



THE QUILTERS COACH PODCAST

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Quilters

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

**WITH YOUR HOST
DARA TOMASSON**

160. Safety to Lose Weight and Sexual Trauma

Today's episode is actually kind of heavy. Today we're talking about sexual trauma and being safe to be you. This is episode one 60 and I'm Dara Tomasson and I'm the quilters coach. I'm here to help you to really look at.

What are the things that are happening in your life that are helping, that are blocking you from living the life that you really want to live.

So today's episode is actually going to be pretty heavy. But I am going to be talking about things that we don't normally talk about. So for some of you, it might feel really heavy. But my goal is for you to feel really liberated. And I'm going to be sharing some personal information. We don't need to be carrying this heavyweight any longer.

I am going to be an advocate to really help you to transform. Your relationship with yourself. It's going to be uncomfortable. It's going to be tough, but guess what? It's even more uncomfortable and more tough if you stay the same and you don't change. This way, at least, you know that you're going to a place where you have freedom and that you're going to be able to start achieving. The life that you really want to live.

Before we get into the meat of this podcast, I got to let you know that this is a double header for the worksheet. That's pretty serious stuff and I, I'm not being light about it, but I am saying it is pretty serious. And I do want you to take this seriously. I legitimately have clients that I've worked with, who have experienced sexual assault. They are in their sixties, seventies. I was the first person they've ever told in their life. They have been carrying that heavy weight with them all this time and that has really shaped so much of their life. I don't want that to happen for you. I'm going to get really raw and honest, really helpful.

Before we go through this very powerful and life changing episode. Make sure that you give yourself some time. Have some headspace to really think about it. The work that you do here has ripple effects when you spend time on your brain and you start investing in your brain, you see the ripple effects of the other people in your life. One of the members just recently went on a trip to Italy and she lost six pounds.

The reason why that's so significant is that she was able to really look at what is her purpose of her vacation? Is it to overeat? Is it too. Walk away from the table, feeling full and regret. Or was she. Being more balanced with the food choices that she made. Was able to do a lot more walking and it was really present with herself.

She enjoyed her trip so much more. What I find is a bonus six pounds down. I had my husband's cousins from England. It was a really hot day and we went to the Bouchard gardens. You guys, the Bouchard gardens are unbelievable. It totally is worth the hype, but I have this giant water bottle and it is super heavy. I got to a certain point where I was like.. I mean, they're going to drink all of this.

I'm going to dump it because it's hurting my shoulders. We are, if we don't take care of the things that we're carrying around then we are literally walking around with all this extra weight and it's not serving us.

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Let's get into the meat of this podcast.

My goal for this podcast is to help you open your eyes and to look at what's really going on and. If there are triggers as you're listening to me, I invite you to actually lean into those triggers. If they're our memories or if there are experiences. Or if there are some. You're feeling some discomfort. I want you to just put your hand on your heart. Put your feet on the ground. What this is doing, actually putting some pressure here. It's sharing your heart. You're mentally connecting to your body, which normally we have our emotions that create our emotions or hormones. A lot of us have stopped those emotions. We stuffed ourselves with food or over scrolling or whatever that is. This is actually a way for us to ground ourselves and to connect with our brain and our body.

This helps calm our hormones and calms our nerves. We have a Vagus nerve, which is. What's responsible for our sympathetic nervous system and our parasympathetic nervous system?

The parasympathetic nervous system is the one that calms us and says we're going to be okay. The sympathetic nervous system is the one that is always looking for danger and making sure that we're going to be okay. Especially when we're, when we're working with trauma, sexual trauma. We really need to reassure ourselves that we are in a safe place.

I'm at home. I have windows. I have a phone. I can call nine one one. I am safe. I am. I don't have anyone who's going to be breaking into my house or raping me or, or any of that. Even if I get on my phone and there's someone who is making inappropriate comments about my body. I can put my phone down.

I can get help like all of those things. When we put our hand on our heart and we kind of give it some pressure, We can breathe and hold it for four. then we can breathe out in four. We can breathe in for four. We can just calm ourselves. When the more we can be calm, the more we can be in our home, our head. Have that parasympathetic nervous system kick in. Because when emotions are high intelligence as well, we have to calm ourselves. That's one really important thing.

So as I'm sharing this podcast or any future podcasts or once he listened to the past. If you are starting to become triggered, I want to encourage you. That is a really important hack to help you to. Create the kind of healing and space in your brain that you can do that because otherwise you're always going to be in fight flight freeze or fun, and you're never really going to be able to. I be in a place where you can heal. I went to the APA V American psychological association of what sexual trauma is. This is on the first page of our worksheet. They define it as any disturbing experience associated with sexual activity. Such as rape incest, harassment, assault abuse and other sexual offenses.

It is a common cause for post-traumatic disorders and dissociative disorders. A post traumatic stress disorder. Is when you get a trigger. Maybe you smell a cologne or see a picture of someone that looks like someone who raped you or sexually traumatized you in some way. And that trigger brings up all the thoughts as if this is not safe. I can't trust men. Then you go into like, kind of more of a shutdown mode. Then just dissociative disorders are when you don't want to be with yourself.

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You will. Eat more food or even disconnect from yourself.

It's really normal for us to have these kinds of reactions because it's not normal to be sexually assaulted. It's not a healthy, normal human action to have someone treat you in that way. It's our body's way of saying, we have to take some serious action here. We can't allow this to happen.

We have that kind of reaction. We need to address it. . It's getting our attention. It's like saying, Hey, Hey, Hey, this is not okay. This is not right. And then we can go look for them . Seek help. Have you ever experienced sexual trauma? I think there's some danger here. Some people will say, yeah, but it's not as bad as other people like Elizabeth Smart or, you know, she was. Abducted from her home and taken for all that time.

My boss straightened my tie and pulled my hair out when I had an apron, this is me at the, I worked as a waitress. My boss did that. He straightened up my tie and pulled my hair out from the apron. It was so creepy. It felt so uncomfortable. That is a form of trauma. This is not a competition of whose trauma is worse. That's not even the point of it.

The point is. Any disturbing experience associated with sexual activity? Rape incest harassment, assault abuse. Sexual offense. I really want to emphasize that. If that was. If you had a reaction that felt like you were being violated or you were being, The steroid in any way. Take that. That's okay.

You're allowed to have that. There's this is not a . . scale of one to 10 and you're more, no, we're not doing that. It was uncomfortable. We're going to deal with it. Of course depending on the severity of it could potentially require more support now I am not, I'm going to say right off the bat.

I am not. A licensed therapist. There's a research paper that I have cited in the, in the show notes. It outlines four different trauma therapies that are highly recommended. I'm a life coach who helps women with that. And so there's psychodynamic therapy psychotherapy. There's trauma focused cognitive behaviour therapy.

There's the eye movement, desensitisation and reprocessing. That's the EMDR. Then there's just general therapy outlined that they put there. But as a life coach, I'm here to help you too. First of all, recognize what's actually happening. And two because so much of our thought patterns are, have been tangled and they've been really messed up.

My job is to help you to put a mirror to your thoughts to look at what's going on now. I also have my job is to refer you to a trauma therapist. That you can work with them separately, but I, what I see a lot of in my practice and in my membership and the one-on-one work that I do. Is that I help women to feel safe? In being in their bodies and start using these tools. To start looking at your thoughts. Because if you don't feel safe being in your brain, Then it's not going to work. So I feel like the work that I do as a life coach and the work that a therapist does, they're so complimentary because then we're able to help you to know what to do with those thoughts and to connect with your body and to help with that.

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I just wanted to kind of clarify that. This is one of the biggest problems too, is that anytime we talk about sexual trauma, we never talked about these things before we just put them in the closet. Then now I feel like there's kind of this whole other spectrum. Where it's like people just talk about all these different things and there's maybe not this level of sensitivity. Or regard. For where people are at.

Learning how to take yourself from where you are and then work through that is really important. Learning how to create that safety for yourself because one of the things that I often see, especially as we do this work and women start losing weight as a side effect of going into the, to solve the problem is that they start sabotaging themselves. They start feeling successful with weight loss.

They're really solving the issues. They're not overeating anymore. They're not over scrolling and they're really feeling the success and they're walking around feeling great. And then what happens? They go to a restaurant or they go. To the airport or something, and somebody comes out to them and then they start complimenting them. They don't know what to do. It's really uncomfortable and they're not used to having eyes on them and they don't want to have eyes on them because in the past. If they have eyes on them, they, that means they got, they attracted somebody and then that person violated them in whatever way it was. In order to feel safe they believe they have to put the weight back on because that feels scary. Now I was, it doesn't happen to me all the Time.

Please don't misinterpret this.

I do on occasion get grown men. Talk to me about my body. I'm six feet tall. They will say things like. You don't look like you had five babies. Or they'll make a comment about how I'm 50 and there's no way that I look 50 and I hardly have any wrinkles. It's actually really uncomfortable. Sometimes I'll say things like I'm a happily married woman. When you're talking to me like this, it's pretty uncomfortable. This is kind of creepy that you're saying these things. I'm 50, I'm married quite often, I'll just say I'm just a happily married woman. This is just my journey with my body. But it is awkward for me and it's uncomfortable, but I've just practised that it's okay to feel uncomfortable and it's okay that people can make comments. It's okay that I feel not so great about it. I also feel really great about the decisions that I've made about taking care of my body. And being healthy.

When we lose weight, like I said, more eyes go on us. Then the more the eyes. They go on us in the booth, come to a target from our potential danger. My goal is to help you to feel safe. In your current body.

And to feel safe in your future body.

What are the things that you feel safe in your body right now? So you feel safe that you can drive a car? That you can walk to the corner store and get in your car and get milk and basics. What are all the things that your body does for you right now that you really appreciate?

When you can start creating safety in the body that you have. Now you can start changing the way you look at yourself. I want you to ask yourself, how has trauma influenced your life?

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Do you spend a lot of time wanting to be like a wallflower, like you just kind of want to melt into the sidelines.

You don't want to have a lot of attention on you. I want you to write it down. All the different ways that trauma has influenced your life.

It's really important to be specific about it because the more specific you are in your understanding of it, the more specific you can be in working through it.

One of the things I do recommend is as you ask yourself, that question. You can just put your timer on.

For a minute you know what, for just one minute. I'm just going to ask myself this question. How has trauma influenced my life?

Then if nothing's coming I will ask myself and because I only have to do this for a minute I'll say to myself, well, what's my best guess.

Best guesses are like the flashlight. You can just see just a little bit ahead of you and it just gives you some ideas.

If you have unresolved sexual trauma, I really want to encourage you to get help. Now if you're not sure what you should do. You can always book a one-on-one 20 minute call with me. I can sit with you and I can help you. So please, please do that.

Everyone. Is entitled to their opinion. All sorts of people have opinions about me having five kids, all sorts of people have opinions. Me being a Christian. Or me being a quilter.

They're allowed. But this is one of my biggest messages for you right now. Is that your opinion of yourself? Most importantly, it is not selfish. In fact. If you don't take care of yourself. If you don't address your own issues then everyone else around you is going to be negatively impacted.

If you are not healthy Even physically healthy, then you can't do it, you can't serve people. You can't help people. If you aren't mentally healthy. You're feeling resentment. You snap. You're impatient. You're not able to help people the way you want to help them.

It is not selfish of you to take care of yourself and it is not appropriate to always put everyone's needs ahead of yours. It is not.

You have been doing it for far too long and you're not getting the results that you want. Have to stop.

You have to stop quitting on Yourself.

There's no way around it. It's like the weight loss drugs we talked about in the last episode. You cannot get personal transformation through taking drugs. You have to change your

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relationship with food. You have to change your relationship with your body. You have to change the way you're thinking about yourself.

Drugs can't do it for you. The other part of this too, is if you've had this trauma. Then blaming them.

And staying negative

it's not going to help. Right. It's just, you're just putting yourself deeper and deeper into a hole.

I really want you to write down your opinion of yourself? Then what is your opinion of your future self? This is the part where we learn about neuroscience. That is so exciting. When we watch a movie or when we, yeah, we watch a movie or read a book. It is so beautiful or it's so sad or it's so scary. We're having all these emotional responses.

The movie's not real. But our brain doesn't know the difference between if it's real or not. Because our brain is saying. Oh, she's so lovely or, oh, this is so scary or, oh no, they have to get together. What's going on? No, no, no. We can't have that other girl interfere with that. Like the other two they're meant for each other.

Even though we know it's not real. But in the moment, our brain believes it's real. Our brain we'll react accordingly. We can trick our brain to create our future self. We can start living into that new you. You can become that person.

When I decided I was going to be a professional quilter, an international quilting instructor. I just decided, I just figured it out. And now that's what I am. I'm also an international life coach. I have clients from all over the world.

I just learned how to do that.

I just figured it out. I went to my future self and I leaned into who I needed to become to become that person. That's what I've done. That's what my clients do and that's what you can do. That's why I'm so glad you're here sharing some wisdom.

When we do the research about obesity One of the biggest issues that I'm really concerned about. Is that Obesity? We don't understand obesity as well as we need to. I don't think I'm doing very well. Educated. I think there's a lot of people just thinking it's out of their control. It's something you're born with the propensity to be obese or whatever that is. But we're not taking matters into our own hands. Now I'm going to give an example.

My grandpa died of being an alcoholic. He didn't always drink heavy, but as he got older and he was a rancher and my uncle took over the farm my grandpa, wasn't doing everything that he used to do and he was trying to retire and he didn't really want to retire, but he couldn't do everything he could do before as a younger man. Alcohol just numbed it. He didn't know how to handle it. Then my grandma died at 64 from a heart attack and a broken heart.

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It was really hard on my grandma to see my grandpa. She'd have to go pick them up at the bar. It was really hard. After she died, my grandpa just said, I don't have the will to live and he literally drank himself. Ruined his liver. And he was gone within eight months. My great grandpa, my other side. He committed suicide. Drank a lot. Put a potato in the exhaust pipe. I have a propensity for alcoholism. I have a brother who is a recovering alcoholic. I think it's been 12 years. I have another brother who struggles with drug addiction. He's been cleaned for a while, it's a challenge. Because.

When you don't know how to feel your feelings. When you don't know how to ask for help you don't know how to navigate all these tricky emotions.

It just feels really overwhelming.

You can have obesity. We can have gambling addiction. We can have a drug addiction. We can have an alcohol addiction. We can have a workaholic addiction. That's definitely one of my challenges. We can have an over shopping addiction, a fabric addiction like.

That expression, pick your poison. A lot of those issues were caused by sexual trauma.

When we look at obesity the research is strong. Loud and clear. Women and men who have been reported to have childhood sexual abuse are more likely to be obese as adults.

Research consistently shows that individuals who experienced sexual trauma or assault are at a higher risk of obesity. Compared to those who have not experienced such trauma. The psychological factors could contribute to weight, gain and difficulty in weight management.

For those women who are survivors of sexual trauma. Emotional eating and using food as a coping mechanism or common responses to trauma which can lead to weight gain over the time. Individuals who experienced sexual trauma or assault may adopt sedentary behaviours or engage in less physical activities as a way to avoid situations that trigger memories or emotions related to their trauma. Substance abuse and unhealthy coping mechanisms such as excessive alcohol consumption are also linked to trauma. Weight loss is involved. Sometimes some very. Heavy duty, emotional work.

And. You will be surprised at different times of your life that different situations and different emotions will come up.

I'm grateful that I have the technology and the ability and the skills to be able to share this with you.

Our bodies are. But the problem is they're very visual. People. Can see our bodies and they can make judgments about our bodies and they can, even, men can be aroused or women could be aroused by different body types. We can't control that. We can't control other people. See us and how they react to us. Me being six feet tall. I might trigger somebody to maybe. I don't even know, like I could look like their mother or who abused them, or I, maybe I remind them of. A teacher or a coach or someone that abused them. I have no idea. Just having that awareness, I think this is really important. The thing is my body is no one

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else's business. This is my body. I can own my body and I can. Do whatever I want with my body and my relationship with my body is mine.

I get to decide what I want to do with this body? Do I want to make food? Do I want a garden? Do I want to Paint? Do I want to tear down my kitchen walls? I just have to decide, but this is my decision. If our dads said things about our body or our teachers or other people, our society.

They're allowed. But what you think about you is the most important..

I want to invite you to spend some time on this. Now I have experienced sexual trauma.

It was one of the reasons why it took me. Some time before I was able to get married. It's definitely a sensitive topic because of a lot of sexual trauma. Happens within our own families. We have those dynamics of cousins and.

Challenges and trying to be respectful to different people, but also being able to say what you want to say and how you want to say it. There's a part of how do you keep the peace or whatever? I mean, it's messy.

No clean cut way. But one of the things that I want to say. Someone who has worked through trauma.

Worked through a lot of body image. Creating safety for my body for myself to be who my, who? My body wants to be around 150, 160 pounds. That it's natural body weight. That's what it feels happy with. When I'm not feeling safe, then of course the weight goes up. Then I'm not, I'm not operating out of my, out of my optimal body.

We have big dogs and big dogs with you put on more weight. It's harder on their hips. Our bodies don't operate as well. If we are over burdening them.

The first thing I want to say is that you aren't broken. When you experienced sexual trauma. If you did not deserve it.

No one deserves that.

The second thing is you can heal.

And everyone's healing journey is going to be different. But I want to encourage you. To take those steps. And if you need someone to cheer you on.

I am more than happy to do that. And the third thing is.

That holding onto this weight is causing you so many blocks in your life. So many missed opportunities. I just want to encourage you to. Take one little step. Because those micro steps, those little steps. Adding it up can have huge impacts. So just like a tap. That's been dripping. Eventually it will fill up the tub. Even though you think, oh, how could I ever heal?

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How could I ever change?

Sometimes it might take years. But if you just do small little consistent steps,

Eventually you will heal.

I recently had a conversation with my mom about the sexual trauma that I experienced. She was able to share some insights and she was able to have that conversation. One of the things that I like to tell myself, is that when I do this hard work, Not only am I healing generational. Changes. But I'm able to give myself so much more pleasure, so much more enjoyment in life. I'm able to keep building trust. And I'm able to.

Increase my ability to help others because it's like I'm the one with the snowplough.

I'm clear on the path. Others can follow.. Clearly, this is emotional for me, and I'm very happy to talk about it, but I'm also.

It is, you know, obviously it's being vulnerable. But I also believe that it's more important for me to share my experiences. To be more open. Then the possible repercussions of sharing those things. I really want to be that flag for you. That to know that you are not alone, you're not broken. That it is possible to heal. Whenever you're ready. I'm not going to force you.

But often they say when the student is ready, the teacher will appear.

So I just want you to know about your love. I thought you're not broken. That you're not past repair. I promise you that.

There's no mistake that you're listening to this podcast right now.

There are no mistakes. I love you. Thank you for listening. If this resonated with you. Please reach out to me. If you have a friend that you

I have shared with you that they've had these challenges. Please share this with them. We need to get this word out.

If you want more help with learning about your body and how it's changing, Through menopause, perimenopause, through whatever it is, my program is focused on helping you truly become your own best expert. So as we go through August, we're really diving into how to lose the physical weight when you focus so much on the mental.

I have an incredible program for that coming in August. So there's so much to look forward to. You truly can make your own transformation and I love helping you find that inner knowledge and wisdom that's just waiting for you to unlock. So that you can create permanent change for yourself.