

## REDISCOVERING YOUR TRUE SELF AFTER TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE

*Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [Flyingfreenow.com](http://Flyingfreenow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.*

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 153 of the Flying Free Podcast! Today, I have my friend Sara Richmond with me. Hello Sara and welcome!

SARA: Hello!

NATALIE: Sara is super excited about this and I am too, because I have no idea what we're talking about. So I'm kind of excited to listen right along with you. She apparently read this amazing book by Jackson MacKenzie. Tell us about the book and why you're so excited about it.

SARA: So, not everything in the book was new to me, but the way it was written, it was so gracious and transparent and inviting and honest. But there were some things in it that have been critical to the growth process that I've been in over the last year, and they paired really well with things that were already coming up continuously for me and related to some of the stuff that I addressed in therapy. I am just absolutely sure that a lot of survivors deal with the same things, so I really just wanted to shout it from the mountaintops, and you're letting me do that.

NATALIE: Right, that's awesome. So what's the name of the book?

SARA: It's called "Whole Again: Healing Your Heart and Rediscovering Your True Self After Toxic Relationships and Emotional Abuse."

NATALIE: I love it. Oh my word, I love the title.

SARA: Yeah! It's funny because I actually had no intention of reading this book, no awareness of it, but one of my clients just mentioned it to me. We have a bit of a similar story, and she just said "Hey, read this book." So I took her advice.

NATALIE: And here we are, talking about it on the Flying Free Podcast.

SARA: Yes, here we are.

NATALIE: It's like a perfect book for this podcast.

SARA: Yeah.

NATALIE: So we don't have the author, we're not interviewing the author, we're just going to gab about it ourselves.

SARA: Sorry Jackson.

NATALIE: Yeah, sorry Jackson. All right, Sara. Tell us. You told me that it talks about the idea of being broken and the problem with that, so tell us about that.

SARA: Yeah. So I know that's a really common theme in Christendom or whatever, and I think there's validity and necessity to realizing that we're not perfect, but I don't think that's basically ever or barely ever a problem for someone who's been through what we've been through or who is sincere in their faith, right? It never was for me. I mean, honestly, more than anything I struggled with feeling like I wasn't enough, and I never really pinned down that phrase in my heart until pretty recently: "I am not enough." That was a core belief I had based on a bunch of core wounds. I remember talking recently about it with a friend, and she sees things differently from me, which is absolutely fine, but I think she thought I was basing the whole idea of brokenness off of the idea of being imperfect versus perfect, and that's not what I mean.

After I got out of my abusive relationship, I felt so broken and busted up. This especially came up not just as a matter in surveying the emotional landscape of my life, but as I tried to deepen relationships around me or start new ones, especially as I started to date (and I'm dating now). I remember at one point saying to the man I'm with, "I just feel so f-ed up." And he's like, "But you're not." And I remember going into therapy several months back and saying something to that effect to the woman who is counseling me, and she said "I don't ever want you to use that phrase again to describe yourself. Find another word. What are you?" And I said, "I'm discovering. I guess I'm discovering." And she said "Broken people don't try to learn about themselves. They don't try to heal. Broken people are the ones who never do anything. Broken people are the people still caught up in what you were caught up in." She just went on and on. So one of the realizations I had through the book and through the influence of that therapist is that we're not actually broken people in that there's nothing that was taken from us that isn't actually still there. The things inherent to us, the valuable things, the things that we think were busted up, they are still there. Now, it's true that there are layers over them and there are wounds that cover them up, but this idea that we're broken, I think, will get in the way of us esteeming ourselves and ever feeling like we

can heal and engage wholeheartedly with life and other people. Does that make sense?

NATALIE: Oh, it totally makes sense. And this goes along with things that I've learned and things that I even teach in the programs as far as how you're framing your experience. That's a way of framing it: "I'm broken." When you think that, your brain just wants to shut down then, and it basically wipes out all possibility. Because you're broken, so there is no possibility, you know?

SARA: Yes.

NATALIE: I think when you reframe it in the direction that you're going to go, it doesn't deny what happened to you, but you reframe it in a way that actually opens up possibility. I like to think about my past experience as having been a huge, amazing set up, like a springboard into my future. So if it wasn't there, it wouldn't have springboarded me in the way that it did to who I am to this day. It took everything, all of the bad things. All it did was shape and strengthen what was already there. That's kind of how I like to think of this. Is there anything more to say about the broken idea?

SARA: Well, I think that there's legitimacy to what you just said. It's not dismissing what was done to us. That's important. I think we need to acknowledge that. But it's also refusing to believe that what was taken from us and was done to us has ruined us.

NATALIE: Right.

SARA: And putting those in their rightful place. So, one of the things she said to me as a follow up is (and it's funny, because she pins me to the wall in the best way), "He didn't get the best of you, you know." And I was just like, "Okay, but why are you saying that?" Of course, she knew exactly why. I said, "What do you mean?" And she said, "Time would have passed anyway. So he didn't take that from you. But in addition to that, he didn't take the best of you. The best of you is your capacity to love." And I think that what trauma does to us is (and it sort of leads into the book) it leads us to create a protective self. And that's when we sort of separate mind, body, and soul, and we do that in an effort to survive and in an effort to prevent ourselves from having to deal with those core wounds. And that's why I think a lot of us, after we get out of these traumatic relationships, we feel so numb, and we're still so anxious, we're still depressed. Maybe we struggle with addictions. And even though maybe we're healing in a lot of different ways, if we don't address core wounds, we sort of walk around and we feel broken because we're still like this onion with all these layers on the outside, and we're refusing to go to the deeper parts. And it's funny, because even though we embrace suffering (I know I did, I mean, for how many years? Like in your case, two and

a half decades, right?), we still are averse to some of the really deep, uncomfortable sensations that relate to core wounds. And for me, one of mine that has come up again and again that I finally am really dealing with is “I am not enough.” I don’t know if you can relate.

NATALIE: Yeah. Well, mine is similar to that. I would phrase it as, “There is something fundamentally wrong with me.”

SARA: It just hurts to hear that sort of stuff.

NATALIE: Yeah.

SARA: As I was reflecting on what the book talked about as far as what wholeness really is... how does he define it? He says, “Human wholeness is often defined as the unity of mind, body, and spirit, and emotional abuse, rejection, and trauma fracture this union, becoming a false shame message that gets stored in our body that disconnects us from that sense of being unconditionally loved.” So that’s directly from the book, “Whole Again.”

NATALIE: Love that.

SARA: Really what it comes down to is there is a disconnection, but there isn’t a destruction. There isn’t some complete obliteration of it. And that’s important to acknowledge because of what you just said earlier: if we believe that we’re broken, that precludes us from ever really truly being whole or esteeming ourselves as valuable people who are worthy of anything good.

NATALIE: Right.

SARA: What was I saying before that? I lost my train of thought.

NATALIE: Well, you were talking about how it fractures but it doesn’t mean that it’s irreparable, so I felt like you were going towards, like, how do you get those pieces back together again as far as unifying the body and... what were those three pieces again?

SARA: Your body, mind, and spirit. You got it. See, together we make one brain. I’ve said this so many times. It’s so helpful. Thank you.

NATALIE: Yes.

SARA: I've realized, especially because I decided to be brave and allow myself to date again, that there are ways in which I created stories in my head that revolved around that core wound but that sort of deflected from it. And there were ways in which I was sort of splitting off from reality when it was painful. And it's easy for us to, because we needed to, gather all this information related to what happened to us but never really get down to brass tacks about healing. We become consumed with information, and then if we have uncomfortable sensations, then we will find a way to numb or to blame, and in my case I could say, for example, "I don't know if I really trust this guy," and it's because I felt afraid. And really, I felt afraid because I was waiting for everything to fall apart again. What I experienced before was someone who acted like he was devastatingly in love with me, and then immediate rejection upon getting married. So I was waiting for that, and that gave me a semblance of control, but it also was me sabotaging the relationship. One of the things the therapist pointed out to me was that when we're young and we experience horrible things like abuse, we try to make sense of it, so we tell ourselves stories that usually revolve around those core wounds. And mine was just "I'm not enough, that's why my parents mistreat me. I'm not enough." The problem was with me. And we have to get to the point where we start making truth, and the truth is that I am enough. It takes some distinct vulnerability to acknowledge that, because if you start acting like you're enough, if they reject you, you can't just go back to that pat-answer of, "See, he rejected me because I'm not enough."

NATALIE: Right.

SARA: And I'll go back to the sort of child-like response to that. I feel like this is a critical part of continuing the healing journey: recognizing that we're responsible for dealing with those core wounds. If we don't allow ourselves to sit and experience all the ways in which our body is trying to manifest that trauma, then it's just going to keep coming up again and again. I will say that for me, having this sort of stuff come up again and again, which was my body trying to get my attention, was so frustrating and so disheartening, and it led me back into that cycle of thinking "I am never going to heal." Did you ever feel like that in your healing journey, like "I'm never going to heal"?

NATALIE: Yeah. I feel like there's sort of a story line that women typically go through and it's like, you keep going down, down, down into the pit and then you think that you're at the bottom and then it drops out even further and then you think, "That surely must be the end," and then it drops out even further. When you get to that place where you just think, "Okay, I guess it's never going to be better," then you get to that hopeless feeling. But it does get better, but I feel like it gets worse and worse and worse before it actually starts to get better.

SARA: Yeah, and I've seen time and time again in my journey that the things that served me in one season (and the seasons seem to switch much quicker than they used to. Maybe it's because I'm growing a lot) don't serve me in the next season. For example, anger helped me for a while.

NATALIE: Yes!

SARA: It esteemed me and my value and legitimized what had actually been done wrong to me. But it didn't help me after that. And gathering data and information about what I had been through helped, but then after a while, it can become a compulsion to move into the story instead of going into like, "Okay, what's my responsibility now? How can I help myself to heal?" And I think that I've seen in the past year, especially, how it would be easy (and the impulse is not there as often anymore) for me to just go back and say, "Well, I experienced this, so the way I feel is legitimate and justified." Sure it is! But is it moving me anywhere into a good future? No. Is it helping me at all, besides giving me some sort of avenue to make me feel like I have some power over this? So I feel like even though I'm a person who really values vulnerability, going deep into the "I am not enough" lie in my heart and wound, it took some vulnerability within therapy, but it's taking so much more than I ever expected and really always want to give, honestly. It's almost as though I'm placing myself back in that relationship, even though I'm not. I didn't expect that. I didn't expect that I would have to be so, so brave and so honest, and I think that every time we have something come up, like a trigger, we have a choice to decide, "Am I going to sit with this, or am I going to numb it out?"

NATALIE: Yeah.

SARA: Am I going to keep this protective self on forever and then I never really get to live, or am I going to move forward?

NATALIE: Yeah. I was just going to ask you, can you think of a specific example, like maybe a recent time where you were triggered where you had to make that decision? I know that's kind of putting you on the spot.

SARA: I have a lot of those times. Here's an example. Let's say my boyfriend brings up a memory from the past, and I know maybe he was at this place that he's describing with his ex-wife. He had been married before, too. I could, in that moment, decide that means that he's missing that time and that it was special to him because of that person, and somehow I'm unimportant or there's some kind of subtle put-down in there. But he's not manipulative or unkind at all, and we all have a history. None of us get to the point where we're in our thirties, forties, and fifties where we don't have a past, you

know what I'm saying?

NATALIE: Exactly.

SARA: And if you meet someone then, you're going to have a whole half of a lifetime without them. So when that's happened recently, instead of going into, like... my spirals aren't as deep as they were anyway, but instead of making that mean something negative, I just assign value to it as like, "Yeah, because he was there, and that's his past, and that's all that means. He's just remembering a story just like when I do. It doesn't mean I'm not enough." One of the things I really struggle with is body-image due to a lot of sexual rejection in my marriage, so when I'm walking around and I start just sort of feeling crappy, lately I've been able to stop myself and instead of going deep into "Yeah, well you don't look like that, so you're just gross. You're getting older, so you're just not enough," I'm just able to calmly say, "No, it's okay. You're okay. And your body? There's no comparison, and you don't need to be compared to."

And as it relates to my boyfriend, he's with me because he wants to be with me. But I will say this: what's been helpful to me in therapy lately is somatic therapy, you could say. And that's just allowing myself to just pay attention to the sensations in my body instead of passing them over or refusing to acknowledge them. A lot of times my body feels uncomfortable or hurt because I haven't let stuff come up. The past time I went to therapy, one of the things she did was just have me sit with the "I'm not enough," and it was odd and weird but it was also really profound because it was almost as if all the physical action that I would have done if I was sitting in that grief seemed to come up but without all the tears, and I finally listened to my body in those moments. And I think that one of the things we fail to take into account when we don't address core wounds is that we're making ourselves the core enemy. We keep rejecting and suppressing all of the things our body is trying to tell us and all the things that our mind wants us to know. Whereas we think, "I can't heal," our body is trying to get us to heal. That's one of the reasons we're having so many issues. Does that make sense?

NATALIE: Oh, it totally makes sense. This is one of the reasons why I think in survivor communities, even, there's a lot of empathy and just "Let's listen to our stories and let's go there," and it feels good in the moment, but it doesn't actually solve anything long term.

SARA: Yeah.

NATALIE: So when you talk about getting triggered like that example you gave with your boyfriend, you had a knee-jerk programmed response that came right away, and that's

the “I’m not worthy” or “There’s a reason why he brought this up and it has something to do with me.” That’s your knee-jerk programmed response. And then you were able to notice it and then change it and say “No. We know now that this is what’s true.” And then you were able to re-frame it and feel differently about it instead of misinterpreting it or making it mean something terrible about you. It becomes more of a healthy response. “Okay, this guy has this experience, and he’s just sharing it with me. This is actually a good thing that he feels comfortable enough to share this with me,” right?

SARA: Right. I’ve told myself in the past, “I’m being careful, I’m just not being stupid,” even though there are no red flags. There really aren’t. Really, what it comes down to is I’ve latched onto my story and I’m making everything about the story, whereas that’s the past, and I am here now. And I have to decide how I want to live.

NATALIE: Right. Okay, so tell me a little bit more about... how do you put the somatic aspect of everything, going into your body and feeling the things, along with the mind-work?

SARA: Yeah, sure. So, I will say, I don’t think he specifically calls out somatic therapy in the book, but it’s really sweet, just the vulnerability that he shares in the book, because he talks about all the different sensations he had come up, and just how it was so much of a process for him to work through these things and realize these things. Even before he wrote this book, he had written another book as an expert on the subject of psychological abuse, but he still wasn’t healed, so he’s coming as a person in the trenches. But he does talk about how listening to his body on his own made a huge difference in realizing certain things, just about how he needed a reference point of unconditional love, and we have unconditional love for ourselves when we’re willing to embrace these sensations and these thoughts and feelings and all the things that come up instead of hating them and suppressing them.

So in the therapy that I did specifically (and I think that every therapist probably picks something a little bit different based on what you’ve been through and what works for you), once we got to the point where she thought I was comfortable enough after several session to just be quiet, we sat together after I brought up what I realized had been coming up again and again, “I am not enough,” and she said, “How do you feel? Where do you feel that in your body when you say that?” I was like, “I don’t freaking know.” And I mean, really, it was awkward and stilted a little bit, and so we just sat there, and I decided “Okay, I’m going to just say it out loud and then try to see how I feel,” so I said “I am not enough” and I sat there. And she started noting observations she made of me, and she made it clear again and again, “Don’t try to think into this” because again, for me personally, I am an overthinker, and that’s a part of hyper-

vigilance because of what I've been through since I was a child, and you can not think your way out of these things. I mean, in a lot of ways you can't. Because I can just argue in a real warped way all day long with myself. So she said "Don't do that. Don't even try to think. Just try to pay attention to your body." And she realized that I was moving back and forth. Not my heartbeat. And she said "Just move with your body. Where does your body want to move?" And every time she talked about being still and just being with my body, I kept swallowing. And I didn't even notice. She's like, "Do you notice that?" and I was like, "Yeah, okay." She said "Try not to swallow," and as I did, as I sat there with my mouth open, it felt like there was something that needed to come out, and I realized that every time that I've stifled my emotion, my pain, and my grief in my life, I've felt... and this is a normal, physical reaction, but I just remembered it, my throat has hurt really, really bad.

NATALIE: Yes.

SARA: I just could see again and again how so many times in my life when I've been in the most emotional pain, I, even though I say I'm a crier and I let things out, no. I will not let the full measure of it come out. I think that there is maybe wisdom to that and that I couldn't handle that right then, but I never really let all that trauma out. I never let that grief have full expression. So I just felt the connection to that. I've actually had times where I've been triggered and I wasn't like, about to cry, but I felt a weird sensation in my throat. It was weird. It was like there was a muffin in my throat or something. So she said "Just sit there. Keep your mouth open and let the sensation come up." And so I just sat there, and as I did, I felt so much emotion come up. I started weeping, and I didn't even know why. I'll be honest, with this, there isn't going to be a lot of figuring things out or nailing things down or even clear thoughts. You're just letting your body talk to you. There's more to it but really, going back to something I mentioned earlier, as I sat there, I could just sense myself saying, and it was like my child-self saying "Finally! Finally, you're listening! I've been trying to tell you for so long. Will you listen now?" And I realized how in saying that I'm not enough and believing I'm not enough over and over again, all I had done is make myself the enemy and how sad that made me, and how the one safe place I've had for my entire life I've rejected over and over just to make sense of my reality and then to protect myself, and I no longer want to do that. I was pretty exhausted by the end of it. It was like I had run several miles, but it was a really beautiful experience just to let my body speak for once.

NATALIE: That is incredible. I can relate to this. I can relate to that throat thing. I don't have a therapist right now, but I've been trying to listen to my body more and I did just notice that recently, and I'm like, "What is that?" It's like it hurts in my throat. My throat is hurting. And when you just articulated that, I'm like, now the next time it happens, I'm

going to be aware of that. I do stifle my emotions a lot, too.

SARA: Yeah, sure. It's really hard not to.

NATALIE: Yeah, well, when I was growing up, if you expressed your emotions, you were a really bad person, and that was really bad. To express your emotions was like you were selfish, you were trying to get attention, all of that. Or you were histrionic or dramatic or there's something wrong with you because you had emotions. I mean, I hate to keep harping on this, but I do think it is kind of a historically Christian sort of... what's the word I'm looking for? It's a badge of honor or something if you can be stoic and you can be, "Well, I'm just going to trust God no matter what, and there's no reason for me to make a fuss, and I'm just going to be the strong one, and I'm just going to suck it up." And that's praised. Or you know, the whole idea of dying to yourself or basically killing yourself off. It's some kind of Christian... gah, what is the word I'm looking for?

SARA: Propaganda?

NATALIE: No. I'm going to have to edit this out because I can't think of the word.

SARA: Sorry I can't help.

NATALIE: I know, I know. Anyway, I'm going to edit this part out because it's absolutely ridiculous.

SARA: I mean, I think the problem with that not only is... you know, you could go back and say that Stoicism isn't even Biblical, anyway. It was something from the first few centuries that they just added in. Again, it does what I did, which was make ourselves the enemy. You cannot hate one aspect of yourself, the physical, and have wholeness. You cannot split those things apart and live well.

NATALIE: Right. I thought of the word too.

SARA: What?

NATALIE: It's "virtue." It's like a virtue to kill yourself.

SARA: Yeah, definitely. But, I mean, even within the context of what we're talking about just in general, if we deny and resist these things, that doesn't help at all. We're not just making ourselves the enemy, we're preventing ourselves from ever healing. We're

breaking ourselves into pieces on the inside. No wonder we feel like we can't heal, because we're preventing it.

NATALIE: Exactly, and here's the other thing too. If you think about it from the Creator's perspective... God creates us, He makes us exactly the way He wants us to be, and He instills in us the personality that He gives us and the body that He gives us. We're hard-wired. It's in our DNA. He's created this beautiful creation, and then He wants that creation to go and live to its fullness, the fullness of what we are created to be. And then we're told, "No! You're not enough! No! You're too selfish! No! You need to die, you need to die to yourself. You need to be a living sacrifice." And yes, the Bible uses terminology like that, but it doesn't mean what a lot of Christians think that it means. And it's Satan's way of taking truth and twisting it to mean actually the opposite of what it's supposed to mean. That's how he destroys us. I was just telling someone in my program that the Bible says that Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy. And if he can destroy us and make us think that it's a virtue to actually self-destruct, all the better. We can actually leave an abusive relationship or leave an abusive family or leave an abusive friendship and we can still continue to destroy ourselves by our beliefs.

SARA: Yes. I definitely am a poster child for that. And what's funny is (it's funny, but it's sad), as I've realized these things and come out of them and started to live and think differently, I've actually gotten pushback from other people who believe that I'm, I don't know, becoming a heathen or something. And I'm just thinking, "But do you understand that all of this has been produced by the acknowledgement, the realization of how much harm those beliefs have done to me, and now I'm deciding to believe something different?" It wasn't like, "I want to go out and do bad things." It's me realizing "These things are doing me actual harm, and here's the revised version that is not, that is bringing life to me." That's the only impetus behind all this.

NATALIE: Right. Jesus was called the son of the devil, so that would be like the equivalent of us being called a heathen, right? Throughout history, I think the people who just really, truly desired to be aligned with the heart of God, the love of God through Christ, are often maligned in the same way that Jesus was maligned because they are not stepping in line with the rules and regulations that enable them to be easily manipulated by the powers that be. I think that's a pattern that you see throughout history. If you know anyone who is calling you a heathen because you believe in being who God created you to be, and healing, and getting in touch with the body that God gave you and the mind that God gave you and the spirit that God gave you, then I think that's a red flag. I think that says something about them, not that they're a heathen, but it just says something about their beliefs. It just tells you, "Well, that's what they believe. They believe something different than I believe now, and they

probably have their own healing to do.”

SARA: Yeah. Well, the irony is, I'll sometimes look around and realize that some of the ways people are treating me now, I would have thought the same thing 10+ years ago about me, you know, on the outside. Because if you haven't lived it, it's hard to understand. I try to be gracious instead of getting angry.

NATALIE: Exactly. Here's how I look at it, because I have a lot of people who kind of dumped me and they probably think I'm a heathen, too. I just think “Well, you know what, they're on their trajectory, and God has them on whatever circles they're spinning around in, and God has me on my circle that I'm spinning around in, and I can't be focused on them, anyway. My focus has to be on Jesus, and my focus has to be on what He's putting in front of me to do with my life.” My whole life, all I ever really wanted to do was change the world in some small way. Be some kind of positive influence, help people to experience God in a special way. And that's what I'm doing, or what I hope that I am doing.

SARA: Yes! You are!

NATALIE: So if I get distracted by people who are... well, you know how Brené Brown talks about being on the field, the game field?

SARA: Yeah, in the arena, right?

NATALIE: Yeah, you're in the arena. And I just feel like, let's stay focused on the game at hand. And of course there are going to be people in the stands who are throwing tomatoes at you. Okay, so they throw a tomato at you. But you know what? We got a game to play. We don't have time to worry about the silly tomato. We have to play the game. That's what's important. That's what we have to stay focused on.

SARA: Yeah. I guess I would probably just end by saying, if anybody's out there and they can fully say that they're out of unhealthy or unsafe situations and they still feel like, “How am I ever going to heal?” They still feel really numb and unfilled and there's this deep, soul loneliness. I don't think that's a static state for you for good, and when it comes down to it, if you're living out of protective self like I have been, like Natalie I'm sure has, like so many of us have, there really is healing. And this book, for me, was helpful in recognizing just a deeper level of that. Somatic therapy helped too, but I just wanted to encourage everybody that our bodies are not just made to heal physically. They're made to heal emotionally, and there is wisdom in them. If, as you said, Natalie, we're made in the image of God, then there are marvelous, incredible, mind-blowingly

great things within us that give us the capacity and the wisdom to lead us into healing. And I would say a big part of that probably is listening to our bodies and really, truly going deep into the acknowledgment of what they need to grieve or release or let go. And once we do that good work, our lives change. I have not found deep healing in striving and in being some kind of perfect person or checking all these boxes. I've found it in just allowing it to come as it does and seeking it out in gentle ways and just loving myself and putting myself in situations where people can love me.

NATALIE: Yeah. I love that. I want to piggyback off of that and just say that we tend to think, "Oh, there's this end goal, and we have to reach the end goal." But there is no end goal to healing other than that it's just a journey. It's a process and we'll be doing it for our whole lives. So never think, "Oh, I just have so much further to go." I kind of use this phrase: "I'm healing and I'm also kind of a hot mess." In fact, just the other day my daughter told me something that involved my ex-husband and I got triggered. I reacted a little bit and then I said, "Okay, this is my unhealed, wounded child that's reacting right now. I just want you to know that." And I'm just crawling out of my skin because this little girl inside of me is freaking out inside of me. But it helps to be able to recognize that and to feel it and to be able to say, "Okay, my wounded child inside is scratching on my innards, and I want you to know, daughter, that's what's happening right now and I'm aware of it." And my daughter was able to hold space for that because she's amazing. And she was able to be okay with that. But if I'm shaming myself for that and going "Come on, Natalie, you're a coach. You should get your act together. You shouldn't be falling apart in front of your daughter. This is a stupid, silly little situation. It's not even that big of a deal." If we do that, all that does is stuff it down and make us feel shame. Like you said, that little girl is saying, "Why can't you listen to me?" It makes her just crawl back into her corner and go, "See? Nobody cares about me. Nobody wants to listen to me." So it doesn't help. So anyway, for what that's worth.

SARA: Yeah, that was a great example.

NATALIE: Well, I'm really glad that you brought this book to our attention. It sounds like a great book. So for those of you who are listening and want to go get the book, it's called "Whole Again: Healing Your Heart and Rediscovering Your True Self After Toxic Relationships and Emotional Abuse" by Jackson MacKenzie. You're welcome, Jackson, for promoting your book. It's so funny. He has no idea who we are.

SARA: He has no idea.

NATALIE: Well, of course, we have no idea who he is, actually. So I think that's a wrap for this session. By the way, I haven't said this in the last couple of episodes, but I want to

just encourage you to go and leave a rating and review on Apple iTunes if you haven't done that already, because that really helps to get our podcast in front of the eyeballs of more people who are just like you. There are algorithms out there, you guys, so when you listen and you download an episode or you like an episode or you subscribe to the podcast or you leave a rating and review (which is the biggest way of giving it lots of juice), you're actually helping to promote this podcast. So if you like it, why not promote it? You can be totally anonymous. You don't have to give your real name or anything. People come up with all kinds of interesting names there in the reviews, so just throw a name in there and give your rating and review.

SARA: Do it, do it, do it.

NATALIE: Give it some juice, you guys, and then more women will be able to find it. I think it's been helping a lot of women and I'd like it to help even more. Thanks for being with us, Sara, and thanks for listening, you guys who are listening, and until next time, fly free!