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[00:00:00] **Pippa:** Hello, I'm Pippa.

[00:00:21] **Kate:** And I'm Kate.

[00:00:23] **Pippa:** Welcome to a practical guide to death.

[00:00:32] **Kate:** This discussion episode shares a conversation between writer, Annie citizens and end of life doula and former therapist Katrina Taae.

[00:00:40] **Pippa:** The discussing Annie's play the tower, so if you haven't already listened to that, maybe pause this episode. Now listen to that one first. So you don't hear any spoilers.

[00:00:50] **Kate:** And if you have already heard the tower, then we hope you find listening to this conversation. Interesting.

[00:01:15] **Annie:** hi, I'm Annie. I wrote the tower and I'm very happy to be joined by Katrina T who is an end of life, doulas specializing in grief for this podcast. Hi Katrina. Hi

[00:01:31] **Katrina:** Annie. Thanks for having me. Yeah, pleasure. Well, shall I tell you a little bit about myself and how I came into grief? I was a nurse originally, so I have a medical.

[00:01:45] Background for awhile, but I was actually a counselor for 18 years of which 13. I worked in a hospice helping the families after death. So I worked with, uh, a lot of grief. I'm now an end of life doula and I specialize in grief and help the doulas with that as well, as well as obviously our clients and. I don't know if you know any about I've I've, co-written an illustrated guide to grief called surviving the tsunami of grief.

[00:02:22] Oh, wow. So it was really exciting to me to be asked to come on and read your book, read your play about grief, because there's just so many interesting aspects to it.

[00:02:37] **Annie:** Great. Uh, is your book out now?

[00:02:40] **Katrina:** It is. Yes. It's been out for about a year and a half. And, um, we sell, yeah, we were doing well with it. It's, um, it's very different sort of book, cause it's not a written, but as in chapters, it's about it's set against the metaphor.

[00:02:57] Of a tsunami, the different phases of that and illustrated beautifully so that even if people even just look at the pictures, they would understand the journey of grief, but it's, we've used all the words and the sort of things that people have said to us and the experiences they've had within grief as little soundbites suits.

[00:03:21] Dip in and dip out of sorts of book on any given day. And I think that's helpful for people who are grieving. Probably, probably not. She wouldn't be

[00:03:34] **Annie:** ready for it.

[00:03:36] **Katrina:** Exactly. That's what I was thinking. Yes, she was. She, she wouldn't relate to it. I don't think. Yeah. Well, she's a

[00:03:44] **Annie:** survivor. Isn't it? And she's created a structure of control and avoidance and compartmentalization around herself in order to make sense of things and survive things.

[00:03:59] And she's already doing

[00:04:01] **Katrina:** that

[00:04:02] **Annie:** before her mom dies. So her mum was an alcoholic. And so she has been brought up around chaos and, you know, very. A lot of loss of control, a lot of anxiety, a lot of fear and a lot of abandonment. And so she's created this identity for herself that involves yeah, a very high level of control and a very high level of not going there.

[00:04:36] But when Mary died, And would the events, I don't know if people have already listened to the play when they, I think they have, so we're married, dies, and when she finds out how she dies, um, and then when the subsequent strange events start to take place, it's a real challenge to the structure of the world that she's created.

[00:05:04] Uh, maybe you could say. Maybe her mom is, you know, it depends on your belief system and this isn't how I wrote it, but I kind of wanted it to

work on this level. Maybe Mary is doing a final, good thing for Shauna and kind of challenging her to rethink her belief system.

[00:05:29] **Katrina:** I quite liked that because. You know, we could put, we can project our own take onto it.

[00:05:36] Can't we as the listener. That's what I did when I listened. I thought Mary felt

[00:05:47] well. I was the word that was going to come to mind was evil. I don't think obviously she's not an evil woman, but I didn't feel she was very kind to show her. You didn't

[00:05:59] **Annie:** feel her intentions? No visitation were kind.

[00:06:03] **Katrina:** No, I didn't. I mean, I wonder, you know, gosh, we don't know why somebody might visit a daughter, but if we were just to sort of step out of the reality of it all, you know, I'm imagining that Mary felt a lot of guilt about being an alcoholic.

[00:06:24] Yeah. At some level. And of course, Shauna, like you were saying, she's really had to build up her safety, that tower she's had to build all her boundaries. And I bet if I asked her in a therapy session, which I doubt very much, she probably come to anyway at the moment where she is at the moment. And we were talking about that and he, but yeah, I think you'd find a very, very defended.

[00:06:57] She's keeping her grief away. She's keeping her mother away. She's keeping her, her life in order to feel safe. Exactly. So that's really, as she says about herself, avoidant personality, somebody who doesn't want to feel her feelings. Um, and of course that's really difficult for her because I think the science and the research shows that people who are avoidant of grief, um, might actually have a longer grieving period.

[00:07:36] **Annie:** That's what it looks like Shauna's gonna have, unless she takes the offer that's made to her at the

[00:07:45] **Katrina:** end. Yeah. What do you think about, uh, we, we w we were just weren't. We, we were just quickly chatting before this podcast to say what would happen at the end of this play? Yeah.

[00:08:00] **Annie:** I mean, I don't want to say too much in case I managed to write a chapter two, but what we were talking about was that probably the shorter that we know at the moment.

[00:08:13] Would probably triple down as a result of that visitation and not embrace her feelings, her shadow her unconscious life, everything below the rational, everything below language, she probably wouldn't. She probably doubled down into the world of ego control, more science, more rules, more boundaries, more co more compartments.

[00:08:41] Until it didn't work anymore. Yeah. And th the thing is Sean has got a hell of a lot of willpower because she has taken herself from a highly dysfunctional, you know, kind of, not even working class kind of criminal underclass is the unfortunate demographic that is used for her background. She's taken herself from that to a research scientist in Cambridge, which is just a wild ride with.

[00:09:10] You know, there's not a lot of reference points for, so she, she has willed herself into that position, which has meant she's, you know, she's stubborn, she's closed she's hyper-focused or those things have really served her. And now in her grief, they, um, they're not going to serve her. They're going to impede.

[00:09:36] Healing properly. That's that's I mean, I'm not, I'm not a scientist and I'm not a therapist, but that's the perspective from which I wrote her. If that

[00:09:48] **Katrina:** makes sense. Yeah, it does. And I, I think the really difficult and sad thing about grief is that often times we don't, we don't want to be grieving. It's so difficult and the feelings are so intense.

[00:10:07] And if we can find ways to emotionally regulate that, then we're going to be very drawn to those. And, um, afterwards I was thinking about, um, the model of grief from strobe and shoot, where if you, for example, had a child. Who died. The father might be showing a lot of restorative grief and that sort of going back to work and, and getting on with things and being quite practical, routines, routines, very important routines.

[00:10:47] And the mother might be a much more emotional and they might not be meeting each other in their understanding. What people who are grieving really need is something that Shauna doesn't have actually is. Then they need both to feel the pain of the law. To work through it in time. No set time. There is, I don't believe there's set times for these things, but they also do need some

chance to be in normal life and use those restorative skills so that you can go to the supermarket and buy the food you need.

[00:11:30] Or you can go to work. Without breaking down all day in the toilets or feeling that you can't be there. And I think what's happened to Shawna because of her avoidant personality is she's all in. The restorative part. Yeah. And that that's, that's tough for her, although she doesn't realize it. You know, I feel a lot of empathy for her because she doesn't realize what's happening.

[00:12:03] We, we were saying when we, that she's very unconscious to her process. She's in her normal life. It feels normal. And the grief, hasn't the depth of that traumatic day thing. Heart's so traumatic by that 1 0 6 bus. Yeah. Army.

[00:12:22] **Annie:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I do do sometimes people like that, um, go into a sort of physical ill, like.

[00:12:33] I believe sometimes like the body has a wisdom or like the psyche has a wisdom to it that can sometimes help you despite yourself. And I suppose, you know, maybe she would get really physically ill so that she had to stop. Like what kind of things happen to people that can sometimes allow them, force them to stop

[00:12:59] **Katrina:** the

[00:13:00] **Annie:** routines and fail that.

[00:13:03] **Katrina:** Well, I, I actually believe myself and I've experienced myself. That grief is about 80% physical. There's just this isn't research-based. So please don't anybody quote me on this, but it's about 80% physical and 20% emotional and mental and social. Um, experience that we have, and those sorts of physical things that happen to you are feeling incredibly tired, not sleeping.

[00:13:39] Well, I think you mentioned that didn't you in the, in the play, perhaps having irregular eating or disordered eating, maybe eating too much drinking, too much, finding physical way. To make that better be that perhaps some too much TV, drugs, or alcohol or sex, different ways that people might suit themselves.

[00:14:10] But at the end of the day, it is an experience that makes you feel very, very physically. Heavy in your heart, heavy in your stomach. Your gut can have a lot of, um, physical side effects and those sorts of things can spiral. And

it's a well-known fact that people who are grieving there, their immune system is down.

[00:14:41] So they're having a hard time. They often get, um, you know, minor illnesses, coughs, Colds, uh, flu or COVID right now, probably. Yeah. So it definitely affects you physically and that long standing stress of being the child of an adult alcoholic that stressful Annie. Yeah. Incredibly. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:15:08] **Annie:** So. Yeah. So you were saying just before we started recording that you felt that Shauna's grief was complicated grief.

[00:15:21] And, um, I was delighted to hear that because that's what I wanted to write was the study of somebody suffering from complicated grief. But, um, what made you recognize that insurance?

[00:15:41] **Katrina:** Well, I thought about way back in my, in my own life. I remember my brother died in a very traumatic mountaineering accident in 1979, God.

[00:15:55] And about, um, let me think. About 10 years after that a girlfriend, um, I was living in America at the time, rang me up and told me that her mother had done. And I listened to her and I wasn't a therapist in those days and I listened to her and that was fine. And then about three days later, she rang me back in a rage and asked me why I hadn't been in touch.

[00:16:24] Why wasn't I supporting her? Why hadn't I gone round to her house? And I honestly just didn't know what she was talking about. I had absolutely no idea what she was saying. I didn't understand. And I just gone into therapy and I was asking my therapist, you know, saying this woman rang me and she was across with me and I, I just don't get it.

[00:16:49] I mean, I spoke to her w what she talking about and we unpacked it a bit and she asked me, well, what is it in you that you don't think. You don't need to talk to her. I said, well, you know, I don't know. I don't know. But of course it was because I had totally suppressed the traumatic death of my own brother for 10 years.

[00:17:17] Oh my gosh. I, I had just gone along saying, well, it's he died that sound. My mum's really having a hard time. My dad's having a hard time. My sister's having time, but I'm okay. I'm okay.

[00:17:32] **Annie:** Oh, well, so that's interesting. So do you think that was, you were aware of the others having a hard time and you were trying to be okay because they weren't, because

[00:17:42] **Katrina:** someone has.

[00:17:44] I think partly that I think to see your parents on rival is very, very difficult. Can you hear my cat by the way? Is that the cat from the play

[00:17:56] **Annie:** Alisa used her cat for the play? This is my cat rush. I've got two. This is rush. It's just come to see what's going

[00:18:02] **Katrina:** on. Well, I hope she doesn't knock anything over.

[00:18:06] We might believe.

[00:18:10] **Annie:** Um, but yeah. That's incredible. So you ha you'd kind of suppressed everything for

[00:18:16] **Katrina:** 10 years. I did. And then just like Shawna, you know, actually it, that trigger of that woman saying that to me and being in therapy and working through that, and really starting to understand what a loss it was is a sort of collapse into grief.

[00:18:43] And your play leave Shauna, just at that moment, when we don't quite know what's going to happen to her, we don't know. And that, it's very interesting to me from my own experience. I re you know, we said a moment ago, didn't we, that we hope that she could have some kind of understanding about the way she was dealing with it and how she was dealing with her life.

[00:19:15] But, you know, also from the aspect, you know, I I'm the adult child of an alcoholic. My mom was an alcoholic or there was any diagnosed later in life, her behavior throughout her life. Was very irregular and it's very, these are very difficult things because you're, when I think when you're the adult child of an alcoholic, you're walking around tiptoeing on eggshells, not to upset the person because it's all very chaotic.

[00:19:53] **Annie:** That's true. That's totally true. But you are already, it was, were you in therapy for not your grief if that's not too personal, because that that's incredible that you just started. So you had the container. Yes. Cause I feel like Shauna doesn't have a container because she doesn't invite that kind of.

[00:20:16] Well vulnerability in her relationships where she's ever going to be the one being held or the one, even the one holding actually. But she's, she doesn't invite that kind of vulnerability at all. Does

[00:20:30] **Katrina:** she? Not at all. She's completely shut down. Isn't Shani. Yeah.

[00:20:38] **Annie:** So what kind of other things about Shauna? Uh, um, illustrative of complicated grief either in what she suffers or her reactions to it.

[00:20:53] **Katrina:** Well, I, I, I thought that her, her comments about her relationships were very interesting when they, but she, you want to say more? Yes. Yeah. I will. I was really reflecting on that idea that she went to the museum to meet her dates and she was on two dating sites.

[00:21:15] So she wanted to date. Yep. And then she sort of suss them out at the museum, which is actually I'm sure very sensible thing to do, but then she would take them back to the flat presumably for sex, but then they were just out there w there was no ongoing relationships. So she scratched her itch. So to speak, but she never engaged in a relationship.

[00:21:44] And, and that, that makes life quite lonely and quite difficult. Although I suspect for her, it's it isn't though near difficult in, in her day-to-day experience, it would probably be harder having a partner in the flat with.

[00:22:03] **Annie:** Yeah. At the moment, that would be hell on earth for her to have to deal with the messiness of day-to-day intimacy would be a nightmare.

[00:22:15] **Katrina:** Yeah. And also with respect to her grief, you know, I really wondered, and I I've certainly experienced this myself about the, the child. We then. The longing for a normal mum. Yeah. You know, when your mom dies and she's now colleague, or you have a difficult relationship with her, which even though my mum wasn't drinking at the end of her for the last, I think 10 years of her life, her behavior was very similar to how it had been when she was drinking.

[00:22:52] **Annie:** She had side drunk, what they call

[00:22:54] **Katrina:** Yeah that's right. A dry drunk.

[00:22:56] **Annie:** Can you explain to our listener what a dry drunk is in case?

[00:23:00] **Katrina:** Well, I don't know if, if I know enough to explain it scientifically, but put it this way. I think my sister and I were really excited when she went into treatment. Yeah. And we thought that this was going to be the big change.

[00:23:16] And we were going to get this mum back from treatment who was going to be this warm, fuzzy, pink, and fluffy, not angry person anymore. And that just wasn't really the case and that the behaviors were all the same. Although I think in reality, she had quite a lot of mental health problems. And that complicated it.

[00:23:42] So, but, but even as an adult woman, as a therapist who understood grief so well, I recognize that I just wanted a nice mum who was a bit more mum, like, of course. And when she died, that, that wishes over. And what do you do with that, Annie? What does Shauna do with that?

[00:24:15] **Annie:** Well, what, what do you think, um, you know, the strange experiences that she has in the play, what, how do you explain them? What do you think going on really?

[00:24:32] **Katrina:** Well, as a therapist and as a doula, I've always just tried to meet people where they are. I have had many clients who have had experiences. Of one sort or another, be it, um, lights flashing at night and feeling that, um, it's their partner or their wife or husband. I've had people who felt that their partner has laid down very close to them on the bed at night.

[00:25:10] I've had people have visitations to the end of their bed as they were dying from their loss spouse. I, people who hear song their song all the time. White feathers doesn't matter what it is. It could, there are many, many. Manifestations of that sort, not quite as explicit as Shawna's, but who am I to say?

[00:25:41] Because I don't know. In fact, if that is the dying person trying to contact them, maybe it is, you know, I like to think of it as an end of life doula. I like to think of it as a huge mystery. But if I was to look at it with a more scientific brain, I think one could say that her personality is cracking in some way.

[00:26:15] There's a, there's a, it's been cleaved by what happened with the, with the glass and the jug and the, uh, coffee pot, and so forth.

[00:26:27] **Annie:** And then the song coming on the radio,

[00:26:30] **Katrina:** the song and, and hearing her mother's voice. It is interesting. Cause I, I do think that we will. It's one of the great ironies, you know, I never want to hear my mother's voice again, in some ways, some parts of me and in other parts, I hear her voice all the time.

[00:26:51] The sorts of things she would say to me and my sister, they come into my head or I say them to my own children. That's incredible thing. You'll never say that. And then you do.

[00:27:04] **Annie:** Yeah. Oh, I, yes. I also am aware that as a parent. Um, but there's something about the extreme physical, if Shauna is in denial about her.

[00:27:22] She's still feeling some of the, the physical symptoms of it. Isn't she, like, we know she's feeling the insomnia and we know she's feeling anxious, although she's not naming it as anxiety, but from my experience of grief, the extreme insomnia, like extreme insomnia going on for months and months and months, it does.

[00:27:50] Hi, and your senses in strange ways. And I think sometimes when you're, I, I got to a point where it was the opposite of Shauna kind of, I just felt like I was underwater, like sounds were really muffled and I couldn't see, I couldn't even see properly, everything felt underwater, but I know that there is a sort of retuning of our responses to our senses when we're in an extreme physical state, whether it's just normal exhaustion or whether it's grief induced exhaustion. So I, I wonder if that kind of exhaustion makes you more susceptible to hearing and seeing visitations and that, that kind of thing. Cause you are kind of inadvertently open doors, whether you want to or not. Does that make sense?

[00:28:50] **Katrina:** It does. I mean, I think lack of sleep, you know, there's, there's a reason that it was used as a torture. Exactly. It is like a torture. I always feel physically ill when I'm tired. I'm very intolerant of being tired. I'm not somebody that compare on through it.

[00:29:10] I think it dissembles us. It dissembles our psychic, dissembles our bodies. It dissembles our digestion. We can't function. And then we are more open to difficult feelings, things that might happen to us the way we interpret them. And we might get that wrong or right. It doesn't, you know, I don't know which it would be, but we are, we're not ourselves.

[00:29:48] And we're definitely not are barricaded selves our way. I mean, to some extent, any, we've all got a mask on. Sure. You know, I may

[00:29:57] **Annie:** go out literally most of the time, these days.

[00:30:01] **Katrina:** Well, so true. It's so true. But,

[00:30:04] **Annie:** um, but is it, is there an argument that the body's wisdom. Helps propel someone into going through grief, even if they don't want to.

[00:30:17] So like, you know, if you're, if you're not sleeping, if you're not eating, you know, and it, all of those things, not eating, not sleeping, maybe using substances as kind of affecting your

[00:30:30] **Katrina:** perceptions.

[00:30:33] **Annie:** Couldn't that be an invitation to start processing? Somehow because you're altering your perception. So is that a kind of wisdom that the body has to kind of help you along?

[00:30:46] **Katrina:** Well, I've always thought of that. You know, I'm really particularly thinking about the first 12 weeks, sort of six to 12 weeks. I think that, um, Mary was killed two months before. Wasn't it?

[00:31:05] **Annie:** She was killed two months before Shauna found out, we found

[00:31:08] **Katrina:** out that's right now, six

[00:31:11] **Annie:** months before the

[00:31:12] **Katrina:** recording. So this is how I would think of it as a therapist.

[00:31:17] Yeah, the first S roughly, roughly up to about eight to 10 weeks, particularly if there's been a traumatic death is really a period of shock. Yeah, so she didn't know she died. So imagine that her shock and a very big one, a huge shock to the system to hear about this traumatic death and also having in that whole talk about the decomposition of the body and her thinking about that that came at roughly two months.

[00:31:55] So six months she's barely. Coming in through the shock. And actually what tends to happen to people is they are in a period of shock. They won't be going around saying, oh, I'm in shock. I'm shocked. Then they're saying things like I'm so tired. I don't want to talk to people. My legs feel really heavy. I'm not sleeping.

[00:32:23] I'm not eating well. I don't know what I'm doing or I feel completely numb. I, I, I done, I'm not crying. What's wrong with me, or I'm crying so much that I can't even get out of the house. So that can be a whole spectrum of symptoms that come forward, but what tends to happen, and this would be happening to add to, um, Shauna, just that this time.

[00:32:55] Roundabout that six month mark, but shorter, of course, because of not knowing is that the reality of the loss is starting to come home to her. So if you like, think of it like that empty space, it's not that she wanted to be with her mother, but her mother now isn't there. And that is when I believe very often grief gets worse and it often coincide.

[00:33:24] With people saying to you, well, six months have gone by, are you feeling better now? Or the support tails off because it's actually being quite a long time and potentially friends are getting a bit tired of hearing the old story again. Yeah. And

[00:33:47] **Annie:** they're getting tired of doing the casserole rotor and the unit.

[00:33:53] **Katrina:** The Castro rotor is stopped by now. They've stopped after probably a month, to be honest. Yeah.

[00:34:03] **Annie:** And that's just at the point at which it's all beginning, actually,

[00:34:07] **Katrina:** exactly when you need more help. So I thought that the timing and the play was very interesting. When you think about that. Yeah, things were going to get harder for Shauna, not easier because

[00:34:22] **Annie:** Sean is then left in this weird space of having to have a conversation with herself that touches on her mum because of her job and the drugs that she's researching.

[00:34:36] And then because of all the weird stuff that happens, she has. Stop the journey somehow, right? At the end, even if she then just draws the Doobie back over her head and

[00:34:53] **Katrina:** reverts. And that's the thing, isn't it. We can go along being unconscious, unconsciously, unconscious, if you like, we don't even know that there's anything deeper or.

[00:35:12] Further down in our psyche or our feelings or our thoughts or how we are as a person in the world. We're just going about our business day to day humdrum and, and it being relatively successful too, which leads it to perpetuate because. That's a good thing because we get to work and we have our friends and we feed our cat and we're happy and we don't have to be in a relationship or be in one or whatever it is you want, or an insurance case.

[00:35:46] You know, we talked about that barricaded boundary itself that is coping, and that is also a self emotional regulation tool because she's quite, even keeled. But at some point, usually something triggers that little first opening, that little chasm that you sort of dropped down, you think, oh, what what's going on here?

[00:36:19] Oh, I am suddenly feeling very uncomfortable or have very sad. Oh, I don't want to be here and just scrambled back up to the top, but the crack is the crack is there. And I think that's what happened to Shawna. Yeah. We,

[00:36:35] **Annie:** we kind of leave her, looking into the crack and wondering what the hell is she's going to do.

[00:36:42] I think it's interesting as well in that, in a way Mary kind of has more access to coping mechanisms than Shauna does. Um, so I don't really want to talk about my own lived experience here, but, um, I am the daughter of a preacher who I violently rejected all of his beliefs at a really young age and for various reasons, Shawna has vial has kind of wholesale rejected everything to do with Mary.

[00:37:23] So, because she's had to reject her as a mother and reject her being an alcoholic, she's also had to reject her Catholicism and her use of tarot and spirituality. Actually might be really helpful for her in this case. I'm not suggesting that everyone needs to be religious or use tarot cards. Absolutely not.

[00:37:45] But I'm saying that sometimes we need a non rational approach to things. Sometimes being a hyper rational that's that's why, you know, CBT is great, isn't it? But it, it goes so far. It doesn't go. To the depths. That's why we have other forms of therapy and like somatic therapy, you know, and psychosynthesis, which is what you used to do in all of those things.

[00:38:17] And I feel like Shawna needs something like that or some kind of, because it provides a language, it provides a safety net for talking about very difficult feelings. If you're someone who cannot be vulnerable because it uses metaphor and you know, it has rituals attached to it and objects attached to it.

[00:38:43] And I think that often people find those mediators very helpful when working through extreme emotional states. Sean, his life is currently bereft of any of those opportunities. So we were talking earlier about, you said you thought Mary was evil?

[00:39:05] **Katrina:** Well, I thought her voice was quite scary.

[00:39:12] **Annie:** You have to talk to the actress.

[00:39:16] **Katrina:** I'm sorry.

[00:39:20] **Annie:** But I, cause we were, we were talking about like, what is it that is happening? And obviously we've already spoken about how it could just be an extreme sort of somatic grief response, or it could be Mary's ghosts coming back to kind of help her daughter or it could be Sean as own internalized good mother.

[00:39:44] **Katrina:** Pushing her. Well, I, I would really like to think so. And I think, I think it could be because you know what, what's so important I need to remember is that even within the most difficult relationships and, um, I know this and you probably do too. There is some good, it's not all bad. It won't have been all terrible, terrible things may have happened, but.

[00:40:13] There will have been moments of mothering that have gone in. And so she will carry those with her and probably have longing for her, her mum or a different sorts of mom missile. So, because she has observed. Probably other mums mothering. Yeah. As well. It's not only going to be her own mum. So, and we watch films and we watch telly and we understand how it would be.

[00:40:45] So it might be her own longing. It might be the good mother that is embedded within her, that she knows what a mum should do. But in the end, she comes to this point, doesn't she with her lack of spirituality and this tarot card really in her face about danger and crisis and destroying everything that feels secure.

[00:41:14] And yet she's almost encouraged by her mom to just step over that line. Fuck Scion. Science might not be the be-all and end-all for Shona

[00:41:31] **Annie:** as a therapy professional, or like, what would you like to happen for Shauna in

[00:41:41] **Katrina:** episode two? Well, in episode two, I would love to see Shauna go into therapy. I mean, I would say I was a therapist, but this is, this is what would really help her because of course in counseling or psychotherapy or psychoanalysis as well, I'm sure a lot of the.

[00:42:10] What done in counseling is done on a relational level. So what I mean by that is the relationship that is built up of trust. And respect between the client and the therapist is where the deep work is done. Of course, there's lots of other things that are done in therapy, but for, for somebody like Shauna, who.

[00:42:40] As you say has no intimacy in her life, it would be extremely uncomfortable to go into therapy. Would probably feel like his skin is being pulled off piece by piece, but in a way it's what needs to happen. Slowly over time, somebody like Shauna, you, you not gonna rush her through therapies. She's going to do it as much as she can.

[00:43:11] At any given time. So you, if, if she were my client, I would not be pushing her terribly hard in, I sort of mean that in a kind way, but I wouldn't, wouldn't be pushing her into places. She doesn't want to go any time soon. I would be building our relationship and gently going around the edges until she gets a little bit of confidence.

[00:43:40] **Annie:** And how, how would you do, what would you for someone that's kind of rational and logical and empirical and scientific has shown, or would you try and hit her a different level or

[00:43:52] **Katrina:** no, I wouldn't. No, I wouldn't because Assagioli, who's the, the, um, person who started psychosynthesis counseling always said meet, like, with like, Certainly at the beginning, I would be keeping it very much on her level.

[00:44:14] I would be meeting her where she is and how well, and in a similar way. And when she, when she would become to trust me more than I'm not going to take her down into the underworld, like young might. Oh, you know, that, that sort of difficult places that she just so clearly doesn't want to go. I would be clearly needs to go.

[00:44:40] So clearly he needs to go at some, some level. Yeah. I would then be doing it that way. So I would meet her where she is.

[00:44:50] **Annie:** So that's quite a long therapeutic process. That's quite expense. That's going to be quite expensive for.

[00:44:58] **Katrina:** Yeah. Well, it probably depends on the therapist. It probably depends where you live.

[00:45:03] It probably, you know, there are, are very good free counseling services around the country. I know there's waiting lists, but that might be an option for her. It's true. Yeah. It's true. But

[00:45:19] **Annie:** what what'd you think would happen to if she didn't hear the call? If she just say. That was a bit weird. I'm going to try and forget about it and go back to Norma.

[00:45:31] And I'm going to do even more batch cooking and even more running and even casual sex. And I'm just going to work harder and I'm going to find a new drug to research that's similar chemically. So I can still like carry on my work and I'm just going to normalize as much as possible. What do you think.

[00:45:52] Obviously she's fictional, but what do you think could happen if that were the case?

[00:46:01] **Katrina:** Well, I think her grief is going to catch her up any,

[00:46:06] **Annie:** but it could be in like 10 years or 20 years

[00:46:08] **Katrina:** at some point there'll be another crack. I think it's that? There's this saying about grief? You can't go over it. You can't go under it.

[00:46:20] You can't go around it. You have to go through it. And then I don't, I'm not prescriptive about that. There's no way to go through it. Each person's grief is their own landscape and every amazing

[00:46:34] **Annie:** to think about it as a landscape,

[00:46:35] **Katrina:** actually. Yeah, that's really coming from my book in an out of the illustrations, in my book. We say

[00:46:44] **Annie:** more about your book to finish off because we've come full circle. So that's really not. So tell me about the landscapes.

[00:46:54] **Katrina:** Well, the book has set against the metaphor of a tsunami and so the illustrations are the different phases of a tsunami and loaded with

[00:47:06] **Annie:** losing the first one where it all sucks back.

[00:47:08] **Katrina:** Yes. So, so what the. The death is depicted as what happens out in the ocean, some sort of cataclysmic event. That's the first bit, the shock is the sea pulling away and people not understanding what's happening because then, then

[00:47:32] **Annie:** it is literally like a rug being pulled from. Cause when you see I've never been in a tsunami.

[00:47:38] Thank goodness, but I've seen footage of the minutes, seeing the sea go the wrong way. Like it's, it's really hard to understand, and that feels like, it just feels like the rug being pulled from under you in the sense of like really not understanding what is happening and having no language or no metaphor for it, because it's so out of your experience.

[00:48:04] **Katrina:** Exactly. Well, that's captured. Exactly what we were trying to talk about. And then of course, remember we talked about that sort of period of shock and the shock slowly wears off. And the reality hits home. That's when we see the tsunami wave coming in and that's that huge wave of grief, but with it come all different strands because I think.

[00:48:33] I think there's a lot of misunderstanding about grief that it's all perhaps about being sad. In fact, it's not, it's every feeling that you could name is within grief. And of course it's a very social experience or a very isolating experience. And also there's the practical side of it, the emotional side, the physical side.

[00:48:59] So, and other things. That's all comes in, but as it goes on, do you remember those terrible scenes of the tsunami where there's no paths? It's just a whole morass of mess. And I think that, that is, that is what I mean by the landscape.

[00:49:21] **Annie:** So like a chair on top of a goat on top of a tree and top of someone. Yeah. That's kind of the brokenness of it or the wrong mish-mash of it.

[00:49:33] **Katrina:** Yes, very much. So it's all wrong and dark and difficult. And then eventually of course, over a, an unknown period of time, these little paths, why when their way through this morass of mess and slowly that place. In this case, a beach, um, within the book and the illustrations does start to clear.

[00:50:01] And finally you're left with your memories and also sort of reconnecting back out into the world where, but that beach that looked like that at the beginning now looks different because things have moved and. And I think that's really important. And if we think about Shauna really, she's stuck in shock.

[00:50:33] She is, yeah. With the sea going back, she doesn't know what's happening and will she just leave the beach or will she wait and see what happens?

[00:50:50] **Annie:** It's interesting with the kind of the effort to clean up after tsunami is a huge collective effort. It's not something that can be done by one person. Everyone has to be involved.

[00:51:04] And was that part of the metaphor that you chose that kind of. The relational aspect of getting through grief, the social aspect, the fact that it's a, you know, a community of people is affected and a community of people needs to get through it together. What was that? Something that you had

[00:51:26] **Katrina:** We did because I think that's something we thought about a lot. And so the last three chapters of the book about. How can people help the bereaved? Because there's a very sad saying any that grief rearranges your address book, and I've never met anybody. It's brutal. We were talking about Shauna's friend went, wait, did she not show up on the podcast for a reason?

[00:51:52] Or, you know, we don't know, but, but unfortunately people fall away. For different reasons and understandable reasons. I'm not judging them at all, but, but I've never met anybody who is bereaved. Who's not lost one or two friends along the way. And it's quite hard. Isn't it to stand along grief, stand alongside grief and be there and listen.

[00:52:20] And because grief takes a long time to work through. So. So with respect to the community, one of the chapters we talk about is who can help and what actually helps so that people have got something a bit sort of shorter, like what's concrete things that actually have. Like, if you say you're going to walk the dog, please show up and walk the dog don't offer to do it, and then just never show up.

[00:52:53] It's a simple thing, but it's so true that you said the Castro train is over. Yeah. Well, what else can you do? That might be helpful. There's so many things that we could do to help the brewery. 'cause they're tired. You know, we

spoke about that. So yes, you need, you need your community, you need your tribe around you and they can really help.

[00:53:21] And I feel that Shauna is quite, she feels quite alone in the play. And that, that worries me as well. She's got her little contacts, but she hasn't got a real tribe. She mentioned friends. So that was good. Maybe

[00:53:40] **Annie:** she goes on a date to the fits and she meets someone who is just not having her BS, you know, is just not having it and confront her because sometimes you meet someone who can kind of see through all your defense mechanisms and, um, you know, just get cut straight to the heart of the matter.

[00:54:06] But obviously she can't rely on that. we buy a book by, can we get, oh, from,

[00:54:13] **Katrina:** um, what's, it's 12 it's on Amazon. It's called surviving the tsunami of grief for the bereaved and those who support them. Amazing. And it's obviously on Amazon. Or are there ethical books? Yes, they are. And I'm suddenly just desperately trying to think what the other one is, or you can buy it direct.

[00:54:38] Well, the best thing to do, to be honest is to go to our website because we've got a website for the book w w w dot tsunami of grief.com high effect, and you'll find different ways to buy some.

[00:54:58] **Annie:** I've found this conversation really rich and inspiring. And now I want to write episode two and maybe give Shauna a little bit of a reprieve, and I love a bit of a happy ending, but, um, it's been a delight to talk to you

[00:55:16] **Katrina:** And lovely to talk to you and, and I'm delving into Sean as well. It's just been so interesting and my hope for her is that her. Her crack her Fisher widens, and she's going to have a tough time, but she's going to come through it and perhaps have a richer world because of it. That would be ideal. Would let us settle on that. Let's

[00:55:42] **Annie:** settle on that.

[00:55:43] So nice to talk to you

[00:55:45] **Katrina:** And you.

[00:55:54] **Pippa:** we hope you found this conversation as absorbing as we did.

[00:55:59] **Kate:** Our thanks to everyone involved and our sound designer, Ian Armstrong and editor Fraser Youngson

[00:56:05] **Pippa:** his podcast is produced by. She works. The support from our commissioning partner, Nottingham Playhouse and funder arts council of England. Thank you.

[00:56:14] **Kate:** To find out more about the series and other. She wants a dog series. Follow us on social media at she wants a dog or visit her website. She wants a dog podcasts.com.

[00:56:28] **Pippa:** Don't forget to listen to all five plays in the series and look out for other series from us, including Sickbabe exploring life with invisible disabilities and the perverts podcast, a queer audio cabaret.

[00:56:41] **Kate:** And please do rate, subscribe and share. If you enjoyed these and join us again for more extraordinary explorations into a subject that affects us all: death.