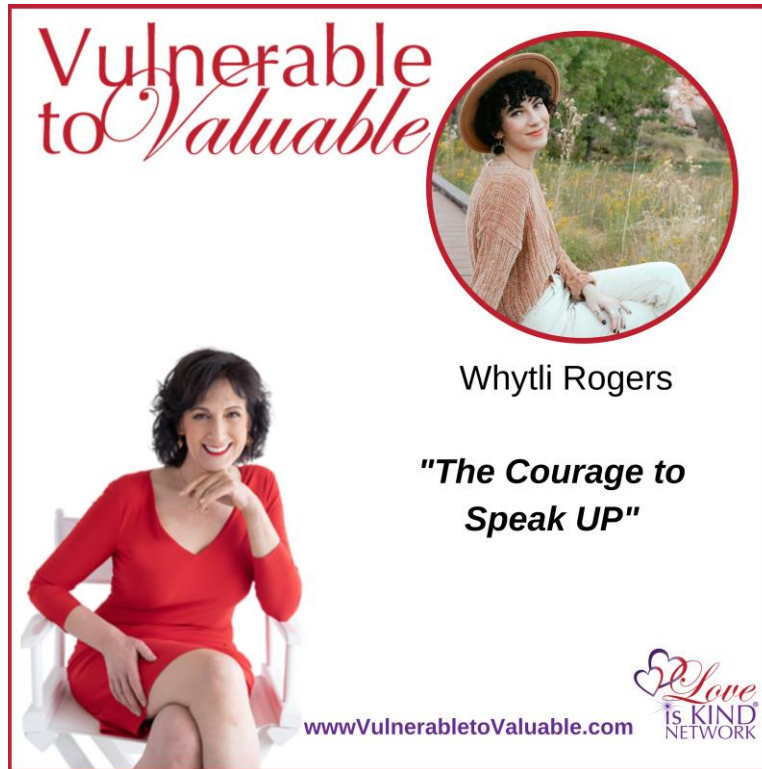


Ep #034: The Courage to Speak Up



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rosie Aiello

Ep #034: The Courage to Speak Up

This shy 15-year-old barely had her first kiss when the handsome charming popular guy at school wanted to date her. She thought she found the love of her life, just like her parents had at that age. But then things started to turn and twist.

Whytli Roger's behavior became erratic. She became confused and depressed. Then she made a dramatic and vulnerable move that launched her into an entire new world.

Hi, I'm Rosie Aiello and welcome to the Vulnerable to Valuable Podcast. We talk about moving forward after experiencing narcissistic, controlling, demeaning and abusive relationships. If you've been in one of those like me, you KNOW what I'm talking about. You are not alone. You've been through some painful stuff ... shame, blame, that inner bully inside you. My mission is to lift and inspire you ... give you the ways you can reclaim your voice and value, your confidence, and the courage to BE the new empowered you.

My youngest guest so far, Whytli Rogers is wise beyond her years. Her story is one of strength, empowerment and courage.

We're going to talk with Whytli Rogers in a moment, and first a mini masterclass ...

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Today I tap into Freedom Fulfillment Pillar #3 Values

Be sure to grab your copy of all 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars. Go to www.TheLoveisKindNetwork.com/podcast and subscribe.

My guest on today's episode had an experience with a narcissistic boyfriend at a very young age.

You'll soon hear how she got out of that stranglehold and moved forward in her life. It's quite astounding.

Her story illustrates that a narcissist is formed at a very young age.

Yet, the behaviors are similar whether they are young or not.

When narcissistic boys grow up, they become narcissistic men who continue to destroy lives in their path.

If you see the signs of a narcissistic young man, speak up. He may have a chance to turn his life around so that he can become a loving and kind man.

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Parents need to intercede when their child is under 18. Parents want to think the best of their kids. This is normal.

They don't want their child's life "ruined."

But I work with women whose lives have been affected by a narcissist. They live a life of hell sometimes for decades because of what happened to them. In the meantime, the narcissist continues to run wild and free without any awareness or care of what he has done to another human being.

People believe in and support the narcissist because he is in a notable, important or high position.

A high school football star, or an attorney, or a police officer. Their position alone presumes that they are better than, and so people assume they are without fault and so it must be the girl's or the woman's fault. This is a wrong belief to uphold, but this is what we face as women every single day.

That's why speaking up and knowing your truth is important and yes it takes a lot of courage. But what is the tradeoff?

The tradeoff is you living a lie about who you are.

It's about denying your authentic self.

It's about you believing that others are more important than you.

It's about you giving up on your dreams, as if they aren't valid.

It's about you believing that there is no way out.

It's about you giving up on YOUR life.

Your life matters.

You matter.

You are worthy.

You are lovable.

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I believe in you.

You begin to believe in yourself when you know what your values, you believe in those values that you have identified and chosen, and you own those values, a technique I teach my clients that instantly elevates themselves.

There's no reason for you to ever end up in a narcissistic relationship again.

I'm example of what's possible. If you don't know or remember, I engineered an international escape from the Middle East after a 25 year relationship.

I have created a life I could have never imagined, and I'm with the KIND love of my life. A love and kindness for which I'm so grateful.

I have this because of the work I did on myself for myself.

You can do this.

If you want to know how, then go to VulnerabletoValuable.com and click on the show notes for this episode.

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The only way to move forward and create an impact in your life is to know where you're at, where you want to go and what's holding you back. Get started by taking the Freedom Fulfillment quiz. In 4 short minutes, you'll discover where you are, where you want to be, and what you'll need to do. If you are serious about evolving into a new empowered you, who can show up as the confident woman she once was, or wants to be then start now. Your life is waiting for you.

Go to: FreedomFulfillmentQuiz.com

Today we're going to meet Whytli Rogers, a dynamic young woman who is Co-Founder of End The Stigma, a mental health foundation. She's a Certified Life Coach, and survivor of sexual and mental abuse. Her story shows how when you have the right support you can move from suicidal, depression and anxiety to creating a fulfilling, productive and purposeful life.

Whytli Rogers will be here in a moment and first ...

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Thank you for downloading the Vulnerable to Valuable Podcast produced by the Love is Kind Network. We're just starting out, Please subscribe. Every 5 star review on iTunes and every share will help our mission to impact 100 M women worldwide who have lost their voice, value and authenticity in narcissistic, controlling and abusive relationships. Will you help us achieve that goal?

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Now let's go from Vulnerable to Valuable with Whytli Rogers.

Rosie Aiello: Welcome, Whytli. I am so excited to hear your story and your journey.

Whytli Rogers: Yeah, thank you for having me. It's an honor to be here.

Rosie: So before we get started, I just want to let our listener know a little bit about you and how amazing you are at such a young age. So Whytli Rogers is a certified life coach, a mental health advocate, a survivor of sexual and mental abuse. She's a podcast host on In the Wake with Whytli and the co-founder of End the Stigma, a Mental Health Foundation. Wow, that is so wonderful that you have created that foundation to really talk about this thing. And I was telling you earlier, I was in a meeting today, trying to bring out this topic and the stigma of what is all around it. And the more we talk about it, you know that the better it is for everybody. And that's the purpose of this podcast as well. So why don't you tell us a little bit about how you got into being a mental health advocate?

Whytli: Sure. I was 15 when my abuser started pursuing me. I grew up in a very conservative religious community. And that's where I knew this boy from. And so I was a very innocent child. I was very shy, very quiet. And I had just barely gotten my first kiss that summer. So I didn't have much experience with intimate relationships at all. This was my very first relationship. And he was a year older than me. And I had known him for years prior because we had been going to the same church group. And he was a very charismatic popular guy. You know, everyone adored him. All the girls wanted to date him, and he chose me, started pursuing me. And that was so weird. I was like, "Why? You could have anyone? Why would you choose shy, little innocent 15-year-old Whytli?" And so he started love bombing me and filling me up.

Rosie: I mean, I know what love bombing is, but maybe for people who haven't, I've used it on the show before, but give us an example of what love bombing he did for you.

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Whytli: Yeah. So he would just do big grand gestures, show up to my house with flowers and gifts and take me on super cute, planned out dates. And I was a hopeless romantic. And that felt like he just adored me and wanted to provide the best relationship for me and experience. And he was giving me so much attention and so much love at the beginning. It was just like constant. And then it flipped. And he started like stonewalling or ignoring me or taking that affection and that attention away and breaking me down. He was building me up just to break me down again. I was 15 when he started pursuing me. And then on my 16th birthday, we went on our first date, we had our first kiss, and he asked me to be his girlfriend all in one day. And so it happened really fast. And it just, you know, was too good to be true, honestly.

Rosie: You weren't aware that it was too good to be true. You were. And then, you know, he came from-- you felt safe. This is a safe community. This is somebody you knew in church. So you already even, whether he was popular or not, it was already like, this should be safe. There's no reason for you to suspect. He wasn't like the bad boy at school or anything like that, right?

Whytli: No. You would assume that you have the same values and standards and you're coming from the same church community. And I thought this was it because my parents, they met at 16 and 17 and they're still together. They had their happily ever after. I was like, "This is my story, I found my guy at 16. And he is perfect." By the book, he seemed perfect, you know, he was religious and he was a straight-A student, super smart, a very talented piano player, and, you know, just like, checked all the boxes on paper. And it felt like an amazing first relationship the first few months, and then it just changed. Like, it flipped and I thought, "Who is this person that I'm dating? I don't recognize you. This isn't the person that I signed up for." And so it always felt like something I did. I provoked him to make him act out in this certain way. So if I just do better and be better, then I can get back to the guy that I had fallen in love with in the beginning.

And it's not abusive, 24/7 because, or it's not abusive on the first date, because then you most likely wouldn't stay. And it's like, a roller coaster of building me back up. And, you know, showering me with that love and attention, just to break me down and mentally abuse me and sexually abuse me. And then when I'm so broken, he needs to reel me back in and build me back up again. And it's just like this exhausting up and down cycle. And so once the sexual abuse started, my mental health deteriorated.

Rosie: You never told your parents any of this?

Whytli: No. I say that they're secondary survivors because he had them under his spell too. Like, he was manipulating them. And he controlled the narrative of what they saw in that relationship. And so, once my mental health deteriorated, and I was having panic attacks daily, and you know, couldn't get out of bed, missing lots of school because I was so depressed and wanted to end it all. Like, they thought he was my Savior. They were like, "Wow, he loves her so

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much that he's staying through all of this." And like, "He is able to calm her down or pull her out of that, you know, depressive episode." But in reality, like he is there, because he caused it, and he's provoking these anxiety attacks, and he's doing different things.

Rosie: But at the time it was happening, were you aware? I mean, I know you've done lots of work, so I can tell by the language you're using. But when you go back there, were you aware that he was causing it? Or you just knew that something felt wrong? Did you think "Oh, maybe he can save me too"? What were some of your thoughts as well?

Whytli: Yeah, I protected him at all costs. I was in therapy for, like, once it got really bad, my mental health, I started going to therapy and all that stuff. And I never talked about the sexual abuse. I never talked about our relationship in therapy, because I thought, you know, if I say something bad about him, my therapist is going to tell my parents and they will never let me see him again. And I was so isolated at that point that he was my only person. I no longer had any friends. I have very strained relationships with my family. And he's feeding me these narratives because of the mental-emotional abuse that like, he's the only one capable of loving me and he's the only one capable of being there for me after seeing my worst and staying.

So I'm trying to protect him, even though I know this relationship is exhausting and breaking me and I'm a shell of myself. I'm also holding on to "I love him and he's the only person that's capable of loving me." And there is like, religious trauma tied into all of the sexual abuse as well that I was like, "You know, no one is going to want me after this. I'm damaged goods. So I have to preserve this relationship."

Rosie: Yeah, this is so good to hear, your experience, and especially at such a young age. You know, I was telling you, most of the women I talked to are much older. And my experience was when I was in my early 30s, but I was married 18 years before I even knew I was in an abusive relationship.

This is what's interesting, is how you describe the person, this boy, is exactly-- I've spoken to women all over the world, it's like we were all with the same person, right? I mean, your experience and how he showed up is no different from my husband or all most of the women I've ever spoken to.

Whytli: It's like they all have a script.

Rosie: Definitely a script, right? And so I appreciate you being vulnerable, because it's Vulnerable to Valuable podcast, and sharing that really intimate story and your experience. And then also how it was with your parents and how this is so hard to, you know, even for yourself, your own mind, right? And then your parents are mature, but they don't see it.

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Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: And that makes it so much harder for the person who's going through it, where your mind is kind of going crazy, right? You're not really putting all the pieces together yet.

Whytli: No...

Rosie: ...that took a while before those pieces started to come together. So you're just thinking, "God, what's wrong with me?"

Whytli: Uh-hmm. Yeah.

Rosie: "What's wrong with me?"

Whytli: Everything always felt like my fault because he's, you know, again, feeding me those narratives that it is. So it's like, how is this happening? Like, even when the sexual abuse started, I was like, "What did I do to bring that upon myself? I didn't want that to happen." And I was just like, so confused. And I was like, "I don't understand how we got to there, from there to here." And there was always just this disconnect of my reality doesn't make sense. And, you know, my, all of a sudden, manifestation of severe anxiety and depression, it didn't make sense. It was, my parents were so confused because they're like, "Where did this come from all of a sudden?" Like, sure, I was predisposed to probably have anxiety, because it runs in my family. But this had never been like anything I experienced before. It was so severe, and they were just trying to keep me alive day by day. But they're also just like, confused, why this all of a sudden is happening.

And then once I cut in on my life, and like realized, you know, the timeline of things and how my mental health really lined up with the sexual abuse, and as it progressed, and got worse, like, everything made sense once I started learning what abuse looked like, and learning what sexual assault or sexual abuse entailed, and, you know, actually, educating myself around these subjects, around consent, around all of that, because I wasn't equipped with that going into this relationship. And so I had no idea that that was even a thing.

Rosie: So how did you make that leap? How did you find out? Did you finally start to talk to your therapist about it? Did she start to explain it to you? And then you did more research? How did you make that? Like I said, I was 18 years before I knew, and it was because I read a book. That's how I found out. How was it for you?

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Whytli: It's a little funny because he actually broke up with me. And people get really confused about that because I think he was-- he had played with me, he'd used my body, and then he was done with me. I was so broken that it wasn't fun for him anymore. And he was ready to move on. And he had already picked out his next girl. And I didn't find necessarily proof of cheating. But it was like two weeks after we broke up, we've been together two years, he has a new girl. And so, you know, he broke up with me. But he was still stringing me along that like, "We're still going to be best friends, nothing's going to change. I just need to work on myself to be able to go on this church mission so I can be pure. And you know, we're still going to get married, but like, I do want to date other people in the meantime." And like, I know, this was over. Like, what he was saying was total BS. And it was devastating.

And, you know, the 48 hours after he broke up with me, I had attempted suicide four times because it was like, I thought this was it. And I had no one after that, and it was devastating. But it was near the end of the 48 hours and I was, you know, still hysterical and crying and I was being physically restrained by my parents so that I wouldn't harm myself. And when I'm having a breakdown and I'm crying, I'm talking nonstop. Everything that's going through my brain is coming out. And so I'm just saying horrible things, "I'm never going to be loved again. I don't want to breathe anymore. You know, my life is over."

And I don't know what happened or how it happened. But something just clicked and flipped, and I was like, exhausted because this hadn't been working. And I was just miserable. And so I was like, "You know, we're going to try something new."

So I started doing the opposite and building myself back up. I was like, "You know what, I am loved and I can do this. I will be okay. And I'm a badass." And you know, building myself back up. And so then it was like, I decided, "You know what, I don't have to worry about a relationship anymore. I'm just going to focus on my relationship with myself because I despised who I was. And I needed to learn to love myself again." And I started prioritizing my mental health, you know, because before I was going to therapy, but it wasn't really doing much. That was one hour of my week. And I had this person still provoking all of this chaos in my life.

And so then I started showing up to therapy, wanting to make a change, wanting to use those coping skills outside of the session, and actually applying the different things in my life. And as soon as I started slowly making friends again, there was the first friend that I ever made. I started confiding in her in this relationship and just different things. And I think she handled it very well. I don't think it would have been very helpful for her to outright be like, "Whytli, that was abusive. You were raped." Like, I would have gotten defensive because I wasn't ready to accept it yet. And so instead, she shared her own experiences. And she shared what her mom had gone through and her mom's reaction, seeing her abuser years later, and how triggering it was, and all

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these different things. And it really resonated with me. I was like, "That's weird because I'm kind of having those reactions, seeing him and you know--"

Rosie: Triggers. You're having triggers.

Whytli: Yes. "Some of those things that you're sharing with me, resonate with me." And so then, that kind of sparked a light bulb, and I started reading books and listening to podcasts about, what is sexual abuse? What is rape? Because before I was like, it's just, you know, by a stranger in a dark alleyway, and, you know, date rape is a thing, and it can happen within relationships. And I read this book about, I think it's called, *Why Does He Do That Inside The Minds Of Angry Controlling Men* by Lundy Bancroft.

Rosie: I've read that.

Whytli: Yeah. And I swear, the whole book is like, highlighted and underlined and notes because it was just like, all the checkboxes were being met. And so then--

Rosie: It was a good validation for you. Right?

Whytli: Yes, where it was, like, giving me the language and the vocabulary to talk about what happened to me. And so then I started sharing these things that I was listening to, and reading with my parents. And I was like, I don't think I was in a healthy relationship. Like, I don't think that the sexual relationship was consensual ever, and, you know, sharing all of these things.

And I mean, it made sense for them too, because once I shared that with them, they were like, "We saw a night and day difference, you know, the you before you dated him, the you while he was in your life. And then once you cut him out of your life, it was like, we got our daughter back. And it was you're finding yourself again, and you're enjoying things in your life. And, you know, your anxiety and depression has like, largely lifted."

And so I think just being able to hear other people's stories was so validating and empowering and also educating myself of what does this actually mean? What does this look like? And does that fit for me? That made a huge difference in my healing and my understanding.

Rosie: Oh, thank you for sharing that because, again, outline the whole process of what you went through and how you started, it was like a little bit of self-discovery. And I think it was really fortuitous that your friend that you shared had a little bit of experience. So she knew some of the language. It could have been somebody else who said "What?" you know, or they may not even understand. "Oh, wow, was it good?" I mean, you don't know what somebody else's reaction.

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Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: But she was just the right person to give you just a little bit of “Yeah, that's not right” kind of thing. And then that sparked, you know, for you to start researching everything. So I do want to go a little bit more into your healing path. But I am curious too before we get there. So you finally told your parents that you were sexually abused, right, or sexually assaulted, right?

Whytli: Yeah.

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And we're back with Whytli Rogers, a Certified Life Coach, mental health advocate, and Co-Founder of End The Stigma, a mental health foundation.

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Rosie: Did you ever press charges against the young man?

Whytli: So, I was still religious at the time when I broke up with him. I've since distanced myself from that because of a lot of the religious trauma and not being supported and believed within that community by leaders. So I first told my dad, he was the first person that I ever said the words out loud. I had shared a podcast episode with him about rape myths, and he had followed me out to my car and we just sat in silence. And I think he knew it. And I knew it. And I said it for the first time. And his response was so validating, you know, to get that from a man where he was like, “I believe you, and I'll support you in whatever you need moving forward to heal.”

So, I first went to religious leaders, because that was where I was coming from the environment, because he was lying about everything that happened. And you know, he was the bishop's

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assistant, which is like the priest to the highest person in our community. And everyone thought that he was like this great guy, but he's like the wolf in sheep's clothing.

And so I wrote out my story, 18 pages. And I actually, I forgot to mention this, I became friends with two of his exes that were before me. They reached out to me. Once they started hearing the rumors that he was spreading about me at school, they were like, "Oh, it's time. This happened to her too."

Rosie: Right. "We know this routine." Yeah.

Whytli: Yeah. So they reached out to me. And again, it was like, word for word to a tee. What I experienced is what they experienced. And he was just like, fine-tuning his skills. Girlfriend after girlfriend. And so, you know, they also wrote their stories. So we wrote out our stories. I wrote it in 18 pages. And I first shared it with my parents. That was the first time they understood or knew to the full extent of like, what went on. And then I sent it to, or we all sent it. My parents wrote a letter too after reading mine, and then I have the other girlfriends.

Rosie: So the other girlfriends had not submitted anything. They just kept it to themselves, right?

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: Yeah. Shame.

Whytli: They were so young, because I was 15. So they were younger.

Rosie: They were even younger.

Whytli: When they were dating him. Yeah.

Rosie: When they were dating him. Oh, interesting, how that pressure of somebody good in the community. You can't rock the boat, you know, we're doing something wrong. Okay, go ahead.

Whytli: So we had all these letters and stories, and we compiled them and brought them to three leaders in our community. And we're like, "Look, this is not the guy you think he is. And this is what's been happening to all of us. Like, it's not just one girl. This is a pattern of behavior." And at first, we thought we were getting such good support that these leaders believed us and they were like, "Your guys' safety is most important to us." And then once they talked to him and talked to his parents, it was like something shifted, and they no longer believed us and they no longer supported us.

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And I was getting counseling from my own Bishop and he's actually a lawyer, which thinking back I'm like, this was really inappropriate and not okay, but he was advising me not to press charges. And he was like, "You know, that's not going to be very healing for you, because then you're just going to have to rehash out everything that you've been through. And it's just going to be, he said versus she said, and you're not going to get anywhere." And so I had these voices from influential people in my life, telling me "It's not worth it, don't do it. He doesn't deserve that. It's not going to be good for you."

Rosie: Interesting, right? Interesting how they-- the perception of other people and who they're protecting. This is why I think your story is so important because I've seen films and everything else certainly with young, that age group

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: And how damaging it is, how they go, football players or their stars, "We've got to protect them, you know, they got to win." And it doesn't matter if they-- it's like, you're not a human being. You don't matter. It's like, what is the message there? Who are we truly trying to protect? He deserves to be protected?"

Whytli: I had one person, when I ended up opening up on social media, they were like, "You shattered his life and his reputation." And I was like, "What about him shattering my life," like, "I have to carry this for the rest of my life. I'm going to have this trauma and triggers come up, like, how does that make sense that he just gets to walk free and continue living his life unaffected, while I have to pick up the pieces of the mess that he made?"

So yeah, we shared with the religious leaders, and then they flipped their support. And we're like, they kind of doubted our stories and went through all the different things of like, you know, were they just regretting having sex outside of marriage, and, you know, they're just saying these claims. And, you know, you could see that they had been manipulated by my abuser and his family once they talked to them and got, you know, their side of the story.

So then I decided, well, regardless of the religious stuff, I felt that it was my purpose to speak up about this. I felt I survived this relationship and I survived all of these suicide attempts for a reason. And I lived to tell the tale. And I'm going to speak up about this, because it could help other girls that are in my place, like, realize something that's happening to them or realize before they get into something like this. And I just want to spread awareness, and I want to share my story. And so I felt like this overwhelming amount of peace and clarity that that's what I was going to do.

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So I started, that's where my podcast was born, from that moment, and I shared a hashtag No Filter Story where I just kind of briefly shared what I have a part one with, like, my anxiety and depression. And then like a year later, I did a part two about my abusive relationship. And when I shared that and then announced that I would be starting a podcast to continue sharing my story and sharing other people's stories, I got a letter from my religious leaders that were very upset, very angry, saying, you know, "This is not Christ-like" you know, "We wouldn't air all of your sins and your baggage out in the open for other people. How dare you do that to him?" And like telling me, "This is not the way to heal, like, this isn't going to be healing for you." When I was like, "It does feel like the most healing thing for me." And just expressing their disapproval. And that was kind of a really disheartening moment where I was like, "I am not believed here, I am not supported here. And this isn't a safe or, you know, healthy environment for me to be in anymore." And then that's when I transitioned leaving the high-demand religion that I grew up in.

And then after I went public, I got a threatening letter from his family because his dad is a very prominent lawyer here, you know, his face is on buses and billboards and TV commercials. And so I got a threatening letter to sue me for defamation. And I got my own lawyer and responded back and basically-- I mean, the lawyer was amazing and didn't charge me anything. He was like, "I think your story is powerful. And what you're doing is powerful. And so you know, I'm going to just help you, however I can." and So he was able to send a letter back and basically lining it up for them like, is that a good idea? Like I can still press charges and I also have three-- I mean, two other girls with the same stories. So it's like three against one, and kind of lining all of that up. And then I never got anything back. I never heard anything. I never got sued by them. So I just continued sharing my story since then.

Rosie: Well, good for you. I'm really glad to hear that you're on that track. It takes a lot of courage to really speak up and to share that. So what was your journey for self-forgiveness and self-compassion? That's such a healing part of our journey. So what was yours? Maybe some of the steps that you can actually share that somebody else can actually do?

Whytli: Yeah, yeah. So I am a big advocate for therapy. I have gone to lots of therapy. I went to an EMDR therapist that specializes in trauma and went through those sessions to be able to process everything that happened, and you know, lessen the triggers or the amount of triggers that I have. And then I also see an individual therapist that has helped me work through the victim blame, the internalized victim-blaming. A lot of that stuff that I still see today.

But I think even educating myself on what abuse looks like, what abusers, what tactics they use, what their characteristics are like, and all that different stuff. And also hearing other people's stories is healing in itself for me, because I have to realize that what I know now, I did not know even like a speck of that when I was 15. And maybe if I did know, I wouldn't have gotten in that

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situation. Maybe I still would, because he's a predator and raging, narcissistic abuser. And he is really good at what he does.

And so like, realizing that I didn't know, this was my very first relationship, how could I know? I didn't have anything to compare it to. I didn't have a healthy relationship experience to compare it to. And I think he took advantage of that, that, you know, he's older, he has more experience, he's going to teach me the ropes. And, you know, if I voice some doubt that like, I don't think this dynamic is very healthy. He's like, you know, "No, if you loved me, you do this," or those different manipulative things. But just like, being able to understand what this looks like was very healing because it's validating and it's empowering

But then also hearing other people's stories, I realized, like, I don't blame them, I don't think it's their fault. And I think it is their abuser's fault. And so that's also true for me, it doesn't mean it's my fault, or I did specific things to bring this upon myself or attract this, like...

Rosie: That's right.

Whytli: ...I am not responsible for his actions. And it's not my fault for trusting someone and loving someone and, you know, wanting to be in a relationship with someone. He just took advantage of those things. But that wasn't me. That wasn't negative things. Like I should be able to trust people, I should be able to give love to people and not have that used against me or taken advantage of and different things like that.

Rosie: Yeah, that's really good because when we go into these relationships, we're not expecting that. Of course, you know, you want to be loved. It's normal to have a human connection. And I like your attitude too, which is hard for a lot of women to get there. You're not blaming yourself, not judging yourself like, "I should be able to go into a relationship and expect it to be nice." And then moving forward with that. That's the basis of a good, healthy relationship. You go in trusting, you go in loving, you go in with open arms, and to continue on that open path to create the love between two people.

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: I'm curious, how do you set your boundaries or like, what kind of boundaries do you have? like now you know, if somebody does this, whatever this is, I will do this. Do you have any of those that you can share?

Whytli: Yeah, I think boundaries can be big and scary for a lot of people. But I think it is giving someone a guidebook on how to treat you and how to show up in that relationship, instead of leaving them guessing on what's good or bad or what do they want from me, what don't they

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want. Being able to communicate those boundaries is the best gift you could give to yourself, but also for that person that wants to be in a relationship with you.

Rosie: What are some of the ones that you have now that you've learned through this experience?

Whytli: So I would say, believe patterns and believe actions over words. And so if someone crosses a boundary or does something that's maybe triggering for me, or upsets me, and I've communicated that and let them know, like, "Hey, that wasn't okay for me," or "I was very unsettled after that happened, I couldn't stop thinking about it," or "I shut down." You know, communicating what happened. And if that just continues happening, that they still are crossing that boundary or doing that thing that like, hmm, are they actually wanting to honor those boundaries? Are they wanting to make me feel safe? Are they wanting to make me feel respected and loved? Because I'm trying to express to them like, this is how I feel supported. This is how I feel respected. This is how I feel loved. And if they are continuously missing that mark, then like, are they genuinely wanting to love me or to support me or to respect me.

I think impact over intention is big, because we can have good intentions, or we can think "I'm a good person, I respect them so much, I support you no matter what." But if you're doing that in what you think is supportive, or what you think is respectful, but there's that disconnect of like, that doesn't make me feel loved, that doesn't make me feel respected, and I need you to show up in this way instead. I think if someone genuinely wants to be there for you and wants to have that relationship, then they will respond to those boundaries in a way that makes you feel heard and makes you feel like they are showing up, wanting to actually make a change or show up differently the next time. But if they're just, you know, bulldozing right over that, over and over again, then that's definitely a red flag for me that I'm like, "What are their intentions actually?"

Rosie: Yeah, what are their intentions, actually? And then, so what's the step of mine I'm going to take. You know, firstly, tell them and then if they still do it, okay, maybe this is just not the right relationship for me. Right.?

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: It's really easy to, you know, slip into what I call people-pleasing, which I'm sure you're familiar with, right?

Whytli: Yes.

Rosie: Right? So, you know, go into people-pleasing. Well, I'll just give him one more chance. The women I coach, it's like, it only takes one. One time. And I think that's the problem with

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women, you know, because they're not feeling secure in themselves and their own value, so they still keep discounting their value. I mean, even at my age, okay?

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: So this happens on the whole spectrum. Women just kind of like, you know, dimming them and dumbing themselves down. Just like, well, making excuses. So for me, if you have to make an excuse for their behavior, that is a huge red flag.

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: Because that's what-- you talked about your story, right? You know, you're protecting him, you're making excuses. It's just, that's what we do. Right? That's what the women do. We make excuses because, well, they're not bad all the time.

Whytli: Yeah,

Rosie: But we have to be aware of that. This has been really good. I so appreciate you sharing your stories and what you've gone through and how you are showing up. So just before we end, share a little bit about the End the Stigma Mental Foundation.

Whytli: It's called End the Stigma and it's a mental health foundation that I'm a co-founder of. My mom is actually a founder of a sister foundation called the Emily Effect. That's a Mental Health Foundation for moms with like postpartum anxiety or depression. And then they branched off and created End the Stigma for teens mental health or youth, and their mental health.

And once I started prioritizing my mental health and showing up to therapy, actually being an active role and active participant, I kind of took over End the Stigma, because they were like, "We want teens or young people to lead this because it will probably be heard better. If adults are talking to teens, they're like, "Yeah, whatever." But if their peers are talking to them about these things or opening up online about their own mental health, then it's probably going to be received a lot better. Because then it's, you know, it's cool to talk about your mental health or go to therapy. Or you know, those different things.

And so, I started leading End the Stigma and I started four support groups here in Las Vegas with my own therapist. There are three for teens that are going through different struggles, mental health, mental illness struggles. And then the fourth support group is for parents with kids that are struggling with these things.

Rosie: That's beautiful. Do you have a website for that?

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Whytli: Yeah. [EndtheStigma.org](https://www.EndtheStigma.org), and the same social media handles.

Rosie: So we'll put that in the show notes, too, so people can look for it. And, you know, there might be parents who are listening to this and they can go for their children, because the more we can get this information out, the better.

So, I want to end our conversation here by asking you, what does Love Is Kind mean to you, Whytli?

Whytli: Hmm, I love that. So I think, you can love someone unconditionally, and just, you know, have an outpouring of love for them and respect. But the relationship is conditional, because you have those boundaries, and you have those standards and how you're going to be treated. And that there are certain things that are, you need that or it's a game-changer, you're not going to be in a relationship with them if they're not able to meet these needs. And so, I think, thinking that love and relationships are equal, being unconditional. It's just a slippery slope, because then again, you're going to get into those relationships where you make the excuses and you make all the justifications or you let your boundaries down, because you just love them unconditionally, and they love you unconditionally, when in reality that isn't necessarily a healthy dynamic.

Rosie: Yeah, and I think that was great. I love that because it's not healthy, right? You always check in, is this relationship healthy?

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: You know, you have to be kind to yourself first, right?

Whytli: Yeah.

Rosie: Well, thank you so much for your time, Whytli. This was fabulous. You're going to have a great future. You're going to help so many more people in your life. They're going to be blessed to be working with you. So thank you for your time.

Whytli: Yeah, thank you for allowing me the space to share my story. I appreciate it.

Rosie: Absolutely

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