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SPEAKERS

Edroy Odem, Gabe Howard, Scot McKay



Edroy Odem 00:04

From the mist and shrouded mountaintop fortress that is x&y Communications Headquarters. You're listening to the World famous mountaintop podcast. And now here's your host Scot McKay



Scot McKay 00:17

Hello again and welcome to yet another episode of the world famous mountaintop podcast. All yell Yeah, my name is Scot McKay I am your host at Scot McKay on both Twitter and clubhouse real Scot McKay on Instagram. You can find all the video goodies on YouTube by searching my name Scot McKay with one T. The website is mountaintop podcast.com. And as always, guys, if you haven't joined the Facebook group, which is the mountaintop summit, got to get there guys got to sign up. That's where all the action is taking place live interaction between guys who are looking to be better men have better women in their lives. That's where all the interactive stuff is going on. Doesn't have to be a one way street, you can join us on the mountaintop summit on Facebook. Today we're going to talk about a topic that you guys know, if you've listened to this show is a very tricky one for me personally, as well as my wife Emily. Today we're going to talk about mental illness, specifically psychosis, and I've tentatively titled this show crazy people need love to Now listen, you guys know that pretty much my first wife ruin my life has

negatively affected my oldest daughter's life. And yet, you know, when the divorce happened, in large part because of very profound psychosis my first wife had and continues to have these days. Of course, I could have decided, hey, all women are crazy. They're all awful. I'm going to be a man going my own way and do all the red pill stuff but instead I didn't want to be a victim. If you want to know why Jocko Willings company origin and main sponsors this show is because we are the show for men about dating relationships, women and sex, where we are not gonna act like victims, we're gonna take control of our lives man up and be the kind of men women are attracted to. Well, that's why I decided to do in my own life. And these days, as you know, I'm married to my wonderful wife, Emily. And what you may or may not know is her ex husband is suffering from schizophrenia To this day, and boy was that solid and poignant first date conversation. And she does not suffer from a psychosis, neither do I. And that has made for a pretty solid relationship relative to either of our respective previous relationships. So you know, I've been kind of bearish on getting into relationships with people who suffer from psychosis. So enter today's guest, his name is Gabe Howard. He's from Ohio. And he's written a book with this title already. mental illness is an asshole. Now on the surface, you're probably thinking, Okay, this guy and I are going to be brothers from different mothers. Well, I don't know many ways we are except here's the kicker Gabe Howard is himself, a guy who lives with bipolar and anxiety disorders. So this is going to be a very spirited discussion. And I'm going to listen, and I'm going to be open minded and I'm also at this time going to welcome my guest, Mr. Gay powered, how are you doing, man?

G

Gabe Howard 03:17

Hey, I'm appreciative to be here. I like how you said spirited discussion. It's like the polite way of saying we gonna debate



Scot McKay 03:24

Hey, there's no better way to put it. I don't want to argue with you. I want you to educate me I want to learn. So on that note, why don't we jump right in Gabe, tell us a little bit about your story and what led you to write a book with a title like mental illnesses and asshole

G

Gabe Howard 03:41

the title I didn't want to entitle it that I mean it is my personality and I wrote an article which does appear in the book called mental illnesses and asshole and listen mental illness is an absolute asshole and an analogy that I sort of used to monitor my own

symptoms and to keep my issues for lack of a better word at bay is to think we all worry about the asshole right? Like Like we're on guard for that asshole you know that the guy at work that's pissing us off the the neighbor that's constantly causing us problems just even the person who looks you know sideways at us in public we're like hey, you might be an asshole Yeah, just we're we're constantly on guard for them and being on guard for them keeps us safe in to draw this analogy to its full conclusion of being on guard for the symptoms of mental illness keep me safe, I don't want to be symptomatic. And mental illness is definitely trying to keep me symptomatic. That's all an illness does an illness makes you sick. It's its primary goal. My primary goal is to be well, so mental illnesses an asshole. I'm on guard for it, boom, the whole thing works. There's probably better ways to explain it. But I didn't go to Harvard Medical School. My story.



Scot McKay 04:57

I mean, we don't want the clinical dry explanation any But go ahead.



Gabe Howard 05:00

I mean, the the clinical DRI explanation is important. But but but not for the moment that, you know, I didn't know I didn't know I was sick. You know, you asked a little bit about my story. And of course, it's wildly vast, we don't have enough time to cover it all. But the reality is, is I was sick, I was very, very sick. And my father, who is now a retired truck driver, obviously growing up, he was a semi truck driver, my mom was a stay at home mom, I always say that we're stereotypically blue collar. And, you know, my dad, and my parents are awesome. Like, I want to be very, very clear. My story is not about to exactly the left where I tell you that my parents beat me or were alcohol. No, they were good, good, good people. But we were emotionally stunted. We believed televisions version of mental illness, which is that people with mental illness came from bad families. And finally, you know, my dad, he's, you know, he's kind of your stereotypical guy's guy, right? He believed that anything that befell a man could be resolved by rubbing mud on it and getting a job. And these are bad values that they're they're very, very clearly not but like, like many things. They don't work all the time. They only work in in the in the in the right settings. And this setting where my family thought that I wasn't sick, and that they could punish the symptoms of bipolar disorder out of me, obviously made me sicker, put me in harm's way, I almost died by suicide, I was committed to a psychiatric hospital. And of course, I was an untreated bipolar. And it's interesting that you say that your first wife put you through utter hell. Because when I believe it, because I put my first wife through utter hell, you know, she was married to a man with untreated bipolar disorder. But more importantly, she was married to a man who didn't know he was mentally ill. Nobody did. So not only was I untreated, but we didn't even know I was sick. So I you know, she just thought I was a

jackass. And that that's a reasonable thing for her to think, given my behavior. And all of that ties into, you know, when I got Well, when I got treatment, I thought, Man, I gotta save people. I don't want these stories. I don't want people to have to go through what I went through what my family went through what my ex wife went through what my friends went through. Hell, what the people watching this happen, went through. That's how I became a mental health advocate. And, you know, my personality is such that I wrote a book called mental illnesses an asshole that ties it all back together, I believe



Scot McKay 07:36

in a nice little bow. Very good. Man. You sound like you've told that story before? Once or twice, once or twice. All right, gay man. Listen, you know, as you were talking about how your dad was a hard ass and macho and, and you know, we're just gonna whip this out of you, or whatever, I was reminded of the old wives tale that so called sane people tend to recite, at least when they're flat out straight up ignorant about what mental illnesses actually entail, oh, you're depressed? Why don't we just cheer you up? That's like, no, that's not what's going on here. It's a little deeper than that. So it must be frustrating to live in a world where nobody knows what's up with you, or has any real depth perception in terms of what it is you're going through. But listen, man, when you don't even know what you're going through, when it's undiagnosed, and you are left saying to yourself, you know, I'm acting like this. And I don't even know why that's got to be really rough. And I have to tell you, just to kind of be vulnerable here and, you know, build some rapport with you. That was what was going on. For the first several years of my relationship with my first wife, he was undiagnosed. I didn't know for lack of a better way to put it what crazy looked like, and she didn't know she was suffering from a mental illness either. Now, what complicated it in our case, and what I want you to comment on here gave is she seemed to like it that way. She seemed to kind of relish how she was behaving, and how she was treating me. And once we who knew her and loved her started saying to ourselves, you know, she doesn't seem to really be in our reality with us, which sounds sort of nuts. She refused treatment, she wouldn't go. She argued, she got combative. She worked very diligently, kind of as an alcoholic would to make our lives miserable by imposing that honor. And I suppose I want you to comment on that scenario. And if you feel so inclined, please talk to us about the ways you made your life a hell for your first wife. And are there any parallels there and what did you eventually do that brought you to the conclusion? I don't want to be like this.



Gabe Howard 09:49

There's a lot there. There's there's an incredible amount to unpack and I'm gonna do my

best to unpack it all. First off, let's talk about her behavior. One of the things that I'm always fascinated when it talk to folks as they're like, hey, my, my XYZ in your case wife, and in some cases, it's children, friends, co worker, they're crazy. And that was used the word crazy, right? They're nuts. They're out of their mind. They're crazy. They have psychosis that all they're so incredibly sick. And then in the very next sentence, they're like, and they made the very reasonable decision to refuse treatment and make my life miserable. Can you believe that? It's like, which is why you can't have it both ways. They can't both be out of their mind, and maliciously, purposely willfully doing something. Those two things are mutually exclusive. If somebody is not in their right mind, anything that they do is suspect, unfortunately, including the things that harm other people. And that's the dangerous part, right? from her perspective, she wasn't doing anything wrong. That's literally what psychosis is. I always use the example of the Red Dragon. And I did not see a red dragon, I want to be very, very clear. I don't know anybody who's seen a red dragon. I just, I just like the analogy. And I just like talking about red dragons. But let's say that you are a person who suffers from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, psychosis, or whatever, and you're looking at a red dragon. You're just you're just sitting there in your chair, there's a red dragon right there. This is how your mind is processing. The Red Dragon is right there. somebody walks up to you and says, Hey, what are you doing? And you say, Hey, I'm watching the red dragon. And that person looks at you and says, There's no red dragon there. Alright, now you trust this person, right? Your reason? When you look at your friend, you're like, Okay, well, they said, there's no red dragon there. So you look forward, and you look right at the red dragon. And you say to your friend, I'm looking at the Red Dragon, and your friend says, There's no red dragon there. Now you have a choice to make, you can decide that the thing that you are seeing is not there. And that your mind is broken, and that you're wrong. And that literally the thing that you are looking at is not happening and that your friend is 100%, right? Or you can think to yourself, my friend is lying to me, or my friend is nuts. Or my friend just is missing the Red Dragon for whatever reason. But that choice is so incredibly difficult because one is flapping gums. Your friend says there's no red dragon there. You're looking at it. You're just looking at it. And if we are honest with ourselves, if I told you that you did not have a microphone, you'd be like, I'm looking at my microphone. I'd be like, no, it's not there. It's not, you're not going to be like, Alright, I need to go to the hospital. Gabe says there's no microphone there. I see the microphone. But you know what I trust game. I have a severe and persistent mental illness. Nobody thinks that way. Nobody, there's actually a phrase for this, who am I going to believe you are my lion eyes. And we hear that all the time. But for some reason, we do not give that benefit of the doubt to people with severe and persistent mental illness. Now let's touch on the fact that she doesn't know Well, that makes getting care. extraordinarily difficult because step one and getting care for anything. I don't care if it's a hangnail, cancer, diabetes, falling off the roof and breaking your leg. Step one to getting care is acknowledging that you need it. Another thing that is extraordinarily difficult when your

mind is compromised. And finally, as far as relishing in it, that that is certainly possible. I don't want to say that she did not enjoy torturing you. I don't know. Some people are in fact, mentally ill, and assholes. Some people are assholes because of their mental illness. And some people are somewhere in between. There's so many facets and nuances. And it's an insidious and terrible illness, both in terms of having to manage it yourself with a compromised brain. And in terms of other people getting you help, I would rather have almost any other illness, not because of my ability to manage it. But because I'd have more help. You know, I don't want to pick on your Scott. But if I fell over right now and broke my leg, you would be more helpful to me than if I had a panic attack. Or if I had psychosis, for one thing, you understand a broken leg. And for a second thing, you know that broken legs are real. this other thing, you'd be like, Oh, why is gay men gay is not very good interviewer he's repeating himself a lot. He looks all sweaty. And I don't want it I guess I shouldn't have booked him on the show. But the broken leg is definitive. Oh my god, he broke his leg in my studio, boom, action happens. It it makes it difficult to live with an illness that the majority of the world does not understand and does not believe is real.



Scot McKay 14:34

Now the beauty of the title of your book, is it so elegantly conveys a very clear notion that there's a difference between the mental illness and the person suffering from it. And the implication is, of course, that the illness is the asshole not the victim of this illness. Now, what you just said is it's possible for people who are not very nice people to offer suffer from mental illnesses, that presents a complexity that I think we have to discuss a little bit here. What is the difference between being crazy and being evil? How can we tell? Or can we, if we can't exactly relate to the mental illness itself?



Gabe Howard 15:14

So that's a fascinating question, right? This is why philosophy was invented. There, there is a philosophical discussion that everybody brings up that we think there's an easy answer to and it's, you know, the train, the train is on the tracks. If the train goes forward, the it's a speeding train, just just in case anybody hasn't heard this, I want to make sure that I tell it right. There's a speeding train on the tracks. If it goes forward, it will run over seven, it will run over and killed seven people. But if you throw this lever, it will divert onto a separate track. However, on that separate track, it will run over and kill one person. What do you do? Now? The easy answer, of course, is Well, you've got you've got seven lives versus one lives you you, you throw that lever, and yes, one person dies, but seven people are saved. And all right, we can all go home. And then somebody says, Well, wait a minute, the one is your son and the seven are strangers. Now, what do you do? Do you save your son and kill seven strangers? One out now that sounds easy? Well, of course you you, you owe it to

your children. Well, okay, that's fair. I can get that. Okay. Now Now what do you do, you've got a, you've got your your brother. But over on the other track are seven Nobel laureates, they've all won Nobel prizes, and enter and are moments away from curing cancer, you kill your brother, and then let the world have the cure for cancer. And we can just do this all day. Right? That's really where we get when we start defining what is mental illness, what is evil, what is crazy, what is personality. And listen, it differs in cultures and families. I am often surprised at just how much gallows humor my family uses, compared to the rest of the population. Whenever something bad happens, we have the most inappropriate jokes go in at the Howard household, it is how we cope. You do not want to be at a funeral with us. Because you will think that we do not like the person who died. But But we do. And this is just the way that we cope. But other people are like, Oh my god, they're mocking the tragedy. We're not we're processing the tragedy. And I bring all this up just to mean, when we talk about evil. It's fascinating to me what some people consider evil versus what other people don't. You know, some people are like, Look, if you make a billion dollars a year, and you pay your workers minimum wage, that's evil. Other people say, look, if you make \$100 billion a year and you don't pay your workers minimum wage, that's evil. The whole country is debating this right now. Look, for what it's worth, there are arguments to be made on both sides. Do you want to be ethical? Do you want to be a good businessman is being a good business person ethical? Where Where does that all lie? We have the identical problem, the identical problem in mental illness, what is personality? What is a symptom of mental illness? And what responsibilities is the person who is sick have to be responsible for their own care, because I want to be very, very clear. The person who is sick has responsibility, and we have to get through to them. We have to get them the care that they need. And they have to take responsibility for the illness, or they never will get well see how complicated this is. I guarantee that half of your listeners are like what the hell did that guy just say? Sincerely, exactly. What the hell did I just say? That's how messed up it is.



Scot McKay 18:47

Yeah, well, my first thought, as you were talking is, wow, this is really complicated from games perspective. Couple things here. First of all, I want to throw on the table, a little bit more of my experience. And at the risk of sounding self indulgent as the host of this show, it really is about you, you're the guest. But I feel like I owe this to you as the guest to say this. When the divorce happened, it was easy to blame my ex wife feel bitter towards her, and I guess by proxy start feeling bitter towards women and the prospect of having a future relationship in general. And I chose to forgive her based on her being sick, instead of being purposefully nasty to me. And that served me incredibly well because it allowed me to heal from the divorce. Okay, I can't really blame this woman for being schizophrenic

and bipolar and borderline and disassociative and whatever else is added to the alphabet soup of psychosis there. Because I can't really blame someone for being diabetic or having cancer. I mean, they're sick. It's not something that was purposefully done to me and I also tried to empathize with her and realize man must be very, very difficult to live inside her brain. And that was cathartic for me. It allowed me to move on, it allowed me to look in the mirror and say, Well, you know, I forgive my ex. But you know, I'm not going to go ahead and marry another crazy woman, which is something I indeed want to talk about next. But something crazy, in and of itself happened over the course of the next 16 years as my axe and I interacted and went round and round with the legal system, and with each other, frankly, about our daughter, who we parented together. And the more I allowed the illness, to take the blame for all of the complications, the more I was taken advantage of, the more she had superpowers over my happiness. And of course, as I've already mentioned, my wife, Emily, who, you know, we've been married for almost 15 years now, she and I have basically been a united front, whenever the exes, either one of them respectively, presented with crazy. Finally, she sat me down and said, Look, this woman just isn't very nice. She's looking to hurt you. She's looking to ruin you. And I remember watching an episode of Narcos on Netflix. And I've had the two guys who influenced the show on this show, by the way, Steve Murphy and Javier Pena. And one of the things that really, really was a wake up call for me was, they were fighting Pablo Escobar, who was an evil, horrible guy and didn't play by the rules. And they were the police department, they were the good guys, for lack of a better way to put it. And they had to play by the rules. And it was an uneven playing field. And my wife and I watched that show. And she just looked at me and said, that's what you need to do with your ex, you need to stop being Mr. Nice Guy and stop playing by those rules. Now, whether my ex meant to do it, or whether it was the crazy talking, whatever the end result was, she was being manipulative, and trying to ruin things, which is what borderline people tend to do, you know, they love drama, etc, etc. Anything prosperous, must die. So I stopped being nice. And I started being an asshole back to her and her lawyer. And something very interesting happened gave, she went away, she stopped acting up. I responded to her and kind and didn't feel very clean or nice about it, it felt dirty to me. But the result was there. And it's almost like you've got to respond to what you're dealing with. And the way it needs to be responded to. And that's very, very difficult for people to do when they don't understand what's going on with that mental illness. You follow?

G

Gabe Howard 22:40

I do. What you've described, of course, is setting a boundary very, very firmly. I'm a big let's take a two year old. Let's just go with a two year old analogy. And you know, I love children. I think children are awesome. I love to see the world through their eyes. They they think differently than adults. They're fascinating to watch discover things. But you

know, two year olds can be a little assholes, right? Let's let's be honest, it's, it can be frustrating. But when a two year old acts up pushes boundaries, whatever word you want to use, obviously, we all want to be good adults. And we say, Well, no, you, you cannot do that, right? And a two year old does it again and you get a little firmer. And you're like, Listen, you know, No, you cannot do that. And then finally, the two year old does it again. And if we're human, we we lose it. We're like I said, No. I said no, you can't do that stop it. Usually at that point, the two year old throws themselves on the ground starts crying and you feel like I'm and I'm a terrible person. But generally speaking, something magical happens in the two year old listens. Because it doesn't feel good to have somebody that they love. You know, mom, dad and uncle, yell at them, it hurts. Now, I don't want people to skip over these steps, I want to be very, very clear. What sometimes happens when we're dealing with children is we skip over the polite steps and we go straight to the yelling, don't don't do that that's not a good idea. The same thing with working with people with severe and persistent mental illness, you know, we want to try to do the steps that you took. But again, much like when working with two year olds, sometimes you just have to set that hard boundary, you got to pick them up. You got to sit them in the room, you got to sit them in their crib, you got to say no, you got to pull them back for their own good. And do we feel good about it? No, no, of course not. It's not the kind of thing you're supposed to feel good about it. It's not a, this isn't a good day. It's not a good day when you yell at your two year old, but it's necessary. It's sometimes unnecessary step. And if you do it sparingly and correctly and with all the steps, eventually, ideally, not 100% of the time, in either case two year old or you know a person with serious and persistent mental illness. But if you can set that boundary solidly, you can often get the result that you want. And if you can never set that result solidly and obviously you can't get rid of two year olds won't be very, very clear children have different rules than adults. But you know, sometimes this is what nested necessity Tate's not talking to that person anymore. And unfortunately, in my line of work, I, I have seen many parents say, you know, look, I had to cut off my 35 year old child, I've tried everything, I've tried everything, I have other children, and I have grandchildren, I just, I can't do it anymore. And you look at everything that they've tried it all of the steps in the appropriate order with the therapist with anything, unfortunately, for your own well being, you may well be there, I often advise them to, you know, leave the door open for the future, because you just never know what happens. You know, lock it, but don't throw away the key. Obviously, it's different with with an accent it is for parents, I want to be very clear on that. But it's not supposed to feel good. And I just want to push back on this idea that, you know, people were like, well, I should have more compassion for people with mental illness look, yes, yes, we should all have compassion for sick people. I'm not denying that at all. But it's not your responsibility to fix everything. What I would much rather see people do especially people in your shoes is set a hard boundary with your ex wife and then become a mental health advocate. Ask hospitals, why they're releasing people who are sick. ask why the police force is tasked

with managing people in psychosis. What are the what is the police force know about managing people in psychosis, not doctors, not therapists. They're they're not trained for this in any way. We ask why people are getting sicker and sicker. And then we look at the health care that we give them. And it's it's horrific. It's horrific, and it sets up other people to fail. And that in and of itself is horrific. Yeah, it's tough, right?



Scot McKay 26:36

Well, you know, listen, I don't think the quote unquote sane world has any idea what it's like to battle a psychosis. Therefore, they have no idea what to do with it, because they can't relate. You know, and there's also an undeniable fact that mental health science is still very much in its infancy. I mean, when we start bandying about terms like bipolar, and schizophrenic and schizo affective and disassociative, the circles often overlap in terms of what the symptoms are, that would over the course of a very long time, frankly, lead to an ultimate diagnosis, that diagnosis is still very fuzzy, because we just really don't know much about what's really going on inside the heads of people who aren't thinking and feeling like us. So I mean, that leads to lots of complications in terms of how not only the mental health professional but certainly police officers and social workers and spouses and families deal with their loved ones who are the suffering. Now, you mentioned something I really want to discuss here. And that's this idea of having to make really tough decisions. You know, you go to a lot of these macho men's groups, especially the groups on how to be a great dad or whatever. And typically, the discussions go like this, my wife left me She took our daughter with me, she's getting all this child support from me, and she stopped holding my kid and won't let me see her. And the dads are always like, who are you know, you got to just man up and do everything. You got to sacrifice everything and be in that child's life, regardless of what it takes, you know? And that sounds real jingoistic Lee macho, like I said, but here in the real world, a lot of times when we're dealing with mental illness in the family, there are the choices that have to be made, like the one you alluded to, which feels a lot like Sophie's Choice. You know, there is no good decision to be made here. Do I cut this person out of our life, even though we love them, even though it may be my own son, because by God, this person may kill us in our sleep. They're nuts. I mean, we're physically in danger here. And yet, I don't think that people who have never been faced with such choices that that feels a lot like Sophie's Choice. If you've never seen the movie, by the way, go Google what I mean by Sophie's Choice, it's not pretty. And it's easy just to, to draw these conclusions based on lack of experience. And all of that leads me to a two part question that I want to ask you, Gabe to close out this show. What do we do if we're in a relationship, you know, committed relationship or married to a woman? She's the mother of our children, perhaps? who is suffering from a mental illness and it's ruining us? What can we do? I mean, you've been very clear about saying, objectively speaking, if they're in a different reality than we are,

it's tough to break through to that alternate reality. Second part is, what if we're dating someone? What if we meet someone and we find out they're suffering from a profound mental illness? Maybe they've acknowledged it, they're getting treatment? Should we even get into a relationship with them? Or should we save ourselves the trouble and you know, you and I We're talking before the show. So I want to offer full disclosure to my listeners that I told you my stance on this, having been married to a crazy woman, my wife, having been married to a crazy person, having both of those ex spouses ruin our respective lives. I do not recommend ever getting into a relationship with crazy people. I had a woman say to me, you know, I deserve love to even though I'm psychotic. And I said, Yes, you do. But that relationship won't be with me because you'll ruin my life. And again, full disclosure, you said, Yeah, you're okay with me feeling that way. But I would love to hear your take. First person, you know, since you are a guy who suffers from bipolar on either of those situations.

G

Gabe Howard 30:42

So first off, let's define our terms a little bit, right. So there's a difference between being a crazy person and living with severe and persistent mental illness.



Scot McKay 30:50

Yeah, okay. Hold on a second, because you're bringing up a very important point. When we go out on first dates with people, everybody has a quote unquote, crazy axe, okay, women are all crazy, blah, blah, blah. That's not what we're talking about here. Indeed. So I want to acknowledge that before you continue.

G

Gabe Howard 31:04

So So same saying all of that, of course, one of the things you said is, you know, should people date somebody with severe and persistent mental illness or somebody that is just, you know, nuts, what, whatever word you're most comfortable with? I think we all know what we're talking about. Right? So let's let's not fall down the, you know, semantics argument, we're talking about somebody who is just not in their right mind, for any reason. Should you get involved with somebody like that? That is a very personal choice. I am glad that when my wife, we've been married 10 years now. We've been together for 10 years married for nine, when I said, Hey, I have bipolar disorder, she did not run, I would not have blamed her. If she did. I do want to confess that point. If she would have said, Look, you know, I did some googling on bipolar disorder. I looked at the relapse rates. I mean, you seem like a real nice guy. And you're stable now. But yeah, this is I don't know.

No, I don't want to risk this. I What am I supposed to say to that? You have to risk it? No. And there's, there's a million other things. I mean, let's replace severe and persistent mental illness or crazy with you know, I'm an over the road truck driver, and I'm gone for six weeks at a time. Yeah, maybe the first couple of days went well, and, and then he says, hey, look, I'm an over the road truck driver, I'm usually gone for about six to eight weeks at a time. So you'll have to, you know, be with the kids alone, hold down the fort, and you won't we won't see me for eight weeks, then I'll breeze into town for a weekend and then I'll be gone for another eight weeks. And you know, the person's like, you know, that's, that's not the kind of life I want. I want I want somebody to be home for dinner. There's nothing wrong inherently with making these decisions. Because Listen, if you can handle my mental illness, I don't want to be married to you. If you're going to go all traumatized, when I get sick, if you're going to have I mean, I'm sick, and I need you know, members better for worse sickness and in health, etc. and here I am sick. And now you're pissed off? That doesn't do me any good. You're doing me a favor, not marrying me. But in to the core question of should you, hey, that is entirely up to you. Listen, I I am often shocked at the people, my friends date. I'm like, I don't know if I would make that decision. But that's not up to me. Right. So, you know, keep an open mind. But ultimately, decide what you can handle. And do keep in mind that the things that you're aware of, are usually not the things that bite you in the ass. Right? It's all the stuff that rears its ugly head 10 years later that nobody saw coming. That's the stuff that usually breaks up relationships. It's, it's not the things that you knew about on day one. Usually the things you know about on day one are the things that you're prepared for, that people have discussed that people are managing, those are generally not the things that knock you out. As far as to the next question of what do you do if your loved one is sick, specifically a romantic partner? Right? I'm going to gear it right toward that. You do everything you can until you're out of options. Specifically, specifically what you do is you wait until your your spouse I'm going to go spouse just for lack of a better word. You wait until your spouse is not symptomatic. Doing well. Things are going well. Everything is fine. You say look, we got to talk you know sometimes you have these days where I can't talk to you where you see a red dragon or whatever you see and that is scary. It's scary for me as your spouse it's scary for the children it's scary for a stability you you start yelling things I don't understand it I don't know how to help you know you're doing well right now. So I we got to get ahead of this honey, we got to get on top of this. Now I've already talked to our family doctor, and I've got a referral right here. I got it right in my hand. I will go with you. We are going to be a partnership on this. And hope that you're not accusing them of doing anything wrong. You're not saying you're crazy, man. You gotta you gotta fix that. What's wrong with you? No, you're saying that you have noticed something that scares you. Here's what you've seen. And you're doing it when things are stable. See, so many people want to have the conversation about mental illness when the person is in crisis. This is the literal equivalent of having a fire drill when the building is on fire. No, you want to have the fire drill and

everything is fine. You want to have the discussion where everything is fine. And you want to set yourself up as an ally, a partner, a friend, a spouse, I just, you're going to attack this together. Yeah, the disease just happens to live in your spouse's head. But but that's okay. That's okay. You're doing it together. It's no different. If it was cancer or anything else, you're together on this, and then start going through the steps. If you can't find that window, go to the emergency room, fight hard for a civil commitment. I was committed to a psychiatric facility and was it traumatizing and scary, yeah. But I got a diagnosis, I got information, I got set up with aftercare. I got hooked up with a psychiatrist, medication support groups and, and this whole world was opened up to me. And that was extraordinarily powerful. Listen, try everything, go to therapy by yourself, talk to your family, Doctor, Google, do whatever it takes until you are out of options. And once you are out of options, ask other people to intervene on your behalf. And once they're out of options. Yeah, not everybody wins. That that's just the reality. And but you want to make sure that if you don't help your spouse, that you can sleep at night, if you get a divorce, because if you don't do everything that you can, you're always going to be like, Hmm, maybe I could have fixed it. And you know, you don't need that on your conscience.



Scot McKay 36:32

I guess it was all about whether the assholes in charge whether the person themselves is home in there, and I guess that's how you time your discussions and time your actions. poignant stuff for sure. His name is Gabe Howard. He's the author of mental illness is an asshole and other observations. And I've set up a URL where you can grab his book on Amazon, and that is [www dot mountaintop podcast, calm front slash game gap](http://www.mountaintoppodcast.com/calmfront/gamegap). And you can grab a copy of his book I will also put it at the very top of my Amazon influencer queue. So you can grab a copy not only of gay powers book mental illnesses an asshole. But books from other authors, prominent folks who are very smart who've been on my show and written great books in their own right, you can build your library there at [mountaintop podcast, calm front slash Amazon](http://mountaintoppodcast.com/calmfront/Amazon). Gabe, Howard, thank you so much for coming on the show today and being so vulnerable. I greatly appreciate you and the important work you're doing sir.



Gabe Howard 37:28

I really appreciate your candor. And hey, thanks for all the questions and thanks for talking about this in a real and meaningful way that people can understand it's refreshing and appreciated.



Scot McKay 37:37

Yeah, man that's my pleasure. It's something that I've wanted to cover on this show for quite a while for obvious reasons I needed the right guests and you were him. So guys, so yes, thank you again. And guys if you have not yet visited mountain top podcast calm I invite you to do so check out our sponsors origin in main and heroes soap by clicking on links right there on the site. You can also get on my calendar to talk to me for 25 minutes. Guys I talk about this at the end of every show. A lot of you guys have talked to me, more of you have not yet listen I'm exactly who you think I'm going to be talk to me for 25 minutes about what you got going on. If we can build a plan to take you from where you are right now to where you want to be not only in your professional life, but especially in your life with women getting the right woman into your life and having the relationship of your dreams that's something you and I can work together to make happen in your life and it all starts with that 25 minute phone call that you can arrange on my calendar directly by going to mountain top podcast calm and until I talk to you again real soon. This is Scott McKay from x&y communications in San Antonio Texas. Be good out



Edroy Odem 38:41

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