds and talk therapy?

[00:19:58] **Roxane Gay:** Off and on. You know, it just depended on my health insurance situation. There were many years where I didn't have health insurance, and I couldn't afford therapy, and sometimes I couldn't afford the medication or the shrink appointment to get the medication to get the prescription. So, it really just depended on financial circumstances throughout my 20s and early 30s. And then my life stabilized in my mid-30s, and I had fairly consistent access to healthcare. And from then on, yes. Therapy often.

[00:20:30] **John Moe:** Yeah. What—I mean, depression is something that takes a lot of different forms for a lot of different people. How did it manifest or how does it manifest for you?

[00:20:42] **Roxane Gay:** It depends. I mean, it starts with just anhedonia and not really caring about anything, not wanting to do anything, not wanting to wake up. And then insomnia, oddly enough. And then, you know, I tend to just feel very dark about the state of the world, dark about my place in it. And you know, I always have to figure out, okay, how am I going to get myself out of this? And fortunately, when I've been at particularly low places, I've somehow been able to ask for help and say, “You know, I am not in a good way.”

[00:21:22] **John Moe:** You strike me as someone who's pretty prolific in terms—you know, in terms of the output that you have. You've got a lot of—you've published a lot of books. You are overseeing imprints. You're, I see you a lot. Do you separate your professional life from your personal mental health life when you're working on these things? Can you say, “Hey, I'm having a rough spot, but I can still pound out 5,000 words today”?

[00:21:53] **Roxane Gay:** Sometimes. Sometimes I'm able to separate it. It's been harder and harder, (*chuckles*) but I was much younger. I could separate it and just get things done. And I still clearly get things done, but it's harder to say, “Alright, we'll have to work on the feelings later. You have to meet this deadline.” And so, it's much more challenging now, and I'm not sure why. Probably because I'm older and I think I have more of an understanding that the world won't fall apart if I'm not constantly working and that sometimes I do need to step away.

[00:22:33] **John Moe:** Did you have to work at maintaining a creative practice when the world was falling apart and you do fall into a morose place?

[00:22:41] **Roxane Gay:** Yes. I mean, I always have to work at it, but sometimes it was a welcome distraction. Sometimes it was an escape, and I appreciated that, you know? Like, during my more prolific years, it really was an escape. I've often said in conversation and interviews that writing and the reason I'm so prolific is oftentimes it's a form of self-medication. Because it's a distraction. I can lose myself in the words. I can lose myself in the lives of others. And therefore, I don't have to worry about mine—or not necessarily worry; I don't have to dwell on mine.

[00:23:18] **John Moe:** Hm. Is it a form of processing then, or is it a form of just escapism?

[00:23:24] **Roxane Gay:** Escapism.

[00:23:25] **John Moe:** Okay, okay. (*Chuckles.*) In your book, in *Opinions*, are there parts of it where you look back now and say, “Oh, I was way ahead of the curve on that. I was prescient in this statement and the reality of that bore itself out later.”—did you nail something in advance?

[00:23:51] **Roxane Gay:** Nothing specific comes to mind, but I feel like I did a few times. Like, I feel like I was ahead of the curve on a few things. I feel like I was ahead of the curve on the art vs. artist conversation. You know, there have been over the years—especially in recent years—many debates about can we love the art despite the artist being, you know, profoundly flawed? And I mean, of course, do what you want. It's a free country, but I've long said that I don't believe that we should valorize art over humanity. And there are plenty of flawed artists. It's not about judging people and their personal conduct. But I don't know that it's all that hard to denounce Bill Cosby and suggest that his art does not cancel out his egregious behavior.

[00:24:39] **John Moe:** I want to return and—you know, I apologize for jumping all over the place, but so many questions keep occurring to me. When we talked earlier about having the gumption, having the nerve to go out online and offer opinions, you mentioned that you have

a very clear set of boundaries that you work within. First of all, could you share what those boundaries are?

[00:25:04] **Roxane Gay:** It just depends. But I have boundaries over which parts of my personal life I'll discuss and the depth or detail in which I'll discuss my personal life. I tend to write about my family in broader strokes, because my parents in particular are very private, as are my brothers—or my brother. My boundaries are mostly about protecting the people in my life and also protecting myself. And so, if I'm putting something on the page, it's something I can tolerate other people criticizing, pulling apart, et cetera. And if I don't, it's because I don't have the tolerance for that.

[00:25:47] **John Moe:** Are there—I mean, the internet in particular is just riddled with trolls, just overwhelmed with trolls. Are there criticisms that you get a lot that are pretty easy to just let bounce off of you?

[00:26:03] **Roxane Gay:** Well, I don't know that they bounce off of me, but you know, I receive a lot of criticism about my appearance, about my size, about—you know, about my people. Oftentimes I'm accused of being too centrist even though I don't know that that's true. Yeah, I mean, it's just—the list is very long.

[00:26:24] **John Moe:** And those—do the comments about your appearance, about your size—have you been hearing that long enough that those just don't bother you anymore?

[00:26:35] **Roxane Gay:** No, they always bother me. I don't know that there'll ever be a time that they don't. I mean, how could they not? You know, when people are criticizing who you are, the very body that you live in, it can be devastating.

[00:26:50] **John Moe:** Yeah. So, how do you not get devastated?

[00:26:55] **Roxane Gay:** Uh, I don't. I just get devastated. (*Chuckles.*)

[00:26:58] **John Moe:** So, I mean, based on how famous you are and how prolific you are, you must then get devastated a lot.

[00:27:06] **Roxane Gay:** I do. I do. But I try to remind myself that, you know, they're not right. Just because they say—just because a stranger says something, it doesn't actually make them right. And so, I have to remind myself of that actively. And fortunately, I have a very supportive spouse who is always reminding me like that's not accurate. And you don't actually have to believe what other people say about you.

[00:27:35] **John Moe:** You've developed this capacity to not suffer fools gladly and to fire back when warranted. And I wonder how that was developed and how you built up that strength.

[00:27:51] **Roxane Gay:** Well, I think that there's a lot of—I don't know about safety, but when it involves words and typing, I'm able to say exactly what I want, how I want, when I want. I do not have that capacity face to face. I'm the same person, but I'm very shy in my

day-to-day life. So, online, I've just always felt like whatever. I can say whatever. And I've tolerated a lot of bullying in my life. And on the internet, I'm just not going to do it. I'm just not. And so, from an early time online, I—you know, if someone came at me, I was going to come right back. If they had a knife, I was going to bring two. And I've stepped away from that in recent years, because I'm married to someone who's not very online. (*Chuckles.*) And when you start to talk to someone who's not very online about insane online things, you start to hear yourself, and you're like, “Okay, this is not rational, and I should stop.”

And my wife, Debbie, often asks, “Why are you engaging?” And I've really sat with that question like why am I engaging? You know, and sometimes it's just fun. Trolls are really dumb. They're shallow. They're just murky pools of water at curbs in New York City, full of disgusting things. And so, it's really easy, because they're dumb. Their logic is illogical. They often make really ridiculous spelling errors. And so, there are so many things that you can easily pull apart, and it's fun. And you know, people enjoy it. And you know, if you're going to call me fat and you have your user pickup, and you are not an Adonis. Well. Well! Let's talk about that, Steve.

[00:29:39] **John Moe:** (*Chuckling.*) They're always named Steve, aren't they?

[00:29:39] **Roxane Gay:** I mean, there's so many Steves. Steve, Bob, John. Not you, John, but—(*laughs*).

(*John thanks her.*)

You know, I just—you know, it just—for me, it was always I'm not going to be bullied here. I'm just not. And so.

[00:30:00] **John Moe:** Do you think—I mean, I'm old enough to remember an internet where if you wanted to express yourself online, you had to either sell someone on the idea of publishing you or know HTML coding yourself. There wasn't this this—I mean, aside from some message boards, it just wasn't as much of a thing. Is it a net positive, the total democratization of opinions online? Is it good for us ultimately?

[00:30:30] **Roxane Gay:** No. (*Laughs.*) Yes, I think ultimately it is, but... when you have democratization, you have to take the bad with the good. You have to recognize that not everyone is going to use that democracy in ways that you approve of. And it becomes kind of a free for all. I think we went well past democracy into anarchy now. But how do you put guardrails on something like this? I don't know, because one person's guardrails are another person's censorship.

[00:30:58] **John Moe:** I'm thinking of lessons that the rest of us can gain from you, because you do—your platform for opinions is larger than certainly anybody that I encounter on a day-to-day basis. Your fame is greater. And I think the animosity that you probably get for expressing your opinions is greater than most of us ever have to deal with.

So, what have you learned about the cost—I don't want to say the price, but maybe the cost of sharing your opinion? What wisdom have you gathered about navigating your opinions in this world that you can share with the rest of us?

[00:31:45] **Roxane Gay:** I don't know. One thing I know I've learned is that people really resent when you have opinions, especially if you're a woman, if you're a Black woman. If you're a fat, Black, queer woman, you know, people don't want to hear your opinions. They don't think you deserve a platform. They don't think you should use your voice. They prefer you to be silent and to not complain. But I'm not actually complaining. I'm pointing out injustices or things that are unfair, things that are, in my opinion, wrong. And frankly, the fact that it makes so many people angry only emboldens me and makes me think that perhaps I'm on the right track.

[00:32:25] **John Moe:** (*Chuckles.*) You can draw some strength from that.

(*Roxane confirms.*)

[00:32:28] **Transition:** Relaxed acoustic guitar.

[00:32:29] **John Moe:** The book is *Opinions: A Decade of Arguments, Criticism, and Minding Other People's Business*. Roxane Gay, thank you so much.

(*Roxane thanks him.*)

Do I still need to say that Roxane Gay's book, *Opinions*, is available wherever books are sold? We know this about books by now. Yes, that you can buy them where they are sold. You can find more of Roxane at RoxaneGay.com. Roxane is spelled with one N. You can also find her using Google on the internet. Laura House with a meditation moment after the break.

[00:33:04] **Transition:** Peaceful acoustic guitar.

[00:33:07] **John Moe:** And it's time to slow things down a little bit, maybe get a little centered, maybe remember that we are animals who breathe.

(*Laura laughs.*)

Our friend, Laura House, is here with us for a meditation moment. Hi, Laura.

[00:33:19] **Laura House:** Hello!

[00:33:20] **John Moe:** It's true! We breathe!

[00:33:21] **Laura House:** And we're animals in pants.

[00:33:24] **John Moe:** We are beasts in pants who breathe.

[00:33:28] **Laura House:** (*Laughs.*) It is. And on its—there's so many things that are said about meditation and can be said about meditation. And you know, it can certainly take on a lot of, you know, scholarship. But really at its core, it's exactly what you said. Like, let's just remember. So, we'll just take a few moments. You know, I love that you carve this time out at the end of some of your shows to just like—let's just pull the car of life over. Carve out—

[00:34:00] **John Moe:** Yes, away from those thoughts that are just clanging around all the time and just take a little break.

[00:34:07] **Laura House:** They're not helping. They're hounding! (*Laughs.*) So, good. So, yeah, it's very easy if you can get where you can relax and close your eyes safely. So, drivers do this later.

And just close your eyes. (*Beat.*) And really just notice exactly what you said. We're animals that are breathing. Notice your breath, maybe for the first time today or this week or this decade, sort of from inside your mind. Just notice it, give it some attention.

(*Pause.*)

You may also notice that your breath starts to slow down, and your body starts to relax. You're unclenching your hands and maybe even your feet. (*Beat.*) And thoughts will come up, and when they come up just redirect to like your breath and your body.

(*Long pause.*)

You can go ahead and open your eyes. Let yourself come out of it.

[00:35:48] **John Moe:** You know, it's such a treat to have somebody tell me to do those things that you tell me to do.

(*Laura laughs.*)

Because a lot of it—like, I know to breathe, and I know to close my eyes. Like, I could coach myself through that, but just being told that takes so much away that need for the self-initiative, and you can just relax into it. It's really nice.

[00:36:11] **Laura House:** Yeah. That's what I love about teaching meditation is it is kind of a coach-y—like, we could work out too, right? But you do it so much better when there's a personal trainer, when there's someone to go, “Well, now do this.” And you're like, oh, I mean, I guess it would have occurred to me to do that. But yeah, I like the message of, you know what? You actually do have a couple of minutes to let go.

[00:36:34] **John Moe:** Yes, nice. It's—and again, you know, don't do it while driving. Or at least pull over.

[00:36:42] **Laura House:** Yeah, that's not the time. (*Laughs.*)

[00:36:45] **John Moe:** Laura House can be found online at LauraHouse.com. She can be found here on the Maximum Fun Network on the *Tiny Victories* podcast with Annabelle Gurwitch.

Laura House, thanks!

[00:36:56] **Laura House:** Thank you!

[00:36:57] **Music:** “Building Wings” by Rhett Miller, an up-tempo acoustic guitar song. The music continues quietly under the dialogue.

[00:37:00] **John Moe:** *Depresh Mode* exists because people support it financially. If people stop supporting it, it goes away. Let's not make it go away. We need to hear from you. If you've already donated to the show, thank you so much. You're getting it out there into the world where it can help people. If you have yet to donate, don't worry! It's easy to do. Just go to MaximumFun.org/join, MaximumFun.org/join. Find a level that works for you, select *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows, and you're on your way.

Hey, the holidays are just around the corner, so you probably have some shopping to do. Consider the MaxFun merch store. All sorts of merchandise for all the MaxFun shows, including *Depresh Mode*. We have I'm Glad You're Here mugs and I'm Glad You're Here shirts. We've got *Depresh Mode* sweatpants. We've got everything for everybody on your list, I promise! (*Chuckling.*) Everyone will be completely satisfied by *Depresh Mode* merchandise. Really, honestly, it's true. Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write rave reviews. That helps get the show out into the world.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline can be reached in the United States by calling or texting 988. It's free; it's available 24/7.

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 there about the show and about people in general. Our *Depresh Mode* newsletter is on Substack, search that up. I'm on Twitter and Instagram @JohnMoe. Our electric mail address is DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org.

Hi, credits listeners. Today I had a business meeting over a Zoom call. So, I wore a smart looking button up collared shirt and, hidden from view, pajama bottoms. And I wondered what is even happening anymore in general? *Depresh Mode* is made possible by your contributions. Our production team includes Raghu Manavalan, Gabe Mara, Kevin Ferguson, and me. We get booking help from Mara Davis. Rhett Miller wrote and performed our theme song, “Building Wings”. *Depresh Mode* is a production of Maximum Fun and Poputchik. I'm John Moe. Bye now!

[00:39:05] **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

[00:39:44] **Melissa:** Hi, this is Melissa from Missouri, and I just wanna say hey to all my fellow Preshies. And I want you to know that I love you, and I appreciate you all.

(Music fades out.)

[00:40:00] **Sound Effect:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

[00:40:01] **Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

[00:40:02] **Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

[00:40:04] **Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

[00:40:05] **Speaker 4:** Supported—

[00:40:06] **Speaker 5:** —directly—

[00:40:07] **Speaker 6:** —by you!