

# Episode 365 She Stopped Asking for Permission: Jillian's Story

Heads up, friend: What you're about to read is a raw, unedited transcript straight from the robots. That means you'll find some weird words, funky punctuation, and moments that make you go, "Huh?" If you want the real experience (and to actually know what's going on), I recommend reading the polished article, listening to the full episode, or watching it on 1.5x speed with captions on. Your brain will thank you.

**Natalie:** Okay, welcome to episode 365 of the Flying Free Podcast. Today our guest is Jillian Llama. Did I say that right? Jillian la It's Scott now. Let's start over. Yeah, I'm gonna, I'm gonna cancel that out. Jillian Scott.

**Natalie:** Welcome to episode 365 of the Flying Free Podcast Today our guest is Jillian Scott. She is a longtime member of Flying Free and Flying Higher, and she's gonna be sharing her story of getting free from an abusive. Christian marriage and rebuilding her life from the ground up. She is now a trauma certified life and weight loss coach and the founder of the Hungry for Love podcast where she helps people lose weight eating the foods they love.

**Natalie:** That sounds good to me.

**Jillian:** Welcome. Yeah. Thank you so much for having me, Natalie. It's such an honor to be here and so encouraging to be able to share this story with other women.

**Natalie:** Awesome. Okay, well let's dive in. Why don't we start with you telling us how you first noticed and maybe when you first noticed something was off in your relationship.

**Natalie:** Was it before you got married? Was it after? Like, tell us about all of that.

**Jillian:** It was right after we got married. Uh, we, we were engaged. Well, so let's see. We, we started dating, we dated for about six months in person. We lived overseas. Uh, we met through the US Embassy community. He was an active duty military service member at the time, and my mom is in the foreign service and so we were able to date in those first six months and then for the next year we were engaged, but living in different countries.

**Jillian:** So he was. Nowhere near. We had a very long distance relationship. Oh wow. So when he came back to the us, we got married, still didn't live together for the first six months, but in those six months I realized we have some serious problems. And I had this con, I drew this conclusion I think around St.

**Jillian:** Patrick's Day. We'd been married maybe about nine months at this time, and I was like. Why does he ruin every single holiday? I don't get it. It could be President's Day, it could be Veteran's Day. Like it doesn't matter how big or small the holiday is, but I feel like he ruins it all. And then I felt guilty because I'm blaming him and feeling like, well, he would just blame me and this, this isn't helpful.

**Jillian:** And, but I just, in that first six to 12 months, I realized he was rageful. He would yell, he would give the silent treatment, he'd be passive aggressive. There was a lot of blame shifting. I couldn't see all of those specifically at the time. I just knew things feel off. This feels terrible. And things were so good when we were dating and engaged.

**Jillian:** Mm. And so my mission then for like the next nine years became how do I get us back to that place where we were dating and engaged and things were good and actually be able to stay there because we could get there for a little bit, maybe a couple months at a time, but we couldn't ever stay there. There was always some kind of blow up, some kind of.

**Jillian:** Meltdown, something would happen outside of the year 2020 when I was pregnant. I think he really held a lot of that in. I think that was a saving grace for that year. That's part of why there wasn't a big explosion then. Okay. And so I thought we had hit rock bottom in 2018, uh, because 2019 wasn't bad.

**Jillian:** 2020 wasn't bad. 21, there was a little incident, little small thing, which looking back on. I realized I had, I told myself I need to leave. It's time to go, but I forgot. It was one of those, I have a small child. My son was about six months old at the time, and then it was kinda like life carried me away.

**Jillian:** And I, but I had this thought of like, I, I need to build a business. I need to find a job. I need to be able to support myself. I have this young child and also a little bit of, it would be really hard to leave right in this. Moment. Sure. So yeah, there were a lot of Did you baby? Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. There were a lot of pieces, but the following year, now he's still a year and a half still very needy.

**Jillian:** Mm-hmm. But that's when we had another big blowup. And by we, I mean, he and I realized we didn't hit rock bottom in 2018, because in 2018 I was thinking, well, the only place we have to go from here is up. Like, okay, this was hard. This was tough, but we can make it through it. And I had a lot of things I could easily blame it on.

**Jillian:** Well, he's separated from the military. There's, you know, it's hard transitioning to civilian life, or he's used to a certain way of doing things and now he doesn't have that same environment. Or maybe it's PTSD. Maybe there's something from his deployments that are coming up. Right. There was a lot of excusing, justifying, minimizing, wanting to give him the benefit of the doubt, and also being so afraid of like.

**Jillian:** What if it is me? Because that just triggered a lot of shame. Yeah. Of like not wanting it to be me, not wanting him to leave and trigger these abandonment wounds as well. And so it was kind of, it really started at the very beginning of our marriage. I just thought we could fix it. I thought things could get better.

**Jillian:** I thought we could work on it, but I was always the one who felt like we needed to work on the marriage and, and it wasn't until year nine that I realized. Oh no. This is, something is off and I don't know what it is, but I need to, I need to get some help. Yeah. And so then it was starting to talk with the counselor, pastor at the church, getting my own therapist.

**Jillian:** And then there were just some little breadcrumbs throughout that year, uh, where I then ended up listening to a book one morning called the Covert Passive Aggressive Narcissist. Okay. Yeah. And it blew my brain wide open and I was like, oh my gosh, she's just described my marriage. Yeah. Holy cow.

**Natalie:** Yeah. Yeah, I remember that.

**Natalie:** That book was a good book for me too, because my first husband was very covert, passive aggressive. Mm-hmm. In fact, before I didn't even know what emotional abuse was, but I remember, um, one of the first terms I ever Googled in trying to figure it out was passive aggressive. I had heard that term somewhere.

**Natalie:** I wasn't sure what it meant. Yeah. But I was like, I think this is what I'm dealing with. And back then, uh, this was long before that, uh, there just wasn't a whole lot out there, but there were people talking about passive aggressiveness and I realized, yeah, this is, this is what it is. So did you ever feel

like in your relationship, did you, when things were going well, do you think looking back that it was because you were kind of playing small and just uh mm-hmm.

**Natalie:** Trying to stay under his mm-hmm. You know, like out of the way and make sure he's placated so that he mm-hmm. So that you don't trigger his anger. Yes, yes. Yeah. There was

**Jillian:** a lot of walking on eggshells, which is also really fascinating because that's what he said about me towards the end. It was like, I don't wanna have to walk on eggshells.

**Jillian:** I don't wanna have to choose my words carefully. I wanna be able to just say whatever I feel like whenever I want to. Wow. And that means that, like, that's a healthy dynamic and Yeah. Yeah. So it was very much, um, when I am. Playing the good wife, the good spouse, when I'm doing what he wants me to do, or doing it in the right way when I'm asking him permission.

**Jillian:** The, uh, the beginning of the end really started because I hired a life coach and I didn't tell him about it either because I was like, Hmm, he is not gonna, he's not gonna go for this. Even though part of the reason I hired her was to help me manage my time and energy and not be so bitter and resentful towards him to like really help me to be able to pursue my goals while still managing the house and a baby and.

**Jillian:** Be a good wife. Like I, I had a lot of really good intentions and I was like, this is gonna make our marriage better. And even though I was using business money for that, his thought was, well, you could have spent that on the family, that money could have gone towards us. And now you selfishly chose to use that on you.

**Jillian:** And so that, that became a, the big blow up in 22. Like that was the trigger. And, and it was then there were threats. It was like, you need to stop working with her or there will be consequences and you won't like them. Gosh. I was like, oh really? So what are these consequences? Like if we're gonna give kids consequences, you need to tell them what it is.

**Jillian:** So what? What's my consequence then? Yeah. And he was like, well, I don't know, but you're not gonna like it. And I'm like, okay, we're driving in a car. Mind you at this point to go on vacation. And I'm like, oh, this is great. This is gonna be a real fun vacation. And, and, and the next day he took it back and

he was like, no, that's like, there won't be consequences, but you need to decide if you wanna keep working with her or not.

**Jillian:** And I don't think you should. And so I thought about it, and at the time I was, I, I wrote out this letter so that I could read it because my words would just get all jumbled. Mm-hmm. But I, I wrote this letter and I, I read it to him and he was, he, 'cause he told me to choose. And so I was like, so I'm choosing to keep working with her.

**Jillian:** Then he was upset and he was like, well, you know, had you asked for permission, I would have said yes. Had you asked me if I, if you could, but really you said that you chose and you did it without consenting me and disregarding my, you know what I think? And you just chose this all by yourself, so therefore I don't like, no, I don't agree with this.

**Jillian:** And I had to go get on a call at that point, and I was like. I don't know what to tell you. Like you told me to choose, so I chose Yeah, yeah. Like that was the verbiage. Yeah. Um, but, but it was, yeah, it was, it was really difficult. And at the time he was ending a mentorship program with the church and we were asked as wives to write letters of how much we loved and appreciated and valued our husbands, and we would give them this like, letter of adoration.

**Jillian:** Oh my God. And so this was after the big blowup and I was like, I can't possibly write that letter. Not because I don't still have some of those feelings, but because it would be so inauthentic to write you this love note and then a week or two later go to therapy and be like, I, something is seriously wrong.

**Jillian:** I can't stand you. And like, I really hate you at times. Like, yeah, I don't know what, like, it just, it didn't feel right at all. So I didn't write him that letter. And I think that was really hard. It was really hard. And that was, that was a big wake up call was realizing I married my stepdad. I was like, oh no, because I promised myself, I remember I have this very vivid memory being 12 years old and vowing, I was never gonna marry somebody like my stepdad.

**Jillian:** And if I did, if for some reason, God forbid I did, the moment I realized it, I would run. And somehow in that last blowup, there was some realization where I was like, oh my gosh, I've married my stepdad and I didn't want to run right away, but there was a strong conviction of what I was going to be exposing my son to and just wanting to be really mindful of the, the situation that I would be raising him in if I stayed.

**Jillian:** And my whole, like growing up with, I grew up with my mom and my stepdad, and pretty much the whole time I wished they would've gotten a divorce. So it was really tough. Um, so yeah, there were, there were a lot of breadcrumbs, a lot of seeds that were planted in earlier years that were starting to come to fruition.

**Jillian:** And then it started with one book, and then it was another couple books because in, in the first one, she talks it about it as abuse. And I was like, Ooh, I don't know. That's a little strong. Yeah. Yeah. I can't quite swallow that word. Like, yeah. I don't know, but, but yeah, then it was like, you know, 12 books later and I think that's when I found you, that's when I found your book.

**Jillian:** And then, and so that was in August. And then in November I remember going through kind of a variety of things. We were set to move states and I really debated on like where I needed to go, where I needed to be. But I found Flying Free and I joined in November of that year and that was so helpful to even just listening to the podcast and the replays was so good just to start to be kind of be in a community around this where even if it wasn't my.

**Jillian:** Question necessarily. I could take the coaching and apply it to myself, and I oftentimes we're asking such similar questions anyways. Yes.

**Natalie:** Yeah. I wanna point out too, for anyone who's listening, um, that I don't remember, you really like, you know, some people come into Flying Free and they're just posting all the time in the forum, you know, asking the questions and stuff.

**Natalie:** Yeah. But I think most people come in. They are lurkers. Yes. That's how I would've been. That's how I am. And that's, I think you were a lurker. Am I right? Totally. Yeah. Yep. Because I don't remember really seeing you a lot in there, but, but here's the thing. You were actually doing the, you know, the courses you were actually learning and listening and getting what the, the benefit of.

**Natalie:** The program. Mm-hmm. Right? Mm-hmm. Yep. And I think people need different things. Some people just need to process and they need to have someone, you know, they need to have the validation. They need to be able to have people see them and hear them. 'cause they're maybe not getting that from their home or their families or their churches, right?

**Natalie:** Yeah. So they need that. And that's really important. And some of us just need, we just want the information. Like, I wanna know, gimme the tools,

gimme the strategies. Gimme the coaching. Help me change my give. Give me the mind shifts. I think that's why you hired a coach. You're more of that like driven, like, I just wanna, I don't wanna dive into the past and deal with all the drama from the past.

**Natalie:** I just want a coach to help me figure out where I'm gonna go for my future. And that's what you got out of it. So I, I only wanna point that out for people who are listening and that there's different ways that you can get help. Mm-hmm. And, um, and there's no right or wrong ways, but it's just, it's just different.

**Natalie:** So, um, I have a question about your son. 'cause I know a lot of people will, he. They'll think, well, I don't wanna get out. They'll actually think, be, they'll stay because of their children. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. But it sounds like you left because mm-hmm. Of your child. Mm-hmm. So tell us a little bit more about that perspective.

**Jillian:** Yes. So growing up. I hated my stepdad. He was angry and snarky and rageful, and I just like was always on edge with him. Just never liked him and I couldn't even pinpoint. It was never an incident. It was just as far back as I could remember. I never liked him and I couldn't understand why. Until earlier in 2022 when my sister had been working with a therapist and she started sending my other sister and I some information around like gaslighting and emotional abuse and passive aggressiveness and just some of these different traits.

**Jillian:** And I started to notice, or I realized like, oh, he was extremely emotionally and verbally abusive. That's why I didn't like him. Yeah. And then if I tried to stand up or stand up to him or you know, it's like I was. It's like whack-a-mole, right? They just smack you down. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. And that's why I think him and my mom had so many problems.

**Jillian:** She would stand up for us girls because she's like, well, this isn't right. But she would then get smacked down and I think she thought she was taking on the brunt of it. She thought she was shielding us and she wasn't. We all experienced a lot of trauma because of how we grew up. And so that was very heavy on my mind of I know what it's like to grow up in this type of situation and.

**Jillian:** As the, once we moved and we were there, it was several months in, I, I was just kind of gauging like, can we still work this out? Maybe things could change, maybe if he just started seeing a therapist, but I wanted him to initiate it

and do it on his own. If he was gonna go, I couldn't be the one trying to push him into it.

**Jillian:** I, and so I was waiting and watching and seeing like, could we make this work? But in that time, I was also noticing the abuse seemed to pick up. Seemed to increase or intensify in little ways. There wasn't another big explosion, but I saw it now in weekly occurrences of like the little things. Mm-hmm. Of we, I took my son to go visit his family in Georgia, then came back and he, he was like, well, why didn't you bring me the soup?

**Jillian:** You know, that's my favorite soup. Why didn't you bring me soup? And I was like, did, did you ask for soup? And he was like, no, you know, that's my favorite food. I'm sorry. These

**Natalie:** people are just, they're like five years old. It just blows my brain. Like

**Jillian:** the

**Natalie:** arguments that we would

**Jillian:** have about food was ridiculous.

**Jillian:** Yeah. I'm like, at one point he thought I was trying to poison him by giving him like raw Turkey meat or something, and I was like, no, that is fully cooked. I think it was beef. And, and he, he was like, no, it was pink. And I'm like, so stick it in the microwave if you think it's not cooked all the way. Like there are some very easy solutions here, but like.

**Jillian:** Because I wasn't backing down. Because I wasn't just placating all the time. Yeah. Or I would stand up a little bit. And so he was like, well, why didn't you bring me soup? Or he was like, you didn't bring me soup. And I was like, well, you didn't come, you could have come. And he, he did not like that. And so then it was like, so it's like I'd stand up a little bit and then I'd get smacked down.

**Jillian:** And part of it was also, okay, don't rock the boat. Don't make things worse. Just try to like figure out, you know. Also this aspect of like, tried to stay healthy and kind of keep the peace as much as possible. Yeah. You know, as we were trying to figure things out, because there was still a big part of me that was not ready to say like, I'm done.

**Jillian:** Uh, even making that decision of, okay, I know we need to get divorced, it's. I decided that I knew that in March and I couldn't even have the conversation until the end of May. Yeah. Like it took months of building up like my courage and my confidence and looking for the right time. Yeah. Or the right words, or him being in the right mood.

**Jillian:** And so it did, it did have to come outta nowhere. And his mind, he, he was blindsided because things seemed fine to him and it was really more a lack that nothing was actually getting better.

**Natalie:** Yeah. Yeah. So how did you, um. As far as your son goes, did you, did you, were you worried about, um, I think the biggest thing I hear is, well, I don't want my, my child or my children to be with him 50% of the time without me to kind of, you know, like be that buffer between him and my kids.

**Jillian:** Uhhuh.

**Natalie:** What did, what were your thoughts about that?

**Jillian:** Yeah, that was concerning because at the time, our son was two and a half when we started the divorce. Yeah. And um, so he was very young and um, and he wanted, my ex wanted a week on, week off schedule. Now the benefit of that was I was still gonna pick him up from his half day preschool, so I would still see him every day in the afternoon, even when it wasn't my week.

**Jillian:** Okay, nice. So on some levels that was very overwhelming. Because I felt like I didn't get a break. Sure. But I also think it was really beneficial for me and, and my son to still have some time together like that. And it really did allow my ex to step up as a dad to cook meals, to clean, to have his own place, to be responsible for himself.

**Jillian:** And now this child, I think it did, it was beneficial for a time. Um, but I had to trust that. He could either stay swimming in a toxic pond all the time, or he could have a clean pond to come and swim in, or a clean pool to come swim in when he was with me. Mm-hmm. And I would be the safe place where he could have his emotions and have his breakdowns, which can be a, there was a lot I had to work on for myself and to be able to hold space and allow all of that and not let it trigger me.

**Jillian:** But that was really, I think what got me was, I knew. I knew he would fight for 50 50 custody, and so I was like, all right, I know what he's gonna want

in the divorce and I will give it to him. And he wanted like money and financial stability was a big thing. Um, 50 50 custody and keeping his reputation intact.

**Jillian:** I would say those were like the three key aspects. So our divorce went pretty quick. I thought about it as I'm buying my freedom. I don't care about these short-term benefits as much as like the long-term life that I'm creating. And I also could see how my mom had health repercussions. She was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease out of nowhere.

**Natalie:** Yeah. In

**Jillian:** her forties. And so I knew this is going to take a toll on me. Like, yes, I have got to, I've got to take care of myself. And part of that is, is now taken up. This separation, this divorce? Yes. And so I have started to see more, um, repercussions of that. So now we are two years into the divorce and when our son is with his dad.

**Jillian:** Now he, he does have to fall in line. He has to follow the rules. He knows he can't be stressed, he can't whine. He knows how he has to behave. He always has to be happy and grateful, and he can't be sad and he can't miss mom when he's at dad's house. And just a lot, there's, there's a lot there. And, um, and so.

**Jillian:** We, but I have conversations with him and I taught him how to breathe from a very young age, was teaching him how to breathe. Right now we're working on impulse control and nope, just because you're angry doesn't mean you get to hit. You can be angry, but let's find some other better tools and coping mechanisms.

**Jillian:** Um, but the only way that I could successfully parent the way that I want to, it would, it would only be if we were divorced because if we did my method of parenting, he, he and I would just be in fights constantly. Yeah, we would be at war.

**Natalie:** Yeah. So this way he can go and he experiences, he's really, what, what's happening is he's being taught the truth instead of being gaslit all the time.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. That this is normal when kids grow up in a family, especially with covert abuse that you can't pinpoint or put your finger on. Mm-hmm. Yeah. There's a lot of uncomfortable, um, there's like a deep inner

knowing in a child that something is wrong, but they also. Are also being gaslit to believe that this is actually normal.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. And then they grow up and that's hardwired into their brains now that this is normal. Yeah. And, and then it's very difficult. Then they have to learn through the hard knocks of adult life, what is normal and what isn't. But this way you're inoculating him against this covert abuse and you are able to take him, pluck him out of that situation, and then train him and teach him the truth so that he grows up knowing.

**Natalie:** What is actually the reality of what's dysfunctional and the reality of what looks healthy. Right. I also wanted to make a comment about your mom's autoimmune disorder. That is very common among women who are in, especially in covert and overt abusive relationships because there is nowhere for that stress.

**Natalie:** Those stress hormones to go other than to start working on a cellular level of your body. Yeah. And it starts to just erode at your physical health. That's why I say, and I'll say it a million times, emotional abuse is also physical abuse that you cannot see. It happens slowly over time. Yes,

**Jillian:** yes. And it

**Natalie:** is just as debilitating.

**Natalie:** Emotionally and physically and spiritually as any other kind of of abuse. So, um, I don't think we can reiterate that enough for people. Yeah. 'cause I don't think people, I mean, you, I know churches, pe so many women have told me, well, my church says that there's no such thing as emotional abuse. And that, you know, that's ridiculous.

**Natalie:** And that's what I heard too. And it's like, that is such a lie from the pit of hell. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Such a lie that is percent ruining. The lives of women and children. Mm-hmm. And it's wrong. Mm-hmm. The churches should be the first ones to stand up against that. Mm-hmm. And instead, they are actually propagate, they're propagating that.

**Natalie:** Propaganda. Right,

**Jillian:** right, right. Exactly. Well, and I remember I was reading a book by Lundy Bancroft, and one of the statistics he had cited was four out of five kids in abusive homes grow up to marry abusers or become abusers.

**Natalie:** Yes. And

**Jillian:** that stopped me in my tracks. I was out for a walk listening to this book, and it just stopped me dead where I was.

**Jillian:** And I was like, oh my gosh. Because I could see it playing out in my own life too. Yeah. Yeah. And. So there were a lot of factors that came up around like, yes, I want to be able to protect him, but this is the best way that I can, is to, and ideally I'd like to get remarried at some point and have a healthy marriage where he can see this as like a healthy, functional marriage and he can see what healthy masculinity looks like.

**Jillian:** Because I don't think I even knew what that looked like when I first got divorced. Yeah. It was kind of, yeah. Uh, it felt like a fairytale or like a unicorn. Right? Like it wasn't real.

**Natalie:** Right. Right. Um, okay. So what do you think was the hardest thing about getting out and then what do you think was the most transformative thing?

**Jillian:** Yeah. Such good questions. I think one of the hardest things was. For me, wrestling with my own self-confidence and self-esteem and how this. Kind of triggered some shame. So this was actually my second marriage and it was now then gonna become my second divorce before 40. And so my first mar I first got married, he was actually a fairly healthy guy.

**Jillian:** I would say he probably had his own is, you know, mild patterns. Um, but. He was in the army and I basically got married to try to make life easier for us. He was stationed in Texas and then deployed. I was living in California, going to college, so I got married as a sophomore, divorced as a senior. Not what most college kids do, but it was kind of that like people pleaser aspect of, um.

**Jillian:** Like, well, this will make life easier for us. Maybe we'll make a little more money. We can see each other more often. He can live out of the barracks. There were all of these ways in which I was like, yes, we'll do this. But in my mind, but like I never wore a wedding ring. It was very much just like, just for the Army, I'm just gonna pretend like this didn't happen.

**Jillian:** Mm-hmm. And I realized a couple months later, I didn't actually wanna be married, like this was not the right decision to make. And so it did end up, uh, I stayed for a while, um, because. My mom trying to give me good Christian

advice was like, you, you made a commitment. You need to follow through with it.

**Jillian:** And I, I tried for a while and then I came to a point where I had an affair and I was like, this is not, this is not okay. And he wanted to keep going. He wanted, he was like, I forgive you, we can work on this. And I was like, no, this is a very clear sign that this is not where I want to be. So with the second marriage, there was, it was a lot of, divorce is not an option.

**Jillian:** It is not, I like, I've already been there once. I can't be two divorces, right? Or like, heaven forbid, I become like Ross from friends and now I'm three divorces. You know? It was like all of the ex, the just kind of fear of like, what are people gonna think of me? So. One of the hard parts was that willingness to be misunderstood.

**Jillian:** The willingness to be judged, the willingness to be perceived incorrectly. Um, I think that's where I, I really struggled in our marriage too, because so many of our fights or arguments, I felt so misunderstood. I didn't feel heard. I didn't feel seen. It was like talking to a brick wall, which is interesting because that's how he would explain fights with me too, or disagreements with me was like.

**Jillian:** He was talking to a brick wall, and I was like, I would always tell him like, no, no, no. You don't need to repeat yourself. I understand what you're saying. I don't agree with you. Yeah. But in his mind he's like, well, I'm always right. Right, exactly. So something's wrong with you if you don't agree with me.

**Jillian:** Yeah.

**Natalie:** Yeah. I think, oh that's so funny

**Jillian:** that, you know, just my really build, rebuilding my self trusts and self-confidence. That was um, I had a pastor who asked me, what is God trying to teach you? Whether you stay or you leave? What does God wanna teach you through this? And I knew instantaneously. It's time to go and God's gonna teach me to build my trust and faith in myself and my trust and faith in him.

**Jillian:** Like that was, and that has been my stronghold. That's been my rock ever since because it's not always easy. There are ups and downs, even post-divorce and being out of that dynamic that like that has. That has been what I go back to. I'm like, all right, God, I know you called me to this. I know this is what you wanted.

**Jillian:** For me, that was, it was a, just a, an instinctual knowing and, um, but, but it did, it's required me to, to rebuild and to change the way I think and see people the way I view single moms. I was pretty judgmental. It brought out some, some real judgment that I had around single moms. And then it was like, 'cause, and my thought was like, well, you just chose poorly.

**Jillian:** You just chose to have sex with this guy who's really a jerk that's on you. You know? And now I'm like, oh my gosh, I just, right. It's like you see it so clearly and with such a fresh perspective, and it's like, oh, well he wasn't a jerk when they got together. Right, exactly. You know, like he was probably really charming and swept her off her feet and was like really amazing.

**Jillian:** And was this Prince charming that she thought was gonna come rescue her? And so I think, you know, I love what you say about like, you rescue yourself. You don't, you stop waiting for someone else to rescue you, and you choose to rescue yourself. And when you've spent so many years. Kind of being beat down, beaten to submission, beaten to like you are less than in that emotional, verbal way.

**Jillian:** It's really hard to come back up from that to rise up and to truly have this belief in yourself that you can do hard things and you can be successful and life isn't going to like the divorce or two divorces, or three divorces is not the end of your life and your opportunity for happiness. Yeah. And so that, that was a huge.

**Jillian:** Huge turning point. And then one of the kind of like subtle blessings that I realized too after this was after the divorce because it went so quick. Most of my processing was after, um, the, it was three months and three days from the day I told them I wanted a divorce till the day it was final by the judge.

**Natalie:** That is fast. It was

**Jillian:** very quick and. And so blessing and a curse with that too. So, um, it was very quick. I very quickly had to move out and find an apartment and be responsible for all my own bills, but it also helped me to see the patterns of myself that I needed to change. And one of the greatest gifts was actually to recognize I was blaming him for a lot of things.

**Jillian:** And I think there was a lot of fairness in how I. Kind of divided it up, but I played into the dysfunction. I don't believe I was abusive, but I played into it and I enabled it. And there were ways that I was showing up that I needed to change and there were core wounds that I had to heal. And sometimes, one of

my favorite quotes is sometimes God takes us where we don't wanna go to create and knew what couldn't have been done any other way.

**Jillian:** Yes, and I really believe that about divorce. I feel like sometimes that's where we have to go and sometimes it's even dating toxic people or having multiple toxic marriages where it's, it's like sometimes we have to get to that point where we recognize. We have our own rock bottom moment and we're like, oh, I need to work on me.

**Jillian:** There are issues and things and patterns in myself and in my life, and ways that I keep relying and looking to a man to meet my emotional needs. Yeah. Instead of figuring out how to do that for myself. And that was a key pivotal moment for me that happened about a year after the divorce was really when I started seeing more of the patterns kind of keep playing out.

**Jillian:** And I realized, oh yeah, now this becomes my work. And yeah. I can, I can let, I can own my part in things. I can let him own his. And ultimately though, like now I get to work on me in these deeper ways and it's, it's been life changing.

**Natalie:** Well, and the important thing about that is that if you, when you're willing to go there, I think there is, I, I've mentioned this in passing a few times on the podcast, that there is kind of a, there's an advocacy idea out there that if you say that a victim needs to work on herself, that you are somehow victim blaming and that is actually a.

**Natalie:** Not true at all. Mm-hmm. That's actually very damaging to a victim because when we learn what our hooks are. And we work on those things for ourselves, then we are setting ourselves up for a better future. So we're doing ourselves a favor by doing that personal work. That doesn't mean that how that we were, that it's our fault that we were abused.

**Natalie:** No. Right. Both of those truths can be true at the same time. Mm-hmm. It is the abuser's fault and responsibility 100% that they are abusive. And also it's my responsibility to figure out what my hooks are that cause me to be attracted to someone who's gonna do that to me. Yes. And because if I don't deal with those hooks and get rid of them, then the next per person who is abusive is gonna come along and go, oh, there's an easy prey.

**Natalie:** I know what to do to get her hooked in. Mm-hmm. And be if my hooks are still there. They're going to be attracted to that. Mm-hmm. Even though it's not, and I'm not saying that we are attracted to abuse. I'm saying that we are

attracted to, there's something inside of us that is attracted to getting our needs met from someone who makes these false claims and false promises.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm.

**Jillian:** Mm-hmm.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. And so, anyway, it's very, very important and this is a good segue to, well. Yeah. Another thing I wanted to mention too, um, you say so many good things and I'm like, I have to write these things down 'cause I'm having ideas and thoughts. Um. You talked about how we need to rescue ourselves.

**Natalie:** And I, I teach that in my program. Um, yeah, I, how I hook that into God though is 'cause I can hear, I can always hear what people are thinking. They're like, oh, but you know, God is the one, God is our rescuer and we can't rely on ourselves. No, we, God, actually, God actually is our rescuer. But how God rescues us is by giving us the tools and strategies and resources to do that work for ourselves.

**Natalie:** Right, because that's us growing up into an adulthood, right? When we are operating on that child level, like where we are, we're helpless. We don't have any resources. We don't have any hope. We don't, we're it, we, all of our, all of our, uh, courage has been drained from us and we are looking to our mommies and daddies for help.

**Natalie:** Or our aunts and our uncles, or you know mm-hmm. Authorities, our pastors, you know, other people above us. We are not operating in the full stature of what God has for us. He wants us to grow up into adult women, adult, you know, Queens. I like to think we are queens, which rise to our queen hood and in Christ.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And then, and then we become the ones like Phoenixes rising out of the fire. We become the ones that get our, that extract ourselves from these abusive relationships and environments. Because a lot of us are not just in abusive marriages, we are swirling around in abusive environments that are actually, you know.

**Natalie:** Encouraging these abusive relationships in strange ways. And so we, a, we get ourselves out of those places so that we can then live the, uh, the adult lives that God intended for us to live. But it means we need to get rid of a lot of lies that we've been indoctrinated with. So, um, what I'm wondering if you

could tell us about now is this is what I, this is the work I do in Flying Free and Flying higher is I help to.

**Natalie:** Indoctrinate or, uh, reprogram or unprogram Yes. Or whatever people from all of these lies so that they can be free to be, you know, they can get free from these chains that are holding them to the, at the bottom of the pit so that they can climb that ladder up and out. And it's a process. It is not an overnight thing that you just.

**Natalie:** You know, oh, I heard a podcast and now my life has changed. Right? It is a slow rewiring of your brain. So can you tell them how Flying Free and Flying higher have helped you kind of to change your mind about a lot of these things?

**Jillian:** Yeah, so the, the coaching calls for me have been some of the most impactful things of, and one, knowing that you're not alone, I think go going into that group too, when I first joined, I realized like, oh, it's not me.

**Jillian:** This is actually a really big problem in the us like around the world. Yeah. But like, especially in the US here, like if I just kind of bring it back to. I live, you know, and so it was, it was really, it was heartbreaking on one hand, but also encouraging because I realized like, it's not just me. I'm not the problem.

**Jillian:** There are deeper patterns, there's deeper layers and aspects to this that then I realize, and it's okay, it's okay to choose divorce. It's okay to to say you want out, and it's okay if other pastors don't agree. If they think you're doing the wrong thing and they. They don't like it because by the time I was ready for divorce, I was not asking for anybody's permission.

**Jillian:** Yeah. It was already decided. And, and so, um, that with the courses, and especially in Flying Free and just better understanding some of these concepts around emotional abuse or gaslighting. Or boundaries or, you know, how do you have some of these hard conversations? Um, a lot of my work personally has been in learning how to manage and reregulate my nervous system.

**Jillian:** So instead of turning to food or later it became a dating app where it was like, oh, let me hop on this dating app and see, you know, who liked me and who's telling me I'm beautiful today. And like, you know, still getting needs met. Still like using it as this way to feel better. It's like really learning.

**Jillian:** How do I do that for myself? How can I allow emotions and process through them? What does that look like? And really, I think it's, it's not just the emotion, it's the what is our body actually physically feeling? What are those sensations and how can I allow those and better? Be okay with it because that's often why I was so quick to appease, like I would freeze.

**Jillian:** But then I was so quick to appease because my body was dysregulated, and I wrote down a quote here. I can't remember where I found it, but it was a dysregulated nervous system, is easier to manipulate.

**Natalie:** Oh yeah. And that

**Jillian:** was really helpful because I realized, oh, that wa, it was way easier once I was dysregulated and I needed him, and in part he had to help regulate me.

**Jillian:** So now if he's dysregulated and now I am, now, it's like, well, I need to fix him yet so that he can fix me and meet my needs. Right. It's this really dysfunctional pattern, and again, it's like being able to own my part without feeling like, well, I'm the problem. It's all me. I'm, I'm an issue. And now also not just saying, well, I just need a different person, because I think that was my thought.

**Jillian:** Well, I, I'm just gonna start dating now and I'm gonna find a better person. Wouldn't, you know, dated some dysfunctional people and one, the first one was not abusive, but just avoidant, you know, like emotionally unavailable. Mm-hmm. So it's like noticing like, eh. I'm falling for the love bombing. Like, oh, yep.

**Jillian:** That's one of the patterns. Like there are certain key aspects I had to rewire. Um, but the, the courses in there and then the communities and having, you know, being able to celebrate, to celebrate the wins and the victories and to be able to offer support and encouragement. And, you know, sometimes it's just that like you're having a hard day and somebody, you know, pops something into the forum and then there are a bunch of comments.

**Jillian:** It's like, it, it really is a sisterhood. It is like. Such deep community and, and it's so, so encouraging. And, and so, you know, being able to take everything at your own pace was great and some things you were doing live and in person, but there were always replays and I loved that. Um, I always had the podcast replays I could listen to.

**Jillian:** There were always things where I could keep this in my mind. And to have that almost as like a life raft, especially while navigating. The divorce and then, and, and as I was still married, you know, that was really helpful in just helping me to feel more, more confident in myself and what I was doing. Yeah.

**Jillian:** Yeah, so. Well, I

**Natalie:** love how you, you took a lot of the things that you were learning, not just through Flying Free and Flying fi higher, but also through other things that you were doing, and you applied it to your passion, which is helping, which is your body mm-hmm. And, and eating healthy and weight loss.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. If that's something someone wants to do and you, because those principles can be applied to every area of our lives. You know, the way that, the way that, uh, cognitive behavioral therapy works, which is a tool that we we're, I'm big on inside of Flying Free, and that I think you are also big on.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. This is something, these are tools that can work no matter what. We're stuck. Whatever areas that we're stuck in, in our lives. So you went and took that. Applied it to all of those other areas and then you started your own business around it. Mm-hmm. Which, and by the way, I just wanna say starting a business is, uh, that is like next level, you know, hard.

**Natalie:** Do you know what I mean? Yeah. There's so many. Yeah. Probably one of the

**Jillian:** hardest things I've ever

**Natalie:** done. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that is when your insecurities and everything that you are not strong in comes. Raging to the surface. Yes. And it makes you just wanna crawl in a hole and die. And yet there's something that Dr.

**Natalie:** Continue to drive you forward. Right. And so why don't you tell us, I'm curious to know like how you're doing today. Tell us about your business. Tell us about how your son is doing, um, where, like where are things at today now that you've gotten out? Yeah. And do you have any regrets? Do you ever look back and go.

**Natalie:** I think I made the wrong decision.

**Jillian:** Never. No, I have not one. If anything, there have been moments where I'm like, thank goodness I'm out. Thank goodness I can go to my own home. Thank goodness we are not like dealing with this, because even I noticed that when my ex was dating, he would be nicer to. Because he's like getting some of his needs met from another woman.

**Jillian:** Yeah. And if he was single, he would be like jabbing and poking. And it was like he had to put me down in order for him to feel better. And it, sometimes it was just like little stuff, but it was, it was interesting noticing that. But there, there were a couple of times, and I, I had notes that I went back through to look at.

**Jillian:** Because he did ask about reconciliation about six months after the divorce. I think he was more prompted or encouraged by his pastor. I don't think he actually wanted it. Okay. I don't think he wanted to be married to me. He wanted to do the right thing in the eyes of the church. Sure. Um, but, you know, going back and reviewing some of my notes and just very small portion of what had happened, and I was like, no.

**Jillian:** No, I can't go back to that. Mm-hmm. Um, and so, and it's, it's made dating a lot easier now too, of like better being able to let go of people, let them manage their own emotions. I will block people like, feel so, like I, that used to be really hard for me. Um. So it's, yeah, everything has changed. So, uh, son is doing really well.

**Jillian:** He is gonna turn five tomorrow at the time of this recording. So he is, he's doing really well. He'll start kindergarten next year and I'm still, you know, working with him and teaching him and trying to help him learn and give him the tools to be able to, to learn, um, you know, how to better function at his dad's house.

**Jillian:** His dad is remarried now. Um, he got married after four months of dating a new woman and. You know, and you know, part of me is like, I hope that, I hope. He changes. Like, I hope he has changed. I hope he is a, a new amazing man. I hope they have an amazing relationship. Like I really genuinely want the best.

**Jillian:** Yeah. You know, I, I know he couldn't have had that with me. Even if he does, let's say he does have that with this other woman, he never could have had that with me. And that's okay. It's like there's so much peace and confidence and then also trust of knowing God has a new man for me. He's got the right man out there for me.

**Jillian:** Who's gonna be on this same like same wavelength, same. Energetically done processed all of his own trauma, or at least the bulk of it, right? Like I think we'll still probably keep healing and working on things. Um, and then, yeah, business has been growing. Uh, I will probably match or get close to matching his salary this year.

**Jillian:** Next year I will probably double that and I'm gonna far out earn him in the next couple of years. So where there used to be so much control and manipulation, I think around money and finances, um, I decided, I was like, I'm gonna flip it and. Don't, I don't ever want to stay with somebody because of money.

**Jillian:** I think that was a big reason why my mom stayed as well, and it was kind of a big reason why I don't think I ever felt safe not working when I was married. It was like, I have to be able to leave. If I need to leave, I need to be able to do so financially. And so it has, it's, it's been up and down. I, I've gone through my own work with therapists and coaches and, um.

**Jillian:** I'm all the better for it. I am like a leveled up 3.0 version of myself, you know? And I up, I was gonna say,

**Natalie:** I was gonna say, I bet you can safely say that you are a different version of yourself now than you were just even six or seven years ago. 100%. That is, I just, I want everyone to hear that because it's possible for everybody.

**Natalie:** That is, it's po. It's not only possible. I really think that's what God's will is for all of us. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. His will is not that we stay the same version of ourselves year after year after year, hopefully one year from now. Everybody listening to this will be a different version of themselves. I wanna be a different version of myself a year from now, but it means that we have to be willing to look at hard things.

**Natalie:** Mm-hmm. We have to be willing to experience the hard emotions of, of, um. Anger maybe. Yeah. Or sadness and grief, right. As we face reality. Mm-hmm. Or even look at our shame, the things that shame us. Mm-hmm. If we're not willing to look at that, if we're, if we just wanna keep things the same, which our brain does, we're just gonna shove it under the rug and then a year from now we're gonna find I'm sitting in the same, I'm sit, I'm the same person I was last year.

**Natalie:** And maybe, and if you are listening to this, think about it like, who were you a year ago? Are you the same person this today, that you were a year

ago? And if so, do you want that to continue? And if you don't keep listening to this podcast, join Flying Free. Um, I, I'm not sure, I can't remember when this is gonna air.

**Natalie:** Did I tell you when it was gonna air?

**Jillian:** No, you just mentioned the number at the beginning. Okay. But I, I don't know a date. Oh

**Natalie:** yeah. So, um, I'm doing a series right now at the time of this recording, I'm doing a, uh, an eight week series. On the mo on, uh. It's just like emotional abuse 1 0 1, all the things that you need to know, right?

**Natalie:** Well it's not, there's no right in eight series. I shall totally disseminate everything you need to know about emotional abuse. No, I'm kidding. I'm just gonna do the highlights in eight, in an eight part series and then this episode is gonna come like two episodes after that series is over. So I think this might be in the new year, but, um, anyway.

**Natalie:** Join Flying Free. Um, yes. If, and, and we, that's what I do. I help you go from, there's a, there's my book, all The Scary Little Gods. I'm giving it away for free the audio version of it right now, because I want people to see a story of what it looks like. Yeah, you gave a story. I want people to see a story of what it looks like on a spiritual level and a, you know, and a mental, like a, an emotional level of what it looks like to go through these epiphanies where you.

**Natalie:** At Crossroads, and you have to decide, I'm either gonna stay the same and go down this the same road, or I'm going to take a new path and believe a new thing. I'm gonna believe a new thought. I'm gonna get curious. Maybe I'm wrong. Mm-hmm. Maybe I've been wrong about the way I've been thinking about all of this.

**Natalie:** And if you're willing to do that, if you're willing to go on that adventure like Julian did. I that is when everything's gonna start changing for you. It's not gonna change if things don't change, right? Mm-hmm. So, uh, that's, that's what we do in Flying Free, and that's what I wanna help you guys do.

**Jillian:** Um, and, and it goes by so quickly.

**Jillian:** Like we think about it as like four years feels like a long time, but when I look year to year, going back four years, it's like there's been so much growth

and so much development. Each year I find it's like I'm getting up better and better and better, and. I'm so glad I started when I did. Yeah. You know, and I think that's it.

**Jillian:** Like future you, two years from now, five years from now, is gonna be grateful that you started now.

**Natalie:** Yeah, yeah. That's the other thing too, that is so, it's such good news and so exciting, is that it's like a snowball at first, you know, it's little arduous and it's hard, but you do, as you start changing, you do start gaining momentum.

**Natalie:** Your courage and confidence start increasing exponentially, just like the interest. You know, just like your interest goes up, the more and more you save money, it's all, it's a compound interest. Well, it works the same way with your emotional upleveling, your emotional health. You start to do that and there's compound interest, and you're gonna find that, yes, it's hard at first, but you will start gaining momentum and then you just start skyrocketing.

**Natalie:** Yes, I, I've seen it. I've seen it. Maybe not a million times. That's an exaggeration. But I've seen it. Many, many, many, many, yeah, many, many times. Not just in my own life, but in the lives of people like Jillian and other people. So, um, if that sounds good to any listeners here, just go to join Flying Free dot com to, um, learn more.

**Natalie:** Otherwise, where can they find you?

**Jillian:** So you can find me@bodyyoucrave.com or on the podcast called Hungry for Love, where we talk about how, what does it look like to lose weight after a toxic relationship, and now bringing a lot of the same work because we can be trauma bonded to a person just like we can be trauma bonded to food.

**Jillian:** And so it's really helping us identify what. Are these dysfunctional and toxic patterns in our life. But like you said, they're in all areas. They can be with food or alcohol, with people in workplaces, not just romantic relationships. But that is, that's my goal, is to help pe women in particular better understand all of these nuances.

**Jillian:** And, and also I, I know there are some men who deal with this as well, and it's, it is so. It is so tough, and I think we really need a community. We need people that can help guide us on a new path. And so I'm, I'm just such a huge advocate of coaching because it has radically changed my life for the better.

**Natalie:** Yeah, it is. It, I. I am a big proponent of coaching too. I, I love therapy also. I know people have had good therapists. I have never had a good therapist personally. Mm-hmm. So I don't, I can't speak to the success of therapy in my own life, but I can speak to the success of coaching. Mm-hmm. And, um, and if you are someone who I, I don't know, I just, I feel like I've seen a lot of people get stuck in therapy and not really.

**Natalie:** Even my own kids have told me, yeah, my own kids have said, mom, I go to therapy and all we do is talk about the past. Mm-hmm. And then they just like say that they feel sorry for me or that they see me and understand me, and then it's over and the therapy session is over and I don't, I'm not getting anywhere.

**Natalie:** I wish I could get somewhere. I wanna go somewhere. Be different than I am now. And that's where I think, um, coaching is, it changes the game that way, so. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Anyways, I, yes, so it looks, it looks like my internet connection is unstable. I hope this. I hope nobody lost us there. Um, alright. Yeah, so go to, uh, you can go visit her@bodycrave.com and you, you'll, they'll find your podcast there as well.

**Natalie:** Yes. Um, I think food is a big thing probably for, I mean. Maybe a hundred percent of people. I don't know. Maybe not, but maybe I have such an

**Jillian:** easy coping mechanism, you know? Yeah. It's like we learn, our brain learns like, well, this feels terrible. Or Your, your nervous system's dysregulated or emotionally, you, you feel unstable.

**Jillian:** And it's like, well, food brings me joy. Food brings me comfort, and, and it's like, it's fast, it's rapid, it's reliable, and it's everywhere. It, you know, it's like we can, yes. Stop at a gas station or at fast food or the grocery store. It's like there's just so we can have it delivered, there's so many places where it's available.

**Jillian:** And so really healing our relationship from food, with food on top of a lot of the diet trauma that we also deal with. And so, yeah, it was really eye-opening as I was waking up to the emotional abuse in my life and how I realized nearly every single one of my clients also had somebody emotionally abusive in their life and they were dealing with emotional eating.

**Jillian:** Or emotional drinking habits, and it was just wild. That's where I started to put all of these pieces together and it's slowly come out now in, in 2025 of just being able to better articulate why, how are these connected and why, and

um, because it, it is, it's a very common habit. And again, we have so much shame and I think that's the biggest thing that stops us from getting help with food and with diets is we think it's me.

**Jillian:** Something's wrong with me and I, I can't get it. I, I don't have enough willpower. Just like in marriage and relationships, we can have a lot of shame and a lot of embarrassment and feeling like, well, I'm not supposed to talk bad about my husband, but how do you ever get help? How do you ever realize what's normal and what's healthy and what's not?

**Jillian:** And

**Natalie:** yeah.

**Jillian:** And so it's. It is really that willingness of like, I can feel anything I can, I've got my own back and I'm willing to be misunderstood. I'm willing for other people to think I'm doing the wrong thing. I'm willing to be the villain. That was a big one. Yes. In my divorce of like, that's fine. You can paint me as the villain.

**Jillian:** I will take on that role if that's what you want, because it doesn't change how I see me.

**Natalie:** Exactly. Exactly. So good. Well, we're gonna stop there. We're all villains. We'll just end right there. Right. Thank you so much, Jillian, for being on the podcast, and I'm excited. We're gonna, I'm gonna actually be on Jillian's podcast Yes.

**Natalie:** In a couple days. Yes. So, um, I think that episode will probably come out before yours does, but, um, yeah, I'm excited. So thanks so much for listening, the rest of you, and until next time, fly free.