

Episode 3: Shit We Don't Talk About

Topic: Suicide & Those Left Behind

Guest: Jessica Sherrick-Sidener

Unknown Speaker 0:36

Hey, welcome to Episode Three of the shit we don't talk about podcast. Today's topic is definitely something that we don't talk about suicide and the journey of those left behind. Our guest is Jessica sidener. You heard her in Episode Two as she described her experience as a breast cancer survivor. And now breast health champion. Jessica shares with us how she lost her beloved husband Tyler to suicide. Just a few months

Unknown Speaker 1:00

Before learning her cancer diagnosis, so talk to us about her experience prior to and after her husband's death, and how she continues to honor his memory as she moves forward. It's an open and honest conversation you don't want to miss.

Unknown Speaker 1:14

Hi, girlfriend. Hello, welcome back. It's so good to be back. Yes. So, yeah, she's the woman. So if you tuned into Episode Two, you heard the voice and saw the face if you're watching it on YouTube, of Jessica cider. So in our first episode, we talked about boobs.

Unknown Speaker 1:34

Let's talk about boobs. We're talking about boobs. I do too. I didn't even realize it until that show. We talked about breast health. We talked about early detection. And that was super fun. So go back and listen to that episode as well. However, today we're talking about a different topic of topics. So honey, thank you for joining us. And as we referenced in Episode Two, Jessica mentioned that her beloved has been Tyler. She thought for sure he was going to

Unknown Speaker 2:00

Find the lump, right when you discovered your breast cancer. That's how it was working out in my head. That was the plan I had in my head. And I'll tell you, I think this is a great example of how just plans don't work out right and, and it's usually tied to shit we don't talk about.

Unknown Speaker 2:15

That's really what happens. But yeah, if you in my breast cancer journey, Tyler was a part of it in the sense that I always thought that if there was ever anything wrong with my girls with my breast, if there was a lump if there was something that didn't feel right, clearly, he would have found it because that's what he was doing when he was up in my business, right is checking, checking the brass doing a bread early.

Unknown Speaker 2:41

I'm rolling my eyes. For those of you who aren't actually seeing the video, you're just listening to the audio like, Big Eye roll because that's not what he was doing. And to make matters worse, I never even communicated that. That sort of expectation that he you know, let me know if anything doesn't seem right with the girls and

Unknown Speaker 3:00

Tell me if there is a lump and I had basically given given all of my power to him right the power that I should have the the courage, I should have the knowledge I should have with my own body and

taking care of myself, I pass that on to him. Again, not thinking critically about it at the time, but that's a big darn deal when we do this. It really is. But what ended up happening and kind of what we're gonna be talking a lot about today is Tyler committed suicide. So, at the age of 36, I became a widow and kind of connecting the dots with the breast cancer. It was six months later that I was diagnosed with breast cancer. And I had decided to do a press self exam because remember, I depended on Tyler to do that. He was no longer with me. He had passed away so I thought, well, I guess I need to be taking charge a lot of things, but especially my health insurance

Unknown Speaker 4:00

I did my own breast self exam, didn't know what I was doing and found a lump. And that's included on the last episode. But Tyler played a big role in the breast cancer diagnosis and in a unique way, but he did. That's amazing, sweetie, I know. It's when we first talked about looping these two episodes together. Yes, boobs in suicide don't seem like a natural progression. But it's been so important in your journey and in our journey of friendship, of learning more about that, and again, that is definitely something one, the idea of being a widow at that age, and then how it came about and then not knowing the pain that he was in, and then your journey sort of backwards. So can you just jump into it and talk about Tyler? Wow. You know, it's interesting, just kind of reflecting and preparation for our chat today. You know, it's interesting how you I think about Tyler every day, of course, but

Unknown Speaker 5:00

You get into a coping mechanism that you don't you don't go there, you know to what happened. So it was just really interesting grief is such a fascinating thing it's been about for years and again preparing to, to talk with you and share and share a little bit I love. I love talking about boobs. But I also love talking about my late husband Tyler, and I love talking about suicide. And I know that may sound strange, but I believe that

Unknown Speaker 5:26

we need to be talking about it. We need to be talking about it. We need to be bringing it to the light because people are suffering and they're suffering by themselves. So, so grateful even even more so another topic shit we don't talk about is definitely suicide. To answer your question about Tyler Tyler was, gosh, he was such an amazing, amazing man. He was so incredibly smart. He had such wisdom he had such a giving heart The man just love to to pour into others to serve others.

Unknown Speaker 6:00

He was intelligent. He was funny. He was the life of the party. He was drop dead gorgeous. I mean, it's true. He was I mean, he was an amazing man. We were an amazing couple. You know, I would say we were a normal couple, that we had challenges and obstacles, but we had a great, really rich, caring relationship and he again, on the surface was the life of the party. And you know, I look back at that time and hindsight is always 2020 and I think you know, Tyler, although he was the life of the party was also an introvert and you may not all be able to tell but I am like a huge extrovert. I love people. I love talking to people and spending time with people he was an introvert but seem to like being around people. But you know, the last couple of years of our of our marriage, which which was about seven years, and I didn't notice

Unknown Speaker 7:00

That he was in isolation more, you know, he was in his office reading, doing meditations doing quiet time. Or he was, he was just he was in the basement, you know, maybe playing video games or just or writing. He was writing a book. So he just did a lot of things by himself. And at that point, I attribute it to him being an introvert and I being an extrovert, and you know what I think opposites attract. And I didn't think much of it. I do know that he struggled occasionally with depression. And you know why so many people do so many people do many people listening to this hack. I struggle with it

sometimes. I mean, right, that it didn't seem out of the norm, though, right. It didn't seem it didn't seem like it would result in what it did.

Unknown Speaker 7:51

So I would say let's see, gosh, it was May 2016. And there were just some more

Unknown Speaker 7:59

people

Unknown Speaker 8:00

I would consider episodes a tie that was a pretty even keeled guy. But, you know, if you ever you have a situation surface and then a response doesn't really level out or match up with the situation, that's what was happening, like a situation happened. And his response was like, Whoa, like alert, alert off the chart. DEF CON five. Yeah. And it was one or whatever the DEF CON is it's really off the charts. Yes. It was scary. It was scary. I mean, it wasn't by no means abusive, or anything, but it was scary. I'd never seen Tyler in that state. And, you know, talking about isolation, he was dealing with mental illness and isolation. And I quickly even in those interactions went into isolation. Like, I can't tell anybody about this. Nobody. Nobody's going to understand what's going on. They're going to be so angry at him for lashing out at me and I didn't want anybody to be angry with him because I knew

Unknown Speaker 9:00

knew something wasn't quite right. But I couldn't pinpoint it. And this was all actually about Memorial Day weekend of 2016. And we had, when he calmed down a little bit, we had some great conversation and really graceful conversation, which, you know, he was so apologetic, and I loved him, and I love them unconditionally. And I look back at that I'm so grateful because Little did I know two weeks later, he would take his own life. So I, I one thing I always like to the gift of what I went through with suicide, one of many, his perspective is truly perspective and knowing, you know, people are doing the best that they can and if you can give grace

Unknown Speaker 9:51

because you don't know what's going to happen Two weeks later, and I'm grateful that I still get upset over stupid things right because I'm human.

Unknown Speaker 10:00

But when I really allow myself to go back to that period, and think about, gosh, life's too short, you know, so and so's driving or so and so's characteristics that kind of irritate the crap out of me, like, let it go. Because you know what, I'm here. I'm healthy life short. So one gift of suicide is just an appreciation and of life in perspective of what really matters.

Unknown Speaker 10:24

So back to that story. Yeah, he, we had talked and agreed that it was time for him. We had always gone to counseling, we'd love counseling. We thought counseling was great. So it was kind of odd that this all happened and right, that was your thing. One of your saying, we love counseling, and he agreed to make an appointment with a primary care physician and follow up on what was going on, which was great. And

Unknown Speaker 10:50

I believe he saw that primary care physician and just really never gave any indication to the extent of his pain and his torment.

Unknown Speaker 11:00

And two weeks later on June, June 15, specifically, I had dinner plans with girlfriends. If some of you live in Denver, I was going to watch Park grill. I was really excited. I was trying to get ahold of Tyler to remind him that I had dinner plans and let them know that I was going to be home a little later. And I texted and I called called a cell called his office texted and texted again. And it had been about an hour and a half, and I had not heard anything from him. And that was that was rare. That was weird. And the reality was, I never did. I never did hear anything from him again. He was missing for 24 hours before we realized that he had taken his life. And

Unknown Speaker 11:47

it was an out of body experience. It's out of body still talking about it. And there were during that that those 24 hours. There were so

Unknown Speaker 12:00

Many people in my life friends and family who I can words can never express how amazing they were and still are to this day because four years later, it's still really, really tough. But never in my wildest dreams, but I've ever thought at the age of 36, I would be staring out the picture window of my house, waiting for my husband to come home.

Unknown Speaker 12:28

That just looking out the window, something out of a movie and something to think about to when you said that the people that are involved to that incredulous feeling that it must have been in just the normalcy of it to have liquidity and making phone calls and trying to get in touch and then as you start to realize something's super, super off and then the feeling for the other folks that were with you going through that? Oh my gosh, it's trauma trauma across the board. Although my heart believes of Tyler's heart was doing the best.

Unknown Speaker 13:00

thing he truly thought that he was doing the best thing. And I it wasn't his intent to be missing for 24 hours. It just took us that long to find his suicide note. Did it on? Oh gosh, that's crazy. Yeah. And that's talk about things we don't talk about as well. Like there's just this moniker or this title of suicide. But the details to what for folks that are on the outside, they're not sure if they can ask right then they also don't know the right way to ask that's and we've I've seen it in so many different things where grief just manifests and presents itself in different ways trauma as well. We both know it from from being survivors of that. Absolutely, absolutely. It is. It is so tricky. Um, you know, I not everybody who has Well first of all, thank you for letting me talk about Tyler because I love I one of my most favorite things and this would be something I would say to your listeners or viewers. You know if somebody in your world has lost a loved one

Unknown Speaker 14:00

No matter how,

Unknown Speaker 14:02

asked that person about them, the person that they've lost as the name as to say the name. Yeah. You know, because that's an honor. It's an honor for me to get to talk about him. But everybody does have different stages of grief and ways that they handle it. For me, I've always been a communicator. So I knew from the get go, I mean, at the funeral, it was clear that Tyler had committed suicide and I was intentional about wanting that again to be brought to the light. This is not something he lived in shame and he lived in darkness. And I refuse to do the same in a way to honor him, not only to honor him who lost the battle of mental illness, but honor every single male, female, teenager, child, adult who is going through it as well and to say that you're not you're not alone, you know, but it is. It is traumatic. It was it's still traumatic to my friend

Unknown Speaker 15:00

Family today, you know, and the friends and everybody who was around and people who really look up to Tyler, you know, it was like this man who was a poster child of, of stability and wisdom and kindness and had it all together, crumbled, crumbled.

Unknown Speaker 15:23

And suffering it on his own, there's just there's no way he could get that out there or that you could see through that too. I'm going to stop wearing makeup at podcasts.

Unknown Speaker 15:35

If you couldn't see it, I just that this the way that you just said that just now really just dove right into my heart. So thank you for sharing that as well. Because again, we I do feel like we literally are honoring the memory of your husband, the other people who have gone through this as well and then the families too, it's such a good reminder to because that, that continues that cycle of shame.

Unknown Speaker 16:00

Hiding, when after they're gone, that you can't celebrate them. Absolutely. And they're still, you know, he had some serious challenges, obviously. And this was the best way for him to handle it. And there are times that I get mad at him for like stupid reasons we aren't so with you. But for the most part, I just, you know, like when he was alive, I wanted to love Him through what he was going through. Well, now that he's gone, I still want to love Him through what he went through. And,

Unknown Speaker 16:36

gosh, life is so hard right now, especially in the midst of COVID and school, you know, doing school at home and what's next and things are unsettled. And I mean, there's just so much that people are balancing and it's complicated, it's complex, and then that's layered on top of sometimes, again, people's own individual demons in the war.

Unknown Speaker 17:00

going on within themselves. And I just sometimes I think, I don't know, I wish I had answers. You know, I wish I had an answer for what I could have done differently with Tyler or what I could say to somebody who is struggling today, maybe and listening. But I just like we just got to love each other through stuff. We just have to love each other through stuff and bring this stuff to the light. And again, I'm so glad that you are doing this podcast because we got to talk about it. We got to make sure that people know that when they feel isolated when they feel depressed and when they're, you know, they've had hardships in their life and they don't know where to turn. They are not the only one and there. You know, Tyler had an army of people, an army of people willing and ready to help him and who loved him yet before he died. He said I really don't have that many friends. Hmm. And I can't find joy

Unknown Speaker 17:57

says just that

Unknown Speaker 18:00

alone, you can just see how that that pretty much qualified was the overall arching theme for him to have not being able to find that joy. And thank you for also clarifying all these different layers that we have. So you can start with your own inner things that whether they're real or not you've been carrying with you. And then you add on the qualifying factors of what's going on your life. And then this very big overarching theme of what's going on in the world right now. So breaking it apart, but I do love I love that you said that you're still loving him through that as well. So you're keeping that

memory alive and then also putting that into practical application for your life. Now, you said earlier, that just these little things, the driving habits are the whole thing that this in some ways you've been prepared for the last four years or five years of what we are going through right now. of you know, don't what is it don't sweat the petty stuff, but the sweaty stuff, you know,

Unknown Speaker 19:01

I mean, it is hard. You know, you do get perspective. You know, people run all this is a huge deal. This is a huge deal. And I hate to say it, but I'm like, well, in my world what a huge deal is, is my husband missing and then finding out that he's committed suicide, but even not even having that experience. No, I'm just like everybody else, I get all wacky about things that I look back and like, really, this doesn't matter. This doesn't matter. And the grand scheme of things, right, right. So that's on the, on the life side of it. Absolutely. And then for the folks that are in your life to that has to be the thing that we don't talk about too is figuring out these issues where we can not hold the expectation, like you said, even when he got really mad and was acting out of character. There is that part where either on a social media scale, we want to look just like this couple or this person, right. I do feel like one of the equalizing things

Unknown Speaker 20:00

About what we're going on right now with COVID. It hit has set a lot of the stuff aside of like, stop, stop playing over here and making yourself look like this way you're spending all this energy, trying to prove something on social media to other people. It is level lot out a lot of that bullshit. I feel.

Unknown Speaker 20:20

I wouldn't mention too when you talk about the personality, one of the most empowering things that I've been able to embrace and certainly a lot more right now, especially when we are going through the real real beginning of lockdown was the fact that I'm an ambivert. So that is an outgoing introvert. That has been one of the most empowering pieces I ever discovered about myself about eight years ago because I used to think I was just a really shitty extrovert because I would get, I'd like, I'd like to go out and did today, you know, go do my own thing, and then I would be drained. And then I used to do a show on Google Plus back in the day.

Unknown Speaker 21:00

I would do that on Fridays and then I realized I couldn't make any plans on Friday night because I'd already give and a lot earlier today so I would get drained super easy. So So figuring out either the focusing for yourself and the people that are in your life close like what is it's kind of like that Five Love Languages thing. Ah, oh, yeah. Five love language. Yes. You know who introduced me to that? Who's that? Pilar? He did fine. And I you know what I love to again about honoring him is that we're not take he's not just become just this person that this is how it ended it you're bringing in all the things to that he brought as well including the fact that yes, loving the five love languages. So I think what you can do in your relationships in your life is add in not only what your love languages, but then what your energy languages to and again, for me figuring out that I'm an outgoing introvert, or a gregarious loner as I like to say, I mean, you know me, we get together and I just

Unknown Speaker 22:00

just can't get enough of, of hanging out with you like they do the hands for the ride. Oh, Megan, honkin? Let's go back to boobs Ladies and gentlemen, it all comes back. And it comes back to boobs. But that has been a really, that's been a powerful thing for me to rely on and then hang on to as well because then I can say, No, I'm good. And there's no shame and that to figuring out what fills up my cup again. Yeah, and you know, and I think I love it. I'm good What a beautiful way to put up a boundary, a healthy boundary and then also a hard stop period at the end. Period, right? I'm good. I'm good. I'm gonna write that one. I'm good. I'll tell you because I think also we evolve. we

evolve as different life situations happen and get thrown our way and I think definitely, with regard to Tyler's death, like I've evolved a different in different ways and, you know, kind of there's another layer to the onion. Unfortunately, if the onion is Jessica

Unknown Speaker 23:00

Right and we're we all know that we have things to deal with things that we don't want to talk about and that experience a lot of gifts, a lot of growth, a lot of reflection, but also the reality is I get nervous about abandonment now you know I do and that shows up in different spaces and different ways that sometimes it's not even conscious but it's true and it's just part of who I am and then that helps drive the the recognizing who I am what I need and how to get what I need. Hmm Gail better write that one down.

Unknown Speaker 23:36

Because that I mean and again, that's also when you talk about abandonment, I mean talk about something that's just wrapped in a layer upon layer of shame and isolation when you speak of that anyone male from anyone. And so now the putting bringing that out in the open as well then you can have those conversations with yourself. Where's this coming from? What's this? What's going on with this and then

Unknown Speaker 24:00

You're moving just like a muscle everything's going to build, it's going to get easier and easier to recognize these different things now. Absolutely, absolutely. You just have to do I still get up every day. And I think it was worse, obviously, right after Tyler died, but I'd get up and I think that was the worst nightmare I've ever had. And it would take me sometimes 30 seconds, especially right after he died to realize that the nightmare was actually my life.

Unknown Speaker 24:30

Right. Yeah. And it's still, I mean,

Unknown Speaker 24:35

it's hard to reconcile, again that this is my life. But you know, you could have put one foot in front of the other and be open to the growth be open to the adventure, be respectful and honoring and embrace the memories and what I've learned. I mean, I feel like Mia if you you never met Tyler but if you love me now, a lot of it's because of how much I learned from Tyler. I mean, Tyler's in

Unknown Speaker 25:00

Right, and just put one foot in front of the other. But Dang, it's tough. And I think it's good to, you know, the shit still surfaces with Tyler and it's important to talk about it.

Unknown Speaker 25:13

And I have to tell listeners, I have a personal experience of even being in your in your life for one of the transitions when I came over to your house, and we were walking around upstairs and you said and this is Tyler's office, what's still sitting there, you can tell there hasn't been just from the air and there, there hasn't been a lot of activity and I so appreciate when we were standing in there. You said it's time. I'm going to move some things around and get that in there. But again, not like I got to get rid of this shit because it's just uncomfortable. Just that natural progression. Yeah, here's what I'm loving about this entire episode. We are not telling you how to recognize signs and how to to fix anything. This is just the story and then this is also if you've gone through it, and how you can love people. So I

Unknown Speaker 26:00

But I also appreciate that what you're doing and talking about this is not good. It's not the speaker circuit thing where you're, and that's okay to where you're telling that story over and over again, but more just sharing it. So that's a that's more of a work in progress. Absolutely not a staying in one spot is a victim. Yeah, thank you. And it is a work in progress. I mean, it is. And I again, appreciate just any time that I can talk about Tyler share my story. I mean, and it's today, I'm one way I could be tomorrow, I could have been sobbing through the whole thing and not know why it's really interesting. And, you know, I think that's the other thing. Nobody looks at me and says, Oh, I bet she's a widow. Oh, I bet she's a breast cancer survivor. And I think that that was the other big learning or big gift from that experience beyond the perspective that I have, but you never

Unknown Speaker 27:00

Know what other people are going through? never know. And it's so easy to judge, it's so easy to just think that you know, but when I tell people that I was, you know, I'm 40 now that I became a widow at 36, it's like they about fall off their chairs, they can't, they can't believe it. But I'm open about it because I want to talk about suicide. I want to talk about mental illness. I want to talk about the fact that, you know, Tyler was the guy that you would walk into at a networking event or social engagement and think, man, that guy's got it all together, kind of all together. And, and I like to think that he had such a service servant's heart. He just loved, the charitable giving he loved loving on people who maybe were more marginalized or just didn't get love, you know, right, right, the appropriate way. And I just, I think part of my mind

Unknown Speaker 28:00

Calling in my passion is to take that forward. And that's a way to keep him alive. But treat people the way Tyler would treat them. I love that I first of all, I love that phrase servant's heart that just kind of got me and if you're watching the video, you'll see me kind of looking off and my closing my eyes because I'm just taking this in. So so so much. And I do I think that again, normalizing. normalizing every normal, is what we're talking about here for everything. Everybody's normal is different. And if there's anyone that we've learned from, besides what you just talked about, is the experience of losing Chadwick boseman recently, and talk about someone that people did not know what he was going through. And he went and he was just, he was just making it happen in so many things. So that is such a great example of you do not know what someone's gone through. So we all need to lighten the fuck up. There's the phone, right but also be open. So thank you, honey, so much for all

Unknown Speaker 29:00

Again, I love that you're going to just continue loving up on him. You also have a blog. Can you tell us about that? Yes, it is called my blog. It's called own mind today. So, um, if you can read about it or see the blog of mine today calm and basically kind of where that came from his Monday I woke up and I was like, oh my damn, I have some big baggage like big if you could see me I'm like, making all sorts of looks at my faces, but my face my face like hot. Basically, I am a hot mess. I've got baggage out the wazoo, like who's gonna want anything to do with me? And then I'm just, you know what? It's like my posture change. And I was like,

Unknown Speaker 29:43

Okay, I'm gonna own my baggage. And I'm going to carry it proudly. And I'm going to use it to serve people how I made the dazzle it, but it's my baggage. It's my story, and I'm taking it with me.

Unknown Speaker 30:00

Really so on my today I actually have a few things I need to post I haven't posted on there in a while but you can really get a good it's pretty raw and real and kind of the heart of the widow and the kind of shit show that it is and the mind it really messes with your head and there are stories that you can't make up but boy I want to put out there because I learned something. And that's the purpose

of it. You know, I don't want to just be talking about myself I want to share a story and and say, hey, these are some things that I picked up, they may not work for you, they may work for you, whatever, take them, run with them. Do with them what you want, have fun. That is perfection by the way. Again, it's just more of the journey so you don't have to be responsible for anyone else but just putting it out there. I have so much baggage I look like rose in the Titanic. Remember when she shows up and they're just like trunk after trunk after trunk. owning it you're right I'm going to dazzle that shit to

Unknown Speaker 30:51

you know if tie into come full circle here because I'm sure we're gonna wrap up here soon. I could talk to you me all day, but I

Unknown Speaker 31:00

coming full circle back to the breast cancer business right night out with the girls in my business all about early detection and how to detect breast cancer early. That is all about that has Tyler all over it. And one more thing. No, I mean, it's about bras and breast cancer. Why does it have a man all over it? No, it does. Because it's really about serving others but also bringing light into a topic breast cancer that people don't want to talk about. Right. So the events are designed the experiences virtually or in person to decrease isolation, increase connection, increased conversation, and then as a as a result, increase action. So it's all rooted in this nasty experience that I had with Tyler and the sad experience. Thank you for looping that both in together all of that together. For us. That is such an important thing again, the road is winding and we've got a lot of layers to it.

Unknown Speaker 32:00

Absolutely love it. So please go back and listen to Episode Two if you're listening in now Jessica talks about her experience with breast cancer and breast health goto night out with the girls, then go to what's the podcast again? Or the blog again? His own mind today.com so own my all one word. Today calm. Love it Jessica. Thanks for coming on. Love you sweetie. NATS love you. Thank you for having me. Thanks for tuning in everyone. Thanks for tuning in to Episode Three of the shit we don't talk about podcast. That was definitely an eye opening conversation. I'm so grateful that Jessica for sharing her story and her experience, make sure to follow her and own my today.com and you can also check out her early detection wellness program at night out with the girls calm. Please share this out with your friends and leave me a review especially if it's a nice one. And if you really liked this episode, feel free to head on over to me Avast dot live forward slash patrons and become a full time supporter of the podcast. And while you're there, you can subscribe and you'll see it

Unknown Speaker 33:00

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