

UNCONDITIONALLY WORTHY

The Podcast

Unconditionally Worthy Podcast EP #53: Coaching with Dr. Adia, How to Stop Catastrophizing and Ask For Help w/ Maria Gamboa

Adia Gooden: (0:00:00) Welcome to the unconditionally worthy podcast. In this podcast, I will guide you on your journey to connect with the true source of your self-worth. Each week, we'll discuss barriers to unconditional self-worth, the connection between self-worth and relationships, self-worth practices you can apply to your life and how to use self-worth as a foundation for living courageously. I'm your host, Dr. Adia Gooden, a licensed clinical psychologist, dance enthusiast and a dark chocolate lover who believes deeply that you are worthy unconditionally.

Adia Gooden: Hello and welcome to a very special episode of the unconditionally worthy podcast. I am doing something that I actually have never done before on the podcast. I am providing someone with some live coaching so that you can get a window into what it looks like for me to offer you coaching and sort of hear kind of how I help people to work through things related to their self worth. So I'm really excited to share this coaching call with you and I just kind of want you to be thinking like, would this kind of coaching be helpful for me? You know, the applications for the unconditionally worthy group coaching program are going to be open very soon. If they're not open already, they may be open already. And I want you to consider, I'm inviting you to consider applying and joining us for the fall cohort. Every week we are live on Zoom and I'm offering coaching.

I am helping you to work through challenges related to self worth. And I think that this call, this episode is such a great example of what my coaching looks like, right? So you can figure out, does this style seem like it would be helpful to you? I want you to apply if you think will be a

good fit. So tune into the episode, please feel free to DM me. If you have questions, find me on Instagram. If you're not on Instagram, you could shoot me an email dradia@dradiagoodin.com and I'm at Dr. Adia on Instagram. Let me know what you think. Let me know if you're like, hi, I actually think I could use that kind of coaching. If you have some questions about the program, reach out and I'd love to talk to you about it and you can learn more about the unconditionally worthy group coaching program on the website, unconditionallyworthy.com/program. Okay. I hope to hear from you and let's get into the show.

Adia Gooden: So I am grateful to have Maria Gamboa on the podcast today. Maria is a first generation immigrant, mother, wife, former academic and historian, and currently works as a consultant, helping nonprofits and foundations develop strategic plans. She grew up in the US and Mexico, lived for 10 years in Chicago, hey, and is currently based in San Diego. She loves Zumba, running, karaoke, and fish tacos. I got to say Baja, California, fish tacos are the best, so I understand that love. And recently Maria launched a blog where she examines mental health in the workplace for first generation professionals. I love that. So I'm really excited to have Maria on today because we are going to be doing a coaching call. So you all are going to get to listen in on me offering some coaching focused on self worth to Maria. So I'm excited about this and grateful that she has volunteered to do this with me. So welcome, Maria.

Maria Gamboa: Thank you so much.

Adia Gooden: Awesome. Well, I'm hoping you can start by just sharing a little bit about your self-worth journey. So like where did it start? Where are you at now? And then we can kind of dive into the coaching.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah, thanks. So I think where it started is last couple of years, I've been focusing on my mental health. The transition after graduating from my PhD, what's going to happen to my life now. I think a lot of my self worth was tied, not just to the PhD, but to getting my first job, like, stability, right. I think that's what I've always wanted my whole life, stability kind of like a basic you know, safety, comfort. So I think a lot of my self worth is to ensure my safety, my security, and so I think right now I'm in an interesting point, I really do like who I am, I'm learning, it took a long time to love myself exactly (0:05:00) as I am with all my identities, but what's harder is I don't like what I do. I don't like the habits that I've always, you know, used to get through stuff to survive, it's not serving me anymore because to actually ensure my safety, survival comfort, I need to step it up.

I need to dream bigger and so coping, you know, the way I cope with stress, the way I deal with disappointment and then just more recently finding out that I'm not making time for myself. I'm

not prioritizing myself and I had a couple of wake up calls where it was really scary because I think, you know, ever since I was 17, my body talks to me like when I'm stressed. I remember when I applied to college, I got TMJ of, you know, senior year.

Adia Gooden: Like lock jaw or...

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: ...is that, yeah.

Maria Gamboa: But ever since I turned 30, my body is talking to me more and more when I'm stressed and it's scary. It's scary. And I'm also kind of, we can get into that, I'm kind of an intense person, some people might say I'm dramatic, but it's because I've seen stuff. I've seen people die young, you know, it's like, I'm pretty serious person, so when something like that happens, it's time to do something...

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: ...it's worth the attention and so that's why I'm trying to change some of my habits to achieve not just that safety, that comfort, but the stakes are much higher to make better reality.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm. Thank you for sharing that. I love that you're sort of focusing in on wanting to make behavior change, because when I think about people's self-worth journey, I really think it is about doing things differently. And I sort of think about like, okay, well, if you do think differently, like you start treating yourself as though you're worthy, start showing up for yourself in a different way that really leads to feeling unconditionally worthy versus like just stand in the mirror and say, I'm worthy, I'm worthy, I'm worthy 10 times and it's like, okay, that could be nice, but is that really going to shift your life? Probably not. And it actually is the behavior change that is the doing something different that can make a big difference in our lives. So I'm really glad that you sort of that's what you want to focus in on today.

And I also really appreciate you highlighting sort of what have been the warning signs, right? Because so often we ignore what our body tells us and we just keep going and keep going and keep going. And I'm really glad to hear that you're listening that you're saying, hey, hey, I got to listen to these warning signs. I don't want it to be too late. I don't want to get to a point where it's

really hard to come back from. I got to listen. I got to start taking care of myself. So I think those are great things for us to kind of talk about and get into today.

I'm hoping you can share a little bit about sort of the coping strategies that you want to evolve. Right? Like what do those look like? When, you know, like I'm coping, I've learned to cope this way. This has helped me to survive, but I know that it's no longer serving me. What are some of those coping strategies or behaviors look like for you?

Maria Gamboa: So I think part of it is just holding a lot, wanting to be in control, thinking I have control because it's harder to ask people to help me. I'm not so good at that. I didn't see it. Maybe growing up, you know, I didn't trust or rely on people and so I just, the shortcut is to do it myself.

And then the other part is worrying too much about others, so, and kind of, I think codependency too, expecting them to worry about me and then realizing that I need to worry about myself. I need to grow up and take responsibility for myself. And it's not a great approach to expect that I'm going to worry about others and others are going to worry about me, that's not how it works. So those are some of the things.

Adia Gooden: Okay. Okay. So holding a lot, right? Like taking on a lot of responsibilities, putting a lot of pressure on yourself, I think that was the first thing I heard and then sort of, you know, starting to give to yourself what you are wanting other people to give to you. Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: With that attention and that care, I think often we do it that way. Often we say, okay, well maybe if I just give so much to everyone else, maybe if I give so much of my time, my intention, my energy caring for someone else, then they will give it back to me and I'm really needing it and then sometimes that results in some resentment or frustration, because it's like, well, they're not what I'm doing so much for them, why aren't they reciprocating? And we sort of learn one, you know, (0:10:00) unspoken needs often don't get met, right? Like when we don't actually say, this is what I need or want from you, the other person is going to have a hard time meeting them. And two, as you're sort of mentioning, we have the power to give ourselves a lot of what it is we're needing from other people.

And that doesn't mean that we get into a hyper independent place where we're like, we don't need anybody or there's room to say, okay, well, how do I give myself the attention and care that I'm

really wishing other people would give to me and I give to other people, but I can give it to myself.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, especially for that second part about asking for help, it just, people are not mind readers, that's really unfair. It's really unfair and the best part is I do have great people around me, like, my husband is great, my boss is great, my mom is great. Everyone wants to be there for me, it's just, they don't know I need anything. Right.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Like I think they say just because you carry it well, doesn't mean it's not heavy, like no one knows and I can't get mad and yet I do get mad, I do get, right now, I do get mad.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: For people who do know how to advocate for themselves, I get jealous. I don't know if it's mad more like where did you learn that? Who taught you that? Who expresses their needs? It's just, maybe it's jealousy, you know? Like...

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Where did you see that? And then, just what I want to say, the first part about holding too much is I do catastrophize things.

Adia Gooden: Okay.

Maria Gamboa: I think they've been telling my mom that since I was little everything is a big deal, everything is a big deal. If something goes wrong, it's a big deal. It's the end of the world. And that's not, that's not serving me...

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: ...just for my health, but even in my job, right. I need to adopt this like gross mentality to be a leader, to move up, to advance, and so unfortunately, sometimes work is the reason I do these things. Right. Even though it's good for me overall, that's when I pay attention.

Adia Gooden: That's the motivator.

Maria Gamboa: So it's interesting, that's how it's happening sometimes.

Adia Gooden: Okay. So I'm going to try to keep two things in my head that I want to address. I will give you a heads up that my brain has not, I've not been getting enough sleep because I have a newborn, so sometimes I lose the things and so maybe you can help me remember. So one train that I'd like to go. One train of thought that I'd like to go down is sort of exploring where and when you developed the need to like carry it all, have it all together, explore some of those fears around, asking for help and then start talking about what that looks like to begin to ask for help and then the other train I want to go down is I'm already like it's the thing, it's the thing for my mind, okay, was that the second chain asking for help, oh, oh, the catastrophizing.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: Right, so then the next train is sort of exploring what happens in your mind that makes everything a big deal, right? Because sometimes our minds will do this. I made a mistake, oh my gosh, if I made a mistake, I'm going to get fired. If I get fired, then I'm never going to get, get another job and then I'm going to lose my house and we're going to lose everything and then we're going to be homeless and la, la, la, la, la, right.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: And so our brains can go quickly down that rabbit hole and then it is a big deal because what happens in those moments is our body and brain don't know that it's just your mind predicting the future and your body and brain respond, and they say, oh my God, we're homeless, that's it. We lost everything. We're not safe anymore. Right. As you just said, safety and security are so important, we're not to end, right, and then we have a physical, physiological reaction to this projected reality that this mistake means that we're homeless. Right. That's where the big deal comes. Right. And so for other people are like, why are you overreacting, it's just the mistake and internally it's like, but I feel like I'm homeless now. And so, of course, I'm going to have this big reaction because that is a threat to my safety, to everything that's important to me and I feel so, you know, awful, that that could have happened. How does that land for you? Does it resonate?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. It gets in the way whether or not it's going to happen. It's super distracting.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm. And so I think let's just start with this train since we're here. I think part of it is there's I think I have two things in mind. One is being willing to tolerate and sort of hold onto yourself in a kind way, when you make mistakes. Because part of the, what happens is that when we feel sort of the emotional discomfort of a mistake or a failure, in order to avoid actually sitting with it and processing it, our mind takes over and sort of avoids it by either beating ourselves up or going down a rabbit hole and it really doesn't help, but it sort of keeps us from, (0:15:00) ooh, I really missed the mark there, right, like sitting with and breathing with that. Right. So we sort of run away mentally. And so some of the work that we have to do is increasing our tolerance for mistakes and failures and learning to breathe through them, work through them without either beating ourselves up or going down a rabbit hole and saying that this is the end of the world and all hope is lost. What comes up for you when I say that?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. I mean, I think it sounds like tolerating. It's not just a mistake, it's like shame.

Adia Gooden: Mm.

Maria Gamboa: And so maybe part of it is that, that's what I pride myself on, like being reliable, being responsible and it's like, that's a problem then, because if something goes wrong, it's like, then I'm not those things and it's not so much that I think something terrible will happen, it's so embarrassing. And that's hard, because I'm already embarrassed about other things that are beyond my control, so why can't I even do this? Right. Yeah.

Adia Gooden: Ah. Hmm. So you take pride in being reliable and then I hear a little bit of perfection in them in there, which is, if I'm not reliable a hundred percent of the time, then I'm not reliable. Right. Then I've sort of lost that, as a strength of mine and I think, oh, go ahead, is there something you wanted to?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. I mean, I, you know, some of my values are like integrity and then the next one is responsibility. Right. And so, I think, you know, it's hard to talk about, but when I say safety and stability, I mean that sometimes there wasn't that, sometimes there was chaos, and so what I want is peace. And to do that, like, there's this idea that like, just work hard and follow the rules, especially as an immigrant, like you can't mess up, you can't mess up, there's no room. And then I've been rewarded when I've done those things, obviously in school and I'm smart, that's the other part, I'm smart, so like, why can't you do it? Right. And so, now that I have a family in all this, it's like, I feel that's not an excuse to not deliver, cause now it's like life is happening and that's really hard. If my kid gets sick, that's not even me anymore and it still affects me. Right.

And it's like, that's human, of course, that's not, but then I feel like it's counted the amount of times I can, you know, like you know, even calling and sick, like, I feel like those are limited, right. You're not going to, I don't want to be labeled or seen as a chaotic person, who is unreliable, but so it's more that like them, I hope this is a terrible thing to feel, but it's like them, I hope it's worth it to ask for this. Not to say like, of course, I don't want my kid to get sick again, but just like, I hope she really needed me...

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: ...and that's terrible, like it's putting you in a horrible situation where it's like other people calling sick, because they feel more entitled to that, like it's not going to reflect on them.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. And, I hear what you're saying, which is as an immigrant, I imagine also as a woman, it doesn't feel like you don't feel like society has afforded you that room, that grace, to be able to get sick or to be able to take care of your kid when they're sick. And so it feels like this struggle, especially when that is sort of, there's a tension between taking care of yourself, taking care of your child or your family and being responsible and being reliable and making sure you get things done and being stable because inherently someone being sick can create a little chaos, right, like can create an instability because you weren't expecting it. Nobody's like, okay, so on November 11th, you'll get sick and I'll take a sick date in advance and all my meetings will already be cleared, right, like inherently when someone's sick, there's like a, oh gosh, I got to cancel those meetings and I got to send those emails and when's this going to happen, and there was a deadline, right, like it inherently creates some of the chaos, which you understandably are trying to avoid and control against.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. And it's just funny because that's where I get in trouble. It is real to me. The reason it's real to me is related to the other point, I pile too much on, so there's no room, there's no room for nothing to go wrong, that's what I'm realizing, and that's really scary because when something goes wrong, I don't recover from it right away. It really messes me up. And now that I'm a consultant, (0:20:00) I'm realizing organizations can't function that way. You don't build no room for error.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: And I can't do that here either. Right. I can't, yeah, I mean, I like don't cut myself a lot of slack.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. There's no margin. There's no wiggle room. And I imagine that you work when you're sick a lot, you know, what I mean? It's like, you feel like you have to keep going or else everything's going to fall down because there is so much that you're holding, as you mentioned before that you're carrying.

Maria Gamboa: And I don't have to because it's not others telling me that. They tell me to take care of myself.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: So it's not them, you know.

Adia Gooden: Well tell me about younger Maria, who thought that she couldn't take care of herself, who thought that she could not ask for help, who felt like that was just too vulnerable, too scary, or who felt like maybe she tried and people weren't there or people couldn't be there. Tell me about her?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. I'm trying to think about it. I mean, I think I was provided for, so it kind of depends what the needs are. I had food, shelter, education. I had a lot of privilege. What I didn't have was a lot of the emotional stuff I needed. Right. So when I say I'm learning to love who I am, who that is, is I consider myself like a weird immigrant because, and I'm okay with that now, I'm okay, but it has taken me a long time and what I mean by that is, so my family background is academics. Right? So the reason the way I came to this country was my mom's student visa with my mom when I was four and that's always been a little weird to people who are not academics for a lot of reasons, but I'm cool with that, that's fine.

And I also acknowledge that privilege of how that set me up for my PhD, but the other part of being a weird immigrant is I'm the child of divorce parents and that kind of goes against the stereotype of the big, happy Latino family. A lot of stereotypes about how women and mothers are about, how men, I don't even know, right, cause I didn't grow up with my dad, so there's a lot of that. So I guess what I'm saying is what I needed was my dad and my mom did the best she could, because now that I'm my mom, I get it.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: That she did the best that she could, cause you're supposed, you know, it's better with two, I mean, it depends on the parents, but just as a parent, like, I can't imagine.

Adia Gooden: It's hard to do it. It's hard one person parenting is a challenge.

Maria Gamboa: Yes.

Adia Gooden: It presents a lot of challenges.

Maria Gamboa: So I don't know what I asked her for, but I think I tried not to bother her too much just because she did a lot. She put me in gymnastics. She put me in, you know, all the stuff and she saved her money to take me to see my dad because he didn't come with us, that's the point. He lived in...

Adia Gooden: So he was still in Mexico?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. And so like now that I'm thinking about it and that I've thought about it, it's like, that's a big deal, that's a big deal when you're four, when you can't see your dad very much because he's far and like I see him twice a year, so I think that's what I needed and just to like wrap it up, what that means is that when I did see my dad, I tried not to ask for anything at all because I don't want to like waste time. Even though, and so it's just kind of a little messed up because I think I was a lot harder on my mom, even though she gave me everything and he gave me like nothing, anyway, so that's kind of what I see, and sometimes it may also like being in a new country where like my mom doesn't know what's going on, so I just tried to not bother her.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Like I'll just give you one example. It's kind of funny, kind of sad. I was always late to school, not because there was any reason, I lived across the street. First I lived in Ithaca, you know? So she was at Cornell. We moved across the street from the school, so I should have never been late, but I was like, because she didn't know that you had to start at a certain time. She thought it was kind of like, I don't know...

Adia Gooden: Show up when you show up?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah, show up when you show up, and so every day they sent me to the attendance office and I was marked tardy and I never told her, cause I didn't know why she didn't send me on time. I was too little. I don't know if I've even ever told her, you know, and it's like, but that makes you grow up fast, because you know, you're doing something wrong and you don't, it's not your fault really, you don't even know like what time it is.

Adia Gooden: Right. You don't know, okay, this is the time I'm supposed to get to school at age four or five (0:25:00) or you know, whatever.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. So I remember they would always make fun of me at the attendance office, like, you really need an alarm clock and I'd be like, I have an alarm clock, I just don't know what time school starts. So I think that's part of it right, where it's like, she gave me a lot. She gave me tons. She gave me more than she even had to cause my dad didn't help.

Adia Gooden: That's fair enough.

Maria Gamboa: But I still needed more.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm. Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: And, you know, I think that's so common, right? Is that our parents try to give us what they can and we still may have needed more and part of what we, you know, our task to hold, if we're kind of doing this in a really healthy way, is that truth. We're neither invalidating our needs that didn't get met. We're also not demonizing our parents that for whatever reason weren't able to meet those needs and so it's like holding that together.

I think I feel really touched by you talking about your younger self and you know, I usually think about this for kind of all of us, I think about it for myself as well, but when we are having a big reaction or getting really upset at something, it's usually the little one in us. Right. Who's upset? Right. It's usually the little one who says I can't be late again, like, you know what I mean, like we can't do this, we can't, you know, my it's, you know and it's the little one who's having that reaction and what she needs in that moment is to be like, oh baby, I'm here, like it's okay, right, like it's okay. You know, this is different than that was or I've got you. I'm not going to let you be made fun, you don't have to go to the attendance office, right or it's not going to be just because

this one thing happened, everything isn't going to be chaotic. Like I'm here, like as an adult sort of saying to you, I'm here, I got us, I got us, don't worry, right, like I'm here and it just like to soothe that part of us that's like, I can't go back there. Right.

Because that's often what comes up and get stirred up in those moments of I made a mistake or those moments of, oh my gosh, I can't show up and things are feeling chaotic and I don't know what to do. We go back to that younger self who wasn't in control. Right. Who just felt very out of control in those spaces because they weren't an adult and now we are the adult. We can say, I got you. I got you. It's a little chaotic or it's a little because you know, there's a lot going on, but I'm here and I got you and I got it under control, I'm not going to leave you, you're good. How does that land for you?

Adia Gooden: Yeah. I'd like to practice that, you know, because what I've found is I am very worst case scenario and then when good things happen or when people are fine with it, I'm just like so shocked that nothing happened. You know, what I mean, like, I didn't get fired or no one hates me and so I wonder if practicing what you're saying and then seeing the results that it didn't lead to...

Maria Gamboa: Didn't all fall apart.

Adia Gooden: The apocalypse, yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Mm-Hmm.

(00:28:27) Are you ready to go deeper and truly do the work to believe that you're unconditionally worthy, so you can finally experience the peace and contentment you've been longing for in your life. If you answered, yes. I want to invite you to apply, to join the next cohort of the unconditionally worthy group coaching program. This curriculum-based group coaching program will guide you step by step to heal any trauma that has gotten in the way of you feeling worthy. It will help you to transform your relationship with yourself to one that is loving, compassionate, and authentic. And the program will empower you to use your internal wisdom, to create a life filled with the peace, joy, and contentment you have been wanting in your life.

If you're ready to do the work and want the transformation, this program offers, I encourage you to apply now. I will personally review your application and invite you to a consultation call with me if it seems like you'll be a good fit for the program, then we'll talk it over and I'll give you the

information and details you need to make a decision about whether or not to join. The next cohort starts on October 3rd, so be sure to apply now before it's too late. You can go to unconditionallyworthy.com/program to learn more and apply now, can't wait to see your application.

Adia Gooden: I think the other piece that I was sort of starting to touch on and I'll start, try to finish that thought is (0:30:00) staying with the feeling instead of being carried away by the thoughts. Right. Because usually when we feel embarrassed, it shows up some way, we feel like a tingly or a pit in our stomach or a lump in our throat, or like it shows up some way, so one of the things is that you may need to queue into, how does that show up in my body? What do I feel physically, emotionally when I'm feeling that embark, like, I missed the deadline, like, ooh, you know, like what comes up and then can I stay with that instead of being dragged down the rabbit hole by my mind and some of that may be like, okay, so I feel this weight on my, I feel a pressure on my chest, my jaw is tight and then your mind might be like, but they're going to find it, they are going to find it, and you say, oh, I feel my stomach, blah, blah, blah. Right. And your mind might be like, you know, and then you just like, keep coming back. Right.

Your mind might keep trying to pull you away and you keep, but I can't believe you did that. I feel this, I feel this right. So if we can stay with the feeling, we're less likely to get caught up in the thoughts, they may come, but you sort of let them go and that's then also when we can sort of offer ourselves that compassion and you can imagine it as offering it to your younger self, maybe it is four year old you, who was taken to another country, and like from Mexico to Ithaca, New York, like, that's cold, and it's like, what? You know, like people don't, the primary language is Spanish and like it's overwhelming and it does feel chaotic, and you just say, oh, come here. Right. Like, let me give you a hug and you just sort of imagine soothing that little one in you and say, it's okay, right, like, I imagine that you caught like the experience of being a child immigrant, like, in the US, like, I imagine there were probably a lot of times when you felt embarrassed, when there were things that you didn't know, like, you didn't know what time school started and then people are making fun of you for something you don't know, right, like that you would probably feel embarrassed, but you don't even know what to do about it. Right.

So comforting her, right, like, and saying, it's okay, it's not your fault, right, like, okay, you missed a deadline, you had a lot going, it's okay. I'm not going to abandon you because this happened or because that mistake was made and other people are not going to abandon you either because that's part of what you're saying, which is they don't abandon me, but I expect it and I don't even know how to take in the fact that they're like, okay, no problem, we'll reschedule the meeting.

Maria Gamboa: To me, it sounds like you're saying, telling myself, it's going to be okay.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm.

Maria Gamboa: Two, I mean, feeling it, feeling it.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Getting comfortable that it does kind of suck how it feels.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm.

Maria Gamboa: But that's it.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: That's as bad as it's going to get.

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: It's not going to get, that's not as bad then if that's it.

Adia Gooden: Right, right. Right, exactly. Right. Like it doesn't feel good, but it's not, it's not as bad as like, you're not going to be homeless, like that's not going to happen and actually your mind is this thing where it doesn't want to feel the little discomfort. We in some kind of orientations of therapy, we would call that clean pain, right? Like you stub your toe, your toe hurts, clean pain, it hurts, doesn't feel good. Dirty pain is you calling yourself an idiot and how could you possibly stub your toe, and you're so clumsy, and you're the da, da, da, da, da, da, da, so then we have the clean pain, yep, you stubbed your toe, it happens, it hurts and then we layer on top of it, beating ourselves up. How could you do that? Oh my gosh, everything's going to fall apart. Right.

And so part of the practice that I'm offering is how do you stay with the clean pain, cats, messing up an email or whatever the mistake is, it doesn't feel good, right? It's like stopping, you're told

doesn't feel good, but we can actually choose to skip all the other stuff that we layer on top of it, which is how could I'm such an idiot. Oh, I'm beating myself up. Oh, it's going to be the worst thing in the world. You're going to get fired. You better start looking for jobs, da, da, da, da. You know, you said you were reliable and you're not reliable, all of that stuff, just amps up the pain that we experience and makes it worse.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. Yeah. And longer, right, because you can get panic attacks and all sorts of, even worse, so I see what you're saying, that it won't last forever. That shame is real, but and is there part two of action? Because I feel like the way to solve it is to send an email, just say like, I won't be in and like doing something, not just, I mean, the shame doesn't produce the action, but to resolve, I don't know or to just like, because I think part of what feels bad is the lingering, (0:35:00) like, you don't know what to do, like you still haven't decided to do the thing, like you can still, yeah, not fail. You can still not fail, but it's like, no, sometimes just you can't show up or something like that.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. So I think that's a really good question, so let's make this actionable. So I would, so let's just say something happens, like you got to deal with something or something went wrong or whatever. So what my recommendation to you would be to pause, do a self-compassion practice, which can look as simple as I'm taking a few deep breath and scanning my body and just noticing what's there. Right. Like sort of what I was like explaining or giving example of earlier, like, okay, I'm feeling tension, feeling pressure, I'm feeling tightness, I'm feeling right, like, and then you might even notice it's okay if you can't label, but notice like my heart's racing, I'm feeling anxious, right, like just sort of scan, that's sort of the mindfulness part of compassion and then acknowledge the second part is the common humanity, which is, this is human, I'm a human, humans make mistakes, right, like we mess up sometimes, we miss the marks sometimes, like this is not mean that there's something centrally wrong with me, right.

This sort of common humanity, like, this is something humans do, this happens to humans, and then the last part is the self kindness part, which is sort of the comforting and that's where you could sort of imagine your younger self, like hand on chest or give yourself a hug or some sort of comforting gesture, I think helps and you say, you know, it's okay, right. Like I'm here. This is not the end of the world. This is a small thing. Right. I love you still, you're still worthy. This does not mean you're not reliable. Right. Like just some comforting, affirming words and what that's going to do is it's going to help calm you down because what happens is when you make a mistake and it feels like the end of the world, your prefrontal cortex, where you make decisions, shuts down and your amygdala takes over, so you go into fight, flight, freeze mode. That's probably why you feel like, I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do, because you're thinking, decision making brain is literally sort of offline because you're, you know, like it's like we're in emergency mode, right, fight, flight, freeze. I don't know. Right. And you may be in

freeze like, ah, like this is the way to keep myself safe, right, and so if you can soothe yourself through that self compression practice, I just walked you through and there's lots of places you can sort of find guided practices that can be helpful, but if you sooth yourself, then your prefrontal cortex will come back online.

You'll be able to re-look at the situation and say, okay, I missed this meeting or I sent the wrong email to the wrong person or I, whatever it is. Okay, what do I want to do to clean it up? I need to let them know, I can't make it. I need to let them know, I need to reschedule. I know this is a really important meeting, but my child is sick and I really have to be there. We actually have to go to the doctor and so unfortunately, I'm not able to make it today. Right. And so then you're in a calmer space, so you can, you know, address the situation in a way that feels proactive and constructive versus like reacting, because you're like, oh, I got to get outta this little shame and like, ah, you know, whatever reaction that might produce, which is maybe do nothing or send an email too quickly or whatever it is.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. I like that. I like that because what you're describing, I mean, it's not easy.

Adia Gooden: No.

Maria Gamboa: It's a lot of steps.

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: But one way, I'm thinking about summarizing, it is like taking myself seriously. Right. Like I feel this thing, yeah, it doesn't feel good, but I matter, right.

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: And so maybe because it's not just like the part of you'll be all right, it's okay, it's human, but the, I matter.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Right. And so it's okay if something goes wrong because I'm I come first.

Adia Gooden: Yes. Yes.

Maria Gamboa: And you got to do all these other things to know what to do though.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And I think part of the, I matter and I come first is I'm bigger than any of this mistake, like my life is more valuable and meaningful than any mistake I could make and I want to honor myself, I want to honor how I feel, I want to care for myself even in the midst of whatever might be going on.

Maria Gamboa: That's beautiful. Thank you.

Adia Gooden: You're welcome. And so I know, so I said that there as a second track, and I think that was like the asking for help, peace.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah.

Adia Gooden: That we maybe could talk a little bit about if that feels like it would be helpful.

Maria Gamboa: Sure (0:40:00).

Adia Gooden: So lemme start with this. Tell me what happened, so I know, so we had a pre-call those of you who are listening and I know you, we talked about both the challenge with asking for help and also even sometimes identifying what you need and what the time and space that you need to ask for, where are you with that? So does it feel like, you know, kind of what you need and it's hard to ask for it or does it feel like, you know, you need something, but you're not sure what that is and then if you don't know what you need exactly, then it's also hard to ask for it, like tell me kind of where you are with that.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. I mean, could be both, could be that I don't think I need it, I don't think I need time for myself kind of like, you know, but I just don't think it's I don't know. It's more that I don't know how to ask for help. I don't like it. I don't think I should need to. I don't know. So I'm not comfortable doing it that's for sure.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. Yeah. What makes it uncomfortable? Like what is the internal narrative about what it means about you to ask for help? What your expectations are from others in terms

of how they may respond, you know, poorly, whatever, if you ask for help, like what are the thoughts you have about that, please?

Maria Gamboa: It's just, I don't like to bother people. I don't like inconvenience people. I feel like other people are either important in the sense of like they're busy or I want to keep people happy that part's kind of more deeper because why am I so afraid to upset people. I noticed that that's especially like people close to me, my husband, my mom, like there's no good reason to be afraid of upsetting them actually.

Adia Gooden: Well, I hear a through line from when you were talking about your experience as a child, which is, I didn't want to bother my mom because she had a lot going on. She was a PhD student. We were in a new country. I didn't want to bother my dad because I didn't have very much time with him and when I was with him, I wanted things to go really well, so I didn't want to ask. Right. Like, so I see a through line straight from four or five-year-old Maria, who was like, okay, the way we get through this is we don't bother people. Right. The way we get through this is we just handle it, we don't bother people. We just take care of it. Right. Because you also didn't say to your mom, like, hey mom, I'm late every day and have to go to the tardy office, like something's wrong. You just said, oh, well she, you know, there must be some reason and I'll just deal with it.

Maria Gamboa: Right, right.

Adia Gooden: Like I'll just take on the experience of being late and going to the tardy, I'll just handle it. I don't want to burden her. I've got it. I'm five, I'm six, but I'm just going to keep that to myself. Right. I don't want to have to ask her to do something different to change this for me. Right. So it seems like a survival strategy, a coping strategy that you came up with when you were very young that you have like held onto

Maria Gamboa: Could be, could be. I mean, yeah. I just wonder if there's something else, but yeah, I mean either way, I also don't like telling people what to do, you know? So that's coming up now for me come.

Adia Gooden: Okay.

Maria Gamboa: But, yeah, I mean that could be a big part of it. It also like what if they do it wrong? Like I don't trust them to do it, maybe that's a part of it, like, I'll do it better and if I ask them to do it, I have to wait for them to do it and remind them to do it and I don't like to repeat

myself, I feel, even though now I'm realizing that's normal, you have to follow up on emails, you have to remind, people are busy, but it doesn't mean anything bigger than that, it's not personal. I do take it personal, like if, and I think just because I am kind of independent, what if they do it wrong? So better that I do it, but that's just not, it's not working anymore.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. So there's some, like, I don't want to bother people. There's some, I don't know if I trust them to do it the way I wanted to do it and there's something I'd have to depend on someone. If I ask you to do it, then I'm waiting for you, I have to depend on you to do this thing I want you to do and that doesn't feel comfortable. It feels easier to just do it myself. Yeah. There's sort of a number of elements there. What experiences have you had actually trying to ask for help? Like have you done it at all and how has it gone?

Maria Gamboa: What I don't like is repeating myself, asking for something multiple times, so, yeah, so, I mean, I'm just thinking, for example, like I need to work out right and to do that, even with a kid, you even have to ask for help to take a shower (0:45:00), you watch the kid. So I think what's happening, you know, what it is.

Adia Gooden: I have learned in the last three months, I understand.

Maria Gamboa: I mean, it's just so what's happening right now is that I already, for example, with my kid, I work all day. My husband already has to watch her all day, so I don't think it's fair to ask on top of eight hours of work, can you watch her another hour so I can go to the gym and can you watch her another hour so I can cook that's a lot and maybe the answer is that, maybe it is a lot, maybe we need some other help besides my husband.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Maria Gamboa: Maybe.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Because maybe like I'm right and there's a reason I feel it is a lot and it is a lot, but I still need to help anyway.

Adia Gooden: Right. Right. Yeah. So I think with things like that, having being able to have a conversation with your husband about like, hey, I want to fully acknowledge you watching our

daughter all day and the amount of emotional and physical labor and time and energy that takes, and I understand that when I'm done with work, you know, I want to take over, right, like I want to take over because I want you to have a break and I know that you have been spending all this time. Right. And I'm noticing that I really want to be able to also work out at times or cook more efficiently so we can all have dinner at a reasonable time and so I'm wondering if there's a way to figure out how to make all of this work, like, could we have a conversation about like, are there two days a week when I could come home a little bit later or you know, do a workout at some point and you know, what I mean, whatever, like let's can we do this? Can we hold this together? Because I think that's the pieces.

There may not be a perfect easy solution and you holding it by yourself is hard. Right. So even if you could have a conversation, which is, can we try to figure out how to make this work? Right. Can we figure out at this stage in our lives, when our daughter is this age, what might be able to figure out and know that, you know, when she's a little older, we'll have a little bit more room because she won't need to be sort of watched 24/7. Can we talk about ways to make that work? And then at least you're holding it together.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. And even bringing it up. Right. Right.

Adia Gooden: Mm-Hmm. And you're not telling him what to do. You're not saying you need to watch her for another hour or like I'm not going to, right, you're not saying that you're saying we've got these balance, we've got these, you know, different needs, different commitments, different responsibilities, can we come together and, you know, put all our needs on the table, put all our responsibilities on the table, knowing that maybe every need won't be met, maybe every single thing won't be addressed, but at least we're aware of them and we can figure out like, okay, how do we start to address them and keep in mind, okay. Maybe it's not going to work right now, but maybe we can ask this family member to come over from 3 to 5 PM or 3 to 7 PM and you can work out and you can get a break and I don't know, but you can start sort of brainstorming and sort of figuring it out together instead of you holding it on your own.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. Yeah. I think so. I mean, I think something I was saying earlier was about thinking bigger and sometimes I don't think bigger. I think I'm only entitled to work. And thinking bigger would be like, oh, maybe I could have more.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: And so I think that's hard for me to, I don't want to feel, yeah, I don't know what the word is, but just ask for more than I need, but then it's like, I need it, so I have to like first feel that it's like valid.

Adia Gooden: If you justify.

Maria Gamboa: Yeah. Because is it a valid ask, so that's kind of where I'm at, where it's like, now I'm realizing it is, oh, because I didn't even tell you this part, I gained 30 pounds this year working from home and it's like, that's a lot and so yes, this is valid.

Adia Gooden: Yeah. Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: Yes. This is valid. Yes, I need to eat. Yes, I need to work out, like it shouldn't get to like a dramatic point like that for me to trust that I need this thing.

Adia Gooden: Right. And I'm noticing there's a sense of only if it's for my survival can I ask for it versus I'd love to have life where I am thriving and working out and moving helps me to thrive, I'm feeling really good in my body and show up, and I can just sort of have that abundance in a lot of senses of the term and I noticed also, when you talk about like, what's really important to you, it's the sort of the basics, (0:50:00) like safety and security, right, and so I think, and you know, we have to wrap up in the second. So this may be kind of the last big thing I say, which is how can you remind yourself of the truth of the safety and security that you are providing that you have provided for yourself? Because I think that there's a disconnect between the truth that you have gotten a PhD, right? Like you are committed, you are a hard worker, you persevere, you have right like there's a disconnect between that safety that you have gotten yourself and that security and your feeling, your internal felt sense of safety and I'm trusting myself.

I'm trusting that if I can get myself through a PhD program, I can figure it out. Right. Like, do you know what I mean? And so I think there's some like reminding yourself, I am safe. I have gotten it. I have earned it. I have worked for it. That's taken care of, that's done. And now it's sort of like, Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Now I get to explore and play in this space of what would bring me joy, what would bring me, right, and I'm not saying you don't have joy, I'm sure you have a lot of joy in your life, but like now I can play in the space of what more might I imagine for myself knowing that the safety and security is established. Right. I have a committed marriage. I have a child. I have a job. I've had jobs. I've done a PhD program, right, like I've gotten that. And so now I'm going to free myself up and again, this relates to the, like when

you're soothed and calm, then it is easier to explore and play. If you are in fight, flight, freeze mode, oh my gosh, I've got to hold everything together, then we're in, how do I just make it through this day? How do I make sure I'm safe, my family is safe, my child is safe? But if we're in, like, I feel good. Like, I can move through this. We can, oh, what would it look like to figure out how I could work out five days a week? Right. What would it like to make sure I get a fish taco every week, right, like, I have like Zumba every day, like, how can I make that happen? You know?

And that allows you to explore in that and I think the last thing I want to say is believing in sort of abundance around that can help with, I'm not taking that. None of this means I am taking away from my daughter or my husband that I could, we could figure out a way, I don't know how yet, but I could fantasize that there is a world in which my husband gets his needs met and gets his break, my daughter is taken care of, and I get my Zumba. Right. Like that, there's, you know, what I mean, there could be fantasy and play and it can stay there and you can say, I don't know how we're going to do it yet and you can say to your husband, wouldn't it be fun? Wouldn't it be great if we could figure that out? Like maybe we'll just start brainstorming and putting it out there and then maybe we'll get an idea. Oh, you know what, I know, you know, my cousin, you know, she's looking for babysitting and you know, we can give her that time, or I don't know what it is, but like leaving the room for figuring it out versus like, well, I don't know how it's going to happen, so I'm not even going to allow myself to desire it to happen.

Maria Gamboa: Mm. Yeah. Entertain the idea first. Yeah.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: I think so.

Adia Gooden: Okay. So as we wrap up, you know, how was this for you and what are like one or two things that you're kind of taking away from this conversation?

Maria Gamboa: Yeah, I really appreciate it. I mean, the first part about just not feeling, being okay with feeling feelings, right. It's not the end of the world. It doesn't feel good, but that's it, right, it'll go away, then you can do something about it once you felt it and giving this, it's more about like giving myself the space, yeah, to be human, right...

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: ...to take care of myself, to take care of my needs and then figure out what to do.

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: And with the part about asking for help, it's about learning how to dream. I mean, part of it, right, that I can have more than I think I can have, that's a big deal, that I deserve more than the basics. I still relate it to the basics, but what would it look like?

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: What would it look like to think bigger?

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: And tell people about it. Tell people about it.

Adia Gooden: Yes.

Maria Gamboa: So then they can help me that they know I want it.

Adia Gooden: Yeah.

Maria Gamboa: And then we can talk about ways to make it happen, but you can't make it happen if you don't even talk about it.

Adia Gooden: Yes. Awesome. Well, I really appreciate you being willing to come onto the podcast to share your experience, to be coached by me, and I'm glad that you found it helpful and that you're coming away with some kind of valuable insights and I hope that you sort of like are able to apply them, keep me posted, feel free to (0:55:00) email me and let me know how it goes. So thank you so much, Maria.

Maria Gamboa: Thank you.

Adia Gooden: Thanks for joining me this week on the unconditionally worthy podcast, make sure to visit my website, www.dradiagooden.com and subscribe to the show on iTunes, so you'll never miss an episode. You can also follow me on social media at Dr. Adia Gooden. If you love the show, please leave a review on iTunes, so we can continue to bring you amazing episodes. Lastly, if you found this episode helpful and know someone who might benefit from hearing it, please share it. Thanks for listening and see you next episode.

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