

# Ep #265: You're Not Broken: Breaking Free from Shame and Misdiagnosis



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Amanda Hess**

[How to Love Yourself No Matter What](#) with Amanda Hess

## **Ep #265: You're Not Broken: Breaking Free from Shame and Misdiagnosis**

If you've ever been told you're broken or too much, you're not alone. These messages can leave deep scars, but you have the power to rewrite your story. In this episode, I am going to show you how to break free from labels and start truly being on your own team.

This show is for women who've been labeled, misdiagnosed, or misunderstood. Whether you have a diagnosis or just know deep down that you experience life differently, this is your space to stop fixing yourself and start trusting who you already are. My name is Amanda Hess. Let's go.

There is something that goes on for the women that I coach and support, and that goes on for many women that I see out in the world, that I think we need to talk about. It's the idea that we need to figure out what is wrong with you to be able to make your life better.

There is this lean that is going on in the world right now, and it definitely comes up in self-help and personal development, wherein we are being told that how we are, that the way we operate, that the way we think, that the way we are in the world is problematic, and that we need to solve it. And that if we want emotional peace, if we want happiness, if we want contentedness, if we want success, we are going to have to troubleshoot all of the things that are wrong with us.

And it is something that I see everywhere all the time. This narrative of you're somehow broken. And I just want to take this episode and really address it and explain to you why I'm always going to be approaching the women that I support and approaching myself through the lens of you are already whole.

And the reason why, the reason where we need to start is just looking at when we decide or hear or agree that there is something wrong with us. So, maybe you're somebody who has been told that you are too emotional, or maybe you're somebody that has been told you are too sensitive, but

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you could also be the opposite side of that. You could be told that you're not emotional enough, that you're not connected.

Where I see this also come into play is for people that are really hyperfocused, that can't let something go, that have anxiety to the point where they cannot function, where they have so much overwhelming negative emotion that they can't get out of bed, where they ultimately are experiencing life in a way that other people are reflecting back to them, "hey, this isn't normal."

So, let's just really look at that to start out with. And I want to start with a personal share to help you see this through the lens of "I can see how this story unfolds" and then potentially apply it to me. So for myself, right? I was a young mom. I had two small babies. Well, one was a baby, one wasn't a baby anymore. One was a preschooler. But I had two small kids.

And I had a C-section after having had another C-section after having two miscarriages in between my C-sections, after deciding that I was much too fat and going on this very extreme diet, working out twice a day, smoking my face off in between my kids, getting pregnant again, and then having the baby and just feeling so off. So off. Like no ability to regulate my emotions in any way, shape, or form. But that's not how I would have explained it to you.

When I was going through that, I would have explained that to you as "I just was so tired." I was so tired, I couldn't get anything right. Everything I did was a nightmare. And I remember when I had a full-blown panic attack moment where I lost control of myself. And when I was in that moment, having that panic attack, after that happened, recognizing that none of this was okay and really looking for help and getting help. And the help that I got was, "you have something wrong with you." And that was through the lens of "you have postpartum depression."

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Now, I think that anytime we get a diagnosis, it is an opportunity to either use it for yourself or against yourself. In that moment, I think it was a relief knowing that there was something fixable here. And, going and speaking to a therapist one time only and then going on antidepressants and then being left with my life still being the same, looking back now, I can see that was insane.

Where did the support change? I was overwhelmed physically, I was overwhelmed emotionally, I was overwhelmed in every way. And there's been so much research now with respect to when you are pregnant and to a certain extent postpartum, you are not growing new brain cells. That is actual documented peer-reviewed research, not just some colloquial thing. We don't grow brain cells. So, there is no new learning. There is just surviving in that moment. And when I really look at it, I can see now that was step one and steps two through one hundred were missed. Totally.

So at any rate, it did give me some relief from the standpoint of the antidepressants numbed out the emotion for me. That was my experience of being on an antidepressant. It numbed everything out. The problem with that is it numbed everything out. So it numbed both the positive and the negative emotions.

There was just a general sense of apathy that I was experiencing. And so when I realized that I didn't want to experience apathy anymore and talked to my doctor, who was my general practitioner, my GP, he indicated that if that was the case, I must be more depressed and I needed to go on a higher dose or I needed to switch. And so I switched and it was so much worse.

In doing that, I spoke to a friend who said that if I was on these types of medications, I should go through a psychiatrist. So I did, who then diagnosed me with a personality disorder, right? Diagnosed me with a 20-minute appointment with BPD, borderline personality disorder. And I

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remember the shame that I felt in that moment and the relief. They were co-mingled.

There's something here. It's not just I don't have to just survive this and I need that, but also, I have an incurable personality disorder? Are you serious? And I remember leaving that appointment being so conflicted and really not knowing what to do with that information. And I did all the things. The one really positive thing that came out of that, I feel, was that I came off the antidepressant that was not helping me at all.

And I was able to feel my feelings again. So happiness, joy, motivation, these feelings came back and they were long gone. At any rate, going through that whole experience and then doing therapy, group therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, I did all of the therapy. At the end of the day, I need you to know, I felt slightly better but I don't think it was because of all of the therapy that I was doing.

The therapy, I would go to therapy, but I wouldn't implement any of the skills because I didn't know how. Where do you start? Where do you begin? You get this enormous book. Which one do you use and how do you know when to use it? Nobody could tell me that. Nobody explained this to me in a way that made any sense to me.

And so at the end of the day, I was left with a book that I never used, increasing internalized shame about my diagnosis, about where I was at in my life, about how I was coping with things, about the fact that there was actually something wrong with me and it was an incurable disease that I had. And I rode that bus for a really long time and I led my life experiencing a lot of shame, a lot of guilt, and still experiencing a tremendous amount of emotional overwhelm all the time.

And it wasn't until I found a coach that I really determined and found out, that I really discovered that "hey, actually, this isn't disordered." This is a natural experience of emotional overwhelm and that this happens to many

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people, if not all people. And the way that we react to it can be different for everyone.

It took me a long time to wrap my head around the idea that it was normal to have the feelings I was having, and that also, I experienced them in a way that other people didn't feel them. That there was a group of us that felt them like this but not everybody did, and that did not mean I had a disorder. You know, you can't tell me that there's twenty percent of the population that experiences emotion in this way and that's a disorder. That's simply a part of being human.

When we speak about being neurodivergent, and I speak about it a lot on this podcast and to others because I do one hundred percent identify as being a neurodivergent human. What I will tell you is that my brain does work different and so does yours. The truth is that we're all on a scale of neurodiversity because not a single one of us is alike. But for some of us, the way that we experience pain, both physical and emotional pain, is going to be more intense. And so we do need to have tools to be able to help us with that experience and give us relief.

The issue that I have with diagnosis and pathologization is that we start vilifying the results. We start vilifying the person for having the experience of emotional overwhelm and that is somehow quantified as making you a good person or a bad person. And I simply don't believe that this is true. The truth is, how it might be for you might just be harder. And can we take that information and change it into something that you can use *for yourself*?

And the answer, my friend, is yes. When we pull away from judgment, when we stop making things “wrong,” and I will put that in air quotes, and instead just make things neutral, which I believe they are, we can start addressing them in a different way. I can think of so many clients over the years that I have helped that have come to me with all different types of issues. I had one client that came to me and she had the experience of using alcohol to help her with her emotional management. And so many of

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us do. Just so you know, alcohol is a drug. And why do we use a drug? We use a drug to feel differently.

So if you are somebody that has overwhelming negative emotion and you use alcohol to help feel it less or to increase pleasure so that the pain is less difficult, know that is just a tool. It's a tool. Now, it's a tool that you might not want to use and it's a tool that might create a lot of chaos in your life, it might cause some problems, but it's a tool.

And so in speaking with this client about her alcohol use and her identifying herself as an alcoholic, she went down a rabbit hole of trying to fix her alcoholism. And when we do that, we unknowingly make ourselves wrong. And in doing that, we experience a tremendous amount of shame and a tremendous amount of guilt. And that shame and that guilt block us from being able to get curious. And this is why it's a problem. So if we can't tap into curiosity, then we can't solve the problem because all we do is continue trying to experience emotions that are difficult if not impossible for us to process and *not use the tool*, and then beat ourselves up if we use the tool. And this is why it persists.

So for this client, we were able to start looking at what is going on with you emotionally? What emotions are hitting the hardest? What experiences are you having? What traumas are being triggered that are creating this exceptionally difficult emotional experience for you? And in doing so, we were able to uncover emotions like sadness and worthlessness and disappointment. And we were able to pull those emotions apart and really look at what is actually going on here? And what parts of this do we have some agency over? And we have agency over so much. We can regulate our nervous system.

So we implemented daily walks in a park, in nature. We implemented her taking some time to breathe and notice her senses. We implemented approving of her experience, approving of herself, approving of how she showed up in her past. Finding other sides of the truth to lean into, different



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versions of the story that she told about herself that created less shame, that created less guilt, that were not the opposite thought, not thinking positive, but instead really getting to the heart of what could also be true here.

In the words of Esther Perel, when I heard her on her podcast recently, can we just put on a new pair of glasses? And in doing that, she no longer felt the desire to use alcohol at all. When we approach things from this place, we don't have to just tolerate the experience of being ourselves. And it's really important to understand how necessary that is.

When we don't do that, we are always going to run out of willpower to do the things we want to do. So if you're scrolling your phone, if you're bingeing TV, if you are procrastinating, if you are not doing the things you thought you said you wanted to do, know this, it's not because there's something wrong with you. It's because there's something happening for you emotionally that we need to address.

And the beautiful thing about this experience is that we have the opportunity to change how we think about ourselves. So the reason why this podcast is called *How to Love Yourself No Matter What* is not only because we need to feel better, because that's something that we want, it's actually because it's something that you *need* to be able to move forward and feel whole and healthy and make choices that benefit you, that benefit the people around you, that benefit your life, and therefore benefit your kids' lives and your parents' lives and your siblings' lives and your friends' lives and your coworkers' lives and the world's lives.

What you don't need more of is shame. What you don't need more of is guilt. You need to learn how to connect with yourself. And in order to do that, we have to stop rejecting ourselves. In order to not reject ourselves, we have to stop pathologizing ourselves. You are not all one thing and none of another. You are nuanced. You are a very intricate fabric that has been constructed through your genetics, through your upbringing, through



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your schooling, through your peers, through society, through the news, through social media, through all of it.

And the coping mechanisms that we use don't need to be vilified. Instead, we need to look at it and go, "hmm, I am using this as a tool". And so, can we go deeper? Can we find out more? Can we regulate this nervous system of ours and teach it that a bear isn't chasing us right now, that this is just a memory? This is just triggering something that happened in our youth. Find emotional safety, find personal safety, begin to start approving of what you want and what you don't want. Begin to start approving of how your brain works, and instead of fighting against it, show up for it.

This is going to make all the difference in your life. One thing that you could say to yourself every day is you could look yourself in the eyes in the mirror, take a deep breath, and simply tell yourself, "you are worthy. You are worthy exactly the way you are. You do not need to be different. You are not disordered. There is not something wrong with you. You are a beautifully imperfect human because perfection doesn't even exist."

Because my friend, it does not. As I tell my clients all the time, life is messy. Expect it to be messy. When we expect it to be messy, we allow ourselves to be messy in the mess. Doesn't mean anything's going wrong. We keep going. We keep showing up. We start changing the way that we think about ourselves and then we're able to really show up in powerful, incredible ways and create powerful results for ourselves.

I've seen it happen again and again and again. I've seen it happen through addiction. I've seen it happen through relationships. I've seen it happen through ending relationships. I've seen it happen through complete life changes. And I've seen it happen through somebody having the exact same life but having a fully different experience of it because she does this work.

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If that is something that you are curious about, this is something that I coach on. This is something that I talk about with my clients. This is something I help them with. You should come book a discovery call with me if you want to find out more. You can just go to [amandahess.ca](https://amandahess.ca) and you can book a call. And we can get on Zoom and I can talk you through this and we can uncover what's under this for you.

So my friend, that is what I've got for you. I hope you have the most incredible week. And I will see you here next time. Bye for now.

Thanks so much for listening today. If this podcast is helping you, please follow wherever you listen and consider leaving a review - it truly helps this community grow and allows me to support more women like you.

I'm excited to see you back here next week with a brand new episode. Until then, take care, friend.