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**John Moe:** Here's what we're going to talk about this week. We're going to talk about lifetimes' worth of anxiety. We're going to talk about powerful, indestructible imposter syndromes. We're going to talk about not getting emotional support from your parents to be the person you want to be. And we're going to talk about giant whale puppets that swallow entire bands. So, anxiety, imposter syndrome, parental support issues, whale puppets. You might have some, or even most, of these things in common with our guest. Probably not all four.

It's *Depresh Mode*. I'm John Moe. I'm glad you're here.

**Music:** “Oh No!” from the album *As It Ever Was, So It Will Be Again* by The Decemberists.

*It was on a wedding night*

*How they danced by the firelight*

*And the bride was well arrayed*

*By her 15 chambermaids*

*As father raised a toast*

*To the health of all the hosts*

*We descended from the apse*

*To bear witness to the old collapse*

*And it's oh no*

*We're jumped up and ready to go*

*(Music fades out.)*

**John Moe:** That's a song called “Oh No!” by the Decemberists off their new album *As It Ever Was, So It Shall Be Again*. It just came out. And that's the voice of the band's lead singer, Colin Meloy. Now just in that snippet, you hear words not often heard in popular music—chambermaid, apse, arrayed. You can find all sorts of fun words in Decembrist songs—palanquin, falderal, parapets. Sometimes it helps to have a dictionary nearby when you're listening to them. And there are boats. A lot of boats in the lyrics Colin Malloy writes and sings. One of their most beloved numbers is the “Mariner's Revenge Song”.

**Music:** “Mariner’s Revenge Song” from the album *Picaresque* by The Decemberists.

*We are two mariners*

*Our ship's sole survivors*

*In this belly of a whale.*

*Its ribs are ceiling beams*

*Its guts are carpeting*

*I guess we have some time to kill*

*You may not remember me*

*I was a child of three*

*And you a lad of eighteen*

*(Music fades out.)*

**John Moe:** In some live shows, the band brings a huge whale puppet out on stage during that number, and the whale systematically eats the Decemberists over the end of the song. It's neat, and I wanted you to know about that.

Colin Meloy is originally from Helena, Montana. He lives in Portland now. His sister is the acclaimed writer Maile Meloy. The Decemberists have released nine full length albums over the past 20 years. The albums land high on the charts. The band plays to big crowds at large venues. Colin is also the author of several children's books—some illustrated by his wife, Carson Ellis, with whom he has two kids. *As It Ever Was, So It Shall Be Again* is the first album from the Decemberists in the last six years.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Colin Meloy, welcome to *Depresh Mode*.

**Colin Meloy:** Thanks for having me.

**John Moe:** And congratulations on the album, *As It Ever Was, So It Will Be Again*. And I'll ask you the question that I think has been going around in probably the press that you've been doing. Why did it take so long since your last album to make this album?

**Colin Meloy:** For one thing, I've just been taking the time between Decembrist records to do other stuff, you know, pursue other creative leads. Right after the last record, I started working on another book. And I was working on that book when the pandemic hit, until last year, really—I mean, where I started to kind of assemble the things that we had. And we went on the road. We had, you know, a twice postponed tour that finally went off in 2022. And I think that kind of got me going. You know, spending time with the gang again and remembering that I like them as creative partners.

*(John chuckles.)*

And I like that job pretty well most of the time. And yeah, that kind of got me fired up to go back into the studio and start recording again.

**John Moe:** It seems, given the size of the band and given kind of everything that goes into making an album—it seems like a Decembrist's album must be a pretty heavy lift also. Like, it must take up a lot of your energy. It's not something that you could just go off into an office and work on your own like a book.

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah, it is.

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It is an enormous energy suck, you know? I mean—and I don't think I really reckon with it until after the fact. Even though, you know, it's been a relatively mellow process. And you know, it gets spread out over time. It's not super concentrated, but I have just been wiped out the last couple days. And reflecting on the process, from going—you know, arranging to start going into the studio. Never mind, you know, writing the songs and demoing them. But like the process of going in the studio and assembling all the people that need to be there and everybody learning the song and trying to figure out the best version of the song that we could possibly do.

And then all the promotional stuff. And this is our first record on our own label, you know, working with 30 Tigers. But you know, it is our own label. That took a lot of brain power. And then to—I mean, it's just the whole thing is exhausting.

*(They chuckle.)*

**John Moe:** So, with the album finally out in the world, do you kind of just—do you collapse then?

**Colin Meloy:** A little bit! I feel like—not literally, but I definitely felt like a, “Ohh”. You know, a certain amount of an outbreath. You know, it's a little weird, this one. Because usually—so, we had toured through the month of May, and the record wasn't even out yet. Usually—I mean, this is the only time we've ever done that. Prior to this, we've always—you know, the record comes out, maybe you've got a show or two under your belt on a tour, but like the record usually precedes the tour and not the other way around. And so, as a consequence, there's a lot of build up those weeks leading up and on the release date, you

know. Because not only are you wrangling with the release of the record and all the promotional duties around that, but also you're getting your head around going on tour for weeks and weeks, and that can just be a very intense time.

And it was kind of interesting this time. It's like very separated. Like, there was a little bit of promotional stuff happening in April or whatever, but it was mostly tour prep. And then being able to do some of that stuff on the road, and then coming home, having a little downtime, doing a lot of promotional stuff, and then the record come out is just kind of a new—in some ways it's kind of nice. Like, it broke it up nicely. It wasn't so concentrated in one spot.

**John Moe:** Yeah, it wasn't so much of a roller coaster. From what I understand, the album previous to this, *I'll Be Your Girl*—according to what I've read, a lot of that came out of your feelings from the 2016 presidential election and a lot of stress and a lot of depression in the wake of that. Is that true?

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah. Yeah, I mean, that record—in my mind, it was a distillation. A lot of those songs were coming from a place of a lot of cynicism and anger, I think. And even the stuff that's not directly about that—you know, that's not directly addressing the political situation—and there are a couple songs that I feel like do directly address the political situation, but even the ones that don't, like I hear them now, and I can hear myself. I can hear my frustration and anger and sadness in that. And it really came to—when we came off the road, we finished up in Germany in late 2018. And I came home, and I just crashed. And was super, super bummed out, and was having a hard time seeing the way forward from there. And I think it was a product of (*makes a barf noise*), you know, vomiting that stuff out night after night.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Do you—when you perform those songs, do you have to kind of go into that emotional space that song is about? Do you have to kind of act them, really?

**Colin Meloy:** No, not necessarily, I don't think. But I mean, they have their effect on you, you know, if you do them expressively and are kind of in the moment night after night. I can't really explain. I mean, it also could be due to just kind of post-tour. Usually though, after a tour I'm pretty elated to be off the road. But for whatever reason—and it wasn't a longing to go back on the road at all. I think that was what was kind of frustrating and freaky about it is that I was just—

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I didn't want to go on the road. I didn't want to be off the road. I didn't—I don't know. I was just in a hole. And it took a bit to get out of that.

**John Moe:** How long did it take?

**Colin Meloy:** Oh I don't know. You know, I think I was... maybe you know six weeks or something like that, just kind of in a state. And then things moved on.

**John Moe:** Is that something that had happened before?

**Colin Meloy:** No. You know, I've had my other struggles. I've not really ever experienced them as purely depression though. I think that was really the only time that I've experienced that, you know. And it wasn't—you know, it wasn't clinical or anything like that. It wasn't debilitating. Thankfully, I don't feel like depression is my demon. But it was kind of alarming, I think. It kind of laid me out.

**John Moe:** Do you have other demons?

*(Colin laughs.)*

What do you got here?

**Colin Meloy:** What are we talking about? This is *Depresh Mode* after all. You can't come on here and be squeaky clean.

**John Moe:** *(Chuckling.)* I don't think anybody's squeaky clean.

**Colin Meloy:** No. You know, I have struggled our entire career with the Decemberists—and something that I hadn't experienced before being in this band—with anxiety. And I think a lot of that has to do—well, there's a million things. And I think it blossomed when the band started to get recognition and notice, and we were becoming successful. I think I have some really strong, powerful... um, what do you call it? This feeling that I am a fraud.

**John & Colin:** *(Simultaneously.)* Imposter syndrome.

**Colin Meloy:** And I think when you are a creative artist and you start to get any kind of recognition for what you do, you would think that any kind of feeling like that would be instantly dispelled. But it's, in my experience, quite the opposite. It can really be exploded in a way that's kind of hard to understand or explain. I started to feel—I was feeling a lot of pressures from, you know, just all the very—like, it just becomes—this thing that you started, that you wanted to do since you were a little kid, right? To be in a band. And it starts—this thing that is this perfect expression of—you know, there's nothing about it that's not a joy, like early on. Like, oh my god, are you kidding me?! Like, even just playing in my friend's back room, you know, recording onto his tape deck through a mixer, doing New Order covers or whatever was a thrill beyond anything I'd ever imagined.

You turn that into—slowly, it's like a ball of something, like a snowball going down the hill. Like, as you get older, as you become more ambitious, as you take on more bandmates, and then suddenly there's agents and managers and then labels and promoters and press people, like that ball starts rolling down. And suddenly this thing that was just New Order covers in the back room of your friend's house becomes this machine. You can get a kind of vertigo—or I did at some point. And this kernel of anxiety that was always there, I think, but just didn't have something to really—*(chuckles)* you know, something to blow it up, that happened. And it—yeah, *(inaudible.)*

**John Moe:** Well, the stakes get higher. And so, the imposter syndrome is like, “Well, now even more people are going to be shocked and appalled when I’m exposed as the fraud that I am.”

**Colin Meloy:** I’m fooling more and more people, you know.

*(John affirms with a chuckle.)*

And I’m fooling—and then the hardest thing is I think this feeling that I’m fooling people for whom their livelihood counts on me.

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Like, these people, like my bandmates and agents and managers and labels, crew people and things like that. A lot of it also wraps around the pressures of tour. You know, I think—and that’s one thing. Even in the early days, like, jumping in the van—like, touring was never easy for me as somebody who’s always been kind of a homebody and an introvert. And even though I’ve always loved traveling, rock tour was something else entirely. And you know, I think we were in vans. There’s a certain amount of excitement that carried me along, I think, in the early days. You know, that I was able to kind of swallow those fears, because it was just so exciting in the early aughts when we started the tours, started to get bigger and expanding and playing bigger places, more people coming out.

So, there’s this excitement on top of that, but then you’re always struggling and fighting this thing inside of you that is desperately frightened, you know, of this momentum. And it seemed to have—and then it gets to a point where you feel like you have no control over it. That, you know, it’s a wheel in motion, and you are being carried along with it. You desperately want off, but you know that if you were to pull it to a halt, it would be sort of devastating to everybody involved, including yourself.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** More with Colin Meloy in a moment.

*(ADVERTISEMENT)*

**Transition:** Gentle acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Back with Colin Meloy of The Decemberists. We’ve been talking about imposter syndrome and anxiety and the unnerving quality of increased career momentum.

Were you able to enjoy the success when that success started coming? Were you able to actually soak in it?

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah, I did. Absolutely. I wasn’t—absolutely. And I think we did not—that’s the other thing, my imposter syndrome kicking in is like, “How dare become overwhelmed

by your success when your success is pretty—” You know, it's modest compared to some people whose lives get totally turned upside down by success. And so, in some ways I'm thankful that never happened. You know, I think I would have experienced something even more powerful, you know.

And so, I feel like our success was modest, and the momentum was slow enough that I think I was able to be carried along with it. There are just some certain points where I got really thrown and have kind of struggled to retain balance since then. You know?

**John Moe:** What were those points?

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**Colin Meloy:** Well, you know, in 2006 we canceled the tour, because I wanted to stop that wheel from turning. And we had a six-week tour planned. And it was when we were like playing, you know, a couple nights in all these different cities. We had had a really busy year where we had been touring relentlessly. And we had—in the States and in Europe. It was on *The Crane Wife*—the end of *The Crane Wife* tour when we were kind of—we had toured *The Crane Wife* and now, you know, looking for another thing. You know, like let's come up with another thing to tour. And so, we had developed this idea of doing two nights everywhere. We were going to do short songs one night and long songs another night. And this was in—I think, mid-2007.

And I knew—I remember discussing it with the band being like, “I feel like I want to stop one of these. Like, cancel one of these tours before they're announced,” and getting pushback from everybody being like, “What are you talking about? Like, this is a—you know, why would you say no to this?”

And of course, I think I was really easily influenced, because there was like, “Yeah, what's wrong with you? Why won't you? Why aren't you loving every second of this? You know, why would you consider not doing a tour that's guaranteed to be, you know, a sellout tour, a big deal, people coming out?” And so—

**John Moe:** Right. We're gonna make a lot of money off this.

**Colin Meloy:** That everybody will make a lot of money off of. And so, I kind of swallowed it up, you know. And this is also at a point where that kind of—the anxiety and the pressures of everything was manifesting in a very physical way. Just like, you know, gut stuff, just like sleep stuff. You know, how that can be. And then it finally—and so—but I was just kind of keeping it all inside, keeping it all inside. Alright, let's just go. And then I kind of cracked a little bit the first week of that tour where I just stopped sleeping. I was in the sort of state of panic. And I called it. I was just like, I can't. I can't go on stage. I can't do a show like this. I need to get home, and I need to get better. I need to get back on solid ground.

I feel like I was on a ship... which is appropriate, I guess, for the Decemberists to use a ship metaphor.

*(John chuckles.)*

But like, you know, a ship that was rocking to such a degree that I couldn't stay steady on deck, you know. And this fear that I would be thrown overboard. And what that means to be thrown overboard, I don't know. You know, I still don't know. But because I pulled the plug, and I got home and was able to—kind of. I mean, it was a very long recovery. Of course, I got back on the road fairly quickly, which is astounding to me in retrospect. Like, I was on—within six months, I was doing a solo tour. But it was enough time just to get home and get straight, you know, a little bit. But it's not like it—from that point on, everything—you know, it's been something that I've struggled with every record cycle, with every tour.

**John Moe:** You struggle with the anxiety of it? The imposter syndrome of it?

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah, the anxiety, the dread of—you know. Of being kind of sucked into that machine again and, you know, what it will do to my mental health. It's almost like fear of the fear as much as anything. Yeah.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Well, you've been at it for a long time now. Have you developed techniques and plans so you can—you know, knowing that might be coming, do you have contingencies in place?

**Colin Meloy:** Well, we don't—we tour less and for a smaller amount of time. You know, for a long time it was like three weeks on the road max, you know, for a tour leg. That kind of, over time, has bloomed into like four/four and a half weeks. But trying to keep it to three weeks at a go.

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Other than that—I mean, there are certain things that I do on the road. I'm drinking less. That's another thing that was happening in 2006/2007. I was drinking a shit ton. And I was using that, you know, as a way to medicate. And of course, it was not making anything better. It was making it worse. And so, I'm a lot more mindful about alcohol intake now on the road. I don't really drink that much at all. Other than that—I mean, early on, like there was a lot of throwing the book at it. You know, doing a lot of mindfulness exercises and, you know, listening to Jon Kabat-Zinn on the airplane. You know, ferociously, aggressively listening to Jon Kabat-Zinn.

*(John laughs.)*

And I think I did—you know, despite that, I think I did draw a lot of meaning from that. And even though I don't have a meditation practice now, I did for a while. I feel like I drew a lot of good from that.

**John Moe:** It just makes me think of Decemberist shows that I saw around that time. You're describing when you would have a big whale puppet come out on stage and eat everybody over the course of a song. *(Chuckles.)* It's hard not to think of that as being a sort of metaphor for what you were going through.



**Colin Meloy:** Yeah, it was this whale. It was a thing that I had created that had gotten bigger than myself, and it was threatening to swallow me is absolutely what was happening.

**John Moe:** Wow. Okay. So, as you—you know, you've already been out on the road with the new album. How have you been doing with the new album when you're out there?

**Colin Meloy:** I've been doing. I mean, I have a different relationship to it than I did then. I mean, we're older. You know, the thrum of that growth, that sudden growth between 2003 and 2006—those three years or whatever, where everything was happening so quickly—I mean, that's 20 years ago now, you know? And I think things have settled into something that, you know—it's a much more... it's kind of an honest career at this point.

**John Moe:** Yeah, it's more of a lunch bucket kind of thing.

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah, we're not gonna... thrill, you know, the rock critics the way that maybe at some point—(*chuckling.*) I don't know if we ever really did. But you know, I think it's settled into something that—it feels more manageable to me. I also have a better sense of—you know, when I do get those feelings of vertigo, you know, a feeling of just don't look down. And I think even though I might not be conscious of it, I think that there are—you know, my body and my mind have created kind of defense mechanisms when those sorts of feelings start to crop up. And I, you know... breathing through shit, you know, is a powerful thing. Along with medication here and there.

**John Moe:** As necessary. If *I'll Be Your Girl* was inspired by that election where that man got elected, how are you doing now that we're, you know, a few months away from another election with this same character and a lot of anxiety in sort of the national mood about what might happen?

**Colin Meloy:** (*Clicks teeth.*) I don't know. It feels so absurd. I think a lot of the 2016 thing was shock, you know? And so, there's part of me that feels like we lived through that, we can live through it again. That guy's not going to live forever. And I do—honestly, I mean, though people may say, well, like, “Oh, well, there'll just be another Trump coming up behind him,” I think it's such a cult of personality that I think that once he's gone, there will be disarray.

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So, I feel like if we can just outlast him—and I don't know, I'm talking to Carson, my wife, and I think she has a way of looking at it sometimes where she's like, “Wouldn't it be wild if democracy in the United States crashed? What a wild time to be an American.” (*Chuckles.*) You know, to have been here for that moment and lived through it. Of course, that's... you know, that would be an awful thing. And I know that—of course, I think that Trump supporters don't realize that, but like a failure of American democracy will certainly affect a lot of his followers more than they will those of us who may have the means to sort of float above it a little bit, you know, or even leave the country. You know, it's the marginalized and poor people who are going to be really fucked by that, by his unraveling of that world. So, I'm also aware of my privilege in that moment.

**John Moe:** That's good to know. You talk about the experience of this imposter syndrome and the anxiety attendant to that. And kind of as the band became bigger and bigger. How did that time out, and how was that affected by your becoming a dad? Like, did that make the imposter syndrome more severe or more dramatic? Or did it help a little? (*Beat.*) And what year did you become a dad, by the way?

**Colin Meloy:** I became a dad in—well, I became a dad in—well, 2006. So, yeah. So, I was also a new dad and touring all the time.

**John Moe:** Yeah, right in the middle.

**Colin Meloy:** And I look back on that, and I'm like, “Well, no wonder, you fucking—Jesus Christ.” Of course, that's the other flip side. You hate—you know, there's no forgiving yourself for that, you know. Because you're supposed to—well, A) as a man, you know, you're supposed to man up and make it through anything. As a musician, as a person who this was my greatest ambition, you know, as a child—like, what's wrong with you that you can't love this and do this?

So, I mean, there's a lot of stuff that gets wrapped up in that. As far as, being—you know, once Hank—and then, I had another kid in 2013. I mean, I don't know. I think a lot of my imposter syndrome probably comes from, you know, my own issues as a kid and my relationship with my parents and how well I was supported in my creative endeavors.

**Transition:** Spirited acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Back with more from Colin Meloy in just a moment.

**Transition:** Gentle acoustic guitar.

**John Moe:** Talking with Colin Meloy of the Decemberists. Before the break, we were talking about his dad.

**Colin Meloy:** And I don't want to throw my dad under the bus here, because I think he was acting like a practical adult. And I certainly... you know, by no stretch do I feel like I grew up in like an abusive household or anything like that. But I was somebody who probably needed a little bit more support, and I feel like I didn't necessarily get that, you know, when I expressed interest in these creative things. So, I think going into becoming a creative artist from the very get go, it felt like what I was doing was wrong—you know, that was going against type, that I really shouldn't be doing this, and that I didn't really belong as a creative artist.

You know, and that was my dad's mantra was, you know, “It's all well and good to have a creative hobby, but never do it as your full-time job.” And he told both my sister and I this. And I remember so distinctly that lesson. And also the fact—you know, when I got involved in theatre, doing theatre as a kid—

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You know, his attitude was like, “Well, fine, but he's not gonna make any money doing it.” You know. And I've forgiven him to a certain degree for that. (*Chuckles.*) I feel like a lot of my career is like a fuck you to my dad to a certain degree. And of course, my sister is a writer as well. So—and we can kind of laugh about it now. Like, he has a good sense of humor about it. I've, you know, in Decembrist songs have sent him up for that attitude.

Yeah, and also I think he was coming from a point where I had a great uncle who was a painter who sort of famously, in family lore, kind of died in New York impoverished on a bus bench in a bus station, like in suburban—like, somewhere in Westchester County. And so, that became the kind of the cautionary tale for my family. And I think my dad took that to heart.

**John Moe:** Did your issues with anxiety exist before this conflict with your dad about your musical path?

**Colin Meloy:** No. No. It really became a thing in my adulthood, you know, when I finally like had a spotlight and was kind of reckoning with that.

**John Moe:** What did it take for him to come around and for you to make a sort of—at least a truce, if not a peace—about, you know, “This is me; I'm established”? Because I think that's very pertinent to any sense of imposter syndrome too.

**Colin Meloy:** Yeah. I mean, you would think that any sense of imposter syndrome would vanish once, you know, at least... the thing that got it—the kernel that got it going, you know, you proved it wrong. But that doesn't happen. You know, I think it was already—the seed had already been planted. It doesn't—you know, my own—my mind's read of the world doesn't really square with my emotional read on it, unfortunately. I mean, my dad—like I said, he has a sense of humor about it. Like, he's immensely proud of both my sister and I. And I think that he probably would even admit that maybe he was being too critical early on. And that he only had our kind of best interests in mind when he was telling us that.

And I think it's also true that both my sister and I's career is—it's pretty rare, you know. And we're profoundly, you know, lucky to be in the position that we're in. And he couldn't have known that. I think he was just kind of trying to save us from a life of hardship and poverty. And I can't blame him for that. But the kid who wanted that unconditional support and to be empowered to see this vision forward probably can never forgive him for that.

**John Moe:** How does that translate to how you approach being a dad?

**Colin Meloy:** Well, (*chuckles*)—I mean, I like to think that I give my kids absolute license over their own interests and their own loves and try not to push them in one direction or another. Of course, you know, one thing you learn as a dad is that you have so little control over that, one way or another. And my older son is autistic. And so, that's another story, you know, as far as like expectations for your kids and letting go what you would hope for them and really letting him follow his own path and supporting him in whatever way you can. Even though he also defies expectations all the time. My younger kid, who is neurotypical—or relatively neurotypical—

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You know, he loves—he's a writer, and he loves drawing. And only recently he has told Carson and I to stop complimenting him.

*(They chuckle.)*

That like anytime we see a drawing or read any of his writing, he's like, “Please don't compliment me. You know, come on. “Because I think we might be overdoing it a little bit.  
*(Laughs.)*

**John Moe:** Well, there's that school of thought—and I have three kids of my own. There's that school of thought of you're not supposed to compliment them. You're supposed to just observe what they're doing.

**Colin Meloy:** I know, I've tried to do that!

**John Moe:** Like, “Oh, you drew a dinosaur,” but I can't help it when I really love what they've drawn or written.

**Colin Meloy:** I know. I know about that too because I—you know, of course, as contemporary adults, I think, who—you know, Gen X, I think who grew up Boomer parents who were very hands off, and we suffered the consequence of that, we inevitably are very hands on and want to be their biggest fans. And so, I—but I'm also aware of that. And that whole thing is like, “Oh, you must be very proud of this.” But it always feel so demeaning, you know. And like it just sounds like psychology speak. So, I'm always like, “This is really great. You know, god, I love this story. The story is so good! And that metaphor is so lovely” and all that.

And he has only recently—he's just told us, like, “Will you just stop complimenting me?”  
*(Laughs.)*

**John Moe:** Yeah. Yeah. No, they've got to understand—I can't remember who coined the phrase, but that our generation was raised on hose water and neglect.

**Colin Meloy:** *(Laughs.)* It's true!

**John Moe:** We've just been trying to gain ground ever since then. What do you teach your kids then about anxiety, about imposter syndrome, about why you had to cancel that tour? Like, what do you hand down to them?

**Colin Meloy:** Well, I haven't really talked to them—to be honest, John, I have not talked to barely anybody about that. You know, it's come out a few times maybe in the last couple album cycles or times, you know, where I would be talking to somebody. It was—you know, I was deeply, deeply ashamed of it at the time and continue to be. I mean, I'm aware that I feel like there's a very different attitude about mental health, particularly in the creative arts.

You know, people are—I'm so impressed just seeing people coming out and talking about that stuff openly, and it's something that I couldn't do then, and I can barely do now. (*Chuckles.*) So, I can't really talk. I haven't really talked to my kids about that, you know. It's—(*sighs*) you know, I maybe probably talk to them about it in an abstract way when they're dealing with their own anxieties and worries.

And I don't know that I necessarily know how to talk about it better. I mean, all I know is, you know, talking to my therapist. And what his thing is is that, you know, being able to talk it out and not push it away and not—god, not be ashamed of talking about anxieties or any kind of mental health issue is not going to make things better. And you know, you're working towards healing by being able to have it be out and be able to talk about it. And I think that's, I guess, what I try to instill with my kids.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Is that soaking in with therapy? Is that—are you catching onto that idea that they're talking about? Or are you resisting it still?

**Colin Meloy:** I don't know. I mean, talk therapy has not—I don't know. I think it's pretty—see, I've never been a person that really struggled with talking about my feelings. You know? I think I grew up in a family that was okay with at least—maybe not so much my dad, but around my mom. My parents were separated when I was five, and they were two very different households. And my mom was very emotionally open where my dad was kind of closed up. Or that was my sense anyway. And so, I think I did at least part time grow up in a household that was all about, you know—“Free to be You and Me” was on the hi-fi. And “It's Alright to Cry” was like, you know, a soundtrack of my childhood.

[00:45:00]

And so, I don't think that I've ever gained the benefit of talk therapy that I think some people do, who need that license just to be able to open up and talk. And thankfully, I also have a partner—my wife, Carson—who is my best friend and who is very able and willing to kind of be a recipient to any kind of talking that I might have.

So, I don't know. I go back and forth about talk therapy.

**John Moe:** Yeah. Well, it's—you know, I always say this kind of stuff exists in the present tense. It's not a matter of like you go to therapy X number of times, and then you never have to worry about it again. It's just a—it's an ongoing journey. I'm supposed to stop saying journey. Somebody said that they get sick of me saying mental health journey. So, I've proposed replacing journey with similar bands. So, it's a mental health REO Speedwagon or a mental health Foreigner or something.

**Colin Meloy:** (*Laughs.*) Yeah. I mean, I guess I've been trying to come to grips with the fact that, you know—that that journey, that REO Speedwagon, never ends. I think for a long time, you know, you want to be fixed. And I don't think... I don't know if fixing happens, is my sense. It's just sort of like finding peace with these things.

**John Moe:** We wish Colin Meloy luck on his mental health Loverboy. The Decemberist's new album is *As It Ever Was, So It Will Be Again*. Here's another little taste, from “The Reapers”.

**Music:** “The Reapers” from the album *As It Ever Was, So It Will Be Again* by The Decemberists.

*Early in the evening, when the working is through*

*And the fields all in furrows*

*And their ain't much to do*

*Me and my lady all a-riding did go*

*As we wait for the reapers to mow*

*(Music fades out.)*

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

**John Moe:** Our show exists because people support it with their financial contributions. If they stop doing that, we can't do the show anymore. We like doing the show. We think it helps people. We ask for your support. If you've already made your contribution, thank you. If you haven't, don't worry. It's easy to do. Just go to [MaximumFun.org/join](https://MaximumFun.org/join). Find a level that works for you, and then select *Depresh Mode* from the list of shows. You will listen differently when you support this show. You will know that you are making something that is helping people in the world. It feels pretty good. Be sure to hit subscribe, give us five stars, write glowing reviews of the show. That helps get the show out in the world also, where—again—it can help folks. We want to help folks.

Speaking of helping folks, 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](https://www.instagram.com/DepreshPod). Our newsletter is available on Substack, just search that up—*Depresh Mode* or John Moe. You'll find it. I'm on Twitter and Instagram, [@JohnMoe](https://twitter.com/JohnMoe). You can join our Preshies group on Facebook. A lot of good discussion happening over there. You get to find out some behind the scenes stuff about the show and people supporting each other. It's just a good place to hang out. Our electric mail address is [DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org](mailto:DepreshMode@MaximumFun.org).

Hi, credits listeners. More bands should have large puppets that swallow them on stage. This is my policy. Why shouldn't Blue Oyster Cult have a Godzilla that eats them during the song “Godzilla”? That would be awesome. Get on that, Blue Oyster Cult. Look at me bossing

around Blue Oyster Cult. By the way, Blue Oyster Cult plays in Reno on July 5th. Better hurry with that Godzilla puppet, guys.

*Depresh Mode* is made possible by your contributions. Our production team includes Raghu Manavalan, Kevin Ferguson, and me. We got 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*

**Jules:** This is Jules from New Haven, Connecticut. And I just wanted to remind you that you are allowed to feel your feelings, even the bad ones.

[00:50:00]

**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!