

The Divorced Christian Woman Podcast with Natalie Hoffman, Season 2, Episode 4 - Rebuilding Your Relationship with God

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: What if everything you believed about God was actually keeping you stuck? In today's episode, we're unpacking the spiritual rewiring that happens after divorce and why questioning your faith may be the holiest thing you ever do. Stick around because this could change your entire view of healing.

Joining me today are, again, this is, they were with me in episode two, and here we are again. It's my friends and fellow coaches, Diana Swer, Stacy Wynn, and Marie Griffith. And today we're gonna be talking about deepening your faith and spiritual practice. After divorce. So before we get into our discussion, I'd like it if you ladies could once again kind of briefly introduce yourselves.

Tell us about the work you do with Christian women in your private practices, as well as your role in the Flying Free and Flying Higher community space. Diana, we'll start with you this time.

Diana: Sounds great. I'm Diana Sweller. I'm also the host of the Renew Your Mind podcast. I was first a member in Flying Free and Flying Higher Kaleidoscope, and now I get to coach and serve other women in there, which is wonderful.

And I also do one-on-one group coaching, and I have a life coach certification program for those who. Some people wanna become coaches, and some just want to go really deep in their own personal development. And nothing like looking behind the curtain and seeing how the pudding's made to really renew your mind.

So, uh, and I love, I love showing up on this podcast and, um, and celebrating strong, divorced Christian women.

Natalie: Yes. Boom. Okay, Marie, what about you? Who are you? Yes.

Marie: I'm Marie Griffith. I have my, um, master's in Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership. I'm a trained spiritual director. I'm an ordained chaplain.

Um, I'm also an accounting professional, so I have a heart for the corporate world, uh, in helping women there. But I also have been part of the kaleidoscope for about five years and enjoy teaching courses and offering my thoughts on this panel because like Diana said, I love to help women in this space feel.

Alone and to know how strong they are.

Stacey: Hmm. I love that Stacy.

Natalie: I'm

Stacey: Stacy Wynn. I have my Master of Divinity and I am my professionally certified coach. I have a long tenured corporate career and ministry, uh, leadership behind me. And during the time I went through a divorce and met you, which was back in, I don't know, 2016, uh, I started to also go through a faith shift.

And that began, um, my journey into theology. And, uh, I haven't, I haven't stopped, I'm in what's called the deconstruction space, which can be a scary word, but for me it just means spiritual formation and, um. It's a space that I've led in since 2019, and it's an area that in my private practice I coach very frequently.

I've written a workbook that's out on Amazon called Deconstruction Your Journey in Faith, and people can find out more about me on clarityunleash.com.

Natalie: Yeah. The more I, um, the more I get into this, the more i, that, that word deconstruction, it can feel scary when you're not familiar with it and you don't know what the results are of it.

The beautiful, incredible results are now, I think of it as just an a, a beautiful word and a necessary thing really for all of us. Okay. So when did you first

realize that your view of God, uh. Was changing. How did it feel to start questioning beliefs that maybe you grew up with or maybe that you had already?

Maybe some of you actually intentionally chose your beliefs as an adult. I don't know. But how did it feel to start questioning those once you know beliefs that you once thought were untouchable? Like these are facts. I know these are facts, and now all of a sudden it's like fruit basket upset and you're looking at 'em going, I don't know if this is real anymore.

Stacey: For me, it was a little bit different. So I experienced, um, kind of being pushed out of the spaces where I had found, uh, a home and, and, and my, my church and ministry world in many ways. Uh, because my view of of. God, my view of my faith was starting to differ, uh, very much from traditional evangelicalism.

And I knew that what I was going through was a deepening of my faith, but I felt very isolated because of that. Uh, but I had this sense of, you're not gonna take this from me. And I dug in really deep. To my own spiritual journey and took courses. I ultimately went into seminary and started carving out this deconstruction journey, uh, for myself, and then quickly found that I wasn't the only one.

And that became the start of just a really beautiful community. So I did, um. You know, if you wanna say, I lost the earlier community, then so be it. But I think that I didn't lose it, but I did outgrow it. Uh, and what I've, what I'm growing into is just, um, a beautiful place that I'm so grateful that I found.

Natalie: Yeah. Yeah. What about you, Marie?

Marie: Yeah. Um, my family and I left a church that we'd been part of for about nine years and. We informed great relationships and one of the things that they like to say there at the church was, we are your family of choice. That they said that a lot. Well, once we left the church and we left it the way that people who left were asked to leave, you know, we did it right.

You know? Um, but after we left those people, our family of choice. Began to separate themselves from us in painful ways. And, uh, this led me to ask more questions than I'd already been asking. I mean, part of the reason we left the church is 'cause we were really asking ourselves some hard questions and there was just not space to do that in the church at all.

Uh, so we began to, I began after this. After the people were separating themselves from us, I allowed myself to ask the question, speak my doubts, even feel the anger. And it was very disorienting though because uh, you know, you're not supposed to be angry and feel angry and you're not supposed to question.

And it was, it was really, that's the only word that I can describe it. It just. Felt like everything had been pulled out from under me. Um, and I actually had this thought, oh my gosh, this is the slippery slope they always talked about. If you allow yourself to go there, it's the slippery slope. Well, it's, it ended up being this slippery slope into freedom and more love than I've ever known.

Wow. So this is what the slippery slope is. Come on ladies. Yeah. Take the slippery slope. I'm telling you, I have never, uh, I, I've known such love, um, like never before. So, yeah.

Diana: That's amazing. Can I

Marie: just say yes? Yes,

Diana: yes. Stacy had heart emojis going on her screen. We're like, let's take this slippery slope.

This is the best. It's like a, the best slide. You terrified to get on the park, but once you get on you're like, this was the best.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: Yeah.

Natalie: That is awesome.

Diana: I'll, uh, my short story is when I decided I needed to get divorced. It's like I pulled a thread on my woven fabric of my faith and religion, and once I pulled that thread to decide that I could get divorced, the, it just kept unraveling.

So my, the faith system I had woven all my life unraveled. I didn't realize. It just kept unraveling and unraveling. Until I got to a point where I'm like, I'm not sure what's left anymore. So that's been very interesting for me. I didn't, it's not like I purposely deconstructed it. I got divorced and unknowingly pulled the thread and it all started unraveling.

Natalie: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And my quick story is that I just got excommunicated, so got kicked out. But when I got kicked out, it's like, if you think of a, a city, you know, I got kicked out to the outside walls of the city, but then I found out wow. There's a lot of people out here and they're amazing and they love Jesus and they, I do wanna say this though, as I'm looking at all of you on the screen and realizing we're representing people who, you know, deconstructed, but we really wanted to maintain our faith and um, we wanted to kind of.

Figure out what parts we were gonna keep and what parts we weren't gonna keep, but we wanted to maintain our faith. There are people who, and no judgment, but, and maybe I should have tried to find someone like that to rep, you know, represent that group of people. But there are people who have deconstructed to the point where they don't want, they don't have that type of faith anymore.

Um. They're not sure what they believe or, or they, the only thing they're sure that they believe is that they just don't believe in anything that has to do with God or Jesus Christ or whatever Christianity holds or any kind of faith. Or maybe some of them have switched faiths to a different faith. Um, but, so there's a wide spectrum and gamut of like what this means, but we're bringing to you, I think we're all.

And even the, the Flying Higher program, the Flying Free program is always going to be, come from a faith-based, uh, faith saturated perspective. And so we are all kind of representatives of that perspective, and that's what you're hearing today. And if that makes you uncomfortable, I totally get that. You can just click the off button or the forward button or go onto another podcast.

But, but if you're someone who really wants to maintain your faith and you're struggling to hang onto it and you're wondering if it's even possible, I hope this episode gives you some hope for that. So, um, why don't you guys each share what the hardest part about Deconstruction was for you personally, and also we'd like to hear what the, what the best part about it has been for you.

Yeah.

Stacey: For me, it was feeling isolated. I didn't know anybody that was having the same kinds of questions or experiences that I was, and it was hard to, um, to know how to communicate that and find support in that. So that feeling of isolation, that wilderness journey. Yeah. Um, I've just become more accustomed

to that feeling and I find that it is quite peaceful and a, and a sign that I am on a journey, and that goes along with the best part, I think.

And Diana Butler Bass has a book called Freeing Jesus that I, I like my library's full of books. That's one of them. But she talks about following Jesus out of church. And that's such a freeing concept because I think often that is the experience that we have is that we are following Jesus out of the church and we're, we're just finding life in new ways and freedom in new ways.

Natalie: Yeah. Yeah. I, I wanna say something really quick too, that Wilder. You talk about the wilderness journey. I think that's so. That's a great word to use and when I just, uh, a couple minutes ago talked about GE getting put outside of the walls and then meeting other people, I do wanna say that there is something to be said for that walk, that internal walk, wilderness walk by yourself.

I think there's healing that takes place when you realize my faith is not dependent on other people and whether or not they're coming with me or agreeing with me or anything, my faith. Very personal between me and the Holy Spirit living inside of me. And it's incredible. It's incredible. There is a whole host of witnesses within me and um, and I think that's just like part of the healing journey as well.

It may, might feel lonely. But it's also just very healing. I have a friend who it recently went through a com, a very, very difficult surgery where she now can't talk or eat or swallow or anything like that, and it might be a year of a process healing. And she feels very, uh, very isolated and alone in her process, even though she has a lot of support.

But she just told me yesterday. That God, her relationship with God, it's like sparkle sparking right now because God is just meeting her there in a, a very real sense. And um, and for that she feels very grateful. She feels like she is going deeper in her faith and she has ever gone before, and that's giving her a lot of peace and joy.

Marie: Yeah. Hmm. Well, I can say one of the hardest parts were the loss of relationships that I talked about. Um, but at the same time, that was a very freeing thing that happened because I'm no longer surrounded by those, uh, you know, performance based or. You have to believe this way, kind of transactional relationships.

I have people that allow me the space to be where I am. And I wanna reiterate this, 'cause you all said this, like, my relationship with Jesus is more solid and,

uh, you know, beautiful than it's ever been. Mm-hmm. Because all of that stuff is out of the way. And I love that. Stacy, I'm gonna, I made a note of that book.

Uh, following Jesus out of the church. Wow. That, that was my experience. Yeah, a hundred percent. Yeah.

Diana: So, well, I didn't lose anybody in my deconstruction process, so I'm still at my church though. I. I pretty much only go for my life group. I don't go for the Saturday or Sunday services, but all my relationships are still fine there.

And uh, so that wasn't scary. I think the scariest part for me was. Kinda like what Marie was saying before is I thought, am I misleading myself? Did I mislead myself to this place? Am I letting go of truth? And if I'm letting go of truth, then what am I making way for? Um, and I felt a scary feeling like I was letting go of a core piece of me.

I, on my own, invited Jesus into my heart saying the prayer that I heard at church on my bed all alone when I was four years old. And. That was me. So what? What am I letting go of here? And I feel like I held so tight to religion and culture and faith and God, all of it I just held was hanging on so tight.

Letting go was like, if I let go, do I lose it all? So it was just terrifying. I'm like, then who am I and what's my place in this world if I let go of everything and there is no God. Because once this is all a sham, I mean, I went all the way to the end when my rope unraveled there, I was letting go of absolutely everything.

And I guess I didn't have a choice at that point because I, I landed there and I knew letting go would ultimately free me. I just didn't know it was on the other side. And so I had to have all this courage to just, you know, I was on the hanging on that final little bit of thread. I'm like, I might let go and it might be gone forever, but I have to, I don't know how to explain it.

I just knew I had to, and I mentioned it in season one and something we were talking about, but I, I'm like, Jesus, I'm letting go of you. 'cause that was the final thread and it took about a day and a half. And then I was like, I just felt him. And I'm like, you're still here. And so I'm still rebuilding now, like my, I feel like my whole tower fell apart and I don't even know what pieces to grab to start rebuilding, but what am I rebuilding?

Because Jesus is still here and he's in me and the Holy Spirit's in me, so maybe there is nothing to rebuild. So I'm in a very weird philosophical space, and it was, but that was what was so terrifying. But I'm here now. I'm, I'm okay and I

have joy and I have hope, and I have peace, and Jesus is alive. And the rest will work itself out over time.

So I'm in for this journey. Whatever comes next for me.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: That's beautiful.

Natalie: Do any of you guys have a story, uh, about maybe a Bible verse or a, or a Bible concept that once felt heavy and condemning, but when after you deconstructed and you reexamined it, that you suddenly realized it took on a completely different message for you?

Stacey: Deconstruction for me, just allows me to see the entire book differently. Like all of scripture I see with new eyes. Um, one of the, one of the most freeing in the beginning of my journey and one of the most freeing places is, is right at the very beginning Genesis, because there was no capital a Adam Mann.

Walking around in the garden, we're talking human is the, is is the word used there. So for me to recognize that, that in the beginning there was a human and that God separated that human into two male and female, um, was a huge, a, a huge moment. And it's very simple and very, very deep at the same time, women aren't an afterthought.

We weren't made from a rib. We're literally the side of, of the created human. And I think that that is a great place for women to start because we have to be able to see how valued we are. And we are, um, made in the image of God and we're, we're, we're equal partners. Yeah. Uh, with those around us. So for me, that was, that was the place that, that where my story began.

Natalie: Yeah.

Diana: I wanna recommend, uh, I, if it's all right, the Eden Podcast, not the latest episodes, but if you go to the Eden Podcast and listen to the first, even if you just listen to the first five episodes, um, the man who does that podcast, his wife did her dissertation or something on. Yeah, this like one verse, um, in chapter two about this and, and it goes way into all the meanings of the words.

And so that too blew my mind. There's other ones that blew my mind, but, um, that really helped me feel secure in who I was as a woman. So I love that. Thanks for sharing that, Stacy.

Marie: Yeah. Um, mine was. One of them was a woman at the well of course. And you know, just seeing that with fresh eyes that all my life I've been taught that this woman was one thing.

Didn't I go to the Bible and read it and ask God, please show me, show help me read the Bible with fresh eyes and. The, the Bible never says that she is what? I was always taught that she was like, they made all of these like generalizations because she was there at, at noon and she was in the heat of the day.

She was a shameful, you know, uh, probably had been, you know, an adulterous and all of these things. That is not, the Bible never says that, you know, and so that's just one way I encourage everyone listening to go and read that story for yourself with fresh eyes and see what it says and what it doesn't say.

And you will discover there's a lot of things that the Bible never says about that one. Um. So that's just one example. Uh, and of course what Diana and Stacy referred to the story of the garden, you know, uh, because where I grew up, kind of theology, grew up with the woman is always under the man and realizing, no, that's not what God intended.

That was the result of the curse. Why do we wanna live in the curse? Mm. We want to, this is what Jesus came to undo anyway. Yeah, so it's just a fascinating how much of it changes when you. Feel your belovedness. The whole Bible just opens up in a whole new way. Doesn't Yes.

Natalie: You know? Yes. And if, if you're new, if you're listening and you're new to these concepts, just know what we're talking about is really just like the snowflake on the top, the tippy top of an iceberg.

What we're, what we can cover today, there is, once you start getting into this and looking into it, it is a whole iceberg of amazing eye-opening. Life changing information about the Bible that 'cause honestly, the, the teachings, the way that I learned the Bible, it didn't, it made me not want to read the Bible anymore.

It made me want to throw out the Bible with the bath water in, in a way. And then, but now as I learn more, um, I'm realizing it's the way the Bible was taught. It's the spin that works-based law keepers. Put on the Bible to, in order to maintain control over other people, that actually has made the Bible harmful to people.

But the Bible itself is actually very beautiful. And when, you know, understand how to read it and what it actually, what its actual intent was to begin with, um,

it can change everything. So can, how do you tell the difference between deconstructing toxic teachings and simply losing your faith? Which you kind of talked about before that some people just sort of, they say, well, I don't believe any in God anymore.

And what helped keep, what helped you keep your connection to God while also letting go of harmful religious structures.

Stacey: There. Once you dip your toes in the deconstruction space, you'll find people who talk about, uh, how terrible it is. There are whole books and podcasts that are written by so-called experts who say that anyone in the deconstruction spaces is, has lost their way and they've left God.

And anyone that says that. Has absolutely no idea what they're talking about, and they just flat out haven't experienced this. So, I mean, I don't know how, uh, there's just no other way to put it because what, what we call deconstruction is a deepening of faith and, and the fact is that you can't. If you're focused on knowing the truth and certainty, you, you, you're not in a space of faith.

Faith is what happens when you're uncertain. When you have questions and doubt, that's where faith lives. Yeah. And so I would just say don't be scared of the process. It is spiritual formation. It's natural. We, all we have to do is look at scripture to see people, uh, doubting God and asking God, where are you?

Yes. Um, so it is, it is quite a scriptural, uh, place to be. And I think that really what this means is, is they've lost control over us.

Natalie: Yes.

Stacey: And, and that's the crux of the issues is we're not controllable. We're not, we don't conform anymore. And, um. It's hard to look at church that way as a place where people want to control the narrative and want to control people, women in particular.

But it, it can be true. And there are many of us, uh, on, on the screen right now who've experienced it and know hundreds of more who've experienced it. So it, it, it does exist. And, um, yeah, I, for me, it's all about control. So I, if you're interested in deconstruction, I say the first thing to do is talk to people who've been there.

And who are, yeah.

Natalie: Yeah. Because the people who are writing these books and stuff, they've never even done their research on it. They don't know. They've do. They're not interviewing people who have gone through this process and changed and grown. I think it's a difference between authenticity and honesty and pretending playing a game.

That's what I think the difference is. And I'm sorry, but I'm gonna choose the authenticity and honesty every time. Marie, did you have any thoughts here?

Marie: Yeah, well, um, this because of Stacy's workbook and Stacy will tell me the name of that again, so other people will know it. It's deconstruction your journey and faith.

Yes. So with that, um, workbook, I saw the story of Jacob in a whole new way, and now I realize because also in grad school I learned about the stages of faith. This is a normal and necessary part of any kind of growth or evolution. We experience this in every part of our lives. Why do we think we would not experience this in our faith journey?

Of course, we're going to, in fact, I think something is wrong if you don't go through this phase. Like it's just a necessary part of growing into a deeper maturity, uh, of your faith. So. Um, I called it untangling. I didn't call mine, uh, deconstruction, but it was a wrestling out the things with God and what, what a beautiful form of intimacy, right?

To actually wrestle around, you know, with God who loves us so much. And, you know, people talk about losing their faith. I don't believe. Personally that we can lose our faith. I think that's just a word that people use because God is faithful. He holds us. He is full of faith for us and with us and in us.

That's my, he does not let us go. That's my stance on that.

Natalie: Yeah, so. So for people, for women who are afraid of getting it wrong with God. Because, well, because you know, we came out of these spaces where it's everything is either right or wrong. So we're afraid at first that, well, what if I get it wrong?

What would you tell them? How do you know when your view of God has shifted from fear based, which obviously, am I gonna get it wrong? There's fear underneath there, right To love based. How do you rebuild trust in God after being told for so long? That if you don't do A, B and C, that you're going to be

punished in some way or there will be consequences, or your children will fall away from the Lord or everyone that you know will go to hell in a hand basket.

Um, yeah,

Diana: let me just start and then I know Marie's gonna have a whole bunch of wisdom on this, but here, here's my coaching mindset on this. I would ask anyone with these questions, questions back first I'd ask, what does it mean to get it wrong with God? Because I think a lot of times we think, oh, I'm getting it wrong with God, but we don't really, we haven't really defined that.

What does that actually mean? And then I'd ask, can we get it wrong with God? How would we know if we got it wrong with God? Would other people agree with us? Or is this just in our own mind? If God is loving and gracious, is it possible to get it wrong with him? If we're coming from an open, honest, curious, and loving place, even if we have a lot of questions and we feel like there's some cute confusion and we have a lot to sort out, or we're trying different things, if God is loving and gracious and we're coming from that place, honesty, curiosity, and love ourselves, can we get it wrong?

Yeah. So I would pose those questions to anyone thinking this. 'cause I think if we think deeply about it, we're really gonna have to confront. The truth about who God is to us and our relationship with him. What

Natalie: do we actually believe about God? Yeah,

Diana: yeah.

Marie: Oh gosh, Donna, that is beautiful. And actually part of what I did, and I think, Natalie, you said this, that you read the book of John over and over or you know, because that felt like a safe place for you to restart and to engage with the Bible again.

But that would be my, you know. I would encourage people when they're ready to read the gospels and discover who Jesus is for themselves. And this is where you, that question that Diana just posed, um, we'll find out, uh, when Peter cut the guy's ear off, did he get it wrong with Jesus? And then what did Jesus do?

You know? Is there a getting it wrong? I love that you said that, Diana. That is beautiful because. I don't think there's a story of anybody in the Bible that God upholds as you know, uh, you know, one of his own, where they didn't what we

would say get it wrong, but Jesus and God never said that. He never said, Peter, you get you, you know, you really screwed it up this time.

You know? So even if you just read a few verses at a time. I would also, this takes practices, but imagine the stories as if you were there. I know that spiritual direction helped me with that, and that was one of the most transformational practices that, um, you know, led me into this more contemplative space.

And being able to read scripture in that way, uh, spiritual direction has been so powerful for me because it is a place. Where I would share my stories, a lot of time speaking them out loud for the first time. But I was met with such tender, non-judgmental kindness and love, uh, that it changed me from the inside out.

And so I know Jesus in a new way, not just from reading the gospels, but from this, um, somebody my spiritual direction. After witnessing my life and paying attention with me to how God is working in my life, um, they just really loved me. Um, well in that space, and this is how I know that I have a different view of God.

He is no longer the great, agitated father in the sky tolerating me because that's forever what I thought. Oh, sure. He loves me. You know? 'cause I, I got Jesus in my heart and he kind of said he would do that, so he tolerates me. Um, no, I know that I'm his beloved and he is embracing me. He is my papa. The one I run to when I fall and scrape my knee, and even when I stomp my, uh, you know, put in feet in question and doubt and anger, he's got me, he's my papa and he loves me.

Natalie: Beautiful. Do you guys wanna share any of your practices that have helped you to reconstruct a healthier faith? Do you have anything like, uh, maybe you journal or pray or you walk, or even things like therapy could be a practice, spiritual practice or seeing a, seeing, uh, someone like Marie or Stacy who helped people with this, these issues.

Diana: I, I'll have to, what you heard me talk about, my thread unraveling all my spiritual practices unraveled with that thread. So I, in a way, I let go of them. So then it's like, like I really, I really am in this, uh, it's almost this zen place where I'm like, oh, it's just me and God and what, what is a practice?

But in that way, I'd say my number one practice actually is a, a prayer stance with God. Where it's not like I'm gonna sit down and pray now, but I feel like I'm in this open dialogue with him. All the time, because that's all, that's, if it was just me and him left, yes, I know there's greater things.

There's his purpose for the world and all that kinda stuff. But I really believe if I'm hanging out with him and I'm communing with him on a regular basis, he's gonna work that stuff through me. I'm a part of it already because I'm in with him. So that is my one practice. I'm just, I'm trying to stay in the the moment of my life at all times, and he is in the moment with me and we're in a communion.

Yeah. And so that could be considered prayer or meditation or just a, a constant awareness. But that is my one practice that's remained. Do I still journal and read the Bible and, um, hang out with other people and have conversations and do nature? Yes. But it's not like this. That's the one regular thing.

Natalie: Yeah. Yeah. It's not like you're waking up every morning, six o'clock like I used to think that you had to do, and you spend 30 minutes in reading your Bible and then you spend 30 minutes in pacing the kitchen floor to pray. Exactly. Yeah. All that stuff's a lot more organic

Diana: now, and I like it. It's freedom.

Yeah. Yeah.

Marie: Yes. Well, I'll just say this real quick, uh, and you kind of alluded to that, Diana, we have our, our idea of spiritual practices, but what, uh, you know, I have found. To be true is there are so much more that in our lives that are spiritual practices. I've heard of somebody saying that the, the act of them taking photographs has become a spiritual practice for them.

Natalie: Hmm.

Marie: It does not necessarily have to be those traditional spiritual practices that we think about. And it is really helpful to think of it like. You know, I don't know if y'all have heard of a rule of life, but you know, kind of like a, a, a way of approaching your faith journey with these certain disciplines or practices that help you.

You know, cultivate that kind of faithful or, uh, grateful heart, kind of like you just said, Diana, you have that stance. It's a peripheral stance. So yes, are there things that help us stay in that stance? Of course, but it's not a rigid, um, thing. It's a rhythm of life. I, I don't like the rule of life. Um, as much as I like rhythm of life, so you know that you can do that, you can, you can create a rhythm of life and of different spiritual practices that help cultivate that kind of stance and help cultivate this way of seeing and paying attention to God in your life.

Natalie: Yeah. Yeah. I think even when I'm working out sometimes and I listen to music when I'm working, not even, I listen to secular music actually when I'm working out music that helps me like do that extra rep that I don't think I can do. And I feel so connected to God when I'm doing that because I feel like he is getting, I'm getting into my body that he created.

And I've typically was raised to not do that because your body is, you know, sinful. Um. Getting into my body and feeling his presence in my body, even as I'm stretching it to do things that I don't typically do. But I do wanna share one more, one thing that's more traditional. 'cause I got away from you guys know that I got away from reading the Bible for a long time.

Um, other than my little reading John, for over and over again for a while, but. I recently discovered the Mirror Bible, and um, it's a new translation and I was attracted to it because it's new and I've been, I've read the Bible through so many times in my life that, and I have these interpretations of, the verses are just always the same.

So sometimes I'm just reading the Bible and all the old interpretations come up for me immediately and then I. I just shut down because so much of it is so harmful. Those interpretations, not the Bible, but actually the translations that I've read, some of them are very harmful. They will take words like just one word in a verse and slightly change it and completely changes the point of the verse.

Or they will take, or I'll have heard a sermon on a verse that was pulled out of, completely out of context. Of what the entire chapter was about. But when I read that verse, I hear the sermon. I don't read it within context of what the thing is. So the Mirror Bible has changed all of that for me. And starting at the beginning of this year, I started to do Bible studies with the people in the Flying Higher program every other Sunday.

And I am not a masters of Divinity. I am just your average Joe Schmoe who's reading the Bible now. And I do two chapters a week or two chapters every two weeks. So one chapter a week, and all I do is in the morning. I read a few verses, and then there's so much commentary and teaching in this Bible that sometimes it takes a while just for me to read all of the really good information, like this Greek word.

And it's not over your head. It's really plain as day to understand for someone like me and. It has completely rocked my world as far as what the Bible is

actually about and what, and it is you guys. It is literally good news. The when the gospel, which means good news, says that it's the gospel. It really is.

It's not just pretending to be, there's no cognitive dissonance about it. There's no, it's good news, but also it's crappy news because you know, if you don't do it, it is amazing. So, um. In that way, I've been able, I actually have been able to adopt more of like the traditional Christian practice of reading the Bible a little bit each day.

Um, and it's actually life giving for me instead of dramatizing. But can, can any of you guys share a moment when you sensed God's presence in like, in an unexpected way since you've been deconstructing?

Stacey: I had one thought, but you mentioned something earlier that brought something else to mind and, and I think as, uh, not everyone who listens to this as a mom, but if, if you are, then perhaps you've heard in the past that, uh, you're responsible in some way for your children's faith journey.

Yeah. And, and I just. I wanna say I, let's, I don't believe that to be true. Um, we all have our own journey, but there was a day when I was already separated and my daughter was with me, she was a teenager, and she came to me and said, I don't believe in God anymore. I, I don't think I'm a Christian anymore.

And in that moment, I just felt intense peace around that. And I said, you know what? I think I'm right there with you because the God that we were following in those destructive communities is not the God that I would say I follow now. So you know what? Good for you, and I'm with you on the journey.

Whatever you, you, you continue to explore who you think God is or is not, and just let me know what you're thinking. The conversation started.

Natalie: Yeah, that is so beautiful. And here's the thing, it takes the weight off of us and our children to figure it out because when you stop and think about it, the good news is that Jesus already did it all for all of us.

Whether we believe it in this moment or not is completely irrelevant. When you are in the middle of a hurricane storm, it's hard to not believe that the sun is still shining above 'cause it can get really dark. Yet the sun is shining. When if we truly believe that Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is efficacious for all of us, then we have to be able to trust that, that he's got our kids and why?

Think about why people don't believe. Some of them just haven't heard at all, okay? Some of them have disabilities, they're not able to understand, and some of them have been wounded. They don't believe because, because of trauma in their lives. And so, so God doesn't, so God has no answers for them.

Stacey: I mean that Well, and I think we have to allow everyone to have their own agency.

And if for a period of time it's important to you to separate yourself through spiritual, you know, not having a spiritual discipline or just not believing, then that's okay. You know? Exactly. Exactly. It's not, it's, there's no pressure there.

Natalie: It doesn't depend on us. It's not, uh, God's love for us is not dependent on us and where we're at in the journey.

Exactly. Anybody else wanna share? Marie, did you have something you,

Marie: yeah. Um, I've talked about this before, but you know, I experienced God's pre presence at a disco dance party, which, you know, in my old evangelical, you know, kind of environment, uh. I would've felt something like that in a weird place like that, but I would've either doubted it and I certainly wouldn't have spoken about it.

But I'll never forget the first disco dance party that I went to, uh, looking around and seeing all the, the diversity, and I felt God's delight as we all danced and saying, sang celebration by cooling the gang. It was absolutely beautiful. I get chills thinking about it right now because of I'm, I know. I felt God's delight and presence.

Natalie: Yeah, I love that. I mean, that is a very spiritual song. When you stop and think about it. Celebrate good times, re good times come from God. Come on.

Oh my gosh. Okay, well I think we're gonna, I think we're gonna wrap up. I just wanted to say, um, Stacy's actually taught a class inside of Flying Hire. Based off of her book, deconstruction Your Journey in Faith. And she, do you still, you, you still have your deconstruction thing on Sunday night, right? I do.

Every

Stacey: Sunday on Zoom. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Natalie: Yeah. So, and anyone can be part of that that wants to, so we'll put a link to that for sure. Um, there's another class that Stacy taught in Flying Hire called Faith and Time Travel. And in that class we go back in time to meet three women from scripture who teach us about.

They have a lot to teach us about our lives now and the things that we're going through and in the middle of difficult situations. And then Marie taught a class last fall, I think it was called, finding Your Sacred Pathway, and that's also inside of the program. And all these classes are in addition to dozens of courses that address specific issues that divorced Christian women are facing.

Fear and big emotions and feelings of failure and navigating relationships with adult kids and single parenting and deprogramming from our past ways of thinking so that we can grow, encourage, and confidence and rebuild lives that we are, that we feel capable of living. As adult women, so when you join us in all of us inside of Flying Hire, you're gonna get access to all of these things, plus our community, plus live events every single week.

Like the Bible study I mentioned earlier where we're going through the mirror Bible right now. We're in the Book of Luke. We've got book studies and classes and discussions and group coaching. You can interact with all of us in real time in our community forum. And the promise that I make to everyone who joins is that if you come in and do the work of learning the tools and strategies and you apply them to your life, you will be.

A different version of yourself in one year, it, and it will happen by osmosis. Okay, I'm going to help you. These women are gonna help you create those changes. That took us, at least I'm speaking for myself many years of trial and error and stumbling around a lot, and you'll be able to make that same progress in a year.

And what would that be worth to you? Would it be worth \$590 because that is what it costs. If you were gonna join us for an entire year, it'd be \$590, and if you can't pay \$590 all at once, we do have a \$59 a month option as well. I wanna read what one member just wrote a few weeks ago, or a couple weeks ago in our forum.

She wrote this. Those who have been around a long time might remember me. I used to post a lot in the forum. Some people come in and they are, they're just consuming the courses, but they're not really posting in the forum, and that's fine. I think actually most people are doing that, but it's there if you need it.

But this person wasn't really posting. She said, I've been in Flying Free and Flying higher now for several years. I just wanted to come in here and share. Thanks for all this program has done for me. When I joined, I was in intense pain. My therapist told me I had one of the worst trauma bonds she had ever seen.

Seriously, I felt like I was white knuckling it through the divorce. I was so accustomed to going back to him that it took everything I had to stay the course. Now here I am Flying higher than ever before. I have an amazing life. I even went back to an old career I thought I never thought I'd be able to handle doing again.

It's pretty amazing what you can accomplish when you're not being abused. My adult kids are thriving. I have my first grand baby. I recently bought a house. I'm happier than I ever thought possible. I basically marinated myself in this program. I have listened to all the coaching calls some many times over.

I've done every single workshop in class, many of them, many times over. I cannot overstate the importance of doing the work, especially if you've been abused. It takes time. For this information to really click. I still listen to a coaching call or workshop almost every day. When I started this program, I was pretty hung up on the idea.

No one would ever love me that my life was over. It's only been recently I realized I don't need a romantic relationship, and in fact, I kind of like not having one. I don't feel lonely because I'm walking in the truth. Because of that, I can show up with so much love for others too. Thank you to Natalie and all the coaches and all of you.

I'm probably going to continue to stick around and soak in the wisdom that you all offer. So if you want to, um, join us in this work, you can by going to join Flying hire.com and you can create those same results in your own life. And I wanna speak to those of you who feel like, you know what? I'm good. I don't really need to join Flying Hire.

That is completely fine. I'm glad that you don't want, you know, I'm glad that you're good, but did you know that this podcast and the Flying Hi Flying Free podcast, which is for Christian women who are still stuck in their abusive relationships, is actually funded by members of the community, A portion of every member's.

Tuition goes towards supporting these podcasts. And so I've had people that have emailed me and said, how can I financially support the podcast? And I'm just like, join the program because that's how, that's how you can support the podcast. You could join as a member and support the podcast and. Get all of this stuff and dip your feet in or help come into the forum and help other women who are maybe aren't as further along as you are.

Those are ways that you can give back as well and still, and also get something out of it for yourself too. Alright, you guys, that's all I have for you. Thank you so much ladies. For those of you who came and participated and joined us here, I'm gonna put links to all of their work. So if you're looking for what they have to offer, you can go to, um, their websites and see what's going on over there.

These are all women that I have known for many years. I trust them. I love them. They're my friends, and I highly, highly recommend. To you. These are mature adult badass women, and they can help you. Alright, until next time, keep Flying higher.