

[Transcription]

Grief After Dark - Podcast
Season 1: Dark Waters
Episode 02: Uncharted Territory

[Gentle Piano background music]

Disclaimer

Micki: This podcast addresses death, difficult emotional content and contains profanity. Listen with-

D: Your own motherfucking discretion [laughs] get your kids ... This is Grief After Dark

Micki: I'm recording in 5, 4 [laughs] ... Hello D!

D: [laughs] Hello Micki!

Micki: And hello everyone

D: And welcome to Grief After Dark

Micki: Season 1, Dark Waters. Episode 2, Uncharted Territory. The embarking on a journey you don't want to take and no one can tell you the way through. Good times.

D: Let's check in, let's check in. Since last we spoke-

Micki: Yes

D: Since last we spoke we were both feeling some kind of way

Micki: Yeah today uhm..if i'm going to be honest with us both . I ate a handful of peanuts. For someone who loves food as much as I do. I am not great at feeding myself in the afternoons. So I had a handful of peanuts, that didn't get me very far, and then I made Ramen, and then I ate a candy. So I'm on a sodium and sugar mild freak out . I'm not sweating, but I'm feeling something akin to uhm the jitters? I feel kinda fucked up, SURELY this wine will help.

D: Surely [laughs]

Micki: I am the vision of health [laughs]

D: [laughs] Well, cheers to that shit. Cuz it's been that kind of day over here too. I woke up and I was doing my little self care and I took my vitamins on an empty stomach. Note to self* please stop fucking doing that* you know what I mean? And then I kind of just went through the same, a whole, it was a whole journey. I got hot, I got cold, I got excited, I got tired.. [laughs] I wanted to take a nap ... and then I was like mmm, what do I need? So I ended up having some ramen as a matter of fact [laughs] and now everything is better. I feel comforted, I took a shower and had some minutes to myself. For those of you who don't know, moments to myself are rare. And so, it's been quiet in the house today so that's nice

Micki: Lovely, is everyone gone?

D: No, everyone's around. I feel like maybe everybody got loved on today, and we're in a place where we can all be in separate rooms and be ok.

Micki: Perfect

D: At this moment i'm excited that we get to chat

Micki: Me too

D: Well now the dog's barking. Welcome, welcome dog to the farm and garden project.

Micki: Do you want to do your reading?

D: I would love to do my reading. This one is from the Mastery of Love by Don Miguel Ruiz. I have been opening this book to whatever page finds me maybe two or three times a week and this one found me this morning. It's about Healing the emotional body page 116. Chapter 11: Let's imagine again that we have a skin diseased with wounds that are infected. When we want to heal the skin we go to a doctor . The doctor is going to use a scalpel to open the wounds. The doctor is going to clean the wounds, apply medicine, keep the wounds clean until they heal and no longer hurt us. To heal the emotional body we are going to do the same thing we need to open the wounds and clean the wounds, use some medicine and keep the wounds clean until they heal. How are we going to open the wounds? We are going to use the truth as a scalpel to open the wounds. 2,000 years ago one of the greatest masters told us "and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free". The truth is like a scalpel because it is painful to our open wounds and uncovers all of the lies. The wounds in our emotional body are covered by the denial system. The system of lies we have created to protect those wounds. When we look at our wounds with eyes of truth we can finally heal those wounds. You begin by practicing the truth with yourself. When you are truthful with yourself you start to see everything as it is, not the way you want to see it. Let's use an example that is emotionally charged... LET'S NOT.

Micki: [Snickering] the end...

D: [clears throat] mmhmm [chuckles] ahh because it's about rape and I don't actually want us to go there. But I think we can start there, when you are truthful with yourself you start to see everything as it is, and not the way you want to see it.

Micki: The idea of truth as a scalpel to open festering wounds is quite visceral

D: It really is, the truth, it is.

Micki: Indeed

D: I know for myself that I did have an experience that [laughs] it's like I have to be honest with myself first and foremost otherwise this is not going to work

Micki: Absolutely. I'm still trying to figure that out. It's hard sometimes to know your truth. It's easy for the truth to get convoluted. Especially when it's hard to look at. It's easy to convince myself of lies.

D: Agreed [laughs] Liiiess, it's all lies

Micki: [sarcastically] All lies. My reading is from a piece of fiction that I just finished, it's called To the Bright Edge of the World by Eowen Ivy. It takes place in the late 1800's in the Alaskan Frontier that was still very wild. In the late 1800's it was WILD. It's a group of military men and some scientists and whatnot and this is from one of the guy's journals. Fiction, but historical fiction. They're about to head down to a river that they don't know and some rapids that they're unfamiliar with in a buckskin boat. And he says: Let me keep to that skin boat, let me ride the roar and swell, alive in the bow in the face of the sun, wind and fresh water spray. Carry me on and on to the edge of the earth with children's laughter like a wind full sail, then carry me beyond. Bent willow boughs and moose hide, wild ways bear me well. Deliver me, I am in your hold. Make me mine end and the measure of my days that I may never know how frail I am.

D: mmmm

Micki: Isn't that pretty? I'm gonna quote this book again in our little journey here cause-

D: Yes, I'm sure I'm gonna cycle through. I have a stack of books here and I am really kind of excited for where this journey has brought us because it's getting me to go through all of the

books that I can reread now with fresh eyes. There's some that I haven't read. There's some that were given to me that I hadn't read because they were just too much and too fresh at the time that I received them. That Don Miguel Ruiz resurfaced for me. I had read it before, but I didn't remember reading all of it so I know that it was in the throes of grief I was in at the time that I got it that I read it. I either embodied the things or they left me and are now returning when I need them the most, when I can hear them better. That truth part, whew hunty. That truth part.

Micki: Yup, that is a journey in and of itself. for sure. And I actually, interestingly enough. I looked online a little bit for quotes on uncharted territory and everything that I found was about like, pursuing uncharted territory, and the enjoyment of uncovering uncharted territory, being a pioneer. And, nothing I could find addressed the fear of finding yourself in a place completely unfamiliar. A landscape that you don't know. That shit's scary. I mean physically being lost, this is really not my forte, like if the wind blows right, I get anxiety., and so [D, laughs] As much as I love to travel and see new places and experience new things, the minute i'm in an airport that I have never been in before. I can feel my shit getting all [grunts and groans] already. And that's not even an emotionally charged situation.

D:I can't tell you just how similar we are. Because, I just do not like to be lost.I don't like to be lost, I don't like to be taken to places and they don't tell me where they are taking me, I don't like surprises, that's the other thing. Don't try to surprise me, because what's going to happen is that you're going to trigger my anxiety. Some surprises are benign but honestly I just need to know. So it's like a control issue or whatever, call it whatever you'd like [laughs] but that's what gets triggered in me as well. I don't like to be lost, I don't like to have to try to figure out where I am and also try to defend myself, and also have to defend somebody else for that matter. I have no escape plan, no planning involved. The thing that comforts me is that now I have so much trust in myself so i'm quicker on the rebound in those instances. I do a hell of a lot of research about the places that i am going if i'm going there. I want to know who the people are, I want to know if there's black people [laughs] i want to know what's happening

Micki:Yep. It's interesting that you brought up trust because that was one of the first things I thought of when you said you don't like being surprised. [D laughs] I don't trust that people know me well enough to surprise me with something that I'm going to like.

D:That. Right. There.

Micki: Tim can plan a surprise for me

D: Adam could probably plan a surprise for me, very sure he could. But anybody really outside of that, again, like, I live with him. He knows me. I trust HIM, and everybody else is in degrees of trust ... I mean ah mmm

Micki: I gotta tell ya, if people who I thought knew me, if they didn't constantly prove that they don't actually know me. I would probably feel better about the surprises

D:That part. And, then it's the people who really be thinking they know you and they don't know you. What they know is, their version that they have created of you, that's what they know.

Micki: Yeah, yes, that is complicated.

D: And folks really don't connect the dots a lot of the time and you know they don't really read the room [laughs]

Micki: My room looks like a circus so I don't blame people for not getting it. It's chaos in here this mind there's nothing but giant cats and sparkly faceted rocks and a stack of books that the titles keep changing. The same bad song on a loop. [laughs, sings a circus theme song] .

D: Woo [laughs] listen, that's the truth of the matter it's that we assume that we know people. I can't assume that I know everything about my children. I mean I know them pretty well and I know them enough to surprise them yes. But, when they become adults I won't know them that well in those ways.

Micki: This is another reason that you have to tread very gently with unsolicited advice and opinions when somebody is going through something.

D: Absolutely, absolutely. It's a case by case basis.

Micki: There is no road map, sorry.

D: Exactly. You know we're all those tour guides of what's going on... [cats mewling and dogs barking in the background] bark bark bark bark bark. I am so distracted [laughs]

Micki: we have the dogs and the cats now, we have mascots! We already talked about this.

D: Yes we did already talk about this

Micki: People, there are pets in the household, you might hear them once in a while.

D: Yes, there are pets. They're going through things. I really should have gone over my friend's house [laughs]. Alright, what was I saying?

Micki: Who can know? [chuckles]

D: Right, who can know? It was the case by case basis and it's always really really in our best interest to discover who we're helping and put a little effort behind the help that we want to give

Micki: Because the cookie cutter recipe of help, when you deliver it to someone, it sounds like bullshit

D: it really does, and you just never know. For myself, I get really overwhelmed when there's more than like three people offering to do the same thing

Micki: For example

D: for example, "I'll watch your kids" ... goodness knows I need this all the time, but at the same time I have to orchestrate when they're going to go, what time they're going, when they're going to be back, what's happening and where are they going and who's going to be there. It's a battery of questions before I can actually say yes. And then i'm like, it's easier if they just stay home at this point "can you come over her?" [laughs] so while that's a helpful offering, if there's too many or too much of something that I don't need ,like advice about why we're homeschooling.

Micki: Advice about pretty much anything

D: You know, discover who you're talking to. You know i'm not one of those flailing moms where I just became a mom, I don't need your help with raising the children. I need your help with maybe keeping the children entertained, so I can take a shower or so I can get my mind right, or so that they have adult supervision here for two or three hours or they can go away for a weekend. I need very specific things. I don't need " I would love to pick them up" , well when? And so , I have troubles with transitioning, so that really overwhelms me, so I need to know.

Because I do have plans with my kids, we're not that spontaneous, we are but we aren't, so we run into this thing a lot where people think "Oh you're home and you can just do things" that we aren't just making plans. Like we're just sitting around waiting for somebody to entertain us.

That's not what we're doing, we are doing so much. Even in our own home we're doing so much

Micki: And that gets into the complication of people helping to make you feel better, or to make themselves feel better? ==

D: mmhmm

Micki: That also becomes really obvious when someone offers help and it's not the help you need and then somehow it's your fault and they get to be offended

D: Absolutely, that happens to me so often, and I don't always know what help I need or when I need it. In the early days it was very overwhelming because I didn't know what I needed other than "I know I need to feed the children" like it was very basic survival things that I knew and those very same basic survival things were just things that I couldn't do every single day. So the people that I really did appreciate were the people who were very specific in their requests. The clearer we can be in our offers of help. A lot of the things we would run up against like "call me if you need something" ... I always need something or I don't know what I need so I am never going to call

Micki: Well I think that's just people who don't know what to offer, and just want you to know they're there. Which is fine but for me when I think back on the people that have helped me the most, they helped by just showing up, they checked in on me, they answered when I called, I answered when they called. I was thinking, it might've been last night, still reflecting on things that I have been trying to unpack and figure out. The problem that I have with unsolicited opinions is they're also almost always uninformed. Uninformed and unsolicited advice and opinions is a fucking horrible combination. It doesn't help me at all. And it kind of makes me feel like you're just talking to hear yourself talk, or you're offering something so that you can feel good not me. That's the reality of it. That's not necessarily the place that they mean to come from, but

D: Sometimes that just what it is though, we can call it what it is, we don't have to give everybody a pass "oh they mean well" ... well this is the age of fucking enlightenment people. A google search will tell you, you know what I mean? Are you that lazy or are you just that removed from your feelings that you can't possibly take two minutes to do some research or to ask a question

Micki: But if they already know, why would they ask?

D: They don't know anything about anything

Micki: No they don't, but they sure think they do.

D: That's what I'm saying and that's why it comes across as so condescending is because, do you even know what you're talking about right now? Are you in grown folks business? [both laughing] When I was kid, that was the question when I had an opinion about some stuff regardless, whether I was correct or not. Well intentioned or not. Are you in grown folks business, and what that meant was, whatever that other person was talking about or going through was not about me and it wasn't about how I would respond, it wasn't about my cousin's auntie who experienced the same thing and this is what she did 65 years ago. None of that has anything to do with the present moment.

Micki: Cuz there's no road map

D: Yeah so, it's real interesting to me now, the things that we are holding on to. The ways that we hold on to poor communication, and to the shame game or the denial or the blame because these things... listening to listen is really not that hard

Micki: Oh that really depends on who you ask...

D: It's really not, it's a really simple concept. The information we need to get, to solve the problem, is with the person we are trying to help. So we need to tune in to that part.

Micki: If current times don't prove how bad people are at listening and paying attention. I don't know what to say. To me it has never been more apparent. I'm watching now

D: It's never been more apparent that's the truth.

Micki: The coin has flipped but everybody is still saying the same things. Saying the same things about the new guy as they said four years ago about the old guy. It's the same people saying it. And i'm like am I taking crazy pills, or is this nonsensical? But, if nobody's listening to one another there's no conversation to be had.

D:and that's the circular bit of everything we are going through right now as a community, as individuals, as whatever we are in our lives. That circular conversation. I have started to practice by asking my kids "what do you need?" you might not have an answer right now but like are you hungry? Are you tired? Do you just want to hang out with me? Figure it out, what's going on, and in that way I have started to give myself a little bit more grace, like "what do you need from yourself right now?" Not from anybody else, because I can't trust anybody else to show up right now in the very particular ways that I need people to show up

Micki: I think that's a life long thing no matter where you are or what you're going through. There are things that you have to show up for yourself for because them's the breaks. There's roles that only you can play for yourself.

D: And since we're the ones who are going to be with ourselves 24/7 for the rest of the life, it behooves us to get to know that person. [laughs]

Micki: [giggles] It's not just hte word behoove, but when you put the lift on the hoove {imitating D} it be HOOVES us [laughing]. Yeah.

D: And we need to stop making that such a removed subject as well. Showing up for ourselves and knowing ourselves and knowing that we aren't alone and the way we can help others is by being truthful with ourselves. If we can't tell ourselves the truth, who else has anything coming ? [cat mewling in the background]

Micki: [laughing] Is that you cat?

D: She is going through things, she likes to talk

Micki:She might need your help [giggles]

D: She don't need no help

Micki:She heard you talking and she's "like let me tell you what I need"

D:YES [laughing]

Micki: "I need three scratches right here on this part of my butt"

D: actually I think she needs to be with Adam. Adam is her person and she really, you know they need to spend some time together and i'm going to let her in so she can do that. alright.

Micki: On my best days, when I am most compassionate I can look at humanity and say: everybody is their own version of lost. I can't always do that.I like to blame people.

D: [laughs]

Micki: I just do. I'm not saying it's my best fucking personality trait. But, as I learn to be a kinder, gentler person with myself. I learn to be a kinder, gentler person with everyone around me. When i am most compassionate with myself I can be more compassionate to the rest of the world and not be judgey and not just think the world is full of total morons. But, I also think it

behooves {imitates D, laughs] BEE HOOVES me and potentially everyone, when someone is hurting, just to be a lighthouse

D: YES and I have that

Micki: Just to try to be a beacon . I don't want to blow sunshine up your asshole, I don't want to make you feel better. I just want you to know that I am here to sit with you?

D: Exactly

Micki: And also i've got a lot of wine, so if you need a glass of something almost any color, I can make that happen for you

D: Hey. That is exactly why we're friends [laughs]. Ummm I have that quote by Brene Brown " In order to empathize with someone's experience, you must be willing to believe them as they see it and not how you imagine their experience to be" brought us right on in...

Micki: Thanks Brene

D: Thank Brene and that's I think in us being able to navigate and create our charts and create our things, we have to be able to say, this is an experience that I haven't had, I am going to differ to the expert on that and the person you are dealing with is the expert

Micki: Yeah, meeting people where they are instead of asking them to be where you're at

D: We need each other, we absolutely need each other in the places where we are because other bereaved families need to hear what i have to say about what we're going through and what they might be experiencing and even every one of those experiences are not the same.

The feelings that we brush up against we can absolutely identify with those. So while my experience might not be the same as the next bereaved mom, I know that there are a glacier of things that are not being addressed. So then I can just be there, be of support, I can be a life jacket, I can be the little buoy, I can be the little ding ding ding in the middle of the water. I mean there's so many places that we can put out our hands for somebody to grab them

Micki: You know the visual that I am getting and it's giving me chills because for me when I think of the part of the journey that's uncharted territory it's so lonely and so scary and I know that it kind of has to be that, but I keep getting this image of me in a boat and it's night and i'm adrift and i'm scared and I can't navigate and I don't know which way to go, and way off, I see a little light and it's another fucking boat and I know i'm not the only one out here. It's not even throwing me a life raft, it's just knowing i'm not the only fucking person on the ocean right now. There's community even just in that

D: Just in knowing you have somewhere to turn, and even that's kind of scary because a lot of times it's strangers. So we are carrying with us on our boat all the nonsense and fuckery that came with whatever we are going through. It could be compounded, boats of varying sizes, you know you're tagging along three or four other boats with you [laughs] you never know. It's always really interesting who the help comes from and that's another thing that I wanted to talk about was that it doesn't always look like you think it's going to look, or you expect it to look or how you hope it looks. We have depended so much on strangers in the last seven years. You know it's been incredible and we've been almost forced to. Like that's in and of itself , crazy and on top of that we've got the ways in which we're supposed to communicate. We catch heat for so much being so open on the internet these days. But, there are some people if they weren't open on the internet, I would have lost this battle a long time ago. My ship would have been sunk, It would have been " I give up, I can't do this, I don't want to do this"

Micki: Yeah you're not the first person that's told me that

D: Yeah, so we have to be real about what we ascribe our shame to as well. It's like some of my best friends now are women across this globe that we have never been in the same room with one another and very few of us have been in the same room together. And that's the kind of trust that's difficult for me. The stepping out on that limb and saying you know what, I am going to go meet my bereaved mom friend who has been here for me, in another country, that was a big deal. That's a big deal and that's what's happening right now, we are making connections stronger than family. The other side of that coin is that you will find somebody, and if you can be open to that kind of help then there's no stopping you, no stopping you.

Micki: Yeah openness and trust are definitely, because if it's not right in front of you, you also have to have some level of trust that it will come, like your books, it will come

D: Help will always come

Micki: what's incredible to me, talking about the unsolicited advice and opinions and tra la la. I feel like 99 percent of the time, even my close group. My little tight knit people... You and Josh and Tim will start to tell me about your experience, you have no idea what's going on with me, what I'm experiencing, Josh just did this to me. He tells me a story about his own experience and I'm like, I swear to God He spelled out exactly where my fuck up was [D laughs] and told me 100 percent what I needed to hear. I felt completely turned around in a good way after talking to him and it was on accident. You have literally saved my life on accident [laughs]

D: It was on accident and that's how it happens, that is exactly how it happens and there's so many unsung heroes in my story, it's that same thing. You know I get emotional about it but be open to accepting the help that you need. We always recognise the help we need and then we talk ourselves out of it for some reason because it's not appropriate or they think it's not appropriate, whatever the shame is we have around it. I know that I've done this many many times because I have been through similar circumstances with death, I know that sometimes my most valued ally is a stranger. It's risky and crazy, and it has panned out really well for me

Micki: It's magical

D: It's magical when it happens

Micki: Oh my gosh, the random customers, I've had walk in my store and say exactly what I needed to hear. I couldn't count them.

D: Absolutely, and sometimes it's just like that, it's like single serving, woo you told me what I needed to hear and then we're not actually going to make a whole connection and live a whole life together. I feel like that's relationship expectations with people when they are trying to accept help or and we've got so much that we are dealing with. You know, my trust issue is a real big thing that I have to constantly keep coming back to and constantly give attention to, and constantly make those really pointed choices when I'm letting my kids go spend the night at someone's house, and it doesn't matter who it is. You could be a safe person, it doesn't have anything to do with that, my anxiety is on fire right now.

Micki: Old habits, old habits die hard.

D: mmhmm

Micki: When I get triggered, the first thing that happens is I lose my trust. I get into that terrible self fulfilling prophecy of like "See, I can't trust anybody but myself. I can only rely on myself"

D: It's reinforced.

Micki: Yeah, I'm getting better at reining that in sooner like hearing that narrative and catching that earlier.

D: Right

Micki: It really depends on how big the trigger is wait I got something here, it gets bigger [laughs]

D: Yeah and it's really unpredictable and uncharted. I know what my triggers are, but I can't predict when the button is going to get pushed or when the trigger is gonna get pulled

Micki: Or who's going to do it

D: Who's going to do, who is going to step on my nerves today. I don't know, and I fall right into another habit that I have of being a hermit and I will not go outside for months. Covid has made that really easy for me. And that's a dangerous place to be

Micki: It can be, yeah

D: And I wish more people would listen to that because I'm ok not seeing people in person for the rest of my life. That's a fact.

Micki: [laughs]

D: That's not a guess, that's not a ... Whew, I will get through some loneliness you hear me.

Micki: mmhmm

D: I will get through some loneliness. I KNOW that I can get through loneliness.

Micki: Loneliness for me has never had any thing to do with whether or not I have people me

D: That's what I mean. Physical loneliness, I'm never really lonely like that, because there's always people here. But if I don't have to go anywhere outside of my house, hey, I'm good. And I have had what you're saying, even with a house full of people, or a room full of people or whatever. But again, I can fight through that

Micki: Yeah, I don't, uhm I'm not super familiar with the place where "you are lonely because you have been alone for a long time" I haven't had that and maybe I just haven't been alone long enough to have felt that

D: It's been a long time since I've actually been alone for a long period of time... there's no... these kids, the husband [laughing]

Micki: I don't really remember. I experience loneliness in rooms full of people that I don't want to be around, that's when I get lonely. If I'm by myself for a long time, and it's nothing but me and podcasts, and knitting and books and Netflix. I'm good for like an indefinite period of time. I cannot stomach being around groups of people that I can't relate to. That makes me feel really lonely

D: And that I have experienced and that's how I know

Micki: That's a big piece of grief

D: It is a big piece of grief and that's how I know and it's one that I have had to really fight through but here I'm on the other side of it and that's what I'm saying I know that I can get through that [dog barking in the background]

Micki:

D: I'm not going to beg for anyone to change. I don't need you to change for me, you need to do it for yourself if there's a change that needs to be made. Let me tell them to stop these dogs barking

Micki: [laughs] so I'm gonna segue

D: Alright cool

Micki: You talked about triggering

D: oh yeah

Micki: I guess WE, we talked about triggering [D laughs] and you very recently brought up to me survival kits

D: oh yes

Micki: And I want very very much to talk about survival kits because you can't get on a goddamn boat without emergency first aid [D laughs]

D: Yeah without your equipment,

Micki:the bandaids

D:Bring the bandaids yes, the surgery equipment, you need all of that

Micki: At best, you're going to get a splinter at worst you're going to rip half of your leg off with the anchor ([laughs] ... That would be me, kung fu master, fucking clumsy. I would love for you to talk a little bit about the survival kits and I kind of wanted to tell you what I had started in mine

D: Ooh yes, I would love to hear that too. SO survival kits are a thing that I came up with my grief coaching and it's Grief Girl's toolbox and this is to be done when you feel good, it's not to be done when you're in a shitty place mentally and the world is doom and gloom because that happens and I spent a lot of time like that so trust me when I say this work is work that I have actually done and it's not just me spouting some shit out of the side of my face. In my house I am really on the self-help/self care train. If you don't have tools to do that it's gonna be harder because you're learning and you're trying to figure out what works for you, and if you're in a shitty place mentally, physically or whatever, it's really difficult to get a read on your real connection to things

Micki:it's also hard to know what is going to make you feel better when you already feel bad and don't know how to make yourself feel better

D:Exactly, you don't know how to make yourself feel better. I will use kung fu as a reference, one of the things that was poignant that was pointed out to me when I started training, is that you can still forget all of your training when you get into some trouble and so while it's great if you have tools and you know how they work, you can still forget them and you can still have a bad day, you can still get your ass kicked

Micki: Absolutely

D: Even if you're a spectacular fighter

Micki: I am no spectacular fighter, but i have had on days with lots and lots of training and I still kinda got my ass handed to me by sometimes lesser fighters, you never know someone could just a nice little sucker punch in every once in a while

D:Right!? And that for me is what anxiety, depression and grief is... it's those sucker punches when you least expect it and they're hard as fuck and you get knocked the fuck out and you're like "oh, I know how to fight" so even the person who has all the tools can still lose the game

Micki: absolutely

D: but, anyway, back to the toolbox and that was one of the things that encouraged me or inspired me to create this little thing, because i was feeling lost, and I was feeling confused, and fucking devastated and I couldn't remember all the time what was helpful to me. So when people would ask me if they could help me WITHOUT giving me a lifeline like " hey I can come watch your kids on Thursday at 2 o'clock is that ok?" I was like dumb struck like a deer in headlights, I was always like " I don't fucking know what you do right now, I'm just barely trying to exist." and so it's tools that you already have or use to help you navigate your current circumstances and you should always do this when you feel good because you know what you

like to eat. One of the things for me is making sure there are things you know you will eat regardless of

Micki:I have that on my list

D:Make a meal plan for the days you don't feel your best, there's no stress and no guilt and no brainers are recommended. For myself, I know one of my comfort foods is ramen and Dr. Pepper and I have those available at my house, no matter what, it's not the ideal meal but it doesn't matter

Micki:it's better than not eating

D:it's better than not eating, and when you're in the throes of grief, we don't have time to be worried about whether we're vegan or listening to what's not the healthiest thing. What we're trying to do is survive. If at all, try to filter out anybody that's trying to tell you you need to eat healthier. Fuck that, because it doesn't matter. Keeping that kind of responsibility on people while they're grieving is a fucked up thing to do, my permission to not worry so much about what you're putting in your mouth, just put it in your mouth and eat it and keep your energy up. It's unrealistic to think everyday you're going to have the energy to cook a three course meal three times per day. Especially if you have little kids, have things that they can eat already ready, and have things you know that you can eat in five minutes or less. I'm a big fan of the five minute rule, if you can't take care of yourself in five minutes or less, beyond that things start to topple

Micki: yeah it gets overwhelming

D: have it available, know that it is available, train your brain while you're feeling good to know that you're gonna have those days and when you have those days, it doesn't matter what you put in your mouth, as long as you can eat something and as long as you can get some rest, as long as you can have some control over one thing. A lot of times it's about control, you are out of control. You just are so overwhelmed and you don't know what to do. The next thing in my toolbox is phone numbers of at least 2 people you know, you can depend on to talk to in depth about what you're experiencing or what your experience actually is

Micki:I put that too! I'm 2 for 2! woooo

D: For example, your therapist, or your grief group, your spouse depending on the situation uhm if you are parenting after loss, children are not ideal candidates for this list. So like, don't put your kids on this list. It's not fair to them and it's not fair to you. And for those without children, don't put people you have to explain your grief to. So for a long time micki you were on my list, like at the top of my list

Micki:oh am I not now?! [sadly]

D:Well you're always on my list, but it's more than two people now. They kind of act like anchors and if you need to put pictures of those people in your box, and your box can look like anything, it could be your purse, your wallet. whatever, whatever you have access to, at least two people

Micki: That you are willing to be vulnerable with?

D:You are absolutely willing to be 100 percent honest about your situation. You tell them beforehand, which is really easy to do now-a-days. I have some friends that I have a deal with. If I go missing for more than 7 days on the internet without saying anything, check in on me, make sure i'm ok. Because my social media accounts have acted as a place to help others, help myself it's something that I actively check, I'm always using, which most of us are, so that was one thing that was very easy for me to say. If I don't let people know that i'm going to be gone

and I just go missing, go ahead and check on me because you just never know. I know that it seems counterproductive to do that but it also ensures that somebody is paying attention to you
Micki: I don't think it sounds counterproductive at all. I actually think it's a great idea. I wish I could think of some red flags but i'll disappear from everything and be perfectly fine. I feel like I have to put my own flags up. But what great advice to tell people if there are serial things that you tend to do when you are going to a bad place.

D: That's one of those things, if I don't actively tell you hey i'm quitting the jade dragonfly and i'm shutting down adventures of grief girl and I don't show up on the internet daily or whatever, maybe go ahead and give me a ring

Micki: Yeah a little message to check in

D: A little text message will do, you know, see how i'm doing or whatever. It can be anything. I'm using social media as an example because that is one of the things people use the most right now and for those that don't, pick something, like if you don't show up to work somebody should check on you, if your kids start looking sideways, somebody should check on you if it's something you are always doing, something you habitually show up to. Definitely give them permission to check on you, and then you show up, answer the phone when they call, because it's accountability, whether it's just to say hey, i'm in a bad place right now and I don't want to talk about but thank you for checking on me. Even if it's just that, i've done this so many times, but usually when I reach out, people respond in like I never expect, with laughter or with joy and it kind of brings me back home to myself and to the world around and to the people that I care about. And the third thing is do you already have a coping mechanism in place? Do you take photos, journal, knit, a favorite tv show, do you meditate anything. Take time to investigate this if you don't know, if you do know, put one thing in there for you to do that doesn't require anybody else's help for you to do, and give yourself the space to just do it, without an end product in mind, without judgement, just without abandon. Something you know you can do that you don't require anybody else's help to do. And it's just for you. I keep it real simple. With the three things in a , of what to put in the survival kit or toolbox is. You can be super flexible and creative and go off of that. Those are just suggestions or a guideline. You don't have to follow that to the letter, but I definitely would put the phone numbers and the reminders and know that it can change over time. So mine has changed to a list of maybe ten people and I know that somebody will answer me and a lot of times I never even get past the third person, because somebody has already responded, or will text me even before I think about it and be like "hey girl. What's up", I know it's a person I can trust, I know it's a person that won't shit on me for having the feelings I'm feeling even as far down the road as I am. That's also important too, really investigate who you're going to have as your lifeline shall we say.

Micki:Well I was pretty on track. I am gonna come back next week with what I have in my kit I am adding to it here and there and I feel really good on how it's coming together and I want your feedback on it

D:mmhmm. Oh so fun so fun

Micki:So should we wrap it up with our rapid fire?

D:[sings] rapid fire

Micki:[overlapping singing] rapid fire, Who are you!?

D: We'll have to come up with a little jingle to put right there

Micki:[mocking] What, that wasn't good?[laughs]

D:awe it was great, but I mean, we can record it and just put it in

Micki:[laughs] ok, I'm asking questions this week, you're answering first, is that good?

D:That'll be great!

Micki: Ok! Have you ever been to a psychic?

D: Yes! [laughs]

Micki: Me too. Number 2 [both laughs] Have you only been to one?

D:I've actually been to a couple and a few have just approached me on the street when I went to New York and that was pretty fun. I am always very tickled because sometime they get it and other times they don't get it and I be looking at them sideways like girl, you better go, go on ahead [laughs]

Micki:[mocking] thanks, thanks for that shitty tarot card reading dude on venice beach. I have a friend Sylvia Beatrix I think is her handle on instagram. She does like spirit guide readings, so you sned her a picture of your eyeballs and she can tap into all of your guides, not all of your guides, she can communicate with at least some of your guides. I won a full reading with her, if anybody's into that kind of thing. This was unbelievable, this girl was legit and she is just one of the nicest people I have ever known

D:Wow, that's pretty cool

Micki: What is one thing you would not do for all the money in the world?

D:oh my gosh, not to be morbid but like I wouldn't kill one of my children. That's just a given, there's no way that that would be a thing, not for money, no no no...

Micki: Tim and I have this argument so many times I can't even count over the years . he's constantly like [imitating Tim] " well what if somebody gave you a million dollars?" " what if someone gave you ten million dollars?" turns out, money is not a big driving force for me

D:Right

Micki: I wouldn't manage a bar for-

D: a million dollars, no thank you

Micki:i'm not dissing bar managers, that's just not my jam. I'm not good at it and I wouldn't like it so I don't want to be paid for some bullshit that I don't want to do.... Do you horde anything?

D:Probably art supplies [laughs] , chickens

Micki:i've been meaning to actually talk to you about your chicken hoarding situation

D:Yeah, it is a chicken hoarding situation at this time

Micki:how many do you have now?

D:We have twenty four

Micki:oh shit that's a lot

D: That's a lot of chickens. We have the two roosters and 22 laying hens. The party is just off the chain over here

Micki:man, you know what I horde? I horde yarn

D:oooooh, mmm yeah

Micki: I do because there's yarn in there I don't want to even knit with

D:I feel you, i feel you on that

Micki:how long could you go without talking?

D:oh god, proolly, I don't know, before I lie [laughs], because there will be some form of talking because I can sign.So vocally, I could probably go a long time without talking. But without communicating, I don't think I could go very long.

Micki: I talk to myself [hesitantly] soo

D:[laughs]

Micki:If it's more than a few hours of me not talking, there's probably something wrong

D: [laughs] Also, I need to shut the fuck up sometimes. Just my own self, which is the truth, I'm being truthful with myself, maybe i'll do a shut the fuck up challenge... [laughs]

Micki: Count me in, i don't even know the answer to that. What's something weird you do before bedtime?

D:I don't think anything I do is really that weird

Micki: What's something you habitually do before bed time then?

D:Habitually, I have to watch Star Trek, Captain Picard, mostly its Captain Picard

Micki: [french accent] Jean-Luc

D:Jean-Luc, good ol' JL. I need for him to talk to me before I go to bed

Micki: I eat pot. [laughs] I usually read but the only thing I can think of before I go to bed that I habitually do is, I eat pot honey and I was going to ask you this as my fifth question anyway...but this is phrased differently and it's actually on the list . if you were captain of a ship Dionne, what would you call it?

D: [laughing]

Micki: This is the name your boat segment

D: [sings] name your boat segment. Uuuhmm i would name my ship The Bright Star

Micki [Soft gasps] Awe I love that

D: Yes

Micki: I named mine The Swimmer, because i'm not a very good swimmer

D:[laughs loudly]

Micki: because when it comes to sink or swim, i need my boat to fucking swim

D: Yes

Micki: Good game

D: Yes good game, good game

Micki: Good game

D: So we're on The Bright Star and The Swimmer

Micki: Yes, and I would highly encourage everyone on the journey is to name your boat

D: Yeah that could be part of your toolbox

Micki: I am not kidding, I am going to find a box and I'm going to paint The Swimmer on it and that's going to be my survival kit

D:Oh my gosh, that's such a wonderful idea, I don't know if you will allow me to add that to my guided journal that i'm creating

Micki: I wish you would

D: yayyyy

Micki:DO you want to dedicate this episode to anyone?

D:I actually do. I want to dedicate it to all those bereaved moms out there right now. I know that many of us are having a particularly rough go and i'm hoping that everybody can really find a moment to just be with themselves and be where they're at and not force any emotion one way or the other

Micki: Nice. I would dedicate it to the six people on my list. I haven't reached out and told all of them quite yet. I mean you know you're on it, but uh yeah i'm just so grateful that you've all kept me afloat for so long. I'm still in it.

D: Heyyy we are all in this together, we all, I feel like at different times we kind of reach out our hands and somebody's in there [laughs] flailing around in the water, in the dark, we put our hands out and somebody is there

Micki: mmhmm absolutely. Thanks D

D: Thank you. I will survive

Micki: I love you, thank you for listening

D: I love you!

Micki: Enter soundtrack