

Clip 1

Debi (00:00):

That was something that you learned that when my wife is emotional or hurting, I can't come in and try to fix it because when I do that, it doesn't work. And it's not, . . .there's nothing that's happening between us. It's almost like a miss.

JJ (00:14):

Yeah. And it usually makes it just worse.

Debi (00:17):

Yes, that's right. That's right. And when you see her crying and hurting that part of you that wants to come up and fix it, is, is that coming from a place where I love my wife, I see her hurting and I want to do whatever I can to help her not hurt.

JJ (00:38):

Oh Yeah It's the best of intentions. It just does. It, it, sometimes it just doesn't come off to her, like I actually care. I'm trying to help, but it's always with the best intension.

Debi (00:51):

That's right. She doesn't get the signal, how much you care. But you're saying for me, when I see my wife hurting and suffering, I want to help her because I love her so much.

JJ (01:03):

Sure.

JJ (01:03):

I don't want to see her. I don't want to see her hurting.

JJ (01:07):

Yeah. And it's not her fault. I'm not, I'm not a very emotional person. It's just, I never have been, this is part of how I was raised. So it's hard because she's an emotional person, but I'm not. So then you're automatically gonna miss right there.

Debi (01:25):

Right. And what I heard about you is that you learned at a very young age at around six years old, that no one was going to be there for you for your feelings.

JJ (01:35):

Right.

Debi (01:37):

So at a very young age, you kind of turned that part of yourself off.

JJ ([01:42](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([01:42](#)):

Don't feel Feeling What's that?

JJ ([01:47](#)):

I said, not like a lot of people.

Debi ([01:51](#)):

Umm .. Yeah. You learned that it has it. Wasn't safe for you emotionally to have those feelings and be all alone with it. So the way that you coped was to turn it off,

JJ ([02:04](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([02:04](#)):

and right now with Holly, that part of you, that the way that you coped, the way you protected yourself as a young boy, when you do that in your marriage, it doesn't really work.

JJ ([02:13](#)):

No, it does it. So it's, we got into this to, to, I wouldn't say, fix the things that were wrong with us, but to try and piece ourselves back together and then piece ourselves together.

Debi ([02:34](#)):

Yes. I get that. And something that, something that happens with when you guys start to get caught in the cycle that you've been working with Pamela on one of the moves that you make or have made in the past is to try to fix it. When I see my wife upset, right. I come in and I try to fix it and that doesn't work. And I come in and I try to fix it because I care and she doesn't get that message how much I care about her.

JJ ([03:05](#)):

Right.

Debi ([03:05](#)):

And I learned at an early age, not to feel my feelings, not to touch into them. . . . Yeah . . That kind of sucks.

JJ ([03:26](#)):

Yup

Debi ([03:31](#)):

Pause Yeah. pause So.

Holly ([03:40](#)):
a lot to unpack.

Debi ([03:45](#)):
yeah, It is a lot to unpack. And JJ, I, I just, I know that you love your wife.

JJ ([03:54](#)):
Oh yeah. more than Anything,

Debi ([03:57](#)):
Ah, more than anything in the world.

JJ ([04:01](#)):
Um hum.

Holly ([04:01](#)):
Oh, besides the kids.

JJ ([04:03](#)):
Well, yeah.

Debi ([04:05](#)):
Well, we'll put them over here for a second, but yes, I get that. I love my wife more than anything. And somehow I can't get her that clear message. I can't, it doesn't come across in an emotional way to her.

JJ ([04:19](#)):
Right.

Debi ([04:22](#)):
And I keep that part of me locked down that vulnerable side.

JJ ([04:29](#)):
Yeah. It's there. It's just not quite sure how to go about it.

Debi ([04:37](#)):
So as we're sitting here right now and we're talking about this, how fix it doesn't work. Right. Fix it doesn't work. It creates a miss. My wife is alone and suffering. I see her pain. I care about her more than anything. What, what, what do you notice as you're sitting here with that right now? What do you notice inside?

JJ ([05:05](#)):

Well, it's just, it's not comfortable. It's not, I dunno, you get like the helpless thing, because you're pretty much saying that you can't do something to make something better. So I'm not that kind of person. It's just, it's just not (UNCOMFORTABLE - PROGRESS HELPLESS PROGRESS)

Debi ([05:28](#)):

Helpless. You're not that kind of person.

JJ ([05:31](#)):

Right.

Debi ([05:34](#)):

So right here, right now, you're saying, as we talk about this and I sit with this, I start to feel this uncomfortable feeling here in my body.

JJ ([05:46](#)):

Yeah.

Debi ([05:46](#)):

and connected to that as this helplessness.

JJ ([05:50](#)):

Yeah.

Debi ([05:51](#)):

Because I love my wife

JJ ([05:56](#)):

Yeah.

Debi ([05:56](#)):

Can't seem to support or help her In the way that she needs to.

JJ ([06:01](#)):

Right. It doesn't have anything to do with her. It's more of just me not being able to figure out how to, I don't know. I guess tell her exactly how I feel or express it. (NOT KNOWING IS PROGRESS - SHOWS VULNERABILITY)

Debi ([06:16](#)):

Well, you're doing a really good job right now. I know sitting with this and even starting to have some uncomfortableness in your body. It's I really appreciate you staying here with me and talking with me about this. It's been a long time, JJ. It's been a really long time that you've keep these emotions locked away.

JJ ([06:39](#)):

Yeah. PAUSE

Debi (06:47):

So I'm wondering if you're, if you're willing to sort of sit in that place, that uncomfortable place right now and that helpless place and just let yourself kinda dip your toe in that water right now. Just sit here with that.

JJ (07:06):

Yep.

Debi (07:17):

PAUSE/Silence . . . So I, I see you shifting slightly as, as you're sitting there, what is what's going on for you JJ?

JJ (07:23):

Oh, I just, I can't ever sit still. It's just how it works. So I get fidgety when I sit.

Debi (07:37):

And when you start to feel uncomfortable, maybe too, is there a fidgety that comes out there? (BODY MOVEMENT – PROGRESS)

JJ (07:42):

There could be, or it could be a boredom or just, it could be a lot of different things. So probably when I get uncomfortable usually my hands, sweat when I get uncomfortable. So

Debi (07:58):

What do you notice about your hands right now? As you sit with this place of helplessness? My wife is suffering. I love her

JJ (08:10):

Oh they are a little sweaty (HANDS SWEATY IS PROGRESS)

Debi (08:11):

They're a little sweaty. So that's a signal that you are that you're feeling those. Some of those feelings inside, my hands get sweaty. I start to feel this uncomfortable sensation in my body When I can't express myself to my wife in a way that she knows how important she is to me, how much I love her and how she's my world. . . . So I'm wondering if you would be willing to look at her and tell her about the uncomfortable sensation in your body and the sweaty hands that come up at this idea, feeling helpless and not being able to help your wife or, or even be a good husband to her,

JJ (09:11):

(DOING THIS ENACTMENT IS PROGRESS) Not being able to help you or explain to you how, how much you mean to me, that kind of makes me feel uncomfortable. And it just kind of makes me feel like I'm

failing at something. And I don't really want to do that. That sucks to not be able to help you. (FAILING AT SOMETHING - PROGRESS)

Debi ([09:35](#)):

I don't want to be failing at something that's so important to me,

JJ ([09:40](#)):

Right.

Debi ([09:40](#)):

you. I don't want to be failing as a husband to you, Holly. And when I can't express myself and I learned from such a young age to turn off my feelings, I've realized that that's not working here because you don't get to know how much I love you and how much I care about you.

JJ ([10:07](#)):

Correct.

Debi ([10:10](#)):

How was that to say that to your wife and, and to say the word that you added, I think was, I feel like I'm failing how was that to say that to her,

JJ ([10:22](#)):

It's a, it's a, I don't know. I wouldn't say it's hard to say. I just, I hope that she takes it the way that I intend to. And just the fact that hopefully that me saying it, she'll believe since I don't really ever say a whole lot of stuff like that.

Debi ([10:44](#)):

Yeah. So you don't, you keep that, that's the stuff that stays under wraps for you, right? You don't talk about feeling like a failure or feeling helpless and wanting more than anything to be there for your wife. (PROGRESS)

CLIP 2

Debi ([00:00](#)):

Important, this idea, JJ, that inside your body, there's a feeling of failing your wife. A feeling of helplessness. And I don't share that with her.

JJ ([00:18](#)):

Um hmm . . Right I feel like it's a burden. And I feel like if somebody is going to bear it, it's going to be me.(BURDEN-PROGRESS)

Debi ([00:27](#)):

Oh So let's pause. If I share with you my feelings that I do have inside . . .right there, they send me, signals my hands, get sweaty. I start to feel an uncomfortableness in my body. Cause I feel like I'm failing you and I feel helpless. And I'm letting you down as a, as a husband. If I share that with you, somehow, I'm gonna burden you.

JJ ([00:54](#)):

Um hmm.

Debi ([00:54](#)):

And I love you so much. that I dont want to burden you . . .right? I mean, why would you want to burden your wife?

JJ ([01:02](#)):

Um hmm.

Debi ([01:02](#)):

That's what kind of makes sense? Why you don't share that with her.

JJ ([01:10](#)):

Yup.

Debi ([01:10](#)):

and yet when you don't share that with her, the distance between the two of you gets bigger.

CLIP 3

Debi ([00:07](#)):

How is that JJ?

JJ ([00:09](#)):

No, I, I completely understand that. She's right. And every part of that, that's the thing is, I don't know. I guess if you do it for so long, you get used to being able to not show people the things that they're usually able to read about people that I have different tells, like I know what my tells are, but nobody else does

Debi ([00:33](#)):

Exactly. Cause you don't let anybody else see them.

JJ ([00:37](#)):

Correct.

Debi ([00:38](#)):

You've learned to not let anyone else see them.

JJ ([00:41](#)):

Right. So, and if you, if you let it all out on your face and then they know exactly what it is.

Debi ([00:52](#)):

Right . . . And here's your wife saying, I need to know what's going on for you. I need to see it in your face. Cause when I see blank, I can't, it doesn't connect to the words you're sharing with me.

JJ ([01:09](#)):

Yeah. So then it makes it hard for her to believe, believe it because she can't see it in my face.

Debi ([01:14](#)):

Exactly.

JJ ([01:16](#)):

So. I get it. And that's, that's the thing is I not quite sure how to express it. Like, through my face so that she understands that I'm being sincere. (NOT KNOWING HOW TO DO IT - PROGRESS)

Debi ([01:28](#)):

Okay. So part of what I hear you saying, what you just added there is, I don't know how to express it so she can see it and feel it.

JJ ([01:39](#)):

Right.

Debi ([01:39](#)):

I've gotten way good at keeping this all locked away. That I don't know how to do this.

JJ ([01:45](#)):

Right.

Debi ([01:46](#)):

I don't know how to show you my heart.

JJ ([01:51](#)):

Um hum

Debi ([01:54](#)):

Wow . . . How is that for you to not know how to show your wife, your heart and know

JJ ([02:03](#)):

It's not, it's not enjoyable. I'd like to be able to do it and show her and everything like that because you can only, your actions are only going to be able to go so far. You can't base everything off of your actions. If you can't actually show them how you feel.

Debi ([02:21](#)):

Right. You're so right. So how is it, you know, all that in your head, you know, all that. And here you are saying, I don't know how to show you my heart. I don't know how to tap into this Softer kind of underbelly that I have with softer feelings and show it to you I don't know how to do that.

JJ ([02:48](#)):

Yeah. It's like somewhere along the line, it just got disconnected. So I don't, I couldn't tell you when it happened or how it happened. I just, before all of this, I never really thought there was a problem with it. But the farther we got into this, the more I realized it.

Debi ([03:09](#)):

Right. And, and now you realize there, I have this problem where I feel really disconnected from my emotions and I can't share them with my wife. And so I problem-solve or make a joke. And when I do that, she gets more hurt or feels more alone in her pain. And then she gets angry at me. And the more she gets angry at me, the more, I feel a little bit of helpless, a little bit of failure inside. And I might crack a joke or tell her not to worry or dismiss her emotions. And then she feels more alone and then she gets angry again. And the more she gets angry, the more helpless I am and the more I make jokes
(REFLECTING THE CYCLE)

JJ ([03:50](#)):

I just shut down at some point

Debi ([03:51](#)):

I shut down.

JJ ([03:54](#)):

Yeah, I do.

Debi ([03:56](#)):

What happens before you shut down though,

JJ ([03:59](#)):

It'll be like the jokes and stuff like that. Then if it continues, if she continues to be angry about it, then at some point it just, I shut down.

Debi ([04:10](#)):

Got it. So it goes around and around in that cycle, I was just mentioning. And then at some point you just like completely pull like the curtain.

Debi ([04:22](#)):

Um hum.

Holly ([04:22](#)):

We both deal. We both, I feel like we never resolve things. They get stopped and then not brought up again. Right.

Debi ([04:32](#)):

Right Which leaves you guys disconnected and your relationship and more distance. Right? Each time we get through something and we just throw in the corner somewhere, we get more distant and then we have that cycle come up, but we don't resolve it. We get more distant.

JJ and Holly ([04:47](#)):

Yeah.

Debi ([04:48](#)):

And then I'm more alone. And then I feel even more distant . . now I feel alone.

Holly ([04:57](#)):

Yeah.

Debi ([04:59](#)):

So, so JJ, do you feel the distance between you and your wife?

JJ ([05:10](#)):

Oh Yeah I feel it, the thing about all this is I feel everything, but I don't know how to express it. So that's where I would say I get myself in trouble because she's not, she's not thinking I am being sincere.
(FEELING THE DISTANCE AND ALONE IS PROGRESS)

Debi ([05:27](#)):

So let's, let's, let's work with that right now. Can we,?

JJ ([05:35](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([05:35](#)):

I feel alone. I feel the distance and I can feel alone in our marriage and I can feel like a failure.

JJ ([05:47](#)):

yeah, That's what it comes down to.

Debi ([05:49](#)):

Yeah. And it sucks.

JJ ([05:52](#)):

Right.

Debi (05:56):

And when you feel alone, JJ, when you feel that distance, is there any part of you that feels like you could be losing your wife in that space when you feel more distant or she's angry with you again, or she's upset and disappointed.

JJ (06:12):

Oh every, every time we argue, (PROGRESS - FEAR OF LOSING WIFE)

Debi (06:15):

Every time we argue, I get afraid that I could be losing my wife.

JJ (06:19):

Yeah. Because it just pushes her farther and farther away. Yeah.

Holly (06:22):

This, this therapy for us was end game. This was our, so it's like, we're trying to come back up from the bottom.

Debi (06:33):

Got it. Thank you for letting me know that Holly and game is rough and you guys have been coming a long way. So I'm so glad that you gave this therapy a try and JJ, anytime we get into a fight that fear of losing my wife comes up.

JJ (06:52):

So yeah, losing my wife and losing my girls and all that. So then it brings you back to feeling like a failure because you got so much to lose, but you don't, you don't know how to go about it to make it better.

Debi (07:09):

Right. Well, I think you're beginning to know how to go about it, to make it better in your head, which is being more vulnerable. Right. Letting her see my feelings that I have in here on my face so she can see how much I love her, how important she is to me. Right. And I could feel, I could start to feel safe in our relationship too. Right. The good thing about that is as you learn that you start to feel safe. Safer too, that you're not going to lose her. Right?

JJ (07:46):

Right.

Debi (07:46):

So can you right now, we're gonna go back to sit in this place thing that I was asking you to do a couple of minutes ago. Let yourself dip your toe in that water. Every time we get into a fight, I get afraid that I'm going to lose you and lose my family.

JJ ([08:15](#)):

Every time we get in a fight, I feel like I'm going to lose you. I'm going to lose the girls and then

Holly ([08:20](#)):

She didn't tell you to tell me.

JJ ([08:20](#)):

that is fine I still want to tell you

Debi ([08:20](#)):

wait wait sorry sorry sorry That was, that was really interesting. what Just happened there. So you wanted to tell her, and I appreciate that and I love how you said, wait, she didn't tell you to tell me yet. And that was really cute guys, because JJ, one of the things that I know is as you start to sit in these emotions and start to feel them, you're, it gets uncomfortable in your body. And by turning to her and sharing that with her kind of quickly, it's almost like now I don't have to sit as much with the uncomfortableness.

JJ ([09:13](#)):

Um hum. (PROGRESS - AWARENESS OF JUMPING QUICKLY AWAY)

Debi ([09:13](#)):

Is that, is that what kind of, what happened almost automatically as you sit with this idea of, I could lose you. I get afraid that I could lose you. And I sit with that. Every time we get into a fight and it scares me, I don't want to lose my wife.

JJ ([09:30](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([09:30](#)):

and I just don't know what to do.

JJ ([09:33](#)):

Yup.

Debi ([09:33](#)):

So let's, let's not jump away from that right now. I know you can do this . . . Every time we get into a fight, which is a lot, I get afraid I could lose you. I feel like I'm failing . . . You feel Helpless and I don't know what to do.

JJ ([10:03](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([10:22](#)):

PAUSE . . .I just want you to sit with that right now, JJ Okay? Every time we get into a fight I get afraid I could lose you. PAUSE . . .I could lose my wife. Who's the most important person to me. I don't want to lose. I don't want to lose her.

JJ ([11:02](#)):

Hmm.

Debi ([11:08](#)):

I feel like a failure. I don't want to feel like a failure ,

Debi ([11:32](#)):

Can you let yourself feel that right now with JJ.

JJ ([11:36](#)):

I feel it all the time.(PROGRESS)

Debi ([11:41](#)):

Yeah . . .Yeah. Cause that's how important she is to you.

JJ ([11:44](#)):

um hum.

Debi ([11:47](#)):

there's like a hum, a constant hum for you that I could lose her. I could lose her. I could lose her. And what would that do to you, JJ, if you lost your wife.

JJ ([12:01](#)):

I don't know. I try not to think that far into it.

Debi ([12:07](#)):

Right? You keep yourself from even thinking that far into it. Because thinking that far into it would be horrendously awful.

JJ ([12:16](#)):

Yeah. I'm not, you know, I already gotta deal with every day thinking about losing her. I don't want to play out the rest of the scenario.

Debi ([12:27](#)):

So what's what I'm asking you right now. Right? To sit with this and let yourself feel this . . Fear . . right now. What do you notice in your body?

JJ ([12:43](#)):

Just being uncomfortable.

Debi ([12:46](#)):

Describe that to me. Describe what uncomfortable is for JJ.

JJ ([12:51](#)):

Oh, I just, I don't know. My mind is my own worst enemy. Really? It's more of a, a mind battle than it is a, I don't know, like it hurts in the heart. It hurts in the head, but you, your mind wants to play this scenario out and deal with the misery of it.(PROGRESS- HURT IN THE HEART)

Debi ([13:18](#)):

Ah, so your mind is going right now. You said it hurts in the heart. And my mind is my worst enemy and it's running things. And, and when my mind is running things, it's harder for me to sit in the hurt of my heart. Is that?

JJ ([13:38](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([13:38](#)):

So that tells me that when your mind is running things, it's kind of like your way of coping with the pain in your heart. The mind kicks in really quick and it starts to run things.

JJ ([13:52](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([13:52](#)):

And that's why you said it's your worst enemy because it gets in the way of you feeling your heart.

JJ ([14:06](#)):

Um hum.

Debi ([14:06](#)):

So can you . . . no words right now, but I just, I just would like for you to look at your wife . . . I want you to let yourself feel as much as you can. The hurt in your heart, The fear that you could lose her. That's real for you, JJ. . . . I don't want to lose you. . . And I live in fear all the time that I could lose. Cause I feel like I'm failing. And as we sit with this, my body is squirming and uncomfortable

JJ ([15:43](#)):

?? I am very squirmy

Debi ([15:46](#)):

Can you tell her that you have this fear every day that you said it's with me all the time, this fear of losing you and how

JJ ([15:59](#)):

I have a fear of losing you every day, not a every once in a while, BUT everyday

Debi ([16:12](#)):

And I don't share that with you.

JJ ([16:15](#)):

I don't tell you that. I don't share

Debi ([16:18](#)):

Nope. And how has it JJ right now to share it with her? It's not something you share. How is it right now?

JJ ([16:31](#)):

I guess it's nicer to just tell her. So that she . . I don't know. Just that way, she knows that I think about her. And I do you actually care about things (PROGRESS - NEW CLEAR MESSAGE)

Debi ([16:46](#)):

Yeah. Cause she doesn't get that signal in the way that you guys get in that cycle at all. She doesn't get the signal that you care. She doesn't get the signal that you're afraid of losing her. In fact, she gets a signal that you don't really care.