

Scot McKay (00:04.75)

Alright gentlemen, welcome to yet another episode of the world famous Mountain Top Podcast. To start off today, I have a question for you. Have you ever gone to a therapist...or you married guys out there? Have you ever been dragged out to marriage therapy and you felt diminished afterwards? Like I was supposed to be built up like this. I'm supposed to feel more empowered, but I feel disempowered or I feel like, man, I was just kind of picked on or ganged up against in this marriage counselor scenario. Have you ever felt like that?

Have you ever thought maybe I shouldn't be going to a therapist or even hiring a coach or anything like that, because this isn't going to help build me up. It's going to tear me down. I'm going to get blamed for everything again. Well, if you've ever felt like that at all, tune in, stay tuned today, because this is your show. Somehow we've gone 500 episodes without ever really throwing this on the table. I don't even think it's controversial. I think this is something all men need to reckon with.

Because a lot of us will go around not getting any help from anybody. Some people would even tell us, you know, we're weak to go try to get help but I think kind of like when we approach women some of us will claim it's fear of approaching women when really it's fear of being...well, fear of bothering women. We don't want to trouble them. They don't want us to talk to them anyway.

I think similar mind tricks can be played on us when we start thinking about, well, should I go get help for this? Should I go talk to a coach? Should I go see a therapist? Should I try to become a better man in this way? Or am I just going to get just slammed to the floor...body slammed by this whole process with me today is a new friend of mine. You guys are going to like her immediately. Her name is Amanda Johnson. She comes from God's country, man. She is just south of Nashville, Tennessee, which is just a gorgeous, gorgeous part of the country.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (01:43.425)
Hmm.

Scot McKay (01:56.174)

If you guys have never been there before, that little area, it's not a little area, but that swath of land, if you will, between say Nashville and Chattanooga, Tennessee is probably one of the most underrated, beautiful places in the country. She is a traditional and psychedelic assisted therapist for individuals and couples. And she really got my attention because this exact topic is what she wanted to talk about. Amanda Johnson, welcome to the show.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (02:23.691)
Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Scot McKay (02:26.114)

Yeah, we're glad you're here too. I think a lot of guys' interest has been piqued here. Talk to us about what, what patterns you see when men go into therapy, maybe not with your practice, but what you're observing here and what you're trying to, kind of fly the flag and rally against here. What are some of the experiences you hear men telling you about and that you see men having that really keeps them from ever wanting to find help again at all? Like this just didn't go my way.

Go ahead and riff on that.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (02:55.829)
Yeah. Well.

You know, this comes up professionally and just in my personal life because you'll hear people have an experience of couples therapy where it felt like one person had to be in the wrong or the problem or the

issue. And depending on sometimes who can paint the more compelling story to the therapist on accident, you're getting someone attempting to kind of arbitrate objective

truth about who's right and who's wrong and creating a dynamic where people can end up walking away feeling more disheartened, more hopeless, more stuck, more grieved in their complaints and they're not really able to move forward. So that's sometimes when I'll meet with people, you'll hear these stories about a failed attempt, a previous couples therapy journey where that's what happened to them and

they'll likely have a lot of defenses ready to go the next time they attempt this, if they do at all.

Scot McKay (04:07.617)

You know, you bring up a wonderful point. In some ways, likes attract, in some ways opposites attract in a relationship. So assuming there is this relationship, we're talking about couples therapy here right off the bat. And the couple goes to see the counselor... Very often, first of all, one, one partner wants this more than the other. The other one's like, why am I here? Yeah, always. Okay. And they're rolling their eyes. The other person's genuinely trying to help.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (04:19.841)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (04:30.069)

Always. Yeah, always.

Scot McKay (04:37.673)

Also, women are known for being talkers and men are known for clamming up. So the woman will give all this information and the guy will feel like, my goodness, she's like oversharing. And then it'll be the guy's turn to say something and he's like, well, there's this and there's that. And, you know, there will be a cognitive bias that gets built here on the part of the therapist. And, you know, let's not pick on therapists. I mean, it could happen even in a coaching session, right? Where

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (04:42.017)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (05:05.661)

Mm-hmm. Sure.

Scot McKay (05:07.657)

Someone will say, well, this person wants it more. This other person isn't as articulate about it, or they seem to want it less or their attitude isn't there. So I have a good guy and a bad guy already figured out in this conversation because of that cognitive bias, right?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (05:20.427)

Yes.

Yes, I think the easier client for a therapist is someone who's more verbally expressive, who's able to kind of share their feelings, where they're at with things. Those tend to be the clients that kind of go with the process more. And on accident, you can create a bias towards that person immediately because they're sort of going with the idea of what's going to happen in the room.

Scot McKay (05:52.728)

Yeah. Yeah. And so what happens is more men than women, I would say, will say, you know, the heck with this. I'm just not going to go. I don't want to go. I dread it. If I've been to one session, I'm certainly not looking for the next one. And then on top of that, a lot of therapists are women and a lot of guys will

feel kind of ganged up on. It's like, okay, she's found her Huckleberry, you know, these two women are just piling on. And if you take

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (06:12.235)
Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (06:22.601)
some of the phenomena that's been happening socially over the past decade. toxic masculinity was a buzzword, you know, it's kind of fading into the cultural background in terms of zeitgeist nowadays, you know? You don't hear about it as much. But for a while, but for a while there, But for a while there, you heard a whole lot about how men inherently are bad simply by being masculine, by being more

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (06:30.891)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (06:36.619)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (06:52.471)
born male and if we can somehow whoop that masculinity out of them then they'll be good neuter humanoids who aren't so violent and hurting everybody anymore. When of course, the guy may be saying to himself all I'm trying to do is provide and protect I'm trying to do what comes naturally to me as a guy. This is this is my instinct and now you're telling me you know women don't need me for that anymore they could take care of themselves, etc., etc. You know you told me to sit down shut up stay in my lane do better but you haven't given him

given me anything to replace it with. Meanwhile, you know, during the Kavanaugh hearings, was believe all women, you know, and then the future is female and all you guys should, again, sit down, shut up and let women take over for a while. And some guys are thinking to themselves like, why does one gender have to take over at all? I don't understand. It's just, well, you know, everything you've done to us for millennia. Now it's our turn. Let us have it. And it's like, well, that doesn't sound very kind.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (07:41.921)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (07:50.658)
That doesn't sound benevolent. That sounds like I'm writing my own writ of doom here. So when we go as men, when we go into a therapist's office, when we traipse into that territory, if you will, and the therapist is of that mindset as we feared she might be, it's like my wife, my girlfriend has turned into an adversary and this lady isn't helping cause she's helping build that,

foster that adversarial mindset between she and I, and I feel like it's two against one and I'm constantly on the defensive. And then the next thing you know, they're both pointing at me going, why are you being defensive? You know, you can see how this snowball gets rolling, right? That's what I hear a lot of guys, at least fearing is going to happen, even if it's not exactly their real world experience. Although I have heard guys for whom that is the real world experience. What say you?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (08:29.856)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (08:44.641)

Mm hmm. Well, to me, it's important to share that if that were to happen, you know, people can stop the process at any point, you know, like I would love for people to know that that would be a red flag if you felt like someone was baiting an argument or creating more tension than was already there or amplifying kind of who's in the right and who's in the wrong.

Often in relationships, there's no objective truth. You have two subjective realities and you need to operate a conversation with that in mind. So anytime you're feeling someone, you know, yeah, almost kind of be judge and jury on the relationship automatically, that's not going to bring the relationship into anything more healed. It's a red flag.

Scot McKay (09:43.02)

Yeah, I how is that going to help? If I feel attacked, how is this going to improve my relationship with her? Certainly my relationship with the therapist hasn't even been established yet. It's not going to be because now she's the enemy and she's helping my significant other pile on against me. That's not going to lead to more togetherness. That's going to at best... Well, I don't know if you would call it at best, but it's certainly going to

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (09:44.831)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (09:51.947)

Great.

Scot McKay (10:12.147)

increase that feeling that we're adversaries rather than partners. And one would think at least that the goal of therapy would be to bring us back into partnership, you know?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (10:16.53)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (10:21.491)

Mm-hmm. Right, right. Yeah, it calls into question how do people constructively share feedback or their experience of another person's behavior without it turning into kind of cancel culture or putting someone in this box of like morally inept or not okay in some way. And I think a lot of men do

Scot McKay (10:39.692)

Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (10:50.997)

tend to feel like they're getting dismissed, demonized, maybe more confused about their role in kind of current culture right now. And we're seeing a lot of polarization where there's sort of an us versus them mentality, which is being grown in echo chambers, whether in groups of people talking online, whatever that looks like.

Scot McKay (11:19.061)

Yeah, you know, when you talk about echo chambers, echo chambers play a dirty little trick on our brains because we find perhaps several hundred or even a few thousand people who think the way we do. And it's easy to fall into the trap going, that's what the world thinks. Everybody agrees with me. Right. All you have to do is on any given day, here's a cute little exercise. Look at the headlines on cnn.com versus the headlines on foxnews.com. And you'll feel like you're living literally on two different planets. You know,

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (11:34.443)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (11:48.396)

That's how I gauge real news. Actually, if both of those outlets are carrying it, something like a plane crash or something, then it probably is newsworthy. But usually, you know, I've seen news, I've seen headlines on either of those outlets where they're talking about how terrible the other outlet is pretending that's the news story of the day. So it's easy for us to kind of get indoctrinated into thinking, okay, my echo chamber is my team. I feel comfortable there. I feel at home there. These are my people. So I don't want to let them down.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (12:03.125)

Yeah.

Scot McKay (12:17.003)

And I don't want to not believe what they don't believe. So critical thinking, critical. So critical thinking goes out the door and what we're left doing is going with the flow. And one day we wake up and go, how did I get here? How did I start believing all these things? Why do I believe all these things? And we can't even answer it. And it's because, well, this is the group we've been hanging with. It's kind of like junk food. It's like getting a diet of like Cheetos and ice cream

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (12:38.038)

Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (12:43.904)

Yeah.

Scot McKay (12:46.869)

instead of anything that's real protein or real substance. But it made me feel good to sit with this group of people who, for example, the Men Going Their Own Way is always my go-to. They all can't stand women. All these women did everything to them. So they get together and complain about women and go, yeah, we're the majority. Men don't want to be with women anymore. But, you know, really, it's this big of a swath of people. Most everybody else in the world would happily like to find a girlfriend and

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (13:09.611)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (13:15.115)

relate to women in a happy way, but we're not grabbing the mic because we're not angry about it. So everybody who's usually content aren't the most, aren't the noisiest ones. So what happens is these people go to therapy after being in this echo chamber. And what does that look like, Amanda?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (13:20.683)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (13:24.767)

Right.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (13:31.809)

Are you thinking more about like an individual therapy experience or where there's a relationship?

Scot McKay (13:35.967)

Either way, whether it's a relationship or a couple, or a relationship or either way, whether it's a relationship or someone who's single.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (13:45.25)

Well, when I think first about individual therapy, that is very tricky landscape to navigate because what people bring is areas in which they're in pain, areas that they're uncomfortable with. What individuals bring into therapy is bias about their own pain points, which we all have them. We all have...

Scot McKay (13:53.965)

I would think.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (14:10.017)

wounds and uncomfortable experiences that we're trying to work on and overcome because it's what's bothering us. Rarely though are people volunteering information about this is where I had a misstep and hurt someone today. Can you help me with that? Almost 0 % of my entire 15 years in the field has someone volunteered information about I need help changing my behavior in this way. I'm finding myself very controlling and I think it's harming this relationship.

so that's been a fabulous kind of observation I've had at some point in my career. If I kept having victims come through the door and there was no one sharing that they were in the offender position. And I started looking at the math. We can't all be, you know, having problems with other people and feeling hurt if, if no one is also simultaneously being the one who's, you know, making errors.

Scot McKay (15:02.957)

That's right.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (15:08.769)

And the way I approach humans is we're all a little bit of both. We all have parts of us that feel wounded or sensitized or insecure. And we all have parts of us that can engage in, you know, one-up behavior or ways that we're allowing ourselves to be in a stance of superiority towards other people. The problem with individual therapy is so you're relying on that person to bring the topic up, ask for help around it, and no one does.

Relationship therapy, on the other hand, you do get the other side of the story. You get someone being able to chime in about what they're experiencing the other person do. But because I take that stance that most of us are all at times completely capable of being in the one down or the one up position, it's dangerous to sort of

try to let one person be all good and one bad and then pit them against each other. I don't know how the relationship could heal in that way. It's just a stance.

Scot McKay (16:17.485)

Well, society nowadays has a way of...

just fostering logical fallacy. mean, the assumption is being made now that we don't know how to think critically, you know, that will fall for whatever they throw at us. And one of the ones that gets overused is the All-Or-Nothing Fallacy, right? There's no gray area in anything. All men are terrible. All women are good. For example, another fallacy that, that,

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (16:26.091)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (16:42.314)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (16:52.897)

goes along with that would be because masculinity and femininity are opposites and men and women are therefore opposites, then they have to be opposites in every way. So therefore one has to be good and one has to be bad because that's what opposites do. But things can, you know, people, places, things, phenomenon, ideas can be bad or good in one way, but not necessarily in every conceivable way can they be opposite. So if you have a situation where

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (17:08.863)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (17:22.625)

the man is painted out to be the bad one and the woman painted out to be the good one, a lot of times that's driven by a narrative that came from, you know, you can call it media, but you know, you can even call it news or journalism, but really even most journalism nowadays is just pop culture. And what is the intent behind this narrative to make me feel this way?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (17:44.469)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (17:50.178)

What are they trying to sell me? You can follow the money. And that's probably the subject of another podcast, but I find it very interesting that in 15 years of practice, almost everybody who's come to you has painted themselves out to be a victim. And I guess it's, it becomes, help me be more resilient, right? If that's not the buzzword of the 21st century or help me get them or change them. And you, you and I both are adult enough and professional enough to know that there's no way you can coach

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (17:53.28)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (18:20.097)

to or therapize someone who isn't in the room. You know, I can't, I can't coach to someone else. I can't coach to a third party. You can't therapize this person who is the alleged problem, according to the person sitting in front of you. I do get people who come to me and go, look, I got to do some self work. I screwed this up. I want to do better. I want to be a better man. I do get those guys. I'm curious that you don't see a whole lot of that because it seems to me probably the best reason

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (18:34.177)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (18:49.079)

to go to therapy would be to heal my own past. The best reason to hire a coach would be help me do better. And you're seeing almost none of that in your practice. Everybody's just like, look, I'm coming here because poor me, this person did something to me. Now what? That's fascinating. Men and women you're seeing this from.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (19:03.595)

Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (19:07.251)

Yeah, I think often people come because they want symptom relief in some form or fashion. And it would be unfair for me to say people were across the board in a victim narrative. But I think what's more accurate is people are personally distressed with what their own pain points are. So when we think about what we want help with, where our symptoms are

coming or stemming from, it's typically what our own organism is carrying as pain. We're asking for help to relieve that. And so it naturally links to, you know, experiences where someone legitimately has gone through, you know, trauma or overwhelming experiences or, you know, an adverse circumstance. The problem is sometimes

people aren't able to then link, you know, because this happened to me, where do I give myself a lot of...

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (20:19.094)

grace but simultaneously have almost zero tolerance for people who enact triggers in me or who are catalytic for me to feel pain. Where have I become, you know, sensitized to feeling like the person who is capable of me feeling pain is then the problem. And that's the wrong way to look at it. Typically these pains are stuck in us from earlier experiences and then we're having

another person answer for the pain that they weren't even around to cause in the first place.

Scot McKay (20:52.177)

I understand. Yeah. You know, I think a lot of guys would be listening to this going, man, if I do that, I'm a weakling. I'm not very masculine. It's anti-masculine for me to go sit in front of a therapist, just simply to get something off my chest and to vent. And it's like, poor baby, you know, buck up and get over it. A lot of guys are thinking that to themselves. And what ends up happening is a lot of guys go without any mental health, you know,

help at all. We just wave off all of those resources available to us out there, and we're stuck inside our heads doing our thing and not getting the help we need. What would you say to guys who feel like you know, hey, I do have something that I want to get better at I do want some help with it But they feel like this isn't a very manly thing to do and if my girlfriend ever finds out I'm doing that she's gonna break up with me, etc., etc.?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (21:50.521)

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (21:55.043)

Those are often the people that I might not, unfortunately, get to interact with. So I think the people, right, I think, you know, I sort of put that back on what could men as a community do for one another to start to give examples of modeling, like, this is where I'm struggling, this is how I'm dealing with it, this is my plan to support myself, take responsibility. I almost think,

Scot McKay (22:01.133)

Well, they're not going to show up. Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (22:24.04)

It's before they get to my office because they won't unless other people are sort of role modeling like, you know, this is what it could look like and be more vocal about it...

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (22:38.442)

to almost kind of change the culture around it, know, the, the lift the stigma a little bit. Do you, do you think it's a generational thing that there's differences in generations towards this topic, or do you, do you think it's still kind of across the board that that would be someone's sense of it?

Scot McKay (22:55.915)

Well, if anything, I think it's gotten better over generations. I think men a hundred years ago, there's no way they would do this fluffy stuff at all. But nowadays, you you've got a whole new generation of men who bought into, you know, and, I'm going to sound like I'm being unfair here, but I'm not, I'm just going to call it the way I see it. I think there's a generation of men who have actually, as you mentioned before

we hit click on the record button here,

have drank the Kool-Aid, you used that term. And I think it applies to what I'm about to describe. I think they've drank the Kool-Aid when it comes to masculinity as a social construct. I'm supposed to do better as a guy. If anything, be more feminine. Let women take charge. They've allowed it to be a mechanism by which they can check out from being manly or being a man or being a provider or protector.

Maybe even going and getting a job, perhaps even moving out from under their parents' roof at age 45. I think those guys are all happy to go to therapy. They're not worried about looking manly or looking weak or anything like that. Whereas I think, you know, 50, a hundred years ago, every guy would have gone, well, what? I don't even know, understand what you're talking about. Right. So I don't know if it's gotten worse generationally with men.

But I will say this, I think, um, the rise in the need for men's groups, men to be in deeper relationship with each other has reached a crisis pitch. I also think 50 or a hundred years ago, men had more closer, had more close male friends. And that's a fact. Men tend to build associations and friendships around shared goals, shared experiences and

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (24:34.41)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (24:42.475)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (24:49.249)
with the isolation of people and the so-called pandemic of loneliness, we're just simply around fewer guys. And we don't have as many close friends. So then what happens is there's this dearth of resources for us to share or for us to even get valid feedback in general. We're really only left with the narratives that social media and the news outlets are trying to feed us.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (24:57.249)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (25:10.081)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (25:17.473)
You should believe this. You should think like that. You should stop doing this and start doing that. And really it's all a big commercial enterprise. You know, again, like I said, a lot of times it's follow the money. What's going to be more profitable? You know, if you tell me that I, am bald and I should have hair or else no women are ever going to like me, then it's easier to get me to believe that than if I go out in the real world and realize that if I shaved my head, women are still going to like me and it's not going to be any different.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (25:45.547)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (25:45.826)
You know, that real world experience just isn't happening for a lot of guys compared to just this onslaught of media engagement that's coming to us from everywhere. So coming back to what you're talking about, when guys go into a therapist and they leave feeling disempowered rather than empowered, my guess is they're predisposed to feeling that way even before they sit in front of you and they're just

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (25:55.958)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (26:13.181)
listening selectively to hear what you're going to tell them that says, that, helps them validate the thought in their mind. See, she's not going to want like me being a male. She's not going to allow me to be a man. There's that preconceived notion, that cognitive bias again, sometimes isn't there.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (26:30.259)
Mm-hmm. Yeah, I imagine people are on guard based on, you know, the identity of the therapist sort of assuming, you know, this could go bad for me, you know, given their other past experiences with someone who looks like that person.

Scot McKay (26:51.531)
Let me interrupt you briefly. Not to be overlooked, that could happen on dates. That could happen in any social interaction where we're we're, we're predisposed to a bias that this person is going to look at me, respond to me, think something about me that I've already dreamed up in my head instead of taking each interaction as it comes. I think that's especially poignant when it comes to talking about a therapist relationship vis a vis

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (26:57.675)
Sure.

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (27:15.36)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (27:21.985)
you know, a fear men may have that we're going to be minimized for being masculine or everything's going to be my fault. You know what I mean? Yeah. But I wanted to, I wanted to put that out in the universe so that it was said. Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (27:28.737)
Correct. Yes.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (27:33.312)
Yeah, Yeah, no, I think it's unconscious happening to all of us all the time. And we up the ante when we imagine we're supposed to be more revealing or share more details about ourselves. It's more more is on the line about what's how's this person going to respond to, you know, my presence. So it it there's a lot of risk in the relationship. And before you have the safety and the trust, it's it's

Scot McKay (27:46.273)
Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (28:03.689)
it can be a lot of work to kind of get people to be bought into the process. Because most of the time, it feels more risky than you get anything out of it right in the beginning. It can be hard to stick it out.

Scot McKay (28:18.839)
Yeah, lot of guys have a problem with being vulnerable too, because there's this weird dichotomy with that word in the English language. You know, the Brene Brownian definition of it such that, you know, we

should be courageous and face that fear. Perhaps we don't know the outcome and therefore we're vulnerable to any outcome. That's the good kind of vulnerability. Like for example, when you are sitting in front of a woman and it could go either way, or you approach a woman and you say hi to her, maybe ask her out, it could go either way.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (28:21.11)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (28:48.929)
But because that word is the same word that also represents a sitting duck, something that has not a chance. And the first thing that could come along and smite it is going to kill it. That doesn't feel very masculine to a guy. So therefore we avoid all vulnerability whatsoever. So then we probably avoid therapists and dare I say even coaches because we're afraid we're going to be knocked down. What would you say to a guy who has feared that and especially

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (29:02.506)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (29:10.432)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (29:18.069)
Amanda, what would you say to a guy who's felt that? Like I did it. I gave it a try. Me and the old lady went to a therapist. I went to a therapist by myself and I just left feeling worse, not better. What would you say to those guys?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (29:31.765)
Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (29:38.945)
You know, there's there's a lot of pieces I would be thinking about. My mind almost goes in a lot of directions when you ask me that because some of it's sort of context specific that would help guide me but in an instance like that I would I would wonder how they became so vulnerable to another person's input about them if they didn't yet feel the person knew them well, like why take their

word so why did they give away their power in that moment to take

Scot McKay (30:14.583)
Well, they could be people pleasers. They could never have gotten any validation from anybody growing up. They could have a poor self-image and they're afraid that their shame is going to be reflected in the words and actions and even the body language of the therapist sitting in front of them. Don't you think?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (30:31.316)
Yeah. Yeah. And that's where sometimes we can see behavior on the outside of people where they're hardened, withdrawn, defensive. And it's ultimately our job to connect to the more insecure parts behind the scenes that are calling up these big defenses so that people over time figure out this balance of safety. There's a lot too that I accept my limitations on. I'll often refer

individual clients I have that are men or part of relationships to figure out how to get some friends like either join a gym, start a hobby, go to a men's group if you have to pay for that initially as a part of a coaching community because I don't think I do a man any service learning how to be vulnerable with me. I think I help them figure out how to have adaptive vulnerability in their life again. And it's got to look

like they know how to do it in a lot of other spaces, even outside the therapist's office. So I kind of have no interest in creating something sacred with one person. I think I'm best used to help that person figure out how to have that in their day-to-day in a lot of relationships. I don't really want to be anyone's one person, if I'm being honest.

Scot McKay (31:56.11)

Well, I think that's a dangerous position to put oneself in. That's almost too much power over anyone. Yeah. So I think that's, that's very self-aware of you to even realize that as a therapist. Cause I think certainly a lot of people in any profession, legal profession, medical profession, mental health profession can sort of develop a God complex. You know, that I'm the voice of God for this person when, you know, we have no such business even pretending that.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (31:58.271)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (32:02.56)

Right.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (32:17.545)

Yeah. Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (32:24.735)

Yeah, I know I've been drawn more to men mentors that try to craft and I craft a stance where we're all kind of on equal footing. have the gift of objectivity because I'm a third party witnessing your dynamic and you would be the person not you but the client would be the person who can't see the forest through the trees. And there's...

Scot McKay (32:49.485)

Well, yeah, because we're not emotionally involved with what they're emotionally involved with. So we don't have that clouded judgment. Yeah, for sure. That's valuable. That's a valuable part of therapy and coaching, by the way. That often stands alone as a reason to invest in oneself for that. Yeah.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (32:53.683)

Right. Right.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (33:03.785)

Yeah, Yeah. And that's where I think my power comes from is just that I'm not in the system. I'm observing the system and I can help see things that two people in the system can't see. It doesn't make me special as a human. I have my own blind spots in my own human life, but in that position you have a certain level of initial wisdom you can see because you're looking from the outside.

Scot McKay (33:30.165)

You know, what you're talking about reminds me what I've heard from lots of people in the psychotherapy field, psychiatrists even, where they have a hard time dating or they have a hard time making even social acquaintances because the gen pop tends to believe this person can see through me because they're a psychology expert. So they can see all my vulnerabilities, all my, you know, all the ways that I don't like myself. They could read my bad self-esteem, like a cheap paperback. And it really just

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (33:49.073)

huh.

Scot McKay (33:58.894)

creates this massive social discomfort with people once they realize they're standing in front of someone who is in the mental health profession. And so I've heard psychiatrists say, man, I just don't even tell... When I was single, I didn't even tell women what I do for a living until like the fifth date. You know, I'd make something up or I would just kind of say, you know, I work with people every day. It's really kind of boring. What about you? And then get them to talk about themselves because well, of course that's what someone in the psychotherapy field would do.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (34:11.093)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (34:28.235)
But really we are all of us coaches, therapists, we're humans. We don't have that X-ray vision to see someone's deepest, you know, all the dirt on people that easily. And, I think that is a myth. And I think a lot of guys are thinking themselves, well, I'm not going to sit in front of some chick and bare my soul when, know, she's going to be psychoanalyzing me, you know, the whole Freudian psychoanalysis bit.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (34:35.853)
huh.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (34:51.413)
Yeah.

Scot McKay (34:54.655)
has created more fear and angst and sturm und drang with people that probably has made them feel better about going and laying on a couch, listening, having somebody listen to all their stuff. I think this has been a fantastic conversation. And one of the key things you just said was that, look, gentlemen, if you need to get better with women, if you need to be a better man to get better with women, you got to do the self work and it's not going to happen alone.

And it's not going to happen between you and Wikipedia and Google and God forbid ChatGPT. ChatGPT is "Mr. Nice Guy", by the way. It'll just tell you what you want to hear. So worst therapist ever, unless you're a narcissist and it feels like the best therapy ever. Cause oh my God, I'm being validated. You don't have to fear ChatGPT, you know, misunderstanding you or giving you the hard truths or the tough love. That's for sure.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (35:31.666)
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (35:37.737)
Yes.

Scot McKay (35:49.378)
But I also, like I said, I love what you said about, look, if this person is your therapist or your coach and they're, they're harshing your buzz and they're bringing you down, you have a right to fire their ass. They're not better than you. They're the wrong therapist for you. And you can wag your finger at them and call them out. I invite my guys, even on the first session with guys, Hey, look, if the communication style isn't there, if you need me to respond to you in a different way, socially,

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (36:01.419)
Sure.

Scot McKay (36:19.255)
cognitively, if you aren't getting out of this, what you signed up to get out of it, let me know. Cause I work

for you and I want to be flexible. And I think that clears the air with a lot of guys very quickly and kind of helps everybody. Even when we work with couples or with women, even in business coaching, everybody kind of... breathes a sigh of relief and says, oh good. I'm not going to be silently judged when I'm here. And me, I don't know about you, but I'm the biggest dorky goofball in the world.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (36:31.766)
Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (36:44.993)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (36:48.459)
So, you know, once I start being vulnerable back with people, everybody goes, alright, well, you know, we're certainly a bunch of co-equals here. No one's lording it over anybody else. I think that's a, fantastic message. And I think that's probably the best defense against well, being indoctrinated into thinking you're some kind of way by a, by an activist therapist. I don't know how far it will go if your wife and the therapist are teaming up on you, but I think

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (36:58.155)
Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (37:18.263)
you know, I'm sure you would agree, right? That you still can stand up for yourself, even if it's two on one like that, right?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (37:25.429)
Yeah, well, there are moments where someone is, man or woman, is completely egregiously behaving and completely in the wrong. There's something very not okay about behavior they're engaging in. I think the trick though is how does everyone in the room stay on equal footing in terms of...

No one's a bad person. No one's a good person. It's like we've got to figure this behavior out, this pattern out, because we're not winning as a couple when this is going on.

Scot McKay (38:01.367)
Well, what if the coach or the therapist takes the side of the egregious and you're thinking to yourself, is this really happening? This can't be me. It's them, not me. Right? But you have nobody to make that appeal to. What do you do in that situation?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (38:14.164)
Yeah, well.

You know.

Again, I've rarely seen it in practice where one person is, you know, holding all the problem behavior and the other person's just a sweet angel. I think we've all got our days where something's going on.

Scot McKay (38:35.685)
Or especially that the professional, the one presiding over the group as it were, over the session would agree with the person being egregious. You don't see that often either?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (38:44.992)
um

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (38:48.606)

You know, I will say that there are behavioral patterns that go undetected when you feel sympathy or empathy for someone's position. So let's say someone has been hurt. They were, the other partner cheated on them and they're hurt, right? So in that example, you might think there's an obvious wrong person and right person. That being said, you know, there's

Scot McKay (39:06.463)

Okay. Yes.

Scot McKay (39:14.85)

Good point.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (39:18.388)

there's still therapy that will leave that relationship broken or therapy that will bring them back into okayness again. And even if someone has been hurt badly, there's...

It can feel compelling to get behind that person, you know, applaud them for sharing their feelings, speaking up. But I still, we can't give someone permission to, like I was telling you, a mentor used this phrase, offend from the victim position. If you're hurt, you've been cheated on, but your plan,

to respond includes character assassination of the other person, screaming at them, becoming volatile back. All of those things still are not meant to be sanctioned, regardless of the feelings that are going on behind the scenes. So I think, you know, that's where true healing that's getting a relationship back on track. You know, it's not about blame or figuring out who's

at fault, but to sort of figure out how do two people reckon with what happened and heal where one person doesn't have to be the problem for the rest of the relationship. No one's going to do a good job in their role as a husband if they're chronically the problem or the one who messed up for all of time.

Scot McKay (40:55.105)

Yeah, I agree. you bring up a wonderful point and I would add to it and... it's like "yes, and..." in improve. Yes, and I think a lot of guys have been fed this fear that in therapy and I would also lump in there family law and the family law system, they're going to take the woman's side no matter what. She's going to start.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (41:08.308)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (41:24.513)

with the crocodile tears and the, I didn't mean to, and but he did this and men are so awful and the emotions and men have been led to believe that's going to work a hundred percent of the time, but therapists are smarter than that. Coaches are smarter than that. And I've heard over and over again, that judges are smarter than that more than ever. And indeed you said something earlier that, you know, you don't have the golden child and the evil,

horrible person. Most people have a lot of gray area. We do some good things and we do some bad things. And okay, this person may have cheated, but you know, they try to be a good person other than that, they just fell to this temptation at one time, or they felt undervalued by their spouse and acted out. It doesn't mean they were a terrible person. And human bias is going to happen. But I think we as professionals, it's incumbent upon us to leave people better than we found them. not just to pile on like that, but I do think a lot of guys are very

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (41:58.24)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (42:23.009)

wary if not terrified to go to a therapist or to go into a divorce situation to divorce court because they just they they say to themselves i'm a guy and i'm going to get fleeced. And you know a lot of guys who are very negative towards this they love to go find examples in the news but if an example was newsworthy all that means is it it doesn't happen every day all the time. Like for example a guy will find a news story about a woman who

revoked her sexual consent the next morning after they had sex the night before now he's up for rape charges. And my... my response to them is like, you know several thousand couples screwed in San Antonio, Texas alone last night and it went fine. So I think a lot of these guys look at this like a plane crashed in India a month ago, therefore flying is awful and I don't want to die and I'm never gonna fly again.

Oh yeah, but a whole lot of planes took off and landed just in your hometown, your home city between then and now. So a lot of guys, they'll gravitate around these horror stories and go, Nope, Nope, Nope. I'm not going to do this. But if anything is ever newsworthy like that, it's usually a rarity. Um, the bottom line here is, you know, don't knock it till you try it. You know, if there's self work that needs to be done, if there is an issue in your marriage that needs to be dealt with.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (43:31.7)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (43:42.837)

If it's rooted in the past, go see a therapist. If the two of you need to, to get on the same page and do better, go see a coach, you know, do better in the real sense, not just in the weaponized sense. You know, there's a real path. There's a real way that we can improve. Then do it. And you know, if, the person sitting in front of you, the coach or the therapist isn't doing their job, fire their asses. I know I'm looking in the mirror. If I'm not doing a good job for the guys who come to me, I'm fired.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (43:50.196)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (43:58.292)

Mm-hmm.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (44:11.328)

Mm-hmm.

Scot McKay (44:11.478)

Which is impetus for me to do a good job, by the way. And I'm sure you feel the same way. I feel like this has indeed been a wonderful conversation, one that we had never had on this show, and that I was very eager to have with you, Amanda. And I think you represented your points extremely well. What I'm going to do is I'm going to head guys to mountaintoppodcast.com front slash Amanda, A-M-A-N-D-A. We've never had an Amanda on the show. And there you go. And what are guys going to find when they

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (44:35.743)

There you go.

Scot McKay (44:40.192)

when they click on that link, Amanda?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (44:43.1)

It's really just a welcome page to my practice. It gives information about the type of work I do in Tennessee, California, and Colorado. Also, I do have some support on there. Video to help people walk through their conflict archetype. People have a lot of modes they go into around conflict that they don't even realize is sort of a...

a unique template to them and it's not the only way to handle conflict. And there's some information about how to detect that and figure out who you typically are when an issue comes up with another person.

Scot McKay (45:21.42)

Well, that's very valuable. You caught me by surprise with the Colorado California thing. What's up with that?

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (45:26.644)

I've moved many times in my adulthood and so I've collected licenses along the way.

Scot McKay (45:32.208)

yeah, see, that's where you're licensed. Fantastic. Yeah, that's important when you're a therapist. Very, very good. Well, bravo. Fantastic show today. And once again, Amanda Johnson, thank you so much for joining us today. It's been wonderful. Hope you'll come back.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (45:34.791)

Uh-huh.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (45:46.623)

Yeah, yeah, I appreciate this. I love talking to men. I like calling them into therapy, telling them what it's all about and that if it's not feeling right, it's just keep trying. You don't necessarily click with everyone right away, but the field as a whole can help.

Scot McKay (46:02.368)

And that's fair.

Scot McKay (46:06.006)

Great. Great. Gentlemen, if you haven't been to mountaintoppodcast.com lately, visit our three long time sponsors. The guys over at Origin In Maine, Jocko Willink's company have come out with a whole new line of jeans, more boots than ever. They got Chelsea boots now, which are so sweet. Okay. And yeah, very nice. And they get these awesome new chambray shirts and they're very movable and breathable. The thing about Origin is

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (46:23.999)

Nice.

Scot McKay (46:32.47)

they want to make you look good, but if you get into a tussle or a bar fight, you still have the right clothes on. They have a way of giving you this smart, casual look while still being somewhat athletic. That and the fact that everything is sourced and made in the USA is probably my favorite part about everything Origin. Not because I'm ever going to get into a bar fight, but boy, it sure feels manly to wear clothes that make sure you can bend and flex like that, even though you look smart and good.

Amanda Johnson LCSW, SEP (46:53.536)

You're ready.

Scot McKay (46:58.7)

It's kind of a neat little deal they've got going on there. Check those guys out. Hero Soap, guys if you haven't tried the shampoo yet it comes in bar form and you're thinking this thing's gonna last me a day and a half No way, dude. It lasts like a month. Like, just three swipes on your head I know I got the high and tight thing going on. But even if you have like, know, you could be Goldilocks The Dude for goodness sake look like a pro wrestler up there and you know

three swipes, it'll lather up. You don't even need to lather, rinse and repeat. All you have to do is lather and rinse. Great stuff from Hero Soap. Plus it smells great and no fake stuff in it. No chemicals. The guys at The Keyport have gone titanium on us and boy is it sharp. Check those guys out too for your everyday carry item. I carry mine every day. The face plates, you can change them all out. I've collected a couple dozen by now, which is kind of cool to be sponsored to be able to do that, but it won't break the bank to

get your Keyports set up the way you want it. All three of those long time sponsors do a great job for us. They've been here probably four or five years now each. use the coupon code "mountain10" to get 10 % off from any of our illustrious sponsors. And guys, you've also heard me talk once again about coaching today. Listen, just like Amanda, I don't think she was faking being someone she's not. I'm not either. My passport says Scot McKay on it. People have commented, you know,

why is your name only spelled with one T? Look, if I was using a fake nom de plume out there, I would have at least spelled my first name right. Right. Correct. So actually we're Scottish, you know, by family extraction. So I would argue it spelled the correct way, but enough about me. when you guys get on the phone and you talk to me, what you see is what you're going to get. I mean, I'm in podcast mode for sure, but who I am, what I'm about.

That's who you're going to talk to. I don't play a fictional character. Get on my calendar. Let's talk about where you are in your journey to being better with women. If we put a plan together to make that happen for you sooner than later, that's great. If not, I'm happy to have talked to you. I sometimes just love to get your feedback on the show. You can get on my calendar at mountaintoppodcast.com. You can get in touch with our three sponsors there. Plus there are a whole lot of other goodies that I don't talk about nearly enough, like downloadable programs.

Scot McKay (49:18.668)

You can get my book Sticking Points Solved free. Sign up for my free daily newsletter, which is also fluff free. All of that and more is there for you at mountaintoppodcast.com. And until I talk to you again real soon, this is Scot McKay from X & Y communications in San Antonio, Texas. Be good out there.