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John Moe: A note to listeners: this episode contains discussion of suicide and suicidal ideation.

You are not alone. I mean, okay, maybe you are in your house right now. I don't want to scare you by saying you're not alone. But in terms of mental health, mental wellbeing, emotional experience, whatever you're going through, whatever it is, someone else somewhere is going through something very similar. You're not the first person to deal with this either. Others have done the same. Maybe they still are. And when you know that, when you really take the opportunity to let that drill in—that we're all just out here dealing with stuff, and a lot of it is the same stuff—you realize you're not alone. You're part of a vast network. You're on a team. You're part of an army. Pick your metaphor.

It doesn't make whatever issue you're dealing with go away, mind you. But it might have an effect on the way you go about your day, the way you view the challenges ahead of you and around you. It might help. I want to help. That's why I make this show every week. It's *Depress Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: This week, someone who is pretty similar to me in a few ways, actually. He's dealt with depression, yes. And he's also the host of a mental health podcast. Don't worry. The episode isn't just me talking to myself. It's a totally different guy. Paul Gilmartin has been hosting *The Mental Illness Happy Hour* since 2011. 683 episodes. Paul and his guests talk about all manner of mental disorders and issues that can affect one's overall mental wellbeing. Sometimes the guests are famous entertainers, other times he has experts on, sometimes just friends of Paul's. He also has sections of the show where he reads responses to surveys about mental health and wellbeing, and people get pretty revealing in that section of the show.

Before he started hosting the podcast, Paul had a pretty different job as cohost of the TV show *Dinner and a Movie* on TBS. Paul and his various cohosts would show a movie interspersed with breaks guiding you through how to cook a meal that thematically fit the movie being shown. *Dinner and a Movie* ran from 1995 to 2011. And during that run, in 2003, Paul found help for his drug and alcohol addiction in the form of support groups. He has also dealt with treatment resistant depression and some other stuff that he'll get into in this interview.

Transition: Spirited guitar.

John Moe: I'm wondering, Paul, where to start with your mental health story. Do we start it in 2003, or do we start it earlier in your life?

Paul Gilmartin: I think earlier. Yeah. You know, I look back now—I used to wonder why sometimes I would lay in my bedroom and just stare at the light bulb on the ceiling and just

kind of feel—I don't know; paralyzed is too strong of a word, but like this, um... I don't know how to describe it.

One of the first albums I ever had—we had a cousin who lived with us who was 13 years older than me, and for my birthday, he would give me these amazing albums. And an album he gave me when I was 7 was *Revolver*, and I just remember playing the shit out of that album. And something about “Eleanor Rigby” and I think “For No One”—I just related to that so deeply, and I couldn't put it into words. And it's not like I was walking around as a sad, mopey kid. I think if you were to see me or interact with me, you'd be like, yeah, that's a well-adjusted kid.

And I think in a lot of ways I was. I was socially active and, you know, enjoyed a lot of things. But there was also this side—I think because there was kind of a darkness in my family. You know, untreated alcoholism. You know, my dad. But very high functioning. I didn't even know he was an alcoholic until I was 18. I'd never seen him slur his words. He never lost a job. He never got arrested. And my mom was like, “Oh yeah, he keeps vodka hidden around the house.” And I was like, woow. Kudos to you, Dad.

John Moe: How was he—how was your dad to you, through this alcoholism?

Paul Gilmartin: Distant. Distant. Never abusive, but I would say neglectful as his alcoholism progressed.

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You know, he coached little league teams. He was mostly sports was the only thing that I recall him really kind of sitting up and taking notice with. The only time I saw him kind of express joy towards me was when I pitched a game in Little League, and we beat an undefeated team. And he came leaping out of the dugout in a way that was so over the top that I remember being like embarrassed. But he came out and picked me up. And maybe that's why today—I still play hockey. And maybe that's why today—why I have difficulty not taking it personally when my team is losing, or I play badly. And I think it's one of those things where you can intellectually understand something, but something in your central nervous system is like, “Uh, we don't want this to happen! We don't want to lose!”

John Moe: So, do you think that only by doing something as heroic and as anomalous as, you know, defeating an otherwise unbeaten team—like, that's a pretty high bar to set for everything else to be a disappointment in comparison to that. That really puts you in a tight spot, really.

Paul Gilmartin: And who knows, maybe that's why I got into show business. You know, an attempt to try to be the center of attention and be spectacular and to get accolades. I'm sure that figured in there. I also loved the craft of comedy. Hearing my first George Carlin album when I was 8 was a revelation to me, because he made fun of organized religion. And being raised Catholic, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. And it was so freeing, because it just opened my mind to this whole world of questioning things and making fun of things that didn't make sense.

And then on the other hand, my mom was kind of—not kind of. Was sexually inappropriate. You know, there's a term called covert incest, where you treat your child like your spouse. And there were boundaries crossed physically, especially when she would care for my body. Things that would take me decades to kind of face and process. But I think that probably played as big of a role as my dad being checked out. I was also small for my age, wore glasses. I think depression runs in my family right along there with alcoholism and mental illness. Almost every male in my family tree is an alcoholic.

(John “wow”s.)

You know, or heavy, heavy drinker.

John Moe: Yeah. So, you had this direct trauma happening with your mom, and then you had this kind of complex trauma happening with your dad. Do you think that if—I mean, it's impossible to know, but do you think that caused a depression? Or would the depression have happened regardless?

Paul Gilmartin: That's an interesting question. And I think if those things hadn't happened, I would be president of the United States.

John Moe: *(Chuckling.)* Probably, yeah.

Paul Gilmartin: I blame them. I blame them. I don't know. I mean, it's rough being any kid. So, who knows? I mean, how many people whose lives we envy have we seen take their life? How many more need to happen for us to go “everybody's got something going on”? You may have the money thing figured out or the love life thing figured out, but there's always going to be something that you gotta carry. And to me, the biggest challenge and the thing to focus on in our life is the things that we can control and our attitude about them. You can spend your whole life wishing things were different. And if I hadn't gotten help for my depression—because it got reeeally bad. You know, self-medicating with alcohol. And it was about 2003—I started doing dinner and a movie in '95. So, it was about in the middle of the run of that show.

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And was just having to drink every night to fall asleep, was sad, was angry, was married, was a cheater. Just hated who I was, hated how I treated people, yet still didn't even really fully grasp what a dick I was.

John Moe: Or how sick you were. I mean—

(Paul agrees.)

So, what did the depression—how did it evolve? I mean, we have you laying there listening to “Eleanor Rigby”. How did that evolve, and how did the traumatic response evolve in your teens and in your 20s?

Paul Gilmartin: Weed. Weed was my first coping mechanism. Actually sex was my first coping mechanism. Obviously not, you know, like adult sex. But you know, the things that you do innocently with—you know, that boys and girls do in the neighborhood when they're kids growing up. You know. But for me, it was more than just curiosity. There was a high that I got from it. And you know, I've had therapists say, "Well, you were in a sexually charged environment with your mom. And so it's, you know, not a surprise that kind of became the thing that you would use to soothe yourself."

And so, interacting with girls, you know, and then later women was not a connective thing for me. It was a thing about control. And that would take decades for me to fully see and fully unwind. And it was very much related to needing to process the sadness and the anger around the things that my mom did. And I needed support groups and therapy to do that, because it was very confusing. But I—it's the most important work for myself personally that I've ever done. Because it was muting almost every part of my life. And you know, at its heart, it's really an intimacy disorder. It's about trust. It's about wanting to control things that you can't control. And real love and real intimacy, I discovered, involves vulnerability and the possibility that you're going to look stupid or get hurt.

But when you do find someone—whether it's platonic or romantic—and you forge, you know, either a platonic friendship or a romantic relationship, the risking things by showing your true self; being vulnerable; when somebody asks you how you're doing, saying, "You know, I'm sad. And you know, I've had a little bit of suicidal ideation, or I'm ruminating with shame about this event." It wasn't until I began to really say how I was doing that I began to feel seen. And I began to trust and not want to control. And not feel overwhelmed by learning how to set boundaries, not feeling overwhelmed by people's needs.

(Chuckles.) You know, being a people pleaser is still a challenge for me. Because—it's so childlike, but I want everybody to love me. And I want them to spread the word!

John Moe: Mm. Right, to get to people before you even meet them and have them love you too.

Paul Gilmartin: Right, and I think that's why self-deprecating humor is a tool. Because it's like, I'm gonna shit on me before you do, that way I'm in control of what a flawed person I am.

John Moe: You did standup for a long time, was that what your standup was like?

Paul Gilmartin: No. There was no vulnerability in my standup. It was—I envied people like Louie Anderson who could be so soft and vulnerable and honest. And I tried it a few times, but I look back now, and I have a really hard time listening to any of my standup. Because I just hear that wall up in my voice. I just see all the things emotionally that were going on with me that—I don't know whether the audience could sense it or not, but it... I don't know, it just kind of bums me out.

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Not that there's not material that I'm proud of. But my delivery and my inability to tolerate silence by going a long time without a punchline. Not like a self-indulgent, you know, five minutes without a punchline. But you know, when you see a great comedian—you know, for instance, Richard Pryor. You know, he would tell a two/three-minute story sometimes before he got to a laugh. And the laugh was so much more profound, because he was confident enough to lay that groundwork for it.

And honestly, a lot of times when you're in nightclubs and people are drunk and they're not there to see you specifically—you're just the comic—they can get impatient. They can yell shit out. Or maybe it was all in my head! You know, who knows? But I just never had the confidence to have the conversations I wanted to have, to say the things I wanted to say. And once I started podcasting, I went, “Oooh! This is the medium!”

John Moe: (*Chuckles.*) This is where that is welcomed! Yeah.

Paul Gilmartin: Welcomed. And you know that.

John Moe: Yeah, no, it's true. It's that intimacy of yourself in a little room with a microphone, kind of prying open all those layers.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Just ahead, Paul hits a wall and finds help.

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Back with Paul Gilmartin from *The Mental Illness Happy Hour*.

Well, let's talk about 2003, because it seems like that was a real turning point in terms of your awareness of your depression, in terms of your awareness of your substance abuse disorder. What happened in 2003, and what led up to what happened in 2003?

Paul Gilmartin: My suicidal ideation was getting worse and worse, and—

John Moe: What did that look like?

Paul Gilmartin: Thinking about killing myself 50 times a day, waking up and every morning, my first three thoughts being, “You slept too late. You're a lazy piece of shit. Your life is passing you by.” And mind you, I had a successful career. I had some visibility, you know. But of course, if you're in a sick place, and you're trying to fill that emptiness with external things—and it sounds kind of cliché, but it's true—nothing is enough. You may get excited by, you know, an award or being in a magazine or a newspaper or something on a TV show, but it's insatiable. And there's also a mean part of your voice that you haven't really addressed yet, that you believe.

One year, the show took out a billboard on Sunset Boulevard. And there's me up on a billboard on Sunset Boulevard, which I'd always thought was the—you know, really kind of the badge of “you've made it in show business”. Everybody driving down Sunset Boulevard can see you now and is aware of you! And I went and looked at it, and I lost respect for Sunset Boulevard. And I'm not kidding. I'm not making a joke. I just went, “Well, you know, who gives a shit? If I can be on there—” I mean, you know, the Groucho Marx joke. “I wouldn't want to belong to a country club that would have someone like me as a member.”

So, that's kind of where my brain was at. A lot of sadness, a lot of anger, depressed all the time. I would be jogging around my neighborhood, and a song would come on, and I'd just have tears streaming down my face. (*Chuckling.*) And I would think, “If somebody sees somebody jogging past their house crying, they'll probably just think I'm in physical pain.”

(John laughs and agrees.)

So, I had been seeing a psychiatrist, but when you're self-medicating with, you know, alcohol and weed every night, your depression's not going to get better. And so, the psychiatrist said, “Look, if you don't get help, if you don't get sober, you're wasting your money. And I can't continue to have you as a client.” And I'm so grateful that he did that, because I eventually did go to support groups.

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And that was where I feel like the—I don't know. If there's a journey towards authenticity and purpose, which I believe there is, that's where it began.

John Moe: How did you—so, the first step that you took to try to get better was support groups?

(Paul confirms.)

What kind of support groups?

Paul Gilmartin: Stuff around drinking and drug addiction. I wasn't sure I belonged, and then in the first five minutes, I opened my mouth and just started crying and cried for the whole meeting. Because I knew I was at a fork in the road. And the thought of dying was equally as scary as the thought of letting go of control and taking suggestions and living a new life that I couldn't predict. You know, I've been going to my old, broken crystal ball for my whole life, and you would think by now I would sell it in a garage sale, (*chuckles*) throw it in the garbage can, but there's—you know. That's one of my bad coping mechanisms is I try to predict how I think things are going to turn out, and then I base my current mood on this crystal ball. It's fucking broken! And so, that's one of the things I battle.

John Moe: So, you thought that the life you were living, with the weed and the alcohol and the suicidal ideation, that was you in control?

Paul Gilmartin: *(Laughing.)* That's what I thought! Because I wasn't opening myself up to anybody. I wasn't taking any kind of advice. I wasn't doing any work other than therapy. But you know, therapy isn't going to treat alcoholism and drug addiction. It can be a nice adjunct to it. But what I needed was peer support. I needed to hear other people's stories. I needed to get sober and then also help other people who came in after me. And that's where I began to feel a sense of peace that I guess brought in the spiritual dimension that had been lacking in my life.

Because all—you know, I think everybody has a God, whether it's money or sex or Instagram likes. Everybody is in pursuit of something, and mine was pleasure. Everything else came second. When I have a good day today, it's because my priorities for that day are a little better. You know, I'm thinking about being helpful. I'm thinking about practicing self-care, eating right, praying, meditating. You know, whatever the things are—setting boundaries with people. Those are all things that I have to do to maintain a majority of peace. Most of my day—I heard somebody say one time in recovery rooms, one of the biggest benefits of recovery is being able to find comfort in the middle of unresolved problems. And on a good day, that's true for me.

John Moe: Did you—when you started going to these groups, started this move towards sobriety, had you been diagnosed with depression by that point?

(Paul confirms.)

Okay, when did that happen?

Paul Gilmartin: The very first psychiatrist I went to see. You know, she asked me how I was doing and what's going on. And I, you know, babbled for about 15 minutes and said what was really going on. And at one point, as she's scribbling as fast as she can, she rolled her eyes like, “Oh boy!”

I remember thinking, “Maybe I'm not making too big of a deal.”

John Moe: If you can amaze the psychiatrist, maybe you've got something to your story, right?

Paul Gilmartin: Yeah. And I asked my psychiatrist one time, I said, “What is the name for what I have?”

And he said, “You have treatment resistant depression due to childhood adversity.”

And I was like, “That goes nice on a business card! I like that.”

John Moe: Yeah, that's a pretty good one. So, were the support group meetings that you went to—was that enough for you to get sober? And stay sober?

(Paul confirms.)

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They sound like some good meetings.

Paul Gilmartin: Yeah, really good meetings. That's one of the nice things about being in Los Angeles, is there's just a gazillion. You don't like, you know, a certain meeting? Go try another one, and you'll eventually find one, if that—you know, if those support groups are your thing. They're not everybody's thing, but they're my thing. They work for me. And I'd say 80% of my best friends now are people that I met in those meetings.

It's funny, I can—there's probably 50 people—100 people, maybe!—that I know, that I talk to, and we share or have shared really, really deep things with each other, and we don't even know each other's last names. I don't know, there's something I kind of love about that.

John Moe: When did you start the podcast?

Paul Gilmartin: 2011. What had happened was I had decided I didn't need my meds anymore, John! I had gone on a diet, and I thought, “Oh, this will clear it up.” And it was good for me to go on that. And it wasn't a calorie restriction diet; it was to help your gut, which is where a lot of the, as you know, dopamine and the other things that help your brain are produced. And it's a great book, and I recommend it for anybody. It's called *The Body Ecology Diet*, because the western diet is too acidic and too sugary. And I lost a bunch of weight, and my energy was better, and I felt great, and I thought, well, maybe I don't need my meds. Maybe I was just depressed because of that.

And I had tried to go off my meds before, despite my psychiatrist urging me not to. And I would usually feel the depression come back within a month, at the latest three months. Well, after four months, I still felt great! So, when the depression creeped in at five months, I didn't recognize it as the depression. I just thought life is really sad. (*Chuckles.*) I remember listening to a guy in a meeting talk about his suicide attempt. And he was describing a moment in a van when he had opened a vein in his neck, and it was spraying onto the ceiling. And I remember feeling jealous. And that's kind of when I went, “Uuuh... I think something's wrong. I think I might need to go back on my meds.”

And people would ask me, “How are you doing?” And yeah, I've been in the support groups long enough. Because I was—what? Let's see, that was 2010—been sober seven years at that point! And I knew enough that when you're not feeling well, it's really important to say what's going on with you, and I would just start crying.

And so, I went back on my meds, and within a week, I started feeling better. And I went, “Fuck.” I know that therapy is helpful. I know that seeing a psychiatrist is helpful. I know that support groups are helpful and meds, for me. And I got fooled by the darkness. I got fooled by the depression. Imagine somebody out there that thinks therapy is for people who are weak. That depression is not a real thing, or you can pray it away. And I thought, oh, a podcast would be a good thing to talk about this. ‘Cause how do you know when it's your depression? How do you know when it's your alcoholism? How do you know when it's your selfishness or your fear or, you know, a toxic relationship? I thought that podcasting is a good medium. And as you know, it can feel really empowering.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Coming up, what do a few hundred interviews do to one's understanding of mental health?

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Back with Paul Gilmartin, creator and host of *The Mental Illness Happy Hour*.

What have you learned about through interviewing people? Through having these conversations? I mean, how has that shaped your view on what mental health is and is not?

Paul Gilmartin: I've learned nothing, John.

(John laughs.)

When people are talking, I'm not paying attention.

John Moe: No, you're just playing Mine Sweeper.

Paul Gilmartin: I'm thinking about what I'm going to say next. No, I've learned so much. I've learned a lot about the experiences and the inner lives of people, people in the trans community. You know, men were never a mystery to me.

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Because I've always been able to make male friends. But because of my view of women, I had never really had female friends. And it wasn't until I started making female friends in my support groups and started doing the podcast that I began to really learn the depth and breadth of the inner lives of people other than me and my White male friends.

John Moe: You didn't learn that through marriage? Because you were married for a while.

Paul Gilmartin: I learned some. But there was a wall there by my choosing. And I think people settle into a thing... certain unwritten rules, when you get into a relationship. And yes, I did begin to learn some things about—*(chuckles)* I was married for 28 years. And about 15 years and I went, "Oh, she just wants me to listen! She doesn't want me to try to fix her! When I go to the grocery store, it's just a decent gesture to call and ask if she needs me to pick anything up." My attitude used to be, well, you can go to the grocery store yourself. Why do I have to? I mean, it's embarrassing now that I say it out loud.

So, that had kind of been—the damage had been done. I damaged that marriage a lot. And yeah, it takes two to tango, but I largely blame myself for a lot of that. So, yes, I did learn about her. But that's just one woman, you know. And doing the podcast, half of the episode is an interview with somebody, and the other half is me reading surveys that have been filled out anonymously by people online. And I've probably read, I don't know, almost 20,000 of

them, where people are sharing their deepest, darkest secrets. Shames, loves, traumas, turn-ons, describing their struggle in a sentence, all kinds of things. And that has been really, really enlightening. So, you know, between the interviews, the support groups, and those surveys, I've learned so much.

John Moe: What do you think it is about the surveys? 'Cause this is—these are people who give a name, but it—you know, it may not be the name on their driver's license, but they are identified to the extent that they wish to be. And then there's some really deeply personal things. What do you think that contributes to the listener, to hear that stuff spoken out loud by you?

Paul Gilmartin: I think they—you're talking about the person who filled it out hearing it, or just people in general hearing it?

John Moe: No, I mean people in general tuning into the podcast.

Paul Gilmartin: Well, they tell me that they feel less alone, and they feel less fucked up. And they're not happy that the person who filled it out is struggling, but it helps put in perspective that they are not the only one.

When I was at the darkest before I asked for help, I truly believed that I was weak, that it was all my fault, and that there was really no hope. In fact, I remember my sister-in-law—I had opened up to her. It was before I got sober. And if you watch old episodes of *Dinner and a Movie*, you can see it, because I wore it as a thumb ring. She gave me this ring that said “hope” on it. Because I needed to look down at that and to remember or remind myself that there can be hope. I didn't necessarily feel hope. I was just—I think not at the point where I was going to make a plan to take my life, but I thought about it all the time. Because I thought I'm making decent money. I'm on TV, which I've always dreamed of. And I can't feel any of it.

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The only time I could feel a sense of relief was getting loaded or, you know, philandering on the road. And it just—it felt like I was just caught in this catch-22.

John Moe: How do you take care of yourself today?

Paul Gilmartin: Oh my god, I have to do so many things just to get to the starting line, John. (*Chuckles.*) I have to get enough sleep. I have to take my meds. I have to connect on the phone with somebody—if not every day, every other day. But it's usually every day, whether it's somebody calling because they want to open up or—and this is probably less rare, because I tend to kind of isolate if people aren't calling me. But I'm really glad that almost every day somebody does call me if I'm not opening up. I also need to exercise, stay away from sugar, white flour. I need to have some type of creative outlet—you know, for lack of a better word, to play. So, for me, playing guitar and creating music and woodworking and hockey—playing ice hockey—those are my big three.

Yeah, those are the ones. And I'm taking my meds. And that has been really an on and off struggle for 26 years.

John Moe: To take your meds?

Paul Gilmartin: Not to take my meds, but to dial in the right combination. Because the right combination will work for a while. And then it doesn't work as well. But right now, I've really just started giving weight to the anxiety that has always been there with the depression. I'd always kind of focused on the depression. Because, you know, as Andrew Solomon says: "The opposite of depression isn't happiness, it's vitality." And so, that was what I'd always focused on trying to fix.

And while I certainly did need to do that, I never really even recognized how anxious I was. Because you know, an anxious person doesn't think of themselves as an anxious person. You just think the world's a shit show, and I'm paying attention.

John Moe: It's like a depressed person thinking that's just the way the world is. I'm seeing it clearly.

Paul Gilmartin: Yeah, I'm just awake. And there is some truth to that. But I talked to my psychiatrist, and it wasn't until it began to present itself as really unmanageable insomnia—I would have to eat sugar to fall asleep. I have psoriatic arthritis and—it's either psoriatic or rheumatoid. They're not sure which one it is, but sugar is horrible for it. And so, I've had to cut sugar out. But sugar when I have insomnia is the only thing that helps me sleep. And so, I was like, "This is so fucked."

So, I talked to my psychiatrist, and he said, "Well, let's try Gabapentin." And that seems to do the trick. So, for four months—five months? This was the first fall winter that I've not been depressed, where I don't feel like crying when the leaves turn brown, where I don't—you know—lay in bed and stare at the ceiling because the world feels like too much. And it's not like my whole day would be that, but I would often have to lay down just because it's just the world is just too much. And I don't mean the news, I mean just being alive, just—and I wasn't wanting to kill myself, I just... you know the feeling. It's hard to put into words.

(John agrees.)

So, so far, so good. And it's reignited my passion for woodworking, and so I've been in the woodshop five/six hours a day. And I really—I think that really helps me. So, those are the things to answer your question that I need to do. And my big fear is that the gabapentin is going to stop working, and I'm going to go back to that place. But I'm getting sleep. And as you know, if you're getting your sleep, sometimes that was the thing that was missing that was really making the depression bad.

John Moe: Yeah, that can make a huge difference.

(Paul confirms.)

How are you with hope going forward, going into the future?

Paul Gilmartin: Good. Yeah, it doesn't mean that I'm not anxious or have anxiety.

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Or honestly ever have fleeting thoughts of, “Well, if this all turns to shit, you know, I'll just end it.” But it's pretty rare that that is more than just a fleeting thought. But I would say 99% of the time, I'm like, “I can handle this. Don't go to the crystal ball, because you're just gonna—” You know. Having an imagination is a wonderful gift, but it also means that you imagine the apocalypse in a very detailed way.

(They chuckle and John agrees.)

You imagine poverty and, you know, debilitating diseases. And it's just—I often say, you know, CGI has nothing on The Catastrophizer 4000 that I have in my brain. It seems so real, the pictures that it paints.

John Moe: You gotta find the hope anyway.

Paul Gilmartin: Yeah. Human connection, as Deborah Maté said. It's—and I'm paraphrasing, but it's the opposite of addiction. And so, I have to do that. And my default is to sit in a chair and think about myself and catastrophize, so I have to battle that every day. And it's not hard. Somebody, a mentor of mine, said, “You know, a lot of people come to support groups because they want to get sober, but very few of them come there and are committed to getting sober.” You know, when people say, oh, support groups don't work, you know, the analogy I like is that's like saying the gym doesn't work, because, you know, somebody had a gym membership, and they didn't get in shape. Well, did they do the things that were suggested? Did they participate? Did they put the energy into it? I've met very few people who put the energy into support groups—whether it's around intimacy or, you know, getting off of drugs—very, very few people who put the energy in who have not gotten the results.

John Moe: So, you talk about sitting in that chair and ruminating and catastrophizing. How do you get out of that chair and turn those thoughts off?

Paul Gilmartin: Depends on the day. Sometimes it's as simple as just switching to a coping mechanism that might not be ideal but is better than just catastrophizing. It could be putting on a YouTube video of, you know, woodworking, or watching the news—which sometimes can backfire. Calling somebody up. You know, if somebody pops into my head, I usually will be like, well, maybe that's the universe telling me to give him a ring. And I can't tell you how many times they'll be like, “I'm so glad you called. Because, you know, I'm going through such and I—you know, I'm afraid to talk about it, or I don't know how to talk about it.”

And those are the things that can help me.

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

John Moe: Paul Gilmartin, thank you so much for being with us.

Paul Gilmartin: Thanks, John. I appreciate you having me on. I look forward to having you on my pod.

John Moe: Alright, it's a date.

You can hear *The Mental Illness Happy Hour* wherever you get your podcasts, and you can hear *Depresh Mode*, too. You don't have to choose. You can listen to both shows. Paul and I are friends.

Our show exists because people donate to it. It's just that simple. That is how we are able to have a show. Please help the show keep going. If you've already donated, thank you. We really appreciate it. If you haven't done so, it's super easy to do. Just go to MaximumFun.org/join. Find a level that works for you and choose *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows. You will listen differently when you are a member. I promise you. Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write rave reviews. All that helps get the show out into the world.

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

Our Instagram and Twitter are both @DepreshPod. Our newsletter is available on Substack, just search up John Moe on that.

[00:45:00]

I'm on Twitter and Instagram, @John Moe. Be sure to join our Preshies group too. Swing by Facebook and find the Preshies group. All sorts of great discussion happening there, sometimes about the show, sometimes people helping each other out, feeling less alone, talking about mental health. It's a really great community. Please use our electric mail address to get in touch. DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org.

Hi, credits listeners. I'm going to be on Paul's podcast the next time I'm in LA, because he really prefers doing interviews in person. So, if you have a St. Paul to LA plane ticket lying around, hit me up.

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

Mary: This is Mary from Maine, and I just wanted to say I'm proud of you.

(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!