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John Moe: A note to our listeners, this episode contains discussion of suicidal ideation. Something that is important to know about mental health, about mental illness, about the whole swirling swamp that our minds sometimes are, is that as long as we're alive, it's all happening in the present tense. It's a now thing. I mean, sure, you can talk about what has happened in the past. In fact, you should. It's important to know what has happened to you—the environment you were raised in, the influence of the people around you, the traumas and triumphs and big events that formed who you were. But here's the thing. I think sometimes a person's mental health story is misunderstood as something that has happened to them before, and now they're fine. Now they're unaffected.

But it isn't really like that. It's like William Faulkner said: “The past is not dead. It's not even past.” If you had trauma, that's still with you—having shaped you and still shaping you. The body keeps the score, as they say. If you've dealt with, say, a major depressive disorder, then you're still probably managing that condition in the present moment. Even if you feel great, it's still something to contend with. Mental health is present tense. You're not over it. You're perhaps going through it. Let's watch our prepositions. Prepositions are important. Similarly, talking about the future is great! What your mind will be like, what your approach to yourself will be, what you want it to be, what you're going to need to address. That is fantastic.

But the future isn't lived yet. You're speculating, predicting, sometimes guessing from right here, in the present, based on who you are now. Mental health, like I said, is a present tense proposition. That's why I don't say this was *Depresh Mode* or it will be *Depresh Mode*. It is. It's *Depresh Mode*! I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

Music: “Real B*tches Don’t Die!” from the album *REAL B*TCHEs DON'T DIE!* by Kari Faux.

My mama seen me cry, she wiped my eyes

Things she would say to ease my mind

(Real bitches don't die!)

My auntie laid to rest, she know me best

Her words still replaying in my head

(Real bitches don't die!)

(Music fades out.)

John Moe: That's Kari Faux with the title track off her latest album, *REAL B*TCHEs DON'T DIE!*. Kari, K-A-R-I, Faux, F-A-U-X. She's a popular rapper and musician who has released three full length albums, a couple of EPs, and a bunch of mixtapes. She's

collaborated with folks like Childish Gambino. She's appeared on Open Mic Eagle's *Anime, Trauma and Divorce* album. And she's been making sense of what she's been through and what she's going through, as we'll get into in our conversation.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Kari Faux, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

Kari Faux: Hello! Thank you for having me.

John Moe: You've been very honest and forthright and vulnerable about mental health issues in your music. You've been very blunt about it. I wonder how far back does your mental health story go to? Does it go back to childhood? How far back are we going?

Kari Faux: Yeah, it definitely goes back to childhood. The earliest I could remember is 12 years old. I would say like 11/12.

John Moe: What happened then?

Kari Faux: I had decided that I wanted to take my own life at a very, very early age. And I was put with a psychiatrist, and that was my first time ever having like a doctor for my mind. I didn't really like my doctor. He was very boring. He was very—I don't know. There wasn't like a connection. There was—like, he didn't seem to want to understand what it is that I was feeling. It was just kind of like, “This is what's wrong with you. Boom. We should give you medicine.” And my mom—I like fought my mom when I was like, no, I don't want to take medicine. Because even at that age, I had like heard or seen that like when—you know, when you take medicine, like you're not as creative or you're not—like, your personality doesn't bloom like it should and all these other things. So, she never put me on medication. And so, yeah.

John Moe: So, then what happened, if you were untreated?

Kari Faux: (*Chuckles.*) I am still untreated to this day. Honestly, I have these like weird back-and-forths of like wanting to get to the root of it and figure out what is happening in my mind.

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But then to be completely honest with you, I'm scared. Because I'm like—I have this thing in my mind, and I know it's wrong. Like, it's wrong. But I have this thing in my mind that like once somebody tells me that this is the thing, it's now—it's like real. And yeah, I don't know. I mean, I've been to therapy a lot. I try to like really self-analyze. I'm very self-aware, and I try to just like take my time with my actions and my words and how I like deal with myself.

John Moe: When you were a kid, then what happened with the suicidal thoughts?

Kari Faux: They just—they come, and they go. They just like—

John Moe: Still?

Kari Faux: Well, not—no, not as often. Not as much as they used to. I would say around—I would say like the last time that I felt that way was right before I made *Cry For Help*. So, *Cry For Help* in 2019 was the EP project that I put out. And maybe like two—maybe like a year and a half before that or two years before that, I had just been kind of struggling like with feelings of loneliness and like not feeling like I fit in anywhere. I was living in Los Angeles, which really, really, really—like, that environment had an effect on my mind and like who I was supposed to be and how I was supposed to show up and all these just unrealistic expectations. You know?

And then I put out that project. And at first I was really scared to do it, because I was like, “Oh, well I don't want people knowing my business. Like, this might be too much.” And the response that I got to it was like, “Oh my god, I feel this way too.” And so, it really—it made me feel a lot better, and I just started going to therapy. Like, I just started like talking to someone actively about my feelings and, you know, finding ways to kind of like combat those feelings, but also allowing myself to feel how I feel.

John Moe: So, was that the first time you started going to therapy was around 2019?

Kari Faux: I would say that was my longest stint of therapy. I was doing therapy for like a year—a little over a year. Before that I would like get into therapy and then I would like either not have any money to afford it, or I would just kind of, you know, fall off with it.

John Moe: Let's go back to when you started with music, because I understand that you were writing poetry before you started rapping. What would you write poetry about?

Kari Faux: Just anything. I think—like, it started when I was in elementary school, and it's kind of like a class assignment. You know, you learn about different types of poems, like sonnets and haikus and all these different things. And so, I just would—like, when I would do it at school, I'd be like, oh, this is cool. Like, I'm going to do this at home.

And I would just kind of write about whatever I was feeling or whatever I was seeing, just kind of practicing those like literary devices.

John Moe: And then how did that turn into music?

Kari Faux: So, it turned into music because I—(*chuckling*) I would write raps for my friends in elementary school. I would like take a piece of notebook paper, and I would write whatever—like, whatever I thought about my friend, I would write it for them. And I would give it to them. And I'd be like, “Okay, like this is your rap. Like, you rap this.”

And so, it became this thing that like my other friends would be like, “Oh my god, can you write me a rap too?”

And I'd be like, "Yeah, sure! Whatever."

And so, it just became this thing. And I used to listen to a lot of rap music because of my older brother. He's ten years older than me, and he had like an immaculate like CD collection. You remember those CD holders? It was like an encyclopedia of just like '90s rap and R&B. And I would, you know, sneak in his room and just flip through the CD holder and look at the covers and all this other stuff while listening to the music. So, that's kind of how I got my first introduction to like gangsta rap, I would say. Not the—the stuff that wasn't on the radio. (*Laughs.*)

John Moe: Right, right, right. So, then when did you start recording yourself?

Kari Faux: That was—I was like 15. I would say 2007/2008. I had friends that were rappers, like that was their thing. And they were like, "Oh, like y'all should come over,"—like, me and my friends—"like, y'all should come over. We be rapping over here. Like, we have a setup in the garage, whatever." And we would just go over there and make up songs. And I remember I was just hanging out one day.

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And my friend—he was a little bit older than us, and he was like—but he had been rapping, like everybody knew him or whatever. And he was like, "You sound like you could rap. You should write—" He was like, "Write a 16-bar verse, and come back here tomorrow, and record it."

And so, I was—well, first of all, what's a bar? What's 16 bars? What is that?

I didn't understand what that meant. And so, he showed me how to count bars. And I was like, oh, okay, cool. And then I went, wrote my rap, came back the next day and recorded it. And my best friend at the time, she wrote a verse too. She got on the second verse, and then we like put it on Facebook. And people—yeah, and people liked it. So, I just kinda went with it.

John Moe: And then when did you start taking it seriously as like this is the thing I'm going to do?

Kari Faux: It wasn't until—okay, so this gonna sound strange, but my mind works how it works, right? I would say that I didn't really truly realize that this was my job until about—I would say like 2017/2018. And by that time, I had been doing it for like—I had been like—so, I put out *Laugh Now, Die Later* in 2014. So, that's when I started doing it professionally, right? But I didn't take it—I didn't understand that this was my job well into—like, well into it. So, maybe like three, four, five years into it, I'm like, "Oh, this is my job. This is like—I pay taxes like to the government to do like this thing." I kind of just had my head down and just felt really passionate about making music and being creative. And then I just looked up one day and was like, oh, okay. This is what we doing. Like, we love this.

John Moe: And then how does your mental health track along with that? Like, so you start this career. You eventually realize that it is your career. You know, you get noticed. Your songs get out into the world. How are you doing as that happens?

Kari Faux: It's really tough. Just because I would say like the environment that I was kind of like thrust into was one—I was very unfamiliar with what I was walking into with the industry of it all. I think that like industry wise, it's just very—like, for me where I'm from, I'm from like a small city. Little Rock, Arkansas. Everybody pretty much knows everybody, or everybody goes to church together or been to school together or whatever, right? And there's just kind of this—like, when you don't like somebody or you don't fuck with somebody, you stay away from them. Or you just like—y'all can coexist, but you don't speak. You don't—you know, you just leave it as what it is. Either you fighting, or you're just leaving it alone.

And I think that walking into the industry, it was—I've just started to see like people who didn't like each other hanging out and like being cool and being friends. And for me—but it was normal! It was like a normal thing. It's like, “Oh, but I'm going to need that person one day. So, like of course I'm going to be nice to them and be cool with them. But like deep down, I hate them.” And I think for that, it just like—it just made me feel crazy! It made me feel really, really, really crazy. And so, there was just like a lot of relationships that just kind of got severed, because I just didn't understand what I was walking into. And so, I mean I feel like a lot of the people that I'm still like really close to and really cool with, they understand me enough to be like, “Oh, she's just—that's just how she is. Like, she don't mean no harm, whatever.”

But I don't know. I just tell the truth. Like, if I'm not fucking with something, I'm not fucking with it. And you can't really convince me to do anything other than that. And that's really been my saving grace in a lot of situations with like the music industry.

John Moe: Yeah, (*chuckles*) I admit I'm still concerned about the suicidal ideation that you bring up, because it doesn't seem to have gone away. Like, how—

Kari Faux: I mean, but it has though.

John Moe: It has?

Kari Faux: Yeah, it has.

John Moe: Okay, since 2019?

Kari Faux: Yeah, because I don't live in LA. I said most of the issues were stemming with the environment. I didn't have any family. I didn't feel like I had like a lot of real friends. And so that felt very isolating. When you feel isolated, and you feel like people are pressuring you to do certain things—

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—that you don't feel comfortable with doing, you start to like feel like something's wrong with you. Because your immediate environment is telling you, hey, you're weird. You don't want to do this. You don't want to do that. You don't want to hang out with these people. You don't want to—

It's like the moment I was like, “You know what? I'm going to go home. I'm going to go home. Because like clearly this is not—this isn't the kind of life I want to live.” Also, there wasn't a good work life balance. It's like when you're—when you make music, and you live in a city that is around industry, everything you do is pretty much for industry. Like, the people you hang out with, it's like, oh, well, we work together, and we make music together, and we do this together, and we do that together. But then we also—

It's just like there's no separation of like what's my life and what's my career. So, the moment that I came home, I just—I decided that I wanted to figure out what I wanted my life to look like instead of versus—like, instead of chasing what I was told that I should want for myself.

John Moe: So, do you live in Little Rock now?

Kari Faux: No, I live in Houston.

John Moe: You live in Houston. Okay. ‘Cause you’ve moved around a little bit. What is—have you been looking for something as you've moved around? I know you've lived in Atlanta. I know you've lived in New York and LA. What's been the motivation to move from place to place, beyond that experience in LA where you just didn't feel at home at all?

Kari Faux: I think I just wanted to just experience something different. I mean, after this, I'm going to go live overseas somewhere. And I'm just going to keep bouncing around, because I feel like there's so much world to see, and there's so many people to meet, so many different experiences to have. Yeah, I just—I'm like I'm 31 years old. I have no children. I have a great partner who wants to travel as well, and I'm just going to do that. It's not necessarily looking for anything. Like, if anything, I've realized that like anything that I'm going to be looking for is already within myself. So, I have to like do that deep exploration inside of myself and figure out what it is that I need and what I want.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: More with Kari Faux in just a moment.

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: We're back with the rapper Kari Faux.

Can you walk us through the adjustments that you made in your personal life, in your professional life, over the years that have landed you in a place where it seems like you're doing pretty well? Like, what have you—what conscious steps have you taken to get to a better place with your mental health?

Kari Faux: I think that I really try—and this is like—I feel like this will be a lifelong thing, but I really just try to focus. Like, not watch other people's lives, and like—'cause like they say, you know, comparison is the thief of joy. And that's something that I know for a fact. You know, you see other people doing things, and you're like, “Oh man, I should be doing that.” But then when you get to the root of it, it's like, actually, I don't want that. Like, I don't want that for myself. And so, I think just like being very intentional about the things that I do and knowing that like I'm doing this, because this is what I want my life to look like. Also, I just think—like, I try to breathe. I try. I really try. I just try to like meditate and just breathe and not get too—just rush to a response or rush to like—just really just like taking my time more than anything.

I used to like try to rush and like respond to stuff or like on an email. Like, oh my god, this person emailed me. I need to email them back immediately. Like, just—it's okay. It's okay if you take a day or two to respond to something. You don't have to stress yourself out about that. Things will come. Things will happen the way that they're supposed to. And I have to like believe that.

John Moe: You've been outspoken about mental health in your work. Or at least, you allude to mental health in a lot of your music. Why—I guess, why do you feel a need to do that? Are you on a mission to educate people? Are you trying to affect some change in society?

Kari Faux: Uh, no. (*Laughs.*) I think that what I want people to understand is that the music that I make is my form of therapy. It is my, like—

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So, I came up with this analogy the other day, is that like my mind is like the sea. And I am a deep-sea diver exploring the things that have affected me that I may not have even understood until this point in my life that I'm like, oh, wait. That thing happened, and that was traumatic, and this is why I act like this, or this is why I responded the way that I did. It's just kind of like a form of self-mastery or documentation, and I just put it to a beat. That's really all it is. Like, I'm not an expert. I'm not a scientist. I'm not a psychiatrist. I'm not a psychologist. The thing that most interests me is like my mind and my experiences and how they've shaped me and trying to figure out how I can just like grow and change and be better as a person. And I just happen to do it to music. So.

John Moe: How do you go about figuring out how those things have affected you and changed you?

Kari Faux: So, I feel like I've been in therapy to pick up on some of the things that we talked about. And I mean, it's like—it's ongoing. Family shit is family shit. Life shit is life shit. And it's just like picking up on certain things and be like, hey, like actually, that's not okay.

Like, I mean, to be transparent—like, mothers, mom, parents is a big role in my life. I was actually—like, I was adopted when I was like a baby. I feel like that has formed some type of like abandonment, whatever, issues within me. And then like I have a mom that raised me. But then even then, like there's things that she's been through that she has now projected onto me. And so, for a long time, I've kind of like dealt with that, went through that. And now I'm

at a point where I'm like, hey, wait, that's not okay. Like, it's not okay that you talk to me like that. It's not okay that you put your hands on me. It's not okay for—whatever. It's not okay. It's just not okay.

And so, I think that like me just growing and learning and understanding what I should be accepting of from other people—like, starting there, that's like the first person you meet in your life. And now it's just trickling down and being like, okay, these are the type of relationships I want. Like, these are the type of friends I want to have. These are the type of partners I want to have. I want them to respect me in this way. And I have to stand up for myself. I've had a really hard time like standing up for myself initially without it turning into something where I'm lashing out on people, because I've just been quiet the whole time. But I've learned that in my childhood. So, yeah, I don't know. I don't know if that answers your question. I'm long winded. I just be talking. So.

(They chuckle.)

John Moe: No, that's a good thing. We value that in this particular kind of conversation. If you don't mind, can you tell me a little bit more about what it is that your mom was doing that you had to kind of reckon with later?

Kari Faux: My mom is—because I don't like to diagnose people. And I know like people love to throw around the narcissist word. But I think that my mom is the center of her universe. I'll say that. And I think that when you're a parent, and you are the center of your universe, you are looking for your children to show up for you. To just kind of be a thing for you that you can't—that you haven't found within yourself because of your experiences. I mean, I don't want to like get into like crazy details, but she's just been somebody that's like everything is about her. It's her way, the highway. If something good happened in my life, it's now her—it's her success. It's her win. It's her thing to go and tell everybody else about, even if I don't want anybody to know. And it's just kind of like, “Well, what are you mad about? Like, why are you upset? Can you get over it? Just get over it. It's been however-many years. Get over it.”

And I just—*(laughs)* I'm just like, okay, girl. I'm going to get over it, over here—like, separate from you. And you know, it sucks. ‘Cause I love my mom, and I want to have a relationship with her. But I also want to—like I said, I finally got to a place where I'm like happy, and I want to like maintain that. And I've just realized that like a lot of the relationships and spaces that I chose to like be in were not conducive to me being happy. If anything, they like wanted me to not be happy—

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—so they could have a reason to like kind of—you know, always dump their shit on me or always feel like, “Oh, I'm helping her. Like, look at me. I'm keeping her alive.” Like, you know? It's just like—it's weird. Like, people be having their weird reasons they need to be needed. And that's fine, but I just be wanting to take care of myself.

John Moe: So, how do you take care of yourself in the midst of all that with that trauma and with that history behind you?

Kari Faux: Well, right now, I'm not going to lie, it's been very—it's been very weird to now have this—be in this point in my life where I'm not talking to my mom. But I will say this though, it feels like a newfound freedom. And I'm like not—I'm like not... I don't want to cry. I don't want to cry.

John Moe: You can cry.

Kari Faux: Um, it feels like a newfound freedom in a way of like... (*choking up*) like, now I get to decide who I am instead of being told who I am. And I just feel like a lot of people in my, you know, childhood—like, growing up, whatever, like they kind of told me who I was, and I believed them. And so, it has had—like, I've harbored those feelings, and I've held those feelings for a very long time. And I've finally got to a point where I'm like, you know what? I'm going to stand up to my first bully and tell her that I'm not accepting that anymore. And then, you know, hopefully that just trickles down into every other relationship to where I can stand up for myself.

And so, it's just been—it's been hard to accept, but I'm working through it. It's super recent. This has been in the last couple of months that I'm like not—that I'm not like, you know, speaking with her. And I'm still processing it and, you know. But I am very, very happy. I'm very happy with, you know, who I am and where I am. I don't have any regrets. Like, even if there's relationships that like fell apart because of me or whatever, like I still have no regrets. Because I can look back and be like, “Damn I should have did that differently. So, next time a situation like that comes I'm gonna do it differently.” So, yeah, sorry. (*Chuckles.*)

John Moe: Don't be sorry. You mentioned standing up to your first bully. Was that bully your mom, or was that somebody else?

Kari Faux: It was my mom. Yeah, it was.

John Moe: Okay. Alright. You told her how you felt?

Kari Faux: I've told her how I felt my entire life. And (*chuckles*) I've told her how I felt—

John Moe: Didn't always get through.

Kari Faux: Oh, it never got through. I'm 31 years old, and it's still like, “Huh? What did I do? I don't understand.”

And I'm like, girl, I've explained this to you—like, I've explained this to you for a very long time. And it seems like you don't want to understand. Like, I feel like if you wanted to, you would be having continuous conversation being like, “Okay, so like, what did I do that made you feel that?” It's just like, “Damn, you still mad about this?” It's just like, girl! I'm traumatized! Like, yes, I'm still mad about it! Like, shit!

John Moe: Well, it sounds like you're being kind to yourself in a way that people haven't been kind to you in the past. And so, you're finally getting that kindness and that love that you got ripped off on earlier in life.

Kari Faux: Yeah, but it's so weird. Like, my brain is like, oh my god. Like, this is what it feels like to not be like fighting—like, metaphorically. Like, fighting for your life. I mean, and literally like fighting for your life. And for the first time, I'm like, “Wow, like my home is my sanctuary. It's like—you know, we have jazz playing all day. We got candles burning. We drinking tea. We just relaxing. It's just like for the first time, like I don't feel like I'm trying to like survive or like trying to defend myself from someone or something. And so, I like had read about this thing that says like, you know, when you get into a space—like, when your brain feels like it's in a safe space, it starts to bring up all the trauma that you've experienced that you might not have had time to like kind of sort out. And so, that's where I'm at where I'm like—

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Oh my god, I've been living like this?! I've been allowing—?! That's crazy. I've been—what? Y'all been—I've been allowing y'all to talk to me like this? I've been acting like that?! Oh my god. Like, I can't believe—what?!

And so, yeah. I mean, it's like a good space to be in. It feels a little scary, because it's unknown. But I'm excited, because it's a clean slate, and I get to just like really start living for me and getting to like—getting to know who I am outside of, you know, who I've been to other people. I feel like a lot of times people's relation to you and who you've been to them for so long can kind of keep you in a certain place. Because they're like, “Well, you always did this, and you always acted like that.”

So, it's like, damn, stop reminding me! I want to be somebody else today. Can I be somebody else? Can I grow up? Can I not be a child anymore?

John Moe: I would think too, in the business that you're in and the professional world that you're in, that can be a challenge too—not being judged on appearance or judged on, you know, the commodification of what you make or downloads or whatever it is. Like, it seems like it could get really impersonal and kind of brutal in a hurry, given that line of work that you're in.

Kari Faux: Oh yeah, I think so. But I also—in the beginning I was like very—I was impressionable. Like, you could tell me anything. I mean, I'm from Arkansas. There's no industry! There's no entertainment industry in Arkansas. And so, that was like my first time being outside of the South. I mean, Atlanta's a bigger city than Little Rock, but I would still think—to me, they're closer. They're closer in like... I guess, kind of like values and how you treat people or whatever. Now going to like LA and being in the industry of LA, it was a whole different thing. It was like any little thing I did was kind of like picked apart. It was like, “Why you talk like that? Like, why you dress like that? Why you listen to that type of music? Why do you da-da-da?” Like, it was everything.

I'm like how do I fit in here? Then I started like trying to do things to fit in. And I'm like I'm so unhappy! This is so wack! Like, I don't even like y'all. Y'all aren't even that interesting. (*Laughs.*) Like, y'all aren't even interesting enough for me to like change who I am fundamentally. This is whack. And then covid happened. And I was like I'm going—I had already—it's funny, because in 2019, I had already had thoughts of like going home. I was

like, man, I've been here for five years, and I've hated every minute of it. Like, living here—like, working there, cool. Living there, different story for me. And I was just like—2019, I was like, man, I should go home. Like, I feel like I should want to move home. And then covid happened that March, and I was like I'm going home. I was like, you know what? This is my sign that I'm just gonna go and be closer to family and just like get re-grounded in who I am and what it is that I love. And then we'll go from there. And yeah, that's kind of how I ended up in Houston. *(Laughs.)*

John Moe: How did that work out then? You went back to Little Rock for Covid?

(Kari confirms.)

How did that go?

Kari Faux: I mean, it was fine at first, but then of course you start to feel kind of claustrophobic with living with family. And like don't get me wrong, like I love my family. And my mom is like—it is what it is, you know? Like, it's more of like an internal—like, this thing that we go back and forth with. But I can like—I can deal with her. It's just like she just she's be irritating me sometimes, like on a deep, deep level. So, it was fine at first, and then I was like, alright, I got to get out of here. Like, I'm grown. I can't live here. I didn't want to be in Little Rock, because I felt like—I mean, if they had like an airport that kind of flew everywhere, I would probably have been there. Because I do like being close to my dad and my grandma and people like that. But I was like I need to find somewhere that has like an airport that kind of like flies all over the country and just more things happening.

And so, I came down and visited one of my high school best friends. She had been living in Houston since we graduated, and she loved it. And so, I came and visited, and I was like, oh my god, I love it here. Like, it's so cool. It's southern. It's like—it feels like home, but there's more happening. So, I was like, alright, cool. And then I just moved here, and I've been here this whole time.

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Since 2021, yeah.

Transition: Spirited acoustic guitar.

John Moe: More of my conversation with Kari Faux after the break.

Transition: Gentle acoustic guitar.

John Moe: Back with rapper Kari Faux.

What's your plan for the future in terms of taking care of your mental health and more of your mental wellbeing—and you know, having come to terms with some of this trauma and some of these rough things that have happened to you, what's your plan going forward?

Kari Faux: I'm not going to lie; I do want to see a psychiatrist again. Well, first of all, at 12, I just don't think I understood—one, I don't feel like I had the right psychiatrist, one. And two, I just feel like I didn't understand what was going on, really. I just knew that I didn't want somebody to tell me something was wrong with me when, you know, there's nothing wrong with like being medicated or any of that. There's nothing wrong with it. And so, I've like now come back to it.

Which, I have a close friend. She's been diagnosed bipolar, and we have had multiple conversations about it. And she takes medication. And you know, she's just like, “You know, do like, you know, go see a psychiatrist, talk with them and stuff, and really see what's best for you. Like, that's your decision to make. And I think for me more than anything else, I just want to know like what's happening with me. So, one, I can understand myself better and know what are the things that I really need to be doing actively to keep me in this good space, and to also like let my loved ones know like, “Hey, these are the things that's happening with me, guys. Like, even though you guys are already like super gracious with me and giving me so much grace, like this is what's actually happening.”

Yeah, ‘cause I just—I don't know. I think that I really do need—I need help in a way where I just want somebody to be able to give me the real tools. One, I need to know what's happening, and then I need the tools. Because like you said—and I'm not gonna lie. I did kind of get offended when you were like, “Well, the suicidal ideation didn't go away.” And I'm like they have! But I understand what you meant by like—if you had that, then it's still there, because it's untreated.

John Moe: That was my concern.

Kari Faux: Yeah. But I'm not—I really, really do. I fight tooth and nail to like not put myself in situations that will have me feeling that way. Seriously, I've worked really, really hard. And I feel like a lot of it stemmed from like—I feel like when I was a kid, that was just like family life stuff. And then again, when I was living in LA, it was like environment. And I feel like now that I'm in this environment, it's like safe enough for me to like really understand what's happening with me. And I have like my boyfriend and my dog who love me, and they'll like support me, you know, on that journey. So.

John Moe: What's keeping you from going to a psychiatrist?

Kari Faux: Like I said, I'm just—I'm like—I'm just—it's gonna be real. It's gonna be real. I know that sounds so silly to say, because it's like, “Well, Kari, it's real regardless of if you know or not.” (*Laughs.*) It's real whether you know it or not. And this—I know this sounds so—I know it sounds so silly.

John Moe: And it's happening.

Kari Faux: It sounds sooo silly.

John Moe: It's not silly.

Kari Faux: But like, I don't know. Just, my mom—like, my family's super religious. And so, yeah—so, it's like the stigma of like therapy and taking medicine for your mind and all these different—it's like, I just—I feel—I just—I have to get over what I've been taught and what I've been told and really do this for myself. Because, yeah, I don't know. I want to stay. I want to stay in this good place.

John Moe: Yeah. What do you think you would say to a psychiatrist?

Kari Faux: I would say that I have trouble focusing. I've realized—it's so crazy. Oh my god, let me tell you this. I have the craziest time focusing. And I did not realize it until like last week. So, I was like cleaning out my hard drive, right?

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And I like stumbled upon something that like I wasn't even looking for it. I was not looking for this shit at all. I'm reading this document or whatever, and I'm like, oh my god, like—aaah! So, then I start like—I sit down, and I just like start doing like the craziest math. I'm like going through all these things, and I'm like doing math to like put—like, basically get a spreadsheet together. Right? So, I go, and I put together a spreadsheet. And it wasn't—like, I was supposed to be looking for something totally different, and I didn't find the thing that I was actually looking for until two days later, because I had got hyper fixated on doing this spreadsheet. So, I don't know what you would diagnose that. But it sounds like ADHD.

John Moe: There's some echoes.

Kari Faux: (*Laughs.*) And then, honestly, I think... I don't know—okay, so don't get mad at me. Nobody, please, get mad at me. I think I be having Manic Depressive episodes for sure. Foor sure. For sure. So, I think—

John Moe: What do those look like?

Kari Faux: Manic is I can do anything, I can achieve anything, I'm a genius—like, I am Walt Disney. (*Giggles.*) I am—I don't know if you got that, but that's a Kanye West joke. But—and then, depressive is like, oh, we're like bed-rotting for like days at a time. It used to be really, really, really, really bad when I was living in LA. Like, I was just—I would sleep so much and wake up and be tired and just go back to sleep. Like, I was basically just trying to like—I'm just—I'm sleeping through the day. It's like, okay, can we just hurry this up? Like, whenever the good part comes, like I'm going to just sleep through it. And now it's—I've gotten better about it. Like, if I feel myself being like, “Oh, like, I just want to lay down. I don't really want to do anything,” I'll at least like—I've been trying to like stretch and like at least walk. Like, I got my dog, so I walk him to the park and stuff. And I just—I try to like, you know, just keep myself—when I'm having those moments, like still be moving and still be doing things and just not on a—you know, not overexerting myself.

John Moe: Yeah. Well, it sounds like there's a good mental place that you're in, that you want to preserve, that you've really fucking earned, (*chuckles*) that you've worked like hell to get to. And that's really—it's really wonderful to hear. But there's a sort of intellectual good

place that you've gotten to as well, because like you, you know, you're in a city you love. You're with a person and a dog who you love. And you've come to this understanding of maybe some of the things that have tripped you up over the years. And so, it's really an accomplishment. And I hope that you have some pride in what you've been able to accomplish here.

Kari Faux: Yeah. I mean, I do. But that's why I'm like—I'm in. Like, I can't let nobody—*(laughs)*.

John Moe: I gotta lock this down.

Kari Faux: Yeah, I'm like I can't let—like, I'm sorry. Like, if you make me feel—oh no, you gotta go! Like, I could love you from over there, but I can't—like, I worked so hard. And I just—I don't take—I don't want to take this for granted, because this is not how it's always been. And so, yeah, I just—aw, man. Thank you. Also, thank you for that. Thank you. Thank you for that. Those are very kind words.

John Moe: Oh, sure! Are you making music right now?

Kari Faux: Yeah, I am. It's like kind of on and off. Like, I'm one of those people where when the thing hits me, like when the album idea like strikes me, I'm like in the studio every day working on the music, making it. But in between, I'm just kind of like living life and hanging out. And I write, like I journal a lot and stuff. And so, a lot of the concepts for the songs kind of come from journaling. And so, yeah. Right now, I'm kind of just writing, feeling how I feel. I've made a couple demos that are really good, and they kind of—

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I mean, they're kind of addressing the things that we talked about today. And yeah, like I said, I'm not trying to tell the world how to live they life. I'm not trying to—I'm just documenting it. *(Giggling.)* And if you like it, thank you!

John Moe: Just notes on your journey that you're taking.

Kari Faux: Yeah, just notes.

John Moe: Kari Faux, thank you so much for sharing your story and sharing your vulnerability, and I think your words are gonna help people.

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

Kari Faux: Thank you! Thank you for having me.

John Moe: You can hear Kari Faux's music wherever you get your music. The internet, for instance. It's all over the internet.

Our show exists because of the donations of our listeners, people who want this show to keep going so that they can get something out of it, so that other people can get something out of it. Do something nice for yourself and for others, and donate to the show. If you already have, thank you. We appreciate it. If not, it's easy to do. Just go to MaximumFun.org/join. Find a level that works for you. You figure that one out yourself, and then select *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows. Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write rave reviews. All of that helps get the show out into the world where it can help folks.

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Our Instagram and Twitter are both @DepreshPod. Our *Depresh Mode* newsletter is on Substack. I write that every week. Search that up. I'm on Twitter and Instagram, @JohnMoe. Be sure to join our Preshies group on Facebook. A lot of great discussion happening over there about mental health, people supporting each other, people sharing information. It is a supportive community. Just search up Preshies on Facebook. Our electric mail address is DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org.

Hi, credits listeners. You can sing the lyrics to “Amazing Grace” to the tune of *Gilligan's Island*, and vice versa! You can also swap in the Emily Dickinson poem, “Because I Could Not Stop For Death”, for either one, in either song. Enjoy. You can make a whole afternoon of it.

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

DB: This is DB in Boulder, Colorado. Take a deep breath with me. (*Breathes in. Breathes out.*) You can do it.

(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!