

[Transcription]

Grief After Dark- Podcast
Season 1: Dark Waters
BONUS 01: STFU Challenge

[Gentle Piano background music]

Disclaimer

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

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

Micki: Ok here we go, Hi D

D: [laughs]

Micki: Hey everyone! Thanks for coming

D: Hey everyone

Micki: Uhhh bonus episode number 1

D: uhh bonus episodes are supposed to be so fun alright

Micki: I'm ready to talk to you about this. I called this meeting today, because at the end of episode 2, you said you might have to take a shut the fuck challenge

D: I think I might have to do that

Micki: Which I'm still laughing at

D: [laughs]

Micki: But also legitimately has got me thinking

D: mmm

Micki: Like I have actually been thinking a lot about it. A couple things that came to mind. I want to tell you all the things and then I want to hear what you think about it.

D: Shoot

Micki: Are you ready?

D: I'm so ready

Micki: Ok and it's funny too because I specifically remember living in L.A. and my fucking world was so full of noise internal and external and I talked several times about finding a shut the fuck up retreat

D: [laughs]

Micki: Where can I go to take a vow of silence for like even a week, just to see what happens, if I can like settle the mental dust. The sort of not quite so obvious thing that came up for me is I was older than I would like to be when I came to the rude realisation that in conversation a lot of times my default would be to agree with the person I was talking to. And, I didn't do it so much with the people that I knew well or was comfortable with but like if it was someone I didn't know very well or if it was someone that I knew kind of well but was still intimidated by uhhh I agreed with shit that I didn't agree with and that feels really gross. And so, hey world if I agreed with you on some superficial subject, I might have been full of shit, I'm sorry. I'm more sorry to myself than anybody else because not honoring my truths

D: Exactly

Micki: And so now I find that my default is not necessarily to argue or disagree but just to be quiet. So when somebody says some shit that doesn't make any sense to me or that I disagree with. Unless it's something really strong, I just don't say anything and it's made for some really fun awkward pauses in a number of conversations of late. But, today I decided to take the official Dionne's shut the fuck up challenge. [laughs]

D: [laughs] Oh my god, we're going to actually have to create this thing right now and then there you go

Micki: Well here's what happened today. I decided from the hours of noon to 3pm. I was gonna be quiet and I didn't turn on music and I didn't put on podcasts, like I didn't have anything external coming in either, I tried to make everything as quiet as possible. Mostly trying to not make noise, no noise from me, shut the fuck up

D: [laughs] Shut the fuck up, yes

Micki: In three hours, I fucked up 11 times [giggles] Which basically breaks down to every fifteen minutes and some of them were legit like I took a couple business calls. I talked to a friend on the phone that was in the hospital. I talked to my cat. I actually burst into song two different times [laughs] which I am fine with. I stabbed myself with a piece of wire and screamed fuck which if you've watched The History of Swear Words, you know it actually can be helpful

D: Yes! Science, Mythbusters. They've done it, Mythbusters. From here on out I'm cussing. I don't give a fuck what folks think.

Micki: Fuck Yes.

D: I just don't. I'm trying to keep MY blood pressure low, I'm not trying to help you.

Micki: Exactly, the word motherfucker is in our intro, if it's gonna upset you, we let you know early

D: Hey. [laughs]

Micki: So here's what was interesting to me in this whole thing. I caught myself three different times in three hours kind of like whispering to myself, mumbling, kind of talking under my breath and all three times I was like, not, I wouldn't say I was telling off somebody but I was like setting them straight. Like I had thought about, it was three different things. I thought about three different things where I either disagreed with someone or they upset me or both and I was just accidentally filling precious fucking space in my mind and life and kind of telling people off. This is concerning to me

D: [laughs] But it was in your mind though right?

Micki: I was whispering it

D: Oh you were whispering, right okay but that's healthy. That's healthy.

Micki: Here's the thing, I think it can be really cathartic to talk shit out to the person who is not there. And probably a lot more productive if you're me and don't always have the best words to use when you're upset with somebody. But, I'm gonna do this again, because if it's a fucking regular thing for me to be like talking bullshit out, I need to, I really want to be aware of that, and this was a really interesting indicator that it's possible I'm spending too much time. [laughs] It was almost like meditating D.

D: [laughs] oh my god this is so good, so good.

Micki: Like you know you sit down to meditate, your brain is talking about the dumbest most inane shit

D: Yo, [clears throat]

Micki:and you have to sit long enough to let the chatter dust settle. I'm kinda hoping if I keep doing this challenge for just two or three hours. And I did no talking, no texts unless, you know, business.

D: Right, you know what's wild is that, of course people do this all the time, but like I used to have to go to these meetings right and like in this meeting, this one person would be like [imitating] "i'm gonna reserve my commentary and I'm not gonna say anything". And I used to fucking hate that shit and only because we were there because we needed their fucking commentary. So like there are times where that shit will bite you in the ass and that's one of those times so don't be that person. [laughs] When somebody actually needs your attention and you actually need to give an opinion, go ahead and give it, that's not against the rules. Which I have really no rules, but these kids will get me up in my feelings and I'll be feeling some kind of way and i'll be like "you know what, I think we're just all overstimulated" and what I mean by that is i'm fucking overstimulated and I need to take care of this. So first things first, let me stop blaming the kids for being overstimulated, they don't give a fuck they are enjoying their life, they like all the noise, they thrive in it for some reason, because you know it feels great and it's exciting I guess. But, I'm overstimulated, and that's new for me because I've never been the type of person to get easily overstimulated, you know I was in a band, I was doing musical theatre, I was dancing. You know, all the time some sort of external noise was around me and was a comfort. Like the noise of L.A. and the noise of the people there and it's so easy to even disappear in all of that noise. So that's what I miss about L.A. like I can disappear in all of that noise and there's not that kind of noise here. This city is very very quiet, anything will kind of catch my attention. And I live across the street from a elementary school and they have fire drills, and these kids ain't even at fucking school right now so like why are they still on this schedule of fire drills. And that shit gets my nerves, like is there an emergency, should I go over there and check, is somebody dead, you know all kinds of shit. And i'm like what the fuck is happening over here, so one day I called I was like uhh y'all need to turn this damn alarm off and they we're like "well what if there's a fire?" and I was like "There's NOBODY there!" like body is there and all them motherfuckers if they're in the vicinity, they can hear it...

Micki:I mean it's a residential neighborhood

D: Not only that, there's some old people and you know, you're getting folk's pressure up and stuff, how do you know there's not somebody over here with PTSD, me, hello, it gets to my nerves and the guy was like "well I don't know if we can turn it off" and I was like well, let me call the fire department and ask them to turn it off. Somebody needs to come fucking turn this shit off. The first time that happened, so it was like a schedule and that's when I had first started to have quiet in the house and we wouldn't watch tv and we wouldn't put on any music. We would just have the sounds of our house and there the shut the fuck up challenge was born because my own noise was going, the kids noise is going, the tv noise is going, the school is going, the cars. Even though I said the city is quiet, it is because it's not noisy like New York or L.A. if y'all are listening, y'all know what I'm talking about, you either love that or you hate that, and you get desensitized. And I think I've been thoroughly desensitized because I can only do it for a little while now, be in that kind of noise and be ok. So we'll go like straight up months without watching tv or like putting on any extra noise in the house, but like all the other noise is cool.

Micki: So is that like something that you schedule or do you just kind of

D: We just kind of fall into it. Once we fall into it, it kind of just works out. So usually somebody will get in trouble over here and that will trigger me being overwhelmed or over stimulated and over everything and they're asking ninety seven questions a day, questions that they can answer, when they just want to hang out with me. We are getting to that point where we can skip over the ninety seven questions and get to what do you actually want me to do? You want to hang out, give me a few minutes, I'm going to make that possible, but don't ask me ninety seven questions because I need to finish my thing.

Micki: Well yeah, I mean I told you this morning, I had more on my to do list than I thought I could accomplish and a big part of my self doubt in that is I know I work at home, it's a very secluded work environment

D: Mmmhmmm

Micki: But my phone is my absolute favorite distraction

D: mmmhmm

Micki: And I know a ton of people especially post covid who are super available pretty much all day long. So if I think of something with somebody whatever i'm doing work wise, unless i've got like a torch going or something, I grab my fucking phone. And I just start texting people right on the fly. If somebody calls I answer the phone, almost always, in the middle of the day if I am by myself. You know sometimes it feels obligatory and the rest of it is like I think sometimes subconsciously I really enjoy the distraction. But, what I would like to do really across the board in my life is be more focused in the moment in the thing that I'm doing. I think we talked about this before right, we could do five hundred fucking things at the same time

D: Yeha yeah, when I was younger that, shit, you couldn't tell me nothing, I could get done, so much stuff. And, I think that, right now, contributes to some of the anxiety or part of the anxiety that I have right now is that I'm not doing enough or whatever. I'm doing a lot, but I also know myself and I know that I'm capable of so much more and I really miss her. I'm trying to figure out how to wake her up but also tame her

Micki: Yeah, it's gotta be a balance right?

D: There has to be a balance there because when I needed to focus, I could just [snaps] focus and go, with 97 distractions and I could get whatever I needed to have done, and I could have list after list and complete tasks. It felt like I was a machine but I also wasn't in the position where I had to pay my mortgage, I wasn't where I had to split my attention and focus on a spouse, or to focus on children, or to focus on anything other than the shit I was doing. I think a lot of my frustration comes from that. I don't have the time to focus on the shit that I should be doing because I am constantly interrupted. And those constant interruptions for me are like my downfall because I will forget so fucking fast, and that's the grief brain or whatever. One minute it's there and the next minute it's not and

Micki: [whistles] there it goes

D: You know there's a distraction and like you have wrecked my whole ass train and my whole ass day in essence, and it's not necessarily "oh it's your fault!" because you don't know what's happening to me and I can barely explain it in terms that other people will really understand. And I know there's a ton of folks out there who know what I'm talking about

Micki: I think probably more often than not people are experiencing that. And sometimes the distractions are necessary. You know if I need to take a business call or you know whatever in the middle of the day, fine, i'll get back to what I'm doing. I think I am just trying to keep those a

little more at a minimum than what they're at. And, really I think just my surprise truly with the shut the fuck up challenge. Well two big shockers was one: I was actually craving noise, I was craving music or a podcast, or something to fill that quiet space. Two: really meditation like and calling awareness to what my brain is fucking doing in the background

D: mmmhmmm, yeah when it's quiet that's when I notice when I overreact to things, it's OVER reaction, it's not even a reasonable reaction. It's like [to self] "you are really fucking overreacting right now" and bring that shit down a notch or maybe ten notches. See so again I had something in my mind and now it's gone, [laughs] it just fucking walked away

Micki: Yeah so, we've been talking for about fifteen minutes and this is right around the moment where I would start talking to myself or burst into song or you know, pick up my phone to text somebody and be like shit no put it down, unbelievable. Maybe next time i'll start a timer

D: it's back now [laughs] one of the reasons that I turned off my cell phone, was because like you said it was the distraction for me as well. I love my phone and I used to do almost everything on my phone and I would run business from a phone basically [laughs]

Micki: Yeah

D: And I still kind of lean towards it, but my alerts aren't on. So like if I see your text, I have to be holding my phone, and if I answer right away, you know I was holding my phone [laughs]

Micki: Yeah

D: But, it's on silent, it doesn't ring, all calls go to voicemail because it will be doing it all the time and i'll be constantly with my face in it and so another way that I have stepped away from it is that, I love my online communities! I LOVE my online communities and it's where I have found a lot of peace and a lot of support and all of that stuff. So any group that i'm in or a group that i'm running, I only schedule things. So I schedule every post that goes out. Even on instagram, I get all situated if I am doing a series of things and I will do that once a day every day and that's it. I will send out that one post on instagram and it goes everywhere else. I don't even sign in to anything else. So by the time I see a message or a notification and like a week or two will have gone by and I'll see a message or a notification and I'll be like oh shoot people were actually trying to talk to me. So that's the flipside, but also i'm enjoying my life, i'm around here running a damn farm and raising kids and trying to make some art and trying to write some books

Micki: Exactly

D: Which, I have a new chapter!

Micki: mmmmm

D: [laughs]

Micki: Fabulous! Well yeah, I guess in summary I would like to say that that question led to more than I anticipated and so did your hilarious response

D: [laughs]

Micki: I'm gonna do this on a regular basis, I'm not kidding. I will report back

D: Yeah just slip into it. Don't even pressure yourself just like one day if you happen to wake up and you happen to start moving through your day with no music, don't turn on anything else

Micki: Sure and there's certainly days where I can hear my inner chatter and be like ooh this would be an excellent day to shut the all the fucking way up

D: Mmmhmmm... MMM HMM

Micki: [laughs]

D: Oh yes [laughs]

Micki: [laughs] Maybe more days than I even realize yet.

D:[laughs]

Micki: Time will tell, now that my awareness is on this so, so thanks!

D: Hey, you're welcome

Micki: Thanks everybody for listening to our ... just everything I guess [laughs]

D:[laughs] yeah everything, oh my gosh

Micki: Our crazy land over here

D:Oh I love it. I love it. This is so fun and i'm enjoying myself so, thank you!

Micki: Yeah, cheers

D: Cheers

Micki: love you

D:love you