

#179 Unbroken: The Trauma Response Is Never Wrong with MC Mc...

📅 Thu, Apr 27, 2023 2:48PM ⌚ 39:34

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

trauma, people, mc, book, life, adult, folks, traumatic, talk, incarcerated, home, therapists office, child, study, veterans, reintegrate, understand, moment, gang, definition

SPEAKERS

Michelle Glogovac, MC McDonald



Michelle Glogovac 00:00

You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 179. Welcome to the my simplified life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present. Don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you. We'll take you on my own journey. This is my simplified life. Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today I have an amazing guest Her name is Mary Katherine McDonald. She goes by MC MC is a PhD, trauma researcher, author and certified life coach. She spent over a decade researching trauma, grief and resilience. And her latest book unbroken. The trauma response is never wrong, debuted in March. It is amazing. And part of the reason that it is amazing is because MC herself is an incredible human being. In the book, she shares her own trauma experience and what that looked like, as a grad student who was learning about trauma while going through trauma, and how it all came together. I have read the book cover to cover, I absolutely loved it. You'll hear the parts where I cried, I tell MC about that. But what I really love is that she's trying to help us all define what trauma is, for far too long. The medical industry has thought of trauma as certain things and she's going to define that for us. But really, trauma is so much more. And I myself didn't know that I went through trauma as a child, I had absolutely no idea. And I don't know if that's because of what my definition of trauma at the time was. Or because I kind of thought that was maybe normal because you don't know any different as a child, MC and I have a wonderful conversation about her work her book and the people that she helps, and I know you're going to fall in love with her as I already have. Hi, MC Hi, Michelle. How are you? Oh, so good. I'm so happy to talk to you. You're



MC McDonald 02:31

so excited to be here.

M Michelle Glogovac 02:33
You're one of my favorites now. Oh, I'm so lucky to get to work with you and talk to you and

M MC McDonald 02:38
just feeling is mutual. Oh,

M Michelle Glogovac 02:42
thank you. Before we dive in and do more of a love fest, can you introduce yourself to everyone please? Yes, I'm

M MC McDonald 02:49
MC I am a PhD, trauma researcher, author and life coach and I just came out with a book unbroken. The trauma response is never wrong.

M Michelle Glogovac 02:57
I love it. And the book is fantastic. I read it. Thank you very quickly to you brought tears to my eyes. Uh, yeah, I absolutely loved it. Jenny loved it, too. I'll give her a little shout out to she read it. And we cried at the same spot. Oh, yay. Oh, I want to know the spot with with Lily. Mm, yes. I don't want to give the book away. But that was the spot that yeah, I was like, Oh, son of a gun. Yeah, there's

M MC McDonald 03:25
there's two spots. I actually cried in the audio book recording, I recorded the audiobook. And I you know, you're that's such I don't know if you've ever done that. But it's kind of a weird experience, because you're reading this thing out loud. And you're very focused in the moment and on the word. And you almost forget the content, even though you wrote it. And so there were two moments that came up that like, you know, I wrote the book. I shouldn't be surprised by the moments, but I was because I was so in the moment focused on diction, pronouncing my words and things and yeah, so there were two moments that the Lilly moment was one

M Michelle Glogovac 03:56
than what was the other moment. Now? I want to know, the letter

M MC McDonald 03:59
from the kid to my dad

from the kid to my dad.

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Michelle Glogovac 04:03

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yep. Look at it, we're gonna get all to already we're, what two minutes and not even two minutes in and they're already crying. This is gonna be a great interview. So how did you become a trauma therapist, life coach, all of the things that you are, how did that even come to be?

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MC McDonald 04:23

So I had a really circuitous route. I'm actually not a therapist. I'm a trauma coach. And there's a there's a reason behind that. So that's why I want to make sure that that's clear. I was doing I did a master's degree and I was studying philosophy and psychoanalysis around mourning, and I was looking at loss of children in particular. And then I moved into my PhD and I started studying trauma and combat trauma, sexual assault and things like that. And I wanted to enter the field of academia and stay there. And then I started learning all of this stuff about trauma and and sort of the State of the Union of psychology around trauma was really this space that, like, I was just really shocked at how little was defined, even in this was like 2009, when I started wanting to pick that as my research area, and the more I started learning, the more I started realizing that that folks were not getting a lot of psychoeducation about what trauma is in therapy. And so I started a coaching practice in 2011. So that I could get information to people who are working on trauma with therapists and not getting the information that they needed about their own trauma response and what was going on. And so that became the sort of like a hybrid academic coach kind of thing that I that I, you know, ended up moving into and still am in, but it wasn't really the plan, you know,

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Michelle Glogovac 05:48

it never is. Right. So what is what is trauma defined? Because I totally agree with you. And it wasn't until this therapist that I have now that said, listening to your story. Well, you had a traumatic childhood, I was like, No, I didn't. That's not trauma. No, I don't know what you're talking about. She's like, No, yes, it is.

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MC McDonald 06:09

And that's the interesting thing. So so when I was actually working on a project in the academic field on identity, and I wanted to lean on trauma, basically, to make an argument about the way that identity is structured. And so I started going to these conferences, about trauma, just to kind of get really clear about where psychology was in, you know, in the face of trauma. how are we defining this? How are we treating it? What is how does this work? Because I knew that we've been talking about it since the 1800s. So we must have made some progress, we must know some things. And I started going to these conferences and realizing that a lot of like 70 to 90% of the conferences were about arguing about which kinds of things count as trauma and which kinds of things don't. And so it's like, you go and you look for the definition. And then at all, it just like falls through your hands like sand, there was no, you know, solid foundation

under what this even is. And so the clinical definition is really narrow of trauma. So it's, there's three things that can clinically count as potentially traumatic. And it's actual or threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury or actual or threatened sexual violence. Those are the three things. And that's it. And that's it. And so some of the first conferences that I was at there were these arguments about, okay, let's expand the list that's too narrow, because what happens then is that a clinician who's taking the DSM very seriously is not going to diagnose you, if you had childhood neglect, they're not going to diagnose you with PTSD, even if you meet all of the other criteria. And so these arguments were like, Okay, we need to expand the list and the and that just seems like obviously, the thing that needs to happen. But the argument on the other side, was that if we expand the list too far, we run the risk of stretching the word to meaninglessness, and everything that is traumatic, and then trauma just kind of fades into the background. It's just part of life. It's like the common cold. Yeah, you have trauma and whatever. And so I think that that that is a real concern. You know, like, we don't want to stretch the word to the point of meaninglessness. And at the same time, though, there are so many more things other than those three things that that are potentially traumatic, right, neglect in childhood, psychologically abusive relationship, whether that's in the home or as an adult, that doesn't rise to the level of physical violence, right, but still is about manipulation, and gaslighting and all these things, bullying in the workplace, they've done a lot of studies about working in a toxic environment, and how that can give you all of the other symptoms of PTSD. But again, your clinician is not going to diagnose you with that, because you don't meet the clinical criteria for stressor, the traumatic stressor. And so that's a very long way of saying that, I think we need to revamp the definition, which is one of the things that I do in the book, by leaning on a definition that is given to us by Robert Stoller, oh, he's a clinician in in California and LA, who says that when you have these two things, you have the potential for lasting trauma, when you have an unbearable emotional experience. That's the one that lacks a relational home. That's thing too, you have the potential for a traumatic experience. And that could be anything. And that could be different at different phases in your life. So you might have handled something when you were younger in a different way than you handle it now. And so it might be it might have been potentially traumatic when you were younger, but not it wouldn't even like faze you now. So I think that definition does a lot of work.

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Michelle Glogovac 09:24

And so if you've experienced something traumatic as a child, and yes, you would handle it differently. Now, you know, what does that look like? What does that like? How does that trauma affect the future? You?

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MC McDonald 09:36

Yeah, so So that's a great example. I had a friend who wouldn't when we were talking about trauma, and this definition, we were talking in kind of a clinical way. And he said, You know, I was growing up in LA I was Korean. I was in a school of white kids I wanted to be I was the new kid. My parents owned a restaurant I wanted to be in in the in crowd in middle school or high school. I think it was middle school. And he convinced his parents to buy him a skateboard. And it was like he was gonna get the skateboard, he was going to be one of the cool kids. And within like three hours of the first day that he had the skateboard, it got stolen. And he couldn't ask for his parents to give them another one, because it was this huge financial thing to get them the first one to begin with. Right? And so from an adult perspective, we look at that, and

we think like, okay, yeah, that sucks, right? But it's not a big deal. And from his perspective, as a middle schooler, like what counts what matters more in middle school than like, fitting in, like, it's a critical, huge issue. And having that tied up with this object that then gets stolen, can absolutely be a traumatic, that can be an overwhelming experience, he couldn't find a relational home because he didn't have friends. And he couldn't tell his parents, right. And so he's got unbearable motion lacks relational home. And then what he realized is that sort of put him into this financial scarcity that was showing up in his life as an adult. So he never felt like he had enough he never felt like he could fit in with the ingroup, wherever he was, in whatever industry, and it was, like just this crazy connection of like this little thing that wouldn't faze you as an adult, but sort of set the stage for behavior and shame in your adult life. Does that make sense?

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Michelle Glogovac 11:18

It does. And you just remind me of something that I saw, like over a month ago, online, there was a post, and as soon as I read it, I was like, Oh, I got to talk to MC about this one, because it came from a sales coach sales expert. And she was saying that the trauma of not making the cheerleading squad in high school could then forward into your career as a salesperson and you're not making sales. And I went really like I thought it was really far fetched. But when you say that, like your example, it makes sense. And now I can see it more. But at the time, I was like just reading that sentence, because that's all it was. It was, it was about, you know, if you didn't make the cheerleading squad, that traumatic incident could affect your sales in the future? And I'm like, No, and it depends on again, like the

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MC McDonald 12:07

with you, if you didn't make the cheer squad, and you had a great family and a support system and your friends and they were able to sort of help you deal with help you bear the unbearable emotions in that moment, then it might not. Right, like so it depends very much on the context and the way that the trauma sort of lands and what the sort of repercussions are in your the larger context of your life. But yeah, should

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Michelle Glogovac 12:29

we should we even be taking something like that as an example, though, and putting it out there? Without further context? Well, they let me know.

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MC McDonald 12:36

I mean, well, and that's, that's the thing that like, runs. That's where we run into this issue of like, okay, well, then, you know, if we're all traumatized by everything, then then Okay, let's stop researching trauma. It's just part of life. There's no way to get around it. And I think that's, that's really the wrong way. Yeah, you need an appropriate context. Like, here's

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Michelle Glogovac 12:55

Michelle Glogovac 13:22

a medal because you participated. Right? You showed up great job. Yeah, I want to talk about to the you really specialize in two types of individuals. With, I want to hear how you landed on these two types of individuals, because they're very unique. Fascinating. I know that we've talked about this offline, how did that come about? And you can just I'll let you share with who the individuals are that I'm talking?

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MC McDonald 13:24

Yeah. So and it's, there's a difference kind of between where I work in terms of research, and then with clients. And so with clients, I've seen clients all over the spectrum in terms of, you know, folks who are dealing with childhood trauma, trauma from a divorce, financial trauma, trauma from a major, you know, shift in their life, career stuff, you know, relationships, breakups, all that kind of stuff. But in my research, I primarily focused on veterans and folks who've been previously incarcerated, and specifically gang members who are producing incarcerated. And so the way actually that I started working with veterans, and this is kind of an interesting kind of, it reveals the the place that trauma studies was in when I started my research, I really wanted to look at folks who had survived sexual assault. And my academic committee at the time said that we don't have enough study on women who've been traumatized. So you should really look at Veterans because there's tons of studies going all the way back to Vietnam about PTSD. And it was I think, that's a really interesting kind of nod to the way that

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Michelle Glogovac 14:39

yeah, only recently that women have been traumatized. Yeah, exactly. Right absurdity of it. The

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MC McDonald 14:47

absurdity Yeah, the fact that it's gendered at all I think is kind of is kind of absurd. But you know, the, the beginning of the the history of the study of trauma begins with hysteria, which is this idea that women have this these set of Symptoms because their uterus wanders all over their body. Like I wish I was making that up. But that was what they believed. And then in some sense, like, trauma only became legitimate as a field of psychological study when men had those symptoms, and then the women kind of fade into the background again. And that's really interesting also, in the way that it impacts men, one of the research papers that I was most proud of writing was about how looking at trauma as like a failure. And being and specifically a female failure, like you're being a woman, if you can't deal with your war trauma is an issue that affects men negatively, you know, like, we're not actually healing our veterans, if we are telling them that they are weak and feminine. That's really interesting. Anyway, so I started working with veterans, really early in my academic career, doing research studies, and then also started seeing them as not necessarily the same people, but started seeing them as clients in my coaching practice. And then, as I was working, I was asked to participate on this project where we were building a trauma informed curriculum for previously incarcerated gang members as they were reintegrating into society post incarceration. So I built this curriculum that was designed to help previously incarcerated folks move through their their first kind of

working environments, their first year of work, post incarceration, and deal with some of the trauma triggers that were invariably going to come up as they were in those, you know, situations. It's just been working with those two populations has been amazing.

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Michelle Glogovac 16:33

And I and they both have such stigmas attached to them. Oh, my gosh, yeah. And yet, I work with formerly incarcerated people, as well as clients and their stories are absolutely incredible. And I feel like now as time goes forward, it's becoming more accepted to hear those stories. Yep. Versus before we ever they were just thrown into a bucket, you know, yep, this is just what it was. That's it. And there's more light being brought to situations to how are they treated behind bars? How are we bringing them back into society? There's so much that goes into it that, you know, when we talk about the prison system in general, so Oh, my gosh, yeah, yeah.

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MC McDonald 17:16

But then also how they get how they get into gang involvement in the first place. Like there's so much misinformation and stigma around folks who are getting involved, and almost no education and awareness about why that happens, you know,

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Michelle Glogovac 17:30

so why does it happen? I know, we've talked about it. So this is not an answer is gonna become surprising history. But you know, for those who are listening, you know, what, what does that look like?

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MC McDonald 17:39

I mean, I think there are so many, it, we couldn't probably go through all of the layers that contribute to why gangs exist and how people get involved. But I think that one thing that we can say that listeners can, can hopefully hold on to and digest is that people don't wake up in the morning and decide that they're going to become violent gang involved humans, like it's not a path that people choose, because they think it's a good path. Most often, it comes out of necessity, in one way or another. And that could be because the family that you're born into is gang involved. And so to continue to be in your home, and you know, have food and shelter and you know, something like love or what you think love is you have to become gang involved. Or it's because there is such a deep necessity in a socio economic reality, that this is a path that provides you with a sense of belonging and family that you wouldn't otherwise have. I think a lot of people are, you know, get into it, we as we make this assumption that if you get into it is because you're already violent and problematic, and like a sociopath. And that is not true. People get into it, because they need to in one way, one way or another. And we need to look at those systems that are in place that enable the person to get to that point of need, instead of shaming people who are just, you know, who are getting involved, you know, yeah, and I imagine what am I missing here,

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Michelle Glogovac 19:05

like, the trauma of getting out the, I mean, you might almost, and I don't know how this is gonna come off sounding but to be incarcerated might almost be your better bet. Because now you're kind of protected, per se, you know, obviously not, but now you're away for if you were trying to get out of it. I imagine it's very hard to get out of just saying, I'm done. I'm out, especially if you were raised in it, right to be incarcerated, and then hopefully find that path to get out. Because once you're out, you know, then what, especially if you're born into it and your whole family is and this is your way of life, it's how you do that.

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MC McDonald 19:44

It takes almost an unfathomable not almost it takes an unfathomable amount of courage to get out of the gang system. It takes an unfathomable amount of courage to get out of the incarceration system and to reintegrate into society that a society The that has deemed you forever a felon. Like, we don't have this conception society that if you've like we say this a lot like, Oh, you've done your time. And so therefore you get to be a citizen. Again, that is not what happens. You know, it's not easy to get a job. It's not easy to get a home, it's not easy to get your anything done none of it. Yeah. And so

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Michelle Glogovac 20:20

it's your credit, your life insurance. Yeah, there's so much your

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MC McDonald 20:24

license, your social security card, your clothes, your family, anything. And there aren't, there are some some amazing nonprofit organizations that are designed to support folks who are coming out of the prison system. But there aren't enough. We need like government wide social programs that are properly funded so that folks can get back on their feet. Because one of the things you know, we say, this is another place where we shame people, Pete, someone comes out of prison, they have a couple of months, working and trying to make it work. And then they go right back in. And we say like, Oh, see, there's a he was a bad person to begin with. He proved it. We should keep you know, incarcerated people for their whole lives. But we don't look at why this recidivism happens. Why does somebody go back in? And often I think it's because of what you said, like, it's, it's the devil that you know, right? So if you've been incarcerated from the age of like, you know, 18. And now you're 40. You've just tried to reintegrate into the world. And I don't think this process is necessarily conscious, of course, but you come back into society, and you realize there's nothing for you. And even though you're outside of the walls, you're not free. Right. And so it's like, well, you know, at least in there, I know what to expect, you know, and again, I don't think that happens consciously. But I think that that's, that's one of the reasons why I wanted to build that curriculum so that folks could understand and validate that what they were going through as they were trying to reintegrate into society was traumatic, what they had just been through was traumatic. What they were born into was traumatic. And if they can understand that, and kind of conceptualize it and move through it a little bit, instead of from this place of shame, and I'm nobody in, you know, that kind of stuff, there'll be much more hope for a successful integration.

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Michelle Glogovac 22:07

This brings me to the title of your book, because the trauma response is never wrong. How did you come up with that title? And what is the meaning behind it?

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MC McDonald 22:15

So that's a great question. The, you know, when we look a lot of the way that we think about trauma, and a lot of this stigma comes from shame and bad science. So before we had the technology to understand what the trauma response was, we were making guesses. And a lot of those guesses were wrong, right? We guessed in the field of psychology that it was weakness of will we guessed that it was the wandering uterus like we were really trying to figure it out and making some wild guesses out here. And then, with the advent, in particular of neuro imaging technology, we could understand that the stress response system is a system that we are born with, that helps enable us to survive. And the trauma response is when the stress response system is activated because of overwhelm or threat. And so it's actually biologically a sign of strength and the human will to survive, it is not a sign of weakness or dysfunction. And that little tidbit can help us reframe our entire conception of what trauma is to begin with. And when we can look at the definition without shame, I think that healing is 1000 times easier, because we're not saying oh, I'm weak, and now I gotta heal. But I'm weak. And I know that I'm broken, and I want to heal and I want to be better. But fundamentally, I'm broken. You know,

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Michelle Glogovac 23:31

I loved in the book, you describe your experience of needing to go out down on the floor? Yeah, to ground yourself. And there was actually a host who had asked if you would be willing to share any of your personal experiences, like well done, like, the book has it in it. So if she's willing to write about it, she's willing to talk about

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MC McDonald 23:51

100% Yes, anything that I've processed, that

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Michelle Glogovac 23:55

was the best example to me of you the the title of the book and your own experience of my body's telling me to do this.

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MC McDonald 24:04

Yes. So I was just to give a little bit of background for folks who hadn't read it. My, my father died really suddenly on Christmas day in 2005. So he had been sick for 10 days, and died really

out of the blue. And here goes on. Right. So I was, you know, expected to be back at work and went back to New York, where I was living at the time, and was was grieving and living at the same time as you do. And started really struggling with with panic attacks. And I would find myself in my apartment at the end of the day, lying on the floor, just because my perception was swimming in grief and panic and anxiety. And so I was lying on the floor and thought that this was proof that I had lost my mind. You know, like what adults wants to lie on the floor because it became this thing that I then wanted to do all the time. I wanted to do it in my office. I wanted to do it in the grad lounge. I wanted to do it on this St. Like it just was, it felt very grounding. And I sheepishly brought that into my therapist at the time, sort of as proof of like, okay, you know, I'm broken. And maybe it's time to like, institutionalize me, like, what do we need to do next. And I was convinced he was going to tell me that I was losing my mind. And this was nuts. And he was like, Oh, that's a great grounding exercise. It sounds like you know, your body knows what it needs. And I was like, what, and I'm like, just to give context to that I'm in a Ph. D. program, studying trauma, and don't know what a grounding exercise is. And I think we've come a long way since you know, 2009. And I think we need to still be really vigilant here and work so that people understand what grounding is. Because what I was doing without knowing it was giving my body the experience of safety. When you lie on the floor, you feel it's a kind of a mindful moment where you feel literally grounded, like, Yes, I don't know what's going on in my world, and everything feels out of control. But here, here is my body. And here is the ground. And feeling into that surface can make you feel stabilized in the face of so much overwhelm. And so you can't body was like, right, you can't fall. Exactly. You're here. You've landed. Yeah.

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Michelle Glogovac 26:14

And it's really beautiful. When when you think of it that way. And I, I can picture you, although no, I have a picture of you in New York street trying to lay down and that doesn't work. But

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MC McDonald 26:23

I didn't do that ever on the street. I just want to do Yeah, yeah, no, don't do that.

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Michelle Glogovac 26:30

But I love the book, I love the use examples that are real life examples, you know, not identifying anybody, but they're, they're true examples of what you've seen what you've gone through. They're beautiful. And they will make you tear up, as I've shared. And I appreciate your honesty, not just your honesty, and your candidness about what you've gone through. But the work that you're doing, because it's so needed, we need to talk more about this, it needs to not be shameful it needs to, you know, I think that if we talked more about trauma, and what we've all been through and shared our stories, that the world would probably be a better place, and there will be a lot more understanding. In general. Yep.

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MC McDonald 27:15

1,000%. And it's funny, because I had the idea for this book in 2018, a friend asked me, you know, what kind of legacy do you want to leave? If you could pick if you could change the world

in one way, what what would it be? And I said, I want to change the way we define and understand trauma. And that was the purpose of this book. And that was 2018. That was before the pandemic and all of the trauma, the global trauma that we've just lived through. And I believed even then that we really need to kind of all get to the same baseline understanding of what trauma is and how to talk about it. But now it's even more urgent. It always was. But now we can't pretend that it isn't anymore. I don't think we've begun to process what we've been through globally since 2020.

M Michelle Glogovac 27:57

No, and I in fact, I said yesterday to my husband, I go, it's like it never happened. Right now everyone is not creating never happened. We literally all sat at home for two years. And now nothing happened. It was poof, gone.

M MC McDonald 28:11

Two years. Like that's it's we haven't even

M Michelle Glogovac 28:15

begun. No. And our children. Oh, my gosh, yes. Is development and then our children. Yeah,

M MC McDonald 28:20

yep. Yep, totally. And I don't mean that as a damning thing, I think we, you know, part of my whole thing is to focus on the hope, because there is so much hope in the darkness. And there's so much hope in the healing process. That is scientifically true. And that's not even just my opinion. And so when we are brave enough to turn to the trauma and actually look at it, there's incredible opportunity for growth and expansion. It's it doesn't have to be this scary thing that we only do in therapists offices, and we're secretive about, you know, we have to get over that.

M Michelle Glogovac 28:53

How would you random question that just came to my mind, for our children that have just gone through this? How do we as adults, help them process this so that it doesn't become something in 20 years that they're taking to their therapists office? Because they didn't realize that it was traumatic? How can we help them now?

M MC McDonald 29:12

Great question, I think the first thing I want to chip away is this idea that if they are showing up in the therapists office 20 years from now that you've done something wrong, because that isn't the case. And it's it's probable in fact that this is so big, that they will be showing up to the therapists office in 20 years, and hopefully everyone will be in therapy in 20 years because it's

just a good process to go through. Looking into yourself and learning about yourself is just is expensive. But I think that the number one thing that parents can do is to provide I talk about this a lot in the book in chapter eight, to provide a relational home. So to make sure that whatever your kids are feeling, whether that's fear of other people, maybe that's a fear of crowds as we are moving back into, you know, some sense of normalcy and being around people again, if they were at those developmental ages where they didn't get that experience before that can be really scary and overwhelming. And so to validate and attuned to their emotional reality instead of to dismiss it, and to actually talk about it, right, what are you feeling? What do you think? Where does that show up in your body? And what do you feel like you might need to feel safe in this moment? Like those three questions, I think, are really critical to ask because what they're going through is overwhelm. Like, just definitively, even if you think they're not overwhelmed, the what they're going through is overwhelming. And so

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Michelle Glogovac 30:41

and that's outside of just COVID. To Yeah, we have school shootings, there's Yeah, yesterday, my seven year old came home and she said, Today we learned about tricky adults, like, what's a tricky adult, she goes, those who say, I'm going to take you home because your mommy's sick, and they're not supposed to. And I was like, What in the hell prompted this? Like, Stranger danger, we get it. But why are we suddenly talking about this? Now? A little concern, something going on that I don't know about? You know, in the area, but yeah, and luckily, they're at an age where we then had the discussion of, well, you know, who the adults are, that are allowed to pick you up? So there's no question there. And she went on to say, you know, we are supposed to kick them scream, spit on them and do all of these things. And I was like, what enough? Okay, you know, between that, and you have mass shootings, and now you're going through drills of that, and the trauma that just from the drills that no one's talking about at home, it because these kids are not coming home going, how are we safe at home? What happens if a bad guy comes here at home? Because if they're going to do it at school, they're gonna do it at home? Right? It's massive for these little people.

M

MC McDonald 31:52

Oh, yeah. Yeah, it's a lot. And it's, it's it's developmentally shaping their worldview. And we need to understand that it's shaping their worldview. There's no getting around that there's no kid that is not impacted. It's shaping their worldview. So knowing that and taking that, in, how can we give them the opposite experience? How can we understand how can we help them understand what it feels like when your body feels safe? There's this stuff in hopefully, this isn't too much of a tangent. But there's there were these research studies about adverse childhood experiences that started in the I think it was the 70s, it was Kaiser insurance, that that wanted to look at the way that adverse childhood experiences impacted your health long term. So they did this huge Longitudinal Study, which is a study where they use tons of people and they watch them over a huge period of time to look at how traumatic events essentially impacted your health. And it wasn't until 2018, or 2016, numbers are hard for me, that researchers thought to look at what positive childhood experiences might be, and how those might counter adverse childhood experiences. And no one really talks that much about the research, which is incredibly hopeful, and actually really instructive for what to how to help little folks cope when they have hard stuff going on. No one talks about that, because we like to talk about the negative and compare our traumas and say I have an adverse childhood experience score of

eight, what about you, you know, but there are things we can do positively that scaffold a child's development, even when they're going through really hard unspeakable things. And so focusing on that is also really helpful. And what can we do? Can you give a quick tip? Yes, the I'm trying to like, remember what the positive childhood experience list was. It was, I know that feeling a sense of belonging at school is really helpful. So having like a couple of friends being involved in extracurriculars was part of it like being on a team or playing in this sport, or having just any hobby that other people are joining you in on having at least one adult who cares about you? And like demonstrably shows that right, like so I love you, I'm concerned about you, that kind of stuff.

M

Michelle Glogovac 33:57

Oh, you're making me feel good

M

MC McDonald 33:58

so far? Right? Yeah, these things are not are not rocket science, that make a child feel like they have a home and a place in the world and that they are taken seriously. I think sometimes we there's this impulse to shelter kids from what is dark, because we want to protect them. And that comes from a very good place. But when the darkness is just out there, and that we know that they are seeing it, it's time to talk about it and bring it into the light. Here's what's going on. The I saw this thing last night about, you know, Pete Davidson is that actor and he lost his father in 911. And his mom didn't tell him for three days. So he has he was picked up usually from school by his dad. His mom shows up at 911 picks him up from school and Dad's gone. And his mom doesn't tell him anything for three days. And part of that like is I don't want to make her sound like a terrible person. And part of that was because they were still looking for people. They weren't really sure, but the way that he found out that as well. Other died was because he turned on the news. He hadn't been allowed to turn on the TV for those three days, he didn't know what had happened. And he turned on the TV and there was they were talking about his dad. Here's this list of firefighters and so I get the impulse behind trying to keep kids safe. And at the same time, sometimes we're doing damage when we do that.

M

Michelle Glogovac 35:21

Yeah. Wow. That just makes you so sad for him. Because you know, I have my son's now eight and get He is Mr. news junkie. I've shared this many times before on the show that, you know, he will wake up at six in the morning on a Saturday, and he comes up and he's like, so there was this fire that went on, and there was this sideshow. And then there was a cop that killed a black man, and I don't know why. And these conversations were okay. Now we're going to have them you know, I was hoping you wouldn't see the video but right. Thank you news. We shot it. Yeah. At six in the morning on a Saturday. So Oh, my God. Yeah. Their conversations you you just you have to have but at the same time, I'm glad that we're having them. Because now he's lightyears ahead of where a lot of adults even are today. Oh, for sure. In his belief system in his right or wrong, you know what he knows and what he's going to practice. So but Porky Davidson Oh, it makes me sad.

M

MC McDonald 36:16

I know. I know. I know. And again, like, you can see why his mom would do that. Number one, they were trying to figure things out what an overwhelming thing to go

M

Michelle Glogovac 36:22

through. Don't want to tell him that he's dead when he's not dead. And

M

MC McDonald 36:25

exactly. And he was like, in a camera hole. He was tiny. He was like in kindergarten, right? Like, so this is like a big, you know, they probably wanted to figure everything out before doing that. But also, like, kids are really intuitive. And they are picking up everything you know. So if you think your kid wasn't fazed by the pandemic, you're wrong. Yeah, exactly. And there's a there's a lot of hope in that. Because I think as you say, like this, these generations of kids have a real potential to be better than we were at talking about emotions, and contextualizing and processing trauma. And, you know, I don't mean to sugarcoat what has been going on, but I don't think it's all dark.

M

Michelle Glogovac 37:03

Yeah, I adore you, MC. Oh, same. You're share with everyone where they can find your book, find you work with you all of those things.

M

MC McDonald 37:12

Yes, you can find the book at fine book retailers anywhere you can find on Amazon, it's on the sounds through website as well. Indie bookstores, wherever you you find books, it's called unbroken, the trauma response is never wrong. There's also an audio book and a Kindle version. So you can get it in any way that you want, or all three. And you can find me on Instagram and tiktok@mc.ph D I also have a website, Alchemy coaching dot life. I'm not taking new clients at the moment, but I am going to be offering classes and things like that. So if you want to subscribe to my mailing list, you'll get all sorts of info about that as soon as as soon as I know what it is.

M

Michelle Glogovac 37:47

Thank you so much. I love talking to you. Oh,

M

MC McDonald 37:50

thank you. This has been so delightful. Thanks for having me. Oh, friends,

M

Michelle Glogovac 37:54

I just can't get enough of MC I could literally talk to her all day long about what she does and who she works with, and how we need to embrace this new definition of trauma and listen to the stories of others. Because as you heard me reference, you know, the the cheerleader example of how could that possibly affect your future life? And yet it can, and in a lot of cases it does. So I think it's really important that we listen and pay attention to the stories of others, and to sit back and think about how that part in their childhood, their teenagehood in their adulthood is affecting how they are today and tomorrow. And I think that if we start thinking more about that, our judgments will become less and less because we're being more empathetic and we're listening. And we're recognizing that we aren't in charge of the way our lives take twists and turns and what we experience and that the way that we handle them is the right way for each of us. So think about that. Give yourself grace, offer that grace to others this week, and please go out and buy unbroken the trauma response is never wrong.