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**John Moe:** A theme on the show today is the difference between lowercase letters and uppercase letters, or capital letters, and how much that difference—that shift key on a keyboard—really matters in regard to one's mental state and emotional state and overall gestalt, the overall compilation of thoughts and actions and tendencies that constitute the entity known as you. At what point does a person's behavior go from being a whole bunch of things swirled together, described in lowercase letters, to an acronym in all caps? Does someone have a penchant for keeping things tidy because they enjoy the feeling of tidiness? Helps them relax? Helps them feel better able to handle stuff? Or are they so bound to a compulsive need to create perfection, obsessed with order, that they can be defined as having those capital letters—OCD? Do they exhibit some anxious tendencies, or do they have GAD, generalized anxiety disorder? Does the person's mental state exist within the very broad and often disparate set of criteria for having some depression, or do they have MDD, major depressive disorder?

I don't expect you to always know these answers about yourself or about anyone else. I certainly don't have those answers very reliably, and I have a podcast about mental health. It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** I've been making mental health podcasts for many years. And in that time, the separation between diagnostic acronyms—those capital letters—and complex human conditions—lowercase—has mattered less and less. Certainly, the acronyms are useful when you're trying to get insurance to cover medicine or treatment. Might help you when you need to tell someone what you have, but you'd rather not get into a big conversation about it. Of course, the lowercase—the big conversation—might paint a fuller picture, one that includes a lot of the mysteries and contradictions in a person that aren't tidily summed up in abbreviations.

My guest this week is Todd Glass. Todd has been a standup comedian for a long time. You could catch him on A&E's *An Evening at the Improv* back in the late '80s, and he's been at it ever since, appearing on just about every late night show you could think of, releasing comedy albums, touring extensively, hosting a podcast called *The Todd Glass Show*. If you listen to Marc Maron's *WTF* podcast, Todd had a very memorable appearance in 2012 when he came out as gay on that show. Todd has a very funny special, called *Act Happy*, on Netflix. And he's planning a new special now, called *Todd Glass: The Event of a Lifetime*.

Now, Todd Glass, I think favors lowercase letters when talking about himself. I had read that he deals with OCD, and I mentioned that in the interview. But Todd doesn't really adopt a lot of capital letters, a lot of acronyms to describe parts of his life. He's more inclined to the lowercase and to the complexity.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Todd Glass, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

**Todd Glass:** Hello, it's good to be here, and nice to meet you.

**John Moe:** Nice to meet you. Where did you grow up?

**Todd Glass:** I grew up in Philadelphia until about second grade, lived in like northeast, and then we moved out to Valley Forge when I was in like fifth grade.

**John Moe:** You had dyslexia growing up. What was that like? When did you first realize something was going on with that?

**Todd Glass:** It's funny that—I'll preface this with I think a lot of times—and maybe it's my own negativity, you know, creating people that don't exist. But I think they do. They think people are looking for a reason, “Oh, I have this, I have that.” Yeah. I'm sure that that slice exists. Of course, every slice exists. But overwhelmingly, it was the opposite. And I think a lot of people would agree with me. I remember thinking even in fifth grade like, “Look, everyone's having the same difficulty you are. Everybody. All they do is they just (*clap, clap*), you know. They try harder. They try harder. No one wants to do this, Todd.” And I still think that sometimes. Like, I know I can learn new things, but I have to remember, Todd, you might not be able to do this.

So, it was—you know, my parents had me in and out of like, I'd go to a special school, and then I would go to a regular school with a special classroom in that school. And so, they tried, but they didn't know a lot about it. You know, I was on Ritalin once in seventh grade and lost my appetite. So, I got off of it.

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Went in and out of special schools. And you know, about when I was in 11th grade or 10th, you know, that's when they really started to know about dyslexia, you know? And by that time I'd already started standup comedy. My guidance counselor—even though my parents would have probably done the same thing—they said, “Usually kids that have this, they tend to hyper focus, whether it's baseball or whether it's—so, you know, let him do this.” So, (*stammering*) that's what happened.

**John Moe:** So, in and out of these special schools or special classrooms, did your parents think there was like a cognitive problem, a cognitive delay?

**Todd Glass:** You know, you have sort of a fuzzy version of it. But they knew—you know, my mom knew that I was not—she knew there was something wrong. And you know what? Good for her for not just disciplining me into—you know already, you know, you can't discipline somebody out of this. So, they thought—you know, I think a lot of times by the questions they would ask me in special classes when we had therapy, like draw a picture, that's when I was really—or are the people in that house happy? Like, I think their attitude was, not to be self-complimentary but, “This kid's definitely smart, but there's some—”

Now it seems so obvious, because we know what it is. But back then, I mean, I would be in schools with kids that were—what you call?—had behavioral issues, bad behavioral issues.

I was in school with kids that were mentally challenged. So, they really didn't know what to do—major autism, now that I look back. I was like, “Oh, that kid had autism. I remember him. He had autism.” And so, I was mixed in with everything. And you know, I didn't mind it.

**John Moe:** Did it improve at all, the dyslexia, as you went through school? Or did it stay rough?

**Todd Glass:** You know, it stayed rough, and I don't know if I made this up, but I don't think I did. I remember thinking in 10th grade—because I made friends, finally. So I did like going to school, but nothing was penetrating, really. I mean, stuff penetrates, but you have a teacher that's teaching history, and he's great at it. That stuff penetrated. So—but the stuff I needed to graduate was not penetrating. And I remember thinking, “Just go. And whatever you retain, you'll retain.” And I was enjoying school. And it is true, like you know, I rarely got a D. If it was, you know, a D, a C—a C was if the teacher liked me and just felt bad for giving me a D. But I thought about it. Like, I still learned a lot of stuff. So, you know, I'm glad I went through the school system, even though I couldn't graduate.

And that's a real compliment to teachers, because I know there's students they know they touched, and there's other students they think, “I wish I could have done more.” But like, I think of my teachers all the time, and I go—the fact that you were patient with me and there's a ton of shit I know, because I went through the school system even though I didn't graduate.

**John Moe:** When did the dyslexia get diagnosed?

**Todd Glass:** In about—you know, it gets a little fuzzy, but maybe in about 9th grade. 9th grade. And I didn't want to be on—you know, I don't know why. At that point, I had just started doing comedy. I mean, it does affect me to this day. I get the job done, but it takes a lot of people to help me get through, you know, life. Like, technical help and stuff like that. But I get it done. And you know, I don't know if I'd want to do anything about it now, although I still wonder, you know.

**John Moe:** Yeah. I mean, how do they—? Do they treat that kind of thing, or do they just help you kind of work around it? Like, what's the plan of attack for people you're working with in a situation like that?

**Todd Glass:** You know, that's a good question. I guess what I would do was get on some type—if I felt necessary, medicine? Or I don't know! It's funny you ask that. ‘Cause I always think could I do something? I always think medicine, you know. But I don't know. I mean, I get—I think at this point—you know, I have to remember I can learn new things. Somebody once told me, and it made so much sense—a woman I sat next to on the plane, we started talking. And she goes, “You know, you're not using it as an excuse. You get the job done.” She goes, “But when you have it when you're younger, you don't do anything about it.” She goes, “Let me ask you if this sounds right. Your attention, your ability to listen and read directions is shot to shit.”

And I went, “Oh my god! Exactly!”

So, anytime I have to take in new information, I get like augh, to this day. So—but sometimes a close friend will go, “Todd, trust me, you can learn this.” And I’m glad I know you can still learn new things.

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But I get nervous when anyone's trying to teach me anything. If that makes any sense.

**John Moe:** It makes total sense. And when did—? You have dealt with obsessive compulsive disorder as well. Did that start around the same time? Did that start when you were a kid?

**Todd Glass:** You know, it's funny. I don't say that in a defensive way—although maybe I do, because I'm about to go, “Oh, I don't think I have that.” (*Laughs.*)

**John Moe:** Oh, really?

**Todd Glass:** But I'm sure if some of my friends were in the room, they would shit in their pants because of my delusion.

(*They chuckle.*)

Maybe because it's so—the things—maybe I'm—the things that I would think would really make your life hard to go through, like not being able to touch things or not—you know, to me. And I respect that. Like I'm just saying that would be—mine seems manageable. I do like things in order. Oh, I guess... I just forgot about this. I know exactly when it happened, when I realized it. My mom was—let me preface this out of respect to my mom. When I'm saying she let go, and she wasn't as neat, my mom was always a very clean, very neat person. But she was, up 'til 5th grade, obsessive. And by the way, along with it being a good mom, we were allowed to play, we had fun. But she was—definitely like everything had a place. And you know, I coincidentally—especially 6th grade, 7th grade—that was good for me. I liked it. I loved it.

And then in about seventh grade, I remember her talking like, “You know, I just learned your friends—I let go. It was just too—” You know, she was talking to another person that did the same thing, and I remember sitting there thinking— She goes, “You know, and I thought your dishes stay, your company leaves. You don't have to clean the whole kitchen before you ever—” And she relaxed a little, which would mean dog nose marks on the window.

Now, believe me, I'm criticizing myself, not my mom, but I did not like it at all. Whoa! It was hard for me to be—we had like five, six dogs, which I loved. But letting go of that stuff, which no normal kid would care about—we had a nice house, but it wasn't obsessively clean. So, that really—oof, that was a lot for me. I mean, I was embarrassed about it at the same time. Like, I didn't want to vacuum the living room. At that point, we had shag carpeting, because everybody did. And I didn't want to vacuum in front of my brother. So, I would make pretend the dog knocked over a plant so I could vacuum the whole room.

**John Moe:** Wow. How do you—I'm intrigued by how someone can keep a very neat and clean and orderly house with five or six dogs. I have two, and it's nearly impossible.

**Todd Glass:** . You know, they definitely can—you know, they make it hard sometimes. Also, I loved the dogs. We had cats, we had dogs. It was one of my favorite parts of my life. But it did coincide with, you know, the mess that a dog would leave. Or like, if there was a dog bowl with dog food in it that had been eaten like an hour ago, little—anything. And it really—so, I would constantly be trying to get ahead of it. And I did get ahead of it sometimes, and I felt calm. But mostly it was, you know, just trying to keep up. You know, the outside too—the mulch I wanted perfect, like these people across the street. So, now because I can control my atmosphere—

I'm not like that with, by the way, people spilling something in my house. I'm a no coaster guy. I get it if you have a table, but I'm a no coaster guy. If you spill something, I don't care. It's more the organization. I like things to have a place.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Well, it's, it sounds—I mean, the D in OCD, the disorder part of it, it just means that it's making it hard to live your life. It sounds like that was the case when you were younger, and not so much the case now.

**Todd Glass:** Ooh, yeah, yeah. It's much better now. And mainly, by the way—I should say—just because I can control my atmosphere. I was in a relationship for 13 years. And you know what? He was a very orderly person too, just not like me. So, when I would come home from the road, you know, it was a little—it was a little bit. But I accepted it. It was a really good relationship, and I was happy I was in it. But being not in that relationship—I mean, I still can't believe I can go away and come home and everything's where I left it. Like, even if it's three weeks or four weeks. What about if it's two months? You come back in to everything—and I do like that. I do like that.

At comedy clubs, it can be hard sometimes. 'Cause you know, I mean, I do try to go in and control as much as I possibly can. I have an expression in comedy: you can't be more of a pain in the ass than you are a draw. So, I have to keep it in check sometimes.

**John Moe:** Yeah, well how do you manage to do that?

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Because comedy—I've been to comedy clubs. It can be pretty chaotic places, especially backstage.

**Todd Glass:** Yeah, well I think, luckily, I tour with certain people sometimes—which I'll explain why this helps me be able to do that. I tour with, you know, like heavily with Jim Gaffigan or Daniel Tosh, but over the years like, you know, Sarah Silverman and David Cross and Mike Birbiglia for a while. That was the first tour bus I ever went on, so that'll always be in my memory. But when I pick the clubs I want to work, I pick the best of the best. You know, maybe if I didn't open up for those guys, I'd have a bigger calendar filled. And I wouldn't go to the worst club, but I might go, “Eh, it's not my favorite club, but it's still

a good club.” You know, I acknowledge it. It's not my favorite. But I don't have to. So, with a lot of affection and appreciation—because I do appreciate it, and I know some people probably think it's a pain in the ass—they let me pretty much come in and— You know, I lower the lights in the showroom. And you know, some clubs even melt my heart. They'll be like, “Look at the sound booth. We cleaned it up for you yesterday.” And I hug them genuinely.

*(John chuckles.)*

And backstage, I lower the lights. You know, I'd bring some candles and turn—even where they're taking their tickets. I'd try to go through the club. I don't want a TV on in the bar, because that reminds them of reality. So, I pretty much go into most clubs and take control, not only in the showroom, but in the bar before the show. And you know, they let me do it, and I'm appreciative of it.

**John Moe:** Yeah, that's—so, why is it so important that you're—? It sounds like you're trying to organize or tidy up spaces that you aren't even going to be working in.

**Todd Glass:** Well, I think in one case we're—it's also in this case, you know, like I wouldn't write it off to my—*(chuckles)* you know, to my neuroses or whatever it is. In that case, I think it's just because like the green room sound booth, yes, that's that. That's definitely that. Like, no one's gonna see that. But as far as the room and the hallway and the bar and not having a TV on that is because I think it ultimately makes a better experience for the audience. Very few people get atmosphere. It shocks me when I go to places and I go, “The joke I have—” Music too! You know, I tell my friend Andy Frasco, I go, “Andy, when they're coming in, and they're waiting for the show, most places will let you lower the lights. Just no one asks! You might get to one venue; they won't let you lower them as much as you want. But almost every venue, if you go, ‘Hey, well the people are coming in, can we lower the lights?’ They will.”

And of course, I think musicians do this more, but I realize, you know, take control over the music you play as they're being seated. And no—the reason I don't want sports on at the bar, because that's real life. I want them, by the time they get down the hallway in the bar before the room to just forget about the world. You know? That's why even the music I play—it's not that—you know, one time they were playing this song, and I said, “Don't play that.”

They go, “You don't like it?”

I go, “No, I love it. I can't stop listening to it, but I heard it already. I want the music they get when they get in there to be like, ‘Where are we?’” And just through lighting and music—some places they're sitting for an hour before the show starts. I take full advantage of that hour to make it as entertaining as the show.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** More with Todd Glass in just a moment.

**Transition:** Gentle acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** We're back with comedian, Todd Glass, and we've been talking about his efforts to make his environment manageable, to maintain some control over his surroundings, like in comedy clubs.

Have you ever been in a situation where you took all these precautions, you've tried to set up the environment the way you want it to be, and then something goes wrong?

**Todd Glass:** Oh god damn you.

*(They laugh.)*

Well, because it leads back to me, and I'm gonna be honest. It's an easier story to tell, because I haven't done it since. It has to do with drinking too much. But most of the time, if I'm at a good comedy club, and I can take control of the audience, I'll handle. If I have—everything else is perfect. Of course, you already have an audience. This is hard to handle, as you know all this stuff. You know, at least if the sound system is good and the lighting's good and they sat them properly, I'm gonna usually have a good shot. I won't—I couldn't say this 30 years ago, or 20, but I'm not gonna let myself have a bad show. You know, especially after the pandemic. I always say I go on stage every fucking night like I have something to prove. And it makes me a better performer. So, I did all this at this comedy club. I mean everything. One of the waitresses goes, “This isn't a little better. This is fucking night and day.” It was a shabby little place, but I made it chic.

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Just through lighting, I had my three-piece band play as they were being seated. I mean, everything. And I got drunk and fucked up and did a horrible—I'm like I did everything right, except my show. And I didn't make myself a promise I would never drink again, but I made myself a promise that that would never happen again. I have full control. You can slip and maybe yell at an audience member, and it's not your style. But to just do that—and this was like five years ago. I said that will never happen again, and it never did. But that was—I think that answers your question, right? I was the one that got in the way, you know?

**John Moe:** Yeah, yeah. Do you—have you stopped drinking entirely, or just before shows, or what?

**Todd Glass:** No, I just know—like, look, I'm a grown adult. I can enjoy—I always say like three drinks or less might even make me a little looser. You know, it might even make the show a little better, let's say. But I do a lot of shows without drinking, so I can also have great shows without drinking. But maybe it's a late show. Three or less, never have a problem with it, ever. Does four drinks mean it gets horrible at four? No, but that's where it starts. So, I try to keep three or under, and then I'll never have a problem.

**John Moe:** Do you deal with anxiety? I've seen it printed a few places that you deal with anxiety on top of everything else.

**Todd Glass:** As good as I can self-analyze myself. You know, and I also say it's later in life—like, I think this will answer your question. I got rid of a lot of stuff I didn't need like five/six years ago. Like, not to get too personal, but you'll get what I mean. I used to have a house that I gave my name to, because I had better credit, and they were buying it. And I would always get things in the mail. “Oh, is this for my mortgage or that mortgage?” And I got rid of that. And a lot of like it, you know. I cleaned up. I leased a new car every year for three years since I was 18, because that's what my dad did. I kept my last Prius. No car payment. Paid my car insurance for the year. You know, back in the day when I couldn't afford to do it.

And I think I've got myself to where I got rid of any chaos in my life that I didn't need. A simplifying thing, not buying more than I can afford. You know, living comf—and I think because of that and also living by myself, I've calmed down—not because I did anything to fix it. Because I just did what I needed to do to correct it.

**John Moe:** It sounds like you've done a lot to kind of control over the years, like way back from when you were a kid, it's a lot about kind of controlling the environment that you're in to reduce that agitation, to reduce the possibility of anxiety.

**Todd Glass:** Right. ‘Cause my head is already chaotic. I don't need to have chaos around me. You know, I think this is somewhat interesting, and I'll tell you. There used to be a house across the street from us, and it was the builder's house, so he built a neighborhood, and then he built himself his dream house in that neighborhood. So, it was very, very nice. But besides that, I used to feel calm over there. And I don't mean just because they were wealthy. I always felt calm when I went there. And years later, I told my friend, Albert—because I'm still friends with him—his mom. I go, “I used to always come over to your house. I felt so calm.”

She goes—you know, now I'm a grown adult, like I still think—you know. And she goes, “You know, it's so funny you say that.” She goes, “We didn't ever have money for a decorator, but for that house, we did.” You know, she said it respectfully. And he had this theory that there's beauty in unity. And at first it scared me, because back then in 1978, like one room had shag, one room had this, that room could have—you could do whatever you want. That was, you know, “Oh, you do what you want.” And that was the look. But their house, a lot of the same. Same carpeting up the stairs, through every single bedroom, the same tile, the same—a lot, a lot, a lot of the same. And she goes, “At first I thought it was going to be boring, but then as it started happening, I felt it calming.” She goes, “And that's so funny to hear you say that, because you don't know this story.”

And I go, “Yeah, I felt calm in your house.”

And she goes, “The decorator said there's beauty in unity.” And that also would—not that I care that there's beauty in unity, although I do; it is true—but it was the calming aspect of it that made me— And that's how I have my house now. You know, I'm able to... I don't need chaos around me. I'm already chaotic. You know, the other night I was on stage, and I sat down. And I don't—I rarely sit down, but it was a high stool. So, I don't mind that, because you're still higher than the crowd and commanding. And I said, “What do I need to sit down

for, folks?” I go, “I’m already running around in my head even if I sit down.” And I think I had a better show.

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I stood up for moments here and there, but I was like—it centered me. My whole head is chaotic, so everything around me— And I think that's a big reason why I couldn't have kids. I adore kids, but I don't think— It's hard to have kids when you need that calm all the time.

**John Moe:** But five or six dogs worked okay? I'm sorry to keep coming back to these five or six dogs.

**Todd Glass:** (*Cackles.*) Yeah, you know what? That's so funny, because I loved the dogs also. They were awesome dogs. So, like that part of it wasn't the worst. It was the—you know, like some of the remnants of them. And again, I'm sort of analyzing myself. I'm certainly not telling a story about my childhood and, “Oh, you know, my bad parents.” It's the opposite. Any kid without being like this, things were fine. But for me— Dog nose marks, I mean, oh, did I hate them. You know, I couldn't express it then, but in hindsight. If I got home from school, first thing I did was just get over there.

**John Moe:** Windex.

**Todd Glass:** And the tracks, sometimes, because the dogs would like want to come in and have mud on their feet, so the tracks at the sliding glass door. I remember being like in sixth/seventh grade; I would get a tea kettle full of hot water and just pour it in there. And it felt so good. I'm like, “Yes, this is the way you're supposed to live!”

**John Moe:** (*Chuckles.*) Have you ever had dogs as an adult?

**Todd Glass:** Here and there I have. But one of the reasons not constantly is because, you know, it's—look, they're worth it. And I'm at the point now where I'm probably going to get a dog. I've said it for a long time, but I told myself that it's time. You know, honestly, through Instagram and TikTok, it pushed me over the edge. Just those videos sometimes of—(*sighs*) you know, I see one more golden retriever, I'm going to... (*chuckling*) they're so goddamn cute. So, anyway. No, but I never have.

**John Moe:** But you travel so much, so it must be hard with all the travel.

**Todd Glass:** You know what? I use that as an excuse. But the truth is, I know enough people that would watch it. I have a backyard that's fenced in. I have people that would stay at my house—love to stay here. You know, they'd be like, “Oh yeah, I'll stay at your house.” So, I think that wouldn't be the hardest part.

**John Moe:** Okay. Alright. How does—you came out as gay when you were 40—? How old were you? 40—?

**Todd Glass:** I came out when I was—yeah, I think 46.

**John Moe:** 46. Is this—I mean, can we make a connection between trying to have an orderly environment and staying in the closet till you're 46?

**Todd Glass:** I think it might be two different things, unless I'm—you know, unless it's obviously connected. But one was just societal; it wasn't even my parents. And you know... I told this to a friend of mine, and he goes, “God, I would never think about that.” But one of the things I realized that even amongst—and I'm growing up with this—open minded people, like not the extreme of like, “Oh, tell him to get the fuck—” You know what I mean. Like, “Just get out of my life, you're not my friend,” or kids that get kicked out of their house. Not even there.

Just I would hear stories. Because you know, when you're gay, no one knows it, and they talk in front of you. You know. They talk in front of you. It's the same thing's happening today, I'm sure, too—when people discuss other issues about, you know, how kids are reidentifying, and they don't know. They could be right across from you. You know, be sensitive. Be nice. You know. Same thing with gay. They would always talk right in front of me. And even my friends, it would be like—you know, I'd be hanging out, and they'd go, “Hey, did you hear, you know, Brad came out?”

Most of my friends would be like, “Yeah, yeah, I mean, I don't give a shit. Like, you know, he's my friend, right?” But then they would go on for about—it seem an eternity—to talk about, “Can you imagine two guys doing it? Do you do this? Do you do that?” Which is, you know, not even I would say wrong conversation. You know, especially then, you know. But I just thought if I come out, all people are going to do is sit around and imagine me having, you know, sex with men or kissing men! Because I know it!

People go, “Well, don't be paranoid.” No! I lived it! I know what they do! I was a straight guy. And no one knew, so I heard everything. I heard every single thing. And that was a lot of it. So, on that element alone, to go on stage, like I remember feeling veeery vulnerable after I came out. Like, even walking into a comedy club with my head down a little. And I was aware of it. That went away really quick. My comedian friends were just—you know, they're the fucking best. Just the way they dealt with it, with a sense of humor, to so quick just put it behind me. But yeah, I walked in, I felt naked. I was like—it was very different, you know. And going on stage? Woof. It was like, oh my god, they all know. And thinking, well, maybe most of them don't. You know, how many people are here to see me? You know.

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**John Moe:** Was it your plan at one point to just never come out?

**Todd Glass:** It was such a plan that, to sideways give a plug, I had a book that I wrote right afterwards. It was called *The Todd Glass Situation*. But I wanted to call it—which, this will answer your question. I wanted to call it *All I Ever Wanted to Meet Was a Girl With a Terminal Disease: And Other Things I Did to Stay in the Closet*. So, people would get it. It wasn't— And the first title was *All I Ever Wanted to Do Was Meet a Girl With Cancer: And Other Things I Did to Stay in the Closet*. But cancer just sounded—and again, I'm not making

fun of the cancer. This is making fun of the plight of a young kid that thinks absurd! Going to the absurd levels. But I would have settled for *All I Ever Wanted to Meet Was a Girl With a Terminal Disease: And Other Things I Did to Stay in the Closet*, because that was my honest plan.

I remember—you know, sometimes you would meet guys. And then you'd have someone to talk to, so you didn't fucking explode, you know? I told him about this plan, half kidding. He goes, "That's what I thought!" And it was we'd meet a girl with cancer, then she would pass away. And you would just go, "Oh, Todd never got over—you know, he never got over Rachel." You know? And then I would just stay single for the rest of my life.

*(They chuckle.)*

**John Moe:** Were you—before you came out, were you seeing men?

**Todd Glass:** No. I would—not that often, but occasionally, you know, meet somebody and maybe fool around or—you know, back then—I feel bad. I wish there were people I could go back to and sometimes apologize, and just—because, you know, you do feel bad. You'll think of something out of the blue, and just—if I found out anybody was like even openly gay, like this coolest dude in the world, and then he would say something, "Oh yeah, my parents totally know. They're cool about it; they make jokes." I'm like, oh, no, no, no. This is the—you gotta be like me, 100%. Maybe I know five or six people. Like, it was okay if they go, "Yeah, I have two friends that know." But this guy—and I was, oh, I feel bad. I feel so bad. I feel—like, it's just so horrible that I would do that to somebody. And I know they probably understand, 'cause they went through it too.

But so, that's what I would do and didn't really ever, you know— But you know, it was—you feel like you're going to explode. I told my friend, I go, "You know how hard it is when you start, you know, being attracted to the other sex? If you're straight, it's hard. Imagine doing that, but you can't tell anybody." So, it's like how long can you do this?

**John Moe:** Well, until you're 46, I guess, but...

*(Todd laughs and agrees.)*

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** More from Todd Glass after a short break.

**Transition:** Gentle acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Back with comedian Todd Glass, who came out of the closet at age 46. What did that do to you psychologically? It seems like that would—it seems like a very lonely way to live, and must incur some psychic damage on you.

**Todd Glass:** You know... I eventually did have a close circle of friends that knew even before I came out officially. And it's not healthy, but to give an honest perspective, I also had a lot of fun and a lot of joy and a lot of, you know, comedians I love. When I met comedians—I've said this a million times, 'cause I want to say it, because I want them to know it. You know, I might not say it at this level when I'm face to face, but comedians gave me a life. So, I had that going on in my life and people that I loved and new friends. And it was so much fun to make new friends, comedian new friends. And so, I had a lot of joy in my life. And a lot of good going on.

And—but there's a lot of—I mean, there's a lot of plates spinning, there's no doubt about it. Like, I mean, (*stammering*) I tell this stupid little detail, because maybe it's like things people go, “Oh my god, I never thought about that! My friend Andrea—I bought a duplex, and my friend Andrea lived upstairs with her friend Nicky. They were a straight couple. And if I had friends coming in from out of town, I would literally go up to Andrea and go, “Andrea, just come down for five minutes. So, when they walk in, there's a woman there, you know?” Hey! Oh yeah, we all live here! I would, I would throw that into the mix too, like trying to get a towel to get smoke out of a room. I'd always get that. “Oh yeah, we all live here. We live—yeah, we live—all of us. We're all living here.” (*Chuckles.*) You know.

And then she would go upstairs, and then I'd have to buy her a dinner the next night. But it's little stupid things like that to just appear straight. And I knew a lot of people knew, too. I'm not—that's why I hate when people go, “Oh, we all knew.” It's not about that, please! Why do you have to go right to there, you know?

**John Moe:** Was Andrea posing as your girlfriend in that ruse?

[00:35:00]

**Todd Glass:** You know, I wasn't—I knew back then be careful with the web you weave. Keep it neutral. Keep it neutral. Because when a guy has a girlfriend, no one wants to say it's my girlfriend. You know, because they're afraid everyone's gonna move too quick. So, you know, people go, “Is it your girlfriend?”

I remember my friends—and I go, “It's not my girlfriend.” So, I would never say. I would go, “No, no, no, no, she's not my girlfriend.” But one time I went to a wedding. You know, and Andrea at this point, you know—oh my God, I was 34. So, she was like 24. And we went to a wedding and she—my friend goes, “Todd, that girl you brought, I saw her making out with somebody. Like, you know, down that hallway.”

I'm like, “Oh, I—no, it's not—yeah we're not like—you know, we're not serious. But like even if—in hindsight, if you weren't serious with the girl, and you brought over a wedding, you wouldn't want her making out. But she didn't do anything wrong. She was just, you know being—you know.

**John Moe:** Having fun at a wedding.

**Todd Glass:** Healthy stuff. Yeah, healthy stuff, you know.

**John Moe:** Why did you come out?

**Todd Glass:** Although ultimately being healthier for me, I think it was—I don't think; I know it was, and it's still going on. There was a lot of kids taking their lives, and it was being—like I said, it's still happening. And I thought, well, I'm giving legitimacy that it's something worth hiding. So, I asked a friend of mine, Kevin. He was a therapist, but didn't have his degree yet. So, we used to call him Almost Dr. Kevin Sousa. And I said, “Kevin, don't let me back out of this. Don't let me back out. I want to come out.” And at that point I thought—because he had dealt with this—I'd thought about it to come out on Marc Maron. That way I can do it once. Just like some people write an email to everybody. It's like a mass email. It just gets all the—I thought, oh I get to do this for everybody. Marc Maron's podcast, he had dealt with very sensitive issues and with—where I felt I'd be comfortable and in good hands. I thought I had a lot to say that I had held in. And I thought, you know, go to a big platform. You know.

Some people would tease me. Like a few friends. “Oh, he didn't do it on my podcast? We're close. He could have done it on my podcast.”

And I go, “I didn't do it on my podcast!” You know, I wanted a big audience. So—and I went, and I said, “Don't let me out of it.” And he called me back like a month later. He goes, “Well, I'm not letting you out of it.”

And I'm like, “Alright, what do I do?”

He goes, “Well, you should start by calling Marc. Ask him if it's something he'd even do or want to do.”

And I said—I remember leaving a message going, “Marc, I won't be offended at all if you're like, ‘Oh, Todd, good for you. That's the healthy life. But you know, that's not something that I think I would want to do on the show.’” You know, I did. I eventually—you know, I talked to Kevin a lot getting ready for it, and I went with a friend. Because I was so nervous. You know, the night before, I watched the *It Gets Better* campaign, with Dan Savage and—I always forget; I know he started that with someone else. I feel disrespectful, but—and it's funny that like though—that I watched it, and I got the confidence. This one kid, I often wonder where he's at, but he was in bed with his dog. He was a young kid, like he might have been maybe 14 years old. And he's throwing like a hacky sack up and down. And he goes “Well, I did it.” He goes, “I told my parents I like dudes. My dad's like, ‘You do?’ I go yeah, I mean, you know, it works for me. Like he goes, ‘Alright.’ My dad goes, ‘Alright, you like dudes.’”

But he felt comfortable saying dudes. Like, he didn't want to say the word gay. So, I related with that, because that word had so much negativity. And he was like—I'm like, oh, look at this little cool fuck. You know? And you know, so I thought oh my god. Like, you know, he came here to get confidence and then, you know, gives this 47-year-old guy the confidence. You know, the little push that was helpful in the last minute the night before.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah, you made it orderly. You made sure everything was neat and straight and ready to go in order for this to happen.

**Todd Glass:** I was just gonna say, one of the things that I remember doing—thinking this literally—was... it's not to say there wasn't brilliant comedy back 40 years ago. Because I think there's brilliant comedy today, I think there was brilliant comedy back then. But I thought I did good comedy, but it doesn't mean there's things in hindsight—oh, I was punching down. I was—even if it's not racial or homophobic or sexist, even if it's just too mean. A joke that's—and I don't think I was a bad person then, but it's okay to grow. I think—maybe I'm guessing, but some people don't want to say, “Ah, maybe I shouldn't have done that.” Not I'm not able to do it.

That always gets me really riled up when people go, “Oh, you can't do that anymore.”

I want to go, “Isn't there anything you don't want to do anymore?” Like, forget about the things you want to do, but you can't. Give me three things you can't do, but you're like, “Oh, no, no, it's—I'm a better person for not doing that.”

[00:40:00]

Isn't there any of those ever? You know, it's like, “Oh, you can't do this, you can't do that.”

And meanwhile, I thought I'm not gonna do that. I'm not gonna do that. History—you know, it's almost overwhelming that history shows that when a group of people ask for things—even if it's confusing—years later, always undeniable on every level, most people, even the masses, go, “Oh, of course they deserve that. Of course they deserve that.” Even the things that they thought, “Now they're pushing it.” You know, “I'm alright with gay people, but now they want to get married.” Even the list of things that, “Oh, now they're out of goddamn control.” Even the list of, “Now women—now they're out of goddamn control.” Years later, There is no “too” list. Everything's just fair! Fair, reasonable asks.

So, when I continue to do comedy—willingly; I'm not in a mad at it. That's why people go, “It's hard to do comedy today.” Yeah, if you're mad at change, it's fucking hard. But if you're not mad at change, and you don't mind changing—I'm having a goddamn ball!

**John Moe:** (*Chuckles.*) Yeah, that's wonderful. Tell me about *The Event of a Lifetime*, which is a standup show that you're putting together, I understand.

**Todd Glass:** I've always liked music, you know, in my show. And it just adds—you know, it just adds so much. And on one level or not, over the years I've used it. But I sort of took—I had a Netflix special. I'll reference it if people want to go reference it, they can. It was called *Todd Glass: Act Happy*, and that's when I first used the band at that level.

After that special was over—obviously, I'm not shooting a special; I'm not nervous. I went out with the band again. There's a three-piece. And it turned into something else. And it turned into going, “I want to take advantage of every single ounce that the crowd is in my control.” That's why like I have a saxophone player out on the street before the show starts. If someone's two blocks away—not just some bullshit line, I've already started entertaining them. It changes the dynamic of a whole city block! It makes it like you're in a movie. So, I do that. The music we play as they're being seated, the lighting, the bass player, maybe in the

lobby if it calls for it—to just make it like this “what the fuck?”, and then it's a standup comedy show with a band that's tight. It's overwhelmingly a standup comedy show. If you're craving standup comedy, it's the guts of it, just with a lot of production around it. After the show, there's an ice cream truck in the street when I can do it. So, I started a crowd source on a on Spark&Seed—Seed&Spark. And it's to get the money to do like a New York run, but—to wrap it up so I don't go on too long—that one of the biggest things is the budget. To be able to promote it like when a play opens in New York. You know, a robust marketing budget. Otherwise I could go do it and do it and do it, and it's not gonna matter.

So, in October, that's our goal: to bring this show. And if they go to my website, [ToddGlass.com](http://ToddGlass.com), or just right to YouTube—my website will take you to the crowdsourcing, but if you just go to YouTube and put in “Todd Glass The Event of a Lifetime”, there's a four-minute reel, and then—you watch four minutes. You'll be like, “Oh, I get it. I get it.” It really clearly explains exactly what the show is. So, thank you for letting me throw some love that way.

**John Moe:** Well, yeah, no—I mean, best of luck on that project. I do—(sighs) I mean, this show, this episode of ours, is coming out after our MaxFunDrive, which is our big like public radio style member drive that we do for our network. We're taping this during the drive, and it makes me think about trying to make your environment just so, trying to make things just so, but also the chaos of “I hope people out there on the other side of the internet like what I'm doing and support what I'm doing. I have no way to control that variable.”

Like, that's—always our drive's certainly nerve wracking for me, to go through that process and just hope that they work. Because I can't, you know, type in someone's credit card number for them; they have to decide to do that. And it sometimes makes me feel like I'm not in control of the situation. I'm wondering how that feels for you with this project and crowdfunding.

**Todd Glass:** You know, it is a little—you know, you don't know what's going to happen or how people are taking it in. But I sort of—I have a plan B, and I always try to have a plan B, that if I don't get the funds I need, I sort of have a plan B. And that sort of comforts me. But I know that—just let it—that's the type of stuff—I guess I can let go of certain stuff. But I still have high hopes that everything's gonna—you know, I'll get to do it in New York. And then, basically, that's what I want to do the rest of my life. And that's the reason—I mean, I really fucking worked hard to make this show as tight as it can be.

[00:45:00]

‘Cause I go, yeah, this is—you have to sort of reinvent yourself. And then if this show is successful, I would love to do a residency somewhere or tour with it ‘til I can't do standup, which would most likely be at least—at least—you know, ‘til you're 80. So, you know, I got a good amount of time ahead of me.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, and you've always got that stool option. If standing up itself proves too difficult, you can sit down.

**Todd Glass:** I know! (*Laughing.*) I always say—it’s funny. I use notes on stage. I have a binder. ‘Cause I started using it. I don't stare at it. I mean, I look at the crowd and I do 15 minutes of standup comedy, get a drink of water, turn a page. They're huge bullet points. They help me perform better. They give me a beaten path. I go off the beaten path all the time, but it's always a beaten path for me to have. So, I thought if I get older, and I forget my act, I won't have to worry. They'll be so familiar with me from using notes my whole career.

So, I thought if I start sitting down now, maybe I—you know, maybe no one will even know. “Y know, he forgets his whole act, and he's staring at it, and he's handicapped.”

They go, “Shut up! He's been sitting down since he was, you know, in his 60s.”

**John Moe:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah. At some point you become a monologist. You know, you can switch from standup comedian to monologist really.

*(Todd agrees with a laugh.)*

Well, Todd Glass, I really appreciate this view into your mind. I've enjoyed your comedy for a long time, and now I kind of feel like I'm looking at it through your brain and through your eyes. And it makes me appreciate it all the more. And thanks so much for being here.

**Todd Glass:** Well, you're welcome. It was a really—you know I always quote Mr. Rogers. He had—amongst so many great quotes, but “if it's mentionable, it's manageable.” And whenever I talk about stuff like this, you know, you ask yourself why? You don't want to just talk. What are you talking about this for, you know? And you go, “Well, if it's mentionable, it's manageable.” So—and it also helps me. So, I appreciate the talk as well. I hope other people enjoy it. But for my own—you know, you ask some questions I've never been asked before, and you sort of start to figure out yourself a little more, which can never be a bad thing. So, thank you. It was nice meeting you, and I really enjoyed the talk. Thank you.

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

**John Moe:** Todd Glass is online at [ToddGlass.com](http://ToddGlass.com). You can also just Google him or search him on YouTube. He's all over the internet, and there's a lot of good laughs to be had.

A quick note here. We had Jenny Lawson on the show a couple of weeks ago and talked a little bit about TMS therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation. Jenny mentioned that her treatment wasn't covered by insurance. In many cases, for many people, it is covered by insurance. If you're interested in that treatment, talk to your doctor, talk to your insurance company. For more about TMS, we have links at our website.

Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write rave reviews for us. That helps get our show out into the world. And when it's in the world, it helps people. So please, help us help people.

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 *Depresh Mode* newsletter is on Substack, search that up. I'm on Twitter and Instagram, [@JohnMoe](#). Join our Preshies group too. Go to Facebook, look up Preshies. Great discussion happening over there, people helping each other out, sharing information, sharing triumphs and challenges. It's a good group of folks. Our electric mail address is [depreshmode@maximumfun.org](mailto:depreshmode@maximumfun.org).

Hi, credits listeners. The smallest state capital in the US is Montpelier, Vermont—7,705 people, meaning 0.01297% of people in Montpelier are the governor of Vermont. Meanwhile, only 0.00006% of people in Phoenix are the governor of Arizona. These things keep me awake at night.

*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*

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

[00:50:00]

**Katrina:** Hi, this is Katrina from Detroit, Michigan, and I believe in you—today and every day.

*(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!