

[00:00:00]

**John Moe:** There was an article, opinion piece, in the *New York Times*. It was on New Year's Day, and it caught our attention here at the show. The author of the piece, Adam Grant, talked about how people thousands of miles away from the Middle East, say in America, are managing or attempting to manage their relationship to the horrific events that are happening in Israel and Gaza, and how a lot of people are just kind of psychologically detaching. That's their way of managing it. They're just cutting themselves off. Adam Grant says it comes down to what psychologists call empathic distress, hurting for others, he says, while feeling unable to help. He says, quote, "Empathic distress explains why many people have checked out in the wake of these tragedies. The small gestures they could make seem like an exercise in futility. Giving to charity feels like a drop in the ocean. Posting on social media is poking a hornet's nest. Having concluded that nothing they do will make a difference, they start to become indifferent." Unquote.

What helps, he says, is not empathy, not feeling all the anguish of others. What helps is compassion, recognizing that others are suffering and being present for them. Well, we'll try. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** I think being compassionate, being present, is a great idea. I also think it requires some careful attention. Like, if we're not going to become indifferent, if we are to be present, that means our shields have to be down to some extent. We're looking the world in the eye. And that can be a lot these days. I've been thinking about how we, who are not in the Middle East, deal with the grief of that situation. And I've been thinking about how we attempt to deal with the shared trauma and grief of the 1.17 million deaths from covid in the United States. Big events. Maybe I should talk to someone about this.

So, I called up Megan Devine, who knows a lot about grief and has tremendous insights on the subject. Megan is a therapist in Los Angeles. She's the author of *It's Okay That You're Not Okay: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand*, and she's the host of the podcast *It's Okay That You're Not Okay*.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Megan Devine, welcome back to *Depresh Mode*.

**Megan Devine:** Thank you. It's always a joy to come back.

**John Moe:** I reached out to you about some of the things that we're all dealing with, as souls on earth—dealing with trying to take in what's happening in the Middle East, still trying to make sense of what happened with covid, and all the lives lost there. And you responded, "Yes, I've been talking about broader grief for a while now." And that term, broader grief, kind of stuck with me. How would you describe broader grief?

**Megan Devine:** Hmm. It's interesting to hear that that stuck with you, because I think that was probably the one of the first times I used that term. I love to hear what really sticks with people. And I think broader grief—you know, we have this idea that grief is a very narrow set of circumstances that happened directly to you, right? Like somebody dies or somebody gets really sick, and we understand sort of grief in that context. But I remember this during covid, that people were messaging me and coming to me and saying, “I don't feel like I have a right to be grieving right now, because nobody died.” And I think that definition of grief does us such a disservice.

There is grief stitched into every day. And I don't mean that as a downer in any way, but there is grief stitched into every day. And grief is anytime something has not gone the way that we want it to or that we long for it to. So, that can be like your ordinary, everyday Tuesday, where your expectations for that day sort of went off the rails and you're upset about the loss of the hours. Whatever, right? Like, that seems to be such a minimal thing, but we have an emotional response to that stuff sometimes. Right? So, again, going back to covid—like, people were grieving the loss of routine, grieving the loss of their workplace community, grieving the loss of unfettered time to focus on what they wanted to focus on, because they now had to worry about homeschooling or, you know, not dying, all of these things. And owning that as grief, it's like it—it legitimizes in a way that being human is hard.

[00:05:00]

And that things affect us, and it is not only okay to be affected but expected that we're affected. So, broader grief for me is how difficult it is to be human and alive sometimes, and it is okay to be impacted by this world, even with small things.

**John Moe:** It's okay, but it's a lot of work also. It's taxing, I should say, more than work. It can take a lot out of you. So, when we are moving through a world with covid, with the Middle East, with—you know—this actual loss of life that that's happening, we want to stay human. We want to stay—you know, we want to care. But I feel like I can't even comprehend the loss of life that we've been witnessing over the past few years in these situations that I've been talking about. So, how—set me straight. How can I function in a world and be empathetic but also not get crushed beneath the weight of it all?

**Megan Devine:** Okay. First, this is not a failure in you. We were not meant to withstand 24/7 suffering of the entire world. We weren't—our nervous systems aren't built for that. Our minds aren't built for that. Our hearts aren't built for that. Our ability to stay present and pay attention and care—we weren't built for this kind of volume. So, I hear a lot of people sort of echoing what you just said, which is—I'm gonna put words in your mouth, so you correct me if I'm wrong here. But like, “I'm failing to pay attention to the things that I feel like need to be paid attention to.” Really bad grammar there, but who cares? That feeling of these things are so important, and I want to pay attention. I don't want to close my eyes. I want to feel like I'm paying attention to the suffering of the world.

And it's not just new stuff coming up, right? Like, sometimes people get really upset. Like, if you're posting about Israel and Gaza, they're like, “What about Sudan? Like, haven't you had any feelings about this one? Like, why are you late to this empathy party or this paying attention party?” And for me, this fits so snugly and so beautifully in the sort of wheelhouse

of grief. Because our nervous systems, our hearts, our minds are responding the ways that they are built to—which is to feel with others and to care about others. And one, as I said, we're not used to it at this scale, at this volume. And two, we have been trained in so many different ways to fix pain when we see it.

This is not something that is fixable on an individual “you got three hours today; what are you going to do?” level. And what I see happening a lot is—not consciously, but like we see pain and suffering in someone else. We read it, we see it, we watch it—endlessly scrolling through Instagram. And it lights up those circuits of caring, that wanting to make it stop, wanting to fix it. And we also know on some other level that we can't fix it. And that dissonance between the desperate need to make suffering stop and the logical “there is no action I can take personally right now to make this stop”—the collision of those two is helplessness.

And when we're feeling helpless, it's sort of like we just start spinning out. Like, what do you mean you didn't post about this today? Don't you know that people are dying? Like, all of that stuff where we attack each other for not caring enough. That is, to me, an expression of helplessness. It's an expression of how small we feel in the face of any kind of pain. Right? How dare you not care about this the way that I do? So, on top of witnessing suffering, we add that extra layer of pressure, of “you're not doing enough, you're not doing enough, you're not doing enough”. And certainly, if you're on social media, you're getting messages back from people. “Why haven't you done this? Why haven't you taken action? Why don't you care?” Right? And that is just—it's toxic, and it's impossible, right? Helplessness on an individual level and helplessness on a global level makes us nutz!

[00:10:00]

**John Moe:** (*Chuckles.*) That's the official, clinical word for it?

**Megan Devine:** That is the clinical term!

**John Moe:** Okay. The article that I've been looking at, Adam Grant writing in the *New York Times* referred to this condition—which I think is close to what you're describing as empathic distress, hurting for others while feeling unable to help. He recommends taking a—*noting* a difference between empathy and compassion—between, you know, trying to steer away from the total empathetic response of feeling everything, feeling all the suffering that all the people who are suffering are feeling, and moving towards compassion. Would you recommend the same?

**Megan Devine:** Yes. That article is so well done. It's so well done. I have a dorky habit of cheering out loud when I read something awesome. And I cheered out loud several times during that piece. So, Adam, if you're listening, it was awesome. Several things. One, (*sighs*) it is so easy to fry your own circuits, right? We were talking about this—like, paying attention to the pain of the world will fry you if you feel like you must take action to stop it. Which is, again, like part of our instincts, part of our human instincts. We see pain, and we want it to stop. And that stoppage of pain is not always possible. So, the answer here is not, “Well, you figure out a way to solve it.” The answer here is: can you notice when you're witnessing suffering, that impulse to jump in and fix it and the helplessness that you feel, and

you start to get all amped up and your nervous system goes into overdrive, and you start (*pants frantically*). Right? That is your cue to remind yourself that you're human, to take a step back, and to acknowledge witnessing the suffering of others is really hard, especially when I feel powerless and helpless.

Just doing that gives you that beat so that you don't accidentally weaponize your feelings of helplessness by like, "I know what I'll do! I need to take action. I'm going to go on social media, and I'm going to attack somebody who I don't feel like is posting the correct way or in the correct cadence or correct their views and educate people and get them to care." Like, it's not that talking about this stuff in the public forum with social media is wrong. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about can we recognize when we're getting activated and take a step back and root into, "Oh, I am human, and this is hard to witness, and it makes me feel helpless or whatever. What is the best action for me right now in this helplessness?" Right?

So, I love that—recognizing the amp up and taking a step backwards. That's good for any kind of situation, right? Like, recognize when you're doing it. This is something that I talk about a lot with individual grief, right? Like, we don't like to see pain of any kind on a big scale or a small scale. So, you know, if you know that your friend's husband just died, the caring human part of you is like I want to fix this. I want to make this better. I want to make them stop feeling sad or angry or whatever. So, I'm going to go in, and I'm going to do something about it. Right? That impulse to fix things is part of us. And in a way, it's really beautiful. It's just when we try to fix something that doesn't have a solution, that's where things get really sideways.

And Adam brings this up really beautifully in that article that—you know, I was just going to quote myself, right? Like, there's something that I've said multiple times. It's like some things cannot be fixed, right? They can only be tended. And Adam takes that and basically says some things cannot be fixed and—I'm putting words into his mouth—for the things that can't be fixed, connection is the medicine. Right? I love that he throws acknowledgement in there, because acknowledgement is my favorite superpower. If something is distressing, if you care about something personally, communally, globally—acknowledging it, not trying to erase it, not trying to hit it with a superficial fix. Any of these things like looking at it and saying, "This is horrible."

**John Moe:** Acknowledging it to yourself or to the world or where?

**Megan Devine:** A lot of places, right? Like, I think it depends on the situation. One, I think acknowledging to yourself, right? Like, this is horrendous. I'm having a response to this. Right? There. Also, Adam gives the example in that article that he was feeling really twisted up around all of this stuff.

[00:15:00]

And an email from a friend of his—I think it was an email. An email from his friend of his came in and said, "This is horrible, and I don't have any answers. And I just want you to know that I love you, and I love your family, and I'm here." Right? That acknowledgement of there is something big going on, and I know that I can't fix this, and I will not let you be alone

in this. Right? That I see you, and that I wonder about what this is like for you. Now, that is person to person, right? And when we see something like Sudan or Ukraine or Iran or Gaza or Israel, remembering that we aren't built to absorb all of those things all at the same time and have skilled responses to all of them but to be able to say, "There is pain in this world that some are causing to others, and I feel that. What are ways that I might act on this?" Right?

Just from that position of slow down, (*chuckles*) recognize your feelings of helplessness, feelings of powerlessness. Because honestly, the forces of violence in so many ways are big. They are big. Right? It is so easy to feel powerless, helpless, small, useless, all of these things. And again, if we act from that place of feeling helpless and powerless, we will not be greatly skilled at this stuff, and we might end up causing relational damage in our smaller circles—which is not what we want—and certainly stressing ourselves out. But to be able to say, "There is pain in this world, and I would like to take action. What would be the most helpful?" Right? And sometimes the answer to that is calling your representatives. It is shows of force in the people-power sort of way. Like, I'm going to attend a rally, because we know that public pressure changes policy. Those are all great options.

And sometimes—this is sort of where I go with all of this stuff is what causes the suffering of the world? What causes the suffering of the world is intimate violence. Right? Like person-to-person violence, person-to-person breakdowns of communication, shit running downhill basically. Right? So, one of the things that I can do is tend to the close things around me with kindness and with skill, so that I'm not adding to the shit running downhill. It seems so stupid, and it seems so small, and how dare you address the pain of the world by suggesting kindness and connection with the people around you?! But honestly, one, it is massively powerful. And two, does being amped up to 167, flailing around like a whirlwind help anything?

**John Moe:** Not usually.

**Megan Devine:** Not usually. And if what you're feeling is helplessness, let's shrink the world down to what is yours to tend and to connect to. And this means being able to connect in our helplessness. I think one of the things that I've been really interested in for the last couple of years is the concept of hope and do we need it? And if we do, what does that mean? And it's just been really fascinating to talk to people about hope. Hope, however you define it, isn't this passive, squishy, "I'll just wait for good things to happen if I think the right thoughts" kind of thing. It really is being able to talk to the people you love around feeling hopeless. About feeling powerless.

Like, we do this thing, right? Like, if I—you wouldn't do it to me, but if I came to you and I said, "I'm feeling really hopeless," the temptation is to be like, no, there's all these reasons for hope! These things are—like, look at the progress we've made over the last couple of— Right? We have this impulse to talk somebody out of their challenging feelings.

**John Moe:** Right. Tell them they're wrong.

**Megan Devine:** Tell them they're wrong, right? There's no reason to feel hopeless. Like, this, this, and this. And like, what happens then is that people hide their hopelessness the same way that they hide their grief.

**John Moe:** And then they put shame into it.

**Megan Devine:** And then they put shame into it. And friends, that is not going to give us the world that we all long for. You have to be willing to hear hopelessness in others and not try to fix it.

[00:20:00]

Right? We go back to one of the things that Adam said in that article about acknowledgement being good medicine—misquoting him with myself, but that's what he's talking about in that article is connection and letting things be hard and being havens for each other. Not just so that we can close our eyes when we need to close our eyes, but so that we can make thoughtful choices about what next. What next?

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** More with Megan Devine after the break.

**Transition:** Gentle, relaxed acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Back with therapist, author, podcaster Megan Devine.

On the issue of grief, it seems to me that if I lost someone close to me and just continued barging forward—take no time off work, don't even try to process it, try to just put the grief aside—that's gonna catch up with me, and it's gonna mess with me pretty bad.

*(Megan agrees.)*

And so, is there a necessary grieving that we need to be doing that we should all be conscious of on issues like the Middle East or Sudan or the 1,000,000+ lives lost in the US to covid?

**Megan Devine:** I love this question. So, first, if you pretend that you don't feel how you feel, you don't make it go away. You make it come out somewhere else sideways. Right? That's just how it goes. I do want to bring in—

**John Moe:** You're dealing with it one way or another. *(Chuckles.)*

**Megan Devine:** You are dealing with it one way or—speaking of like shit running downhill, right? Like, when you look at regimes, leaders, all of these things—this is the tiniest of sidebars, but they are products of their systems, right? They have learned dominance and destruction instead of connection and collaboration. Right? So, these are folks who never learned to deal with being human in ways that don't destroy. Yeah? So, I'm not saying that if

your dad died and you didn't take any time off of work and you didn't process it and you suppressed it that you are in the same camp here. (*Chuckling.*) So, I don't want anybody to panic about that. But my point here is that, you know, the microcosm and the macrocosm here are that you are dealing with the reality of being human, whether you do it consciously and actively or not.

I do also want to say that—because this has come up quite a number of times in some trainings that I've been doing, being a naturally sort of stoic person, like you don't cry a whole lot, does not mean you're not dealing with your grief. So, I think we can have this idea that like dealing with grief means you take six months off to go sob and cry and thrash and wail. Like, that is what's accurate or true for some people, but it's not true for everybody. So, you know, choose your own adventure here with what would tending to my grief look like. Yeah?

And I love that you asked this. Like, is there—one, is there grief here? And the answer is absolutely. And the second question is what do we do with that? One, I come back to acknowledgement as the best medicine, where we started—right?—with recognize that what you're feeling is grief. Grief for the world we wished existed and does not yet. Grief for feeling powerless and helpless. Grief that your heart and your consciousness and your conscience won't let you close your eyes for very long. And you wish you could just be like, “Yeah, whatever.” Whatever it is, like there are losses upon losses upon losses here. And what would tending to that grief look like for you? What would making space for that look like for you?

There is no one answer, but I love the question—just the action of asking yourself that question opens things up, because you're no longer trying to fight it or hide it or pretend you don't have rights to it. Right? There's this exclusionary thing that we do with ourselves and certainly with others. Like, how dare you be sad about that when I'm dealing with this over here?

[00:25:00]

That sort of line in the sand, us-and-them thing doesn't help either, right? So, recognizing that—you know, certainly coming out of high pandemic, right? Still a pandemic, still exists. Coming out of that and like—as a culture, like we just stopped talking about it. Like, we didn't—we just—do y'all—?

**John Moe:** Took off our masks and went on like nothing ever happened.

**Megan Devine:** Like nothing ever happened! And it's really interesting in this—I'm going to try to rein in my history geek sidebar here but—

**John Moe:** Please don't.

**Megan Devine:** We've done this before. Right? 1918 flu epidemic in the States that killed largely young adults of childbearing age, as they phrase it back then—or I guess still now. But it killed so many people. And also, there was a war happening at the same time. And what era do we get right after the mass death and destruction of the 1918 epidemic?

**John Moe:** Well, we get the roaring '20s briefly, and then we get the Great Depression.

**Megan Devine:** Right. We get the roaring '20s, and then we get the Great Depression. You can actually see this also in the UK. The official government response after the blitz of London was and when the war ended was nothing to see here. Nothing happened. It is your patriotic duty. This is where we get “keep calm and carry on”, which was a propaganda sign that was actually never published. But somebody found it, and they made a big thing. But the official government response to so much pain, so much suffering, was to gaslight an entire nation and say, “It is your patriotic duty to pretend nothing happened.” And you can look at the spikes in child abuse, in alcoholism, that come as a nation by pretending nothing ever happened. And I don't want that for us.

**Transition:** Quiet acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Back with Megan Devine in just a moment.

**Transition:** Quiet acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** We're back with the author, podcaster, and therapist Megan Devine.

So, is it on an individual level that we need to do this? I mean, if we—(*sighs*) it's this conscious acknowledgement that you talk about, and is that the way to process what's happening? Or what has happened?

**Megan Devine:** I think so. I think—you know, maybe it's just my very special circles that I run in, (*chuckles*) but like when I bring up, “Do you all think it's weird that we were all sanitizing our groceries and terrified that everybody we love could die and we didn't know how, when, or why, and then we just stopped talking about it?” Like, people are relieved. Like, it is so weird. Like, the cognitive dissonance, the gaslighting. Like—and also, covid still exists long covid is bad and you don't want it. I think it's a collective effort to tell the truth. And you know, what's interesting here is, you know, I say like, you know, let's acknowledge the grief that we feel from covid, from being alive in the world, from having unfortunate access 24/7 to every piece of suffering in the world ever and the expectation that we know what to do about it.

This doesn't mean—like, we're such a binary loving culture. Which is messed up, because binary is code for computers. Binary doesn't work in human beings. Like, it's just not—that is not how we roll in anything. But we want to make ourselves into these computers, right? Like, this or that. You are either awake to the pain in your own world and the world around you—which means you are collapsed in a corner somewhere wearing sackcloth and sobbing and writing angst filled novels about dystopian whatever—or you are able to rise above it all, positive psychology. You got this, babe! There's always hope.

Like, neither of those two options are achievable, nor are they desirable. Because both of them lie. So, when I say that taking that moment to go, “Oh. Right. I am feeling a response to this. This is my mammal nature. This is something that makes me recognize the inherent beauty and sovereignty of this person.”



[00:30:00]

“These people, this community. And that is butting up against my powerlessness. And I feel stuff around that. What do I need for myself when I feel this?”

Just that is so powerful, right? You can do this in little—like, this doesn't even have to take that long. Like, if you're scrolling through or you're, you know, talking to somebody and you like—you know, you read something about long covid, and it brings up something for you, and you notice like, oh yeah, it is really weird that we did that. Is there anything I need for myself around that to like just touch into that reality for a second and go that happened?

Yeah. So, this doesn't have to be “I must now live my life in deep sadness”. Like, that's not real and it's not sustainable. I don't know if you're familiar with Adrienne Maree Brown. She's amazing. But she really talks about joy as activism, right? That we need connection, joy, play in order to fulfill ourselves to like enjoy this world and these bodies and all of these things. But we also need that in order to sustain our gaze on the world. You cannot do pain upon pain upon pain 24/7. What are we fighting for? Right? Leaning into pleasure and connection and joy and play reminds you of what we are fighting for when we see terrible things happen and that nervous system response comes up and says, “No, you will not cause this kind of harm.” Like, what we are fighting for is the safety to play and connect and have joy and be human.

**John Moe:** I think there's some comfort. I take some comfort in thinking about grief in regard to all these issues, in regard to this world that we live in, by your characterization that you've made that grief is not a mental illness. It's not—I mean, we're a mental health program. I think grief can be mentally distressing, but it isn't a sign that something has gone wrong. It's a sign that that you have loved.

**Megan Devine:** Mm-hm. Yeah. Yeah. No matter what the APA says or the diagnosis codes say, grief is not a disorder. It's not a disease. It's not something wrong with you. I mean, we have just learned over and over and over again through books and movies, through the American Psychiatric Society, through ill-informed providers, through governments who said nothing to see here—right? We have learned, generation upon generation, that grief is a problem. It shows that you're doing it wrong. Like, you might get to be sad if your dad dies. Until the funeral, and then you have to rely on your happy memories, and they would want you to be happy and put the past behind you. And anything other than a complete return to your jolly, happy, pre-loss self is pathology. And that is cruel, and it is wrong. And that is not how humans work. Right?

I have actually seen—I mean, I've been doing this work for a long time now, and I have seen so much change. So much change. I mean, it's not better out there yet. Like, all I have to do is talk to a newly grieving person who tried to go to a therapist for some support and was like offered medication and a diagnosis code. But things are changing, right? We are starting to see pop culture address grief in ways that are more human and more real. You know, the grief lasts as long as love lasts. That's not weird, right? Your grief is a sign of your connection. And that is true on a personal level and on a global level. It's what I was saying when we started, right? That we are—as biological, neurological mammal beings—we are built to feel

with each other. Grief is part of love, and that is love for self, love for others, love for community, and love for this world. For the world we want.

**John Moe:** And how have you been holding up, Megan, with everything that's been going on?

**Megan Devine:** That's a great question! (*Chuckles.*)

**John Moe:** How are you doing?

**Megan Devine:** That is a great question. Thank you for asking that. And I am doing well, honestly.

[00:35:00]

Which I think can sort of be a taboo thing to say with the state of the world, is that you're well. But I feel good. And here's what's worked for me. I do pay attention to the pain and suffering of the world. It is literally my job to do so, and it is in my wiring as a human to do so. I stopped looking at social media as much as I was. I have specific times that I look. So, boundaries. I also know for myself the warning signs that I'm getting fried and overwhelmed and that if I keep going, I will not be better for it. Right? So, repeated application of boundaries for myself. Super helpful. So, shortening my amount of time on social media and reading news and doing that sort of stuff, recognizing my early warning signs that I'm getting overwhelmed and I'm about to be unskillful somewhere—probably with myself. Doing that.

And I had the ability to take two years—two years. (*Chuckles.*) Oh, there's a slip. Two weeks completely off at the end of the year.

(*They chuckle.*)

So, like in October I took my first vacation I've taken in 10 years. So, by vacation, I mean I didn't go somewhere pretty and work. I went somewhere pretty and didn't. Like, didn't check email, like left everything with the team, did absolutely nothing. So, I did that. And then at the end of December, I took two weeks off again and stayed home and stayed off the social media and cooked food and hung out with my friends and went to gardens and played with the dog. And honestly, that restoration and that nourishment helped me so much. It helped me so much.

And I just—it's really been surprising to me, for somebody who should—like, I know myself really well! And like, I know that all of this stuff, but it's just been really stunning to me how restorative both of those breaks were in different ways and has made me more capable of showing up skillfully with the people I love and the people I care about. And to ask myself questions about in the face of this, this, this, this, and this, what are ways that would feel effective and empowering for me to engage? And I don't actually have answers for those things yet. But I do know—here's what I do know. It is—I'm going back to the hope and hopelessness thing. I just—it's not true that I just started working on this book, but I just sold this book.

**John Moe:** Congratulations.

**Megan Devine:** Thank you. On hope and hopelessness and what it means to lose hope or to find hope. And how do we—if we need it, how do we define it and how do we use it? And it just—that in itself feels hopeful to me, for me personally. To be like can we have a bigger conversation now, finally, about how often our hearts get broken and what do we do with that and what world do we want to build together? It's not enough to say this must stop. It also has to come with that second wheel of the cart here that says this is the world that we will bring into being. Right? I just—grappling with hope and hopelessness and being a practical, logical person grappling with that and having conversations with people about that has been really beautiful and useful for me personally. So.

I also stopped drinking coffee, which is a little bit sad, 'cause I miss it very much. But the peace of being that stepped into the place of coffee, I did not expect it. But I think that has also like very, very, very much contributed to my—to the lowering of the volume of panic that runs in the background of my brain most of the time.

*(They laugh.)*

**John Moe:** Well, good. I'm proud of you for kicking the coffee too. I can't join you there, but I can admire what you're doing from afar. *(Laughs.)*

**Megan Devine:** You know, the, the saddest part of that for me is—so, I live very near a great coffee shop. And it is my dogs and my habit every morning, most every morning, to walk over there. And we use it for training.

[00:40:00]

And she's learning new skills there and all of these things. But now I'm not drinking coffee. And I don't know what to do with myself.

*(John laughs.)*

Like, we have to go. It's part of the routine. Anyway, but that is the saddest part for me is like the dog being like, "No, it's seven o'clock. We go here." And I'm like mmm, there is literally nothing there that I can get at this time of day. Sooo.

**John Moe:** So, we might just need to go somewhere else. You might need to do some retraining.

**Megan Devine:** You know what I do? I buy a bunch of gift cards when I go in. If she—like, if I really can't sway her from the training routine, I just go in and buy a gift card and like hand it to the next person in line and be like, "Have a great day." Which, you know, is a way to seed the world that I long for. Right? Like, how does your day change if somebody—how much can I swear on this show, John? I don't remember.

**John Moe:** As much as you please.

**Megan Devine:** Excellent. If somebody is a dick to you in the morning, that changes the rest of your day.

*(John agrees.)*

It does. Right? And if there is an unexpected kindness, if there is an unexpected human connection, that also has the ability to change your day. So, in a way, my inability to drink coffee and my dog's insistence that we stick with routine means that I very frequently need to be a very small agent of awesome, hopefully, in somebody's day. *(Chuckles.)*

**John Moe:** Well, Megan Devine, thank you for being an agent of awesome on our program today. Thanks so much for being with us.

**Megan Devine:** You are so welcome, anytime.

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

**John Moe:** Megan Devine can be found online at [RefugeinGrief.com](http://RefugeinGrief.com). Her show, *It's Okay That You're Not Okay*, is available wherever you get podcasts. Her book, *It's Okay That You're Not Okay*, is available where you get books.

Our show exists because of the donations of our listeners, and we need to hear from you if we haven't already. If we have heard from you, if you are already supporting the show, thank you. It's going out into the world. It's helping people. If you have not yet donated, it's easy to do. Just go to [MaximumFun.org/join](http://MaximumFun.org/join). Find a level that works for you, and then click *Depresh Mode* on the list of shows. It's just that easy. Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write rave reviews. All of 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. Free, available 24/7.

Our Instagram and Twitter are both @DepreshPod. Our *Depresh Mode* newsletter is available on Substack, search that up. I'm on Twitter [@JohnMoe](https://twitter.com/JohnMoe), Instagram [@JohnMoe](https://www.instagram.com/JohnMoe) as well. And be sure to swing by Facebook and join our Preshies group. Great discussion happening over there, sometimes about the show, sometimes about mental health. People supporting each other, giving each other ideas, commiserating. It's a great hang. Preshies on Facebook. Our electric mail address is [DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org](mailto:DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org).

Hi, credits listeners. Heavy show this week, right? Though I did like the image of the stubborn dog who keeps going to the coffee shop. *Depresh Mode* is made possible by your contributions. Our production team includes Raghu Manavalan, 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.

**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*

**Kyle:** Hi, this is Kyle from Appleton, Wisconsin, reminding you that this too shall pass.

*(Music fades out.)*

**Transition:** Cheerful ukulele chord.

**Speaker 1:** Maximum Fun.

**Speaker 2:** A worker-owned network.

**Speaker 3:** Of artist owned shows.

**Speaker 4:** Supported—

**Speaker 5:** —directly—

**Speaker 6:** —by you!