

Ep #274: Creating Emotional Safety in Your Daily Life



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With Your Host

Amanda Hess

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

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Do you ever feel emotionally drained, caught in a cycle of guilt or frustration, or like your emotions are running the show? You're not alone. In this episode, I'm diving into why emotional safety is key to breaking that cycle, and how you can begin to create it for yourself - no more masking or pushing emotions down. Keep listening to discover simple but powerful steps you can take to take control, and truly feel safe and grounded, no matter what life throws your way. Let's go.

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.

Hey my friend. Welcome back. We're deep in summer if you're listening to this podcast in real time. And creating emotional safety might be a concept that you don't really understand. And that's okay, because I have to tell you, you know, before I was a coach, if you would have told me that I need to create emotional safety, I would have looked at you like you have two heads. It would have made literally no sense to me.

I think what we need to do is first, we need to talk about what is emotional safety. OK? How do we define it? What does that even look like? Because a lot of times, what we believe is that being emotionally safe means that we're calm. I also think that we could think it's very externally driven, in that I'm emotionally safe with these people because they keep me safe and they make me feel safe. And we might have this idea that emotional safety is created by others.

And that makes sense, right? That makes sense, because ultimately, that's what we've been taught. And especially, I believe we've been taught that as women. I actually think that men get a different kind of set of messages, and that might be changing and evolving. But when I look at the sort of generations that I experience, you know, my dad, my brother, my husband, they grew up in a world where you needed to 'be a man'. You know? And I'll put that in air quotes, right? You need to be a man. Be a man. Don't be a baby.

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And then it extrapolates, right, to things like, "don't be a pussy." Excuse my language. And I literally hate that word so much because it's so derogatory to women and specifically to our anatomy. So I find it to be a very nasty thing to say. But that is how men are raised or were raised at any rate. I've heard those words come from men's mouths more times than I would like to remember. And I'm talking recently where I've actually said, "Hey, that's not how we're going to talk here. That's not an acceptable way to speak. Period. In front of me or, you know, ever."

But men do have a different message wherein they're taught to buck up, right? But as women, we get different messaging. And what I'd say for women is that we don't have to buck up necessarily, although in some cases we do. So we are taught that we have to buck up at work. We're taught that we have to buck up with difficult situations or with difficult people. And when we don't 'buck up' I will put that in air quotes, it is really reflected back to us that we are psycho or crazy or being a bitch, right? We definitely have that experience.

Because there is an outward emotional expression that the world wants from you. And it's very interwoven in our social fabric. Now, you may have grown up in a home that's different than my home, and that's okay. You might have had a more, I guess, neutral upbringing when it comes to what emotions you can and cannot show as a man and as a woman, etcetera, etcetera. But I think to an extent, women are told that they can be softer and men are told that they cannot, and it creates different sets of problems.

But then when we get into things like the workforce or we're in groups of people, the way that women are expected to behave is very different. If we're angry, that is especially not okay. Nobody wants to see an angry woman. That's not a good look. It's not attractive. How often have we heard that? And any version of that. We've heard that so many times that it's not attractive as a woman to be angry. We're not supposed to have rage as women. That's not okay. As a man, more acceptable, as a woman, definitely not.

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We are taught that we have to handle things. And we have to handle things for other people before we handle ourselves. So our kids come before us, our husbands come before us, our family, our extended family comes before us, our friends come before us. But then also like our house comes before us, cleanliness comes before us, the dog and the cat and the hamster all come before us.

And it's no shock to me when somebody comes to me and I'm talking to them and they are emotionally undoing, they feel emotionally undone, that the reason why that's happening is because this is where this has pushed them.

There is just this inability to create emotional safety because they've actually never known how to do that. And that very well could be you. So I think what we get really good at is emotional masking, which is not the same thing as being regulated. It's not the same thing as having emotional safety. It's actually the opposite. It's the opposite of emotional safety when we're masking.

Because what happens is we feel an emotion. Maybe we're frustrated, upset, triggered, mad, sad, whatever it is that's coming up for us. And it's not even that we need to necessarily outwardly express it, but we're not allowed to actually even acknowledge the experience of it to ourselves. And so we push over it. We shove it down, we push over it, and we force ourselves to perform. And if this is resonating for you, I want you to know you are not alone.

This is a very common refrain that many women experience wherein the emotional experience has never really been addressed. And even if we do get to acknowledge the emotion, taking time and space to actually deal with it is not celebrated and actually is not even really allowed. And this is where I think we start running into problems.

I've seen this with clients. I've also seen it with friends. And of course, I've seen it in myself. How could I not? We all grow up in the same world, for the most part, even if you're not in this part of the world, because I do have

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listeners all over the world. I think that we all have our own different experiences with this. But we end up being just in this situation where not only do we not take the time or the space to cope emotionally, we don't do it in advance because we don't even know that's a thing, and we don't know how.

You know, I really think back to when I was just the most emotionally dysregulated I could have ever been, which was when I was going through postpartum, getting different diagnosis, just constantly trying to figure out how do I even get out of bed and brush my hair, let alone take care of these kids and deal with my day-to-day life and pretend that I'm normal for all the people to see. But I don't know how to deal with my emotions because I don't even know what they are.

I have no idea. I couldn't tell you how I'm feeling other than I just need everybody to give me a break and nobody will give me one. And the people that are paying the biggest price are the people that are the closest to me. And I know that this is not what I want to be doing. I know this is not how I want to be showing up. Yet, that is what happened. And I see this in so many clients.

I was speaking to a client just the other day who was sharing with me the fight that she'd had with her husband about getting the kids to bed, about each of them having their own time, about the way that they were showing up to each other. And one of the things that she said to me that I have heard said to me, and you may have heard said to you, is, "Why do you gotta be so psycho?" Right? Or, "Why you gotta be such a bitch?" Or, "The reason why I'm so stressed out, Amanda," or fill in your name, "is because of you."

And then we internalize that and what happens? We experience a bunch of shame, a bunch of guilt, we shove it down, we go again. So does this go hand in hand with last week's episode? Of course. Yes. Because if we're talking about creating emotional safety, what I would say to you is if you want to experience less guilt, less shame, if you want to not be internalizing that all the time, then we need to know how to create emotional safety.

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And to me, emotional safety has nothing to do with other people. Although, you are going to confront their thoughts about it and your thoughts about their thoughts about it. But it has more to do with deciding, "Hey, I am going to take care of me." And that is my number one job, and that's what I'm going to take care of, period.

It has to be the first step. So when I'm coaching someone and we're - we're talking through this, what we're really referring to is I feel an emotion first, and I go first. So this is what I offered my client yesterday, and I think it would be very helpful for you. I go first. So when I notice that I'm dysregulated, "I go first" means I notice I'm dysregulated first, before I go outward at all, right? Before I blame my husband or blame my boss or whatever it is that's going on for you, I go first. I'm dysregulated and that is something that I must deal with.

That is something that I must take care of because I am the leader of me. So emotional safety is first created by being the leader of yourself. Now, what my client did say to me on that call is, "Well, how do I do that in the moment?" And it's a really good question, right? How do I do that in the moment? And this is something I really didn't understand.

Back in the day when I was doing DBT, which is dialectical behavior therapy, and I was going to counseling and I was going to group and I was learning all these things, I couldn't understand how you do it in the moment. Like what do in the moment though? And what I didn't understand is that this is a skill that we build with time and practice.

Being able to know what's happening for you in the moment and experience the dysregulation and have an awareness for the dysregulation just requires practice. It just requires practice and repetition over time, which is why I'm always such a big proponent of you coming and getting coached. Because I know that the way that you change this is through practice and repetition.

But step one is just identifying I'm dysregulated, not this person is making me dysregulated, which is what we think, but I'm dysregulated. Why does

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that create emotional safety? That creates emotional safety because you begin to have more power. And my goal for you is always to be empowered and not victimized by your life.

We know, right? We know we can't control and change other people. We just can't. That's not in our power. We can make requests and we can set boundaries and we can do those things. However, we can't make other people act a certain way. We just can't. But we have control over how we act and what we do. So understanding step one, I'm dysregulated. Okay.

So then what's step two? Step two is understanding what you can do to regulate your nervous system. There's a few rules that can really help you with this in the moment. And then there's a few things that you can do long-term that are going to have big impact, right? So in the moment, there's two things that I really like to lean into and that I coach my clients through.

Number one is go and move your body first. Before you respond, before you do anything, before you say anything, before you send the rage text, go move your body. Do that first. The reason why? It's going to regulate your nervous system. It's going to pull things into balance because right now your body is just set to panic mode. So we need to pull it out of panic mode, so we need to regulate it. So once we know it's dysregulated, we know, "Oh, I'm set to panic mode," because that's what that really means.

When we're dysregulated, it means our nervous system just set itself, right, all on its own, to panic mode. And we don't want to stay there. So we've got to move it out of panic mode before we move on. I think about it like driving a car. "Oh, I want to go in reverse, but I'm going forward." So when I go forward and I break, I need to move it into neutral before I can move it into reverse.

And I think a standard is a better, it's a better analogy. So anybody old enough to have grown up driving a standard, which I did, just think about that, right? You're in fifth gear and you want to go in reverse. First you have to hit the brake, then you have to hit the clutch because you have to pull it

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out of gear and put it into neutral, come to a complete stop before you put it in reverse. And this is what we're really trying to do with ourselves, right? Like we're taking ourselves in a situation where we are dysregulated and we are wanting to do something that we don't want to do.

And how do we put ourselves in reverse? We can't just throw it in reverse. Won't work. So we've got to get it into neutral. So to me, nervous system regulation is just putting it into neutral. So that's one thing you can do when you're dysregulated in the moment, when you don't want to react, when you don't want to respond, etcetera, etcetera.

The second thing is you are going to want to give yourself a 24-hour rule. I think a 24-hour rule is such a beautiful thing in every single thing you do. It's something that they teach you in sports for your kids. And it's actually a 48-hour rule now, but I honestly feel like if you wait a full 24 hours, you're probably fine. But a 24-hour rule gives you the ability to say nothing until you've been able to process and regulate and allow and really look at the thoughts that you're thinking, right?

If you think about creating emotional safety, having a 24-hour rule, I believe, creates a lot of emotional safety because what we're not saying is this can't matter to you and you have to push it down and you can't respond. Ever. What it is is I'm not going to respond until I'm clear emotionally. And that doesn't mean I'm not feeling any emotions, but I feel empowered of my emotion, I agree with my decision, and now I'm going to react or respond accordingly, right?

Those are two things that you can do in the moment. But what I will say to you is that what we really need to do is be a lot more proactive. And that proactive piece is bigger. What we tend to do when we're feeling emotionally unsafe, so when we're feeling emotionally unsafe, what does that look like? Well, we're triggered, right? Something has been triggered.

Either we're feeling desperate or we're feeling frustrated or we're feeling angry or we're feeling rage or we're feeling an emotion that feels like we

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can't control it. Maybe it's that you feel rejected. Maybe it's that you feel worthless, stupid, embarrassed, whatever those emotions are, right?

When you feel those emotions, those are the ones that feel unsafe. And when we feel them, that is why we try to get rid of them right away. So I always like using the emotion of rage as an example because rage is a very uncomfortable emotion to feel in your body. It creates a lot of urgency. And so when you're feeling rage, rage is going to want you to act because, and the reason why is so that you can get rid of the feeling.

When you feel out of control, you want to stop feeling out of control, and that is why you do the things you do. It's why you say the things you say. It's why you either freak out or you completely shut down or you start scrolling your phone or whatever it is for you. This is why it's happening. In order to build emotional safety with that emotion, let's just start with rage. Like, how do we build emotional safety with rage?

I was actually coaching a client on this yesterday. So we were talking about that. First of all, we want to be regulating our nervous system frequently, every day. What does that look like? Movement, using your senses.

It looks like having down-regulating thought patterns that you can lean into, things that you believe that you can lean into on purpose, things like, "This is just a feeling. No feeling lasts forever, not even this one. I know that I feel this right now really, really strongly and it's really hard for me to feel this, but if I still feel this strongly about it tomorrow, then I'll decide."

These are down-regulating thoughts and what they do is they take the emotion down a notch where we're not arguing with ourselves. We're not having a tug of war with ourselves. When you're doing your day-to-day, you're wanting to make sure that you have the things in place that you know move the needle for you, that allow you to have more capacity for the feeling, right? So if you're feeling a lot of rage lately, first of all, we are building capacity through our nervous system regulation.

But second of all, the thing that we really want to be doing and really looking at is what's under the rage. So for this client, what was under the

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rage was the belief that she had to do everything all the time and that everything was her responsibility and that when he doesn't do it, she has to do it. And even if he does do it, she still has to keep thinking about it. And that this is an unfair, unjust division of responsibility, right? That's what it is.

That is creating a weight on her that's really, really heavy because she feels like she has to do everything and think about everything and be everything for everyone. And the weight of that is exhausting. And so therefore, her only solution is to try and figure out how to get her partner to do it, but he's not doing it. And so the cycle repeats: rage, freak out, break down, no good things going on in the marriage, back and forth, maybe some repair, and then we start again.

The problem is the problem doesn't get solved. So when I look at creating emotional safety, the first thing I want to look at is, okay, rage is mine. I'm the one that shows up first for rage. I go first. So me feeling rage is a me problem, not a him problem. It's a me problem. And the reason why we do that is because then we can solve it.

So then if the rage is a me problem and I have to solve it, now I can start looking at it through the lens of what needs to happen here for me. Number one, we got to allow the rage. So it's probably going to take a day. So that 24-hour rule is really going to help you out, right?

Number two, why am I experiencing so much rage? Because I'm experiencing a lot of pressure. And what we'll tend to do when that's happening is think that we've got to get into the weeds of like who does what and when and where do we have the tasks and we've got this like 15-app calendar with all these pinpointed events and then I've got to manage it. And I just want you to know that's not what I'm talking about at all.

Instead, I think that you need to ask yourself questions like, "How do I simplify this and what can I give back?" And a lot of times what we're doing is we're just over-functioning for other people. And we're making it our

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responsibility to fix things for them, but we don't see it that way. We don't see it that way. How we see it is I need you to do this so I can be okay.

And that's where the disconnect is. Because you don't need them to do that for you to be okay, I promise. Your emotional safety is not dependent on other people. Your emotional safety is dependent on you and your ability to put things down and let things go. And not like, "Oh, just let it go. Be more easygoing." That's not what I'm talking about. Instead, what I'm really talking about is, "Hey, husband, child, boss, worker, whomever, this is the standard. This is what I need you to do. And you didn't do it. And that's not okay."

And then you say nothing. Because you don't fix it for them. You take the weight off you and you put it back on them. And yes, you will have to do this more than one time. But the thing that we do that we do unknowingly without realizing it is we get so directive. And we want to tell the other person exactly how to do it so that we'll be okay. And notice how that shift occurs, because it's not about what you say. It's about what you think and what you believe.

And what we want to do is we want to only hold what's ours, which is, "Hey, here's the division. Here's what I will do. Here's what I won't do. You need to actually show up and do what you're supposed to be doing. And then if you don't, I'm going to let you know this is not okay." But I don't fix it for you. I sit in the discomfort of this isn't enough for me. This isn't working for me. I'm not okay when you do this.

And then you are silent because what it really does is it allows you to give them back what's theirs. And the reason why this creates emotional safety is that it allows you to not be running around trying to manage everyone else's emotions because it will not work because you can't do it. You can't make your husband feel motivated. You can't make your kids feel motivated. You can't make your boss be more compassionate. You just can't do that.

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But here's what you can do. You can decide what your standards are. Now, people get confused when I talk about this. So I'll try to explain it in a way that hopefully makes sense for you. I think that you can really look at your personal standards, right? What is required to be in partnership with me? And you are in partnership with people.

So what is required for you to be in partnership with me as my lover, as a co-parent, as a roommate, as a friend, as a child, as a co-worker, as a staff member, as a boss? We can make that determination and it can just be internal. And sometimes what I will lead with is how do you want to feel? And what I will offer to you is when it comes to creating emotional safety, either in relationships or out of relationships, it's always important to decide what you need to be emotionally safe. And these aren't actions.

I think about feelings. I want to feel validated. I want to feel supported. I want to feel loved. I want to feel worthy. Those are the big rocks, right? Those are the big rocks for me that need to be in place for me to be emotionally safe. And then when I have those things, then I can be vulnerable, then I can ask for what I need, then I can have uncomfortable conversations and not over- or hyperfunction for other people.

So in order to do that, right, for instance, for my client, what she really is working on is first of all, identifying the emotions that she's feeling and finding them in her body. She's working on having a better understanding of what's going on emotionally before the rage, because stuff goes on before the rage. The rage is a reaction to something else.

She works on regulating her nervous system, taking time and space, and taking responsibility for growing her own personal capacity. She takes responsibility for validating herself, for telling herself that she's worthy and that she's enough, for telling herself that she is lovable and deserves love, especially from herself. And this is what needs to happen first. When I say you go first, this is what I mean. The way that we create emotional safety is by you going first.

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The cool side effect of that is how down-regulating it is when we start looking at how do I decide that I just love myself? I'm going to decide to love myself today and I'm not going to beat myself up for any perceived shortcomings. I'm going to love myself instead. Listen, that might be really hard for you. It's really hard for a lot of people. But if you want emotional safety so you can be more regulated around other people, so you can have vulnerable and effective conversations with them, this needs to happen.

There's no other way. There's no shortcut. A lot of times we want to be told what to say and how to say it and how do I make them validate me more? How do I make them understand what my love languages are? You know, how do I make my boss understand that I don't work that way? You're asking the wrong question.

The question you should be asking is how do I make sure that I feel validated and supported and worthy and lovable? And am I doing that for myself? Am I taking enough time and space to be kind to myself, to give myself time to process and allow emotion? Am I giving myself enough nervous system regulation? Am I finding ways to do that? And if I'm not, am I getting support with that? Am I reaching out to sources where I know I can get help for that?

That's why somebody would come and work with me, right? Because I'm going to help you with that. And then we just keep doing it again and again and again and again. And as we do that, we start understanding how to take care of ourselves emotionally so that we don't expect it from other people.

Now, does that mean that we just let people walk in and be total a-holes to us? Absolutely not. Never. But you might find that a lot of times the reason why you think somebody is being an a-hole has nothing to do with them and everything to do with you. Said with love and firmness.

The truth is human interaction is complicated and nuanced. I will tell you right now, when you assume that somebody is wishing you the best, unless they're outwardly aggressing to you, swearing and yelling and being really

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mean to you or being massively passive aggressive and ignorant, unless they're doing that, chances are, if you could find that emotional safety within yourself, you would be able to advocate for what you need in a very calm and measured way. And that's a life changer.

So it's not about being calm and measured. It's not about that at all. It doesn't make you a better person. Who cares? But I'm really looking at the result that we're creating, you know? To me, if you're going to work on yourself, it better create results. Otherwise, what's the point?

So the point here is the result, which is I have the ability to have emotional control to an extent in the way that I mean it, right? Because sometimes I say that and it gets taken out of context, like not shoving emotions down and pushing emotions away and not honoring them. More so, I have capacity and I am willing to experience the discomfort of a negative emotion and ride the wave without reacting, without hiding, without buffering. And

then I'm going to go back and I'm going to be really measured with my response because I'm going to make sure that I'm being validated and I'm being told that I'm worthy and I'm being told that I'm lovable by me. And that is going to define how I show up here.

It is night and day. I had a business coach once who talked about how when people are selling, that when they are needy in their selling, when they're making the selling about them, that people notice it without noticing it.

So it's like BO. And she's like, you know, you ever notice, like I've had this experience by the way recently where you go to the gym, oh my gosh, so many times at the gym in the summer, where people don't realize they have exceptionally bad BO or they don't care. I'm not really sure, but I would never be in public like that, right? But there they are, just doing whatever they do with their bad BO and they're totally clueless, but everybody else can smell it and they're repulsed by it.

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And that is your energy, right? And so this coach was talking about it in a sales conversation, but I want to talk about it in a personal relationship conversation. When you have that energy of I need to figure out how to make you act different so that I can be okay, you wear that like BO. And what happens is you do all the things that I said here, but they don't work for you. And the reason why is the energy behind it can be sensed by other people.

It isn't about what you do. It is about the thought and intention behind it. So this is what I've got for you. I absolutely love talking about this. It's something that I'm so passionate about. If it's something that speaks to you and you think, "Man, I would really like to know how to do that," book a discovery call. Let's talk it through. Let me show you how this could work for you. And then you can decide, you know, maybe coaching's for you, maybe it isn't. But I will say this, it's for most people.

You can go to amandahess.ca/bookacall if you want to set that up. Otherwise, my friend, I will see you here next week. 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.