



THE CHRONIC ILLNESS RECOVERY PODCAST

Episode 39

People Pleasing and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Toby: Hello everyone. I'm your host, Toby Morrison from CFS Health, and on the other end of the screen we have our resident mindset coach, Gemma Hanley. Hey Gemma.

Gemma: Hello!

Toby: In today's video, we are going to talk about people-pleasing and boundaries. And so if you are someone at home who is a people-pleaser, someone who just puts everybody's needs before their own, if you're someone who really struggles with saying no, who is a yes-person, even when you don't want to be, this video is going to be for you. So, welcome Gemma to the episode. Super pumped to have you here. Gemma, you went through this yourself. You had chronic fatigue syndrome in your early twenties, and you went through all of these struggles: the people-pleasing, the lack of boundaries, and how much that actually affected your health and wellbeing. How much does people-pleasing and boundaries affect our wellbeing?

Gemma: Enormously, right? Because we're trying to fill up our cup of knowing we're valuable, knowing we're significant, knowing we're worthy outside of ourselves, it's like insatiable. And we're always forever in every moment needing someone or something outside of ourselves to prop us up. Which means as soon as they're not there, or as soon as they don't play the role, or as soon as we don't make choices or behave in a way that fits into a category where they can give that tick of approval, it's like we're scrambling and operating from this idea that what we need is actually outside of us, and that can be exhausting. So, so stimulating for the nervous system, for our neurology, and for the most part- and this was definitely true for me, and I see this in so many of our members as well- no one joins our program because they're lazy and they're not getting stuff done, right? It's these patterns of overachieving and perfectionism, and what I would even put into the category of like standards and expectations of self and often others as well, that are not even humanly possible. And so we're asking things of our body and our nervous system that we are just not designed to be able to achieve as a human. And that's so freaking exhausting.

Toby: Yeah. It's a fast way to stay down, isn't it? It's a real energy drainer. What are some symptoms of a people-pleaser, for the people at home wondering, "am I that person?" Like, what are some of the common symptoms of a people-pleaser?

Gemma: Yeah, I think in the body, a lot of what it will feel like is an unsettled energy, overwhelm, nervousness, anxiety, panic, fear, second-guessing, self-doubting, and this urge to be looking for reassurance a lot of the time too, like the inability to make a decision to know what we want, to know what's right for us, to know what would light us up inside. Maybe for someone who's a little bit more self-aware, it might look like awareness or knowledge to what it is that would light them up inside, to the choice that they do wanna make, to change it where they might wanna change their mind and change the trajectory or direction of their life in a big or small way. But this feeling of, "ooh, that can't be here, that's not allowed, that needs to be suppressed, I need to hide these parts of myself, because I might be rejected if I revealed that part of myself, or that might create conflict, that might cause tension." These are a lot of the symptoms, and so if I was to summarize that, like always seeking assurance outside of self, always looking to impress or please others ahead of ourselves, putting others in front of ourselves. An inability to receive help, to ask for help, to rest, to slow down, to be able to say no. All of these, yeah, weave into that people-pleasing pattern.

Toby: Fascinating. And I guess boundaries is the secondary nature to a suffering people-pleaser. Would that be correct? That the boundaries is the thing that, if they've got them, they're most likely not gonna need to people-please anymore, because they're solid in what they know is true for them and what feels right for them, versus someone who doesn't have the boundaries, they're just floundering around constantly grabbing for that, "is there anything else I can do," or like you said, putting on everyone else's oxygen mask before they put their own on, and just basically suffocating. Scrambling above water, trying to stay on top of water, suffocating and drowning underneath, but quickly coming back up for that last bit of breath. And I know for a fact that so many of our members go through this- and thank God for your work, and the work inside the program, and all the videos and the trainings and the coaching sessions- that our members finally do get to this place of total freedom of making choices for themselves, and feeling empowered and strong and having that inner certainty. But at the start it's not easy, especially if this pattern's been around for a long time. Is there anything else you wanna speak to the people-pleaser before we get into some tips for people who might be suffering from this right now?

Gemma: Yeah. I think, across the line in my work, one of the most important steps that I see most frequently missed is not just the naming of the problem of, "okay, people-pleasing is happening here. This is a problem," and then,

"what do we do about it? What's the fix? Tell me the five steps," right? This space in between of being able to introspect and reflect and understand: as well as that feeling painful and problematic, how is that also beautifully serving you right now and meeting your needs? And so I spoke before about significance, love, and connection, knowing you're valuable, you're worthy as a person. Rather than just going into this shame cycle or this self-judgment cycle of, "oh, I'm a people-pleaser, I'm not good enough, I don't know how to change this. Look, I'm doing it again," is like really recognizing and honoring, "yeah, I want this to change, but right now it's also very much meeting these needs that I have that are really important." It's important for us to know that we bring value into the world. It's important for us to feel loved and connected to people around us, and so it doesn't have to be like this severance, and like this severe eradication and forcing of this way of being to stop, and then forcing into this new way of being. It can be a combination of acknowledging, understanding why it's there, almost appreciating it and appreciating the role it's played as you transition into a more empowering way.

Toby: Yeah. I think that's spot on, because I think a lot of people, especially people-pleasers, they're almost afraid of having boundaries, because they think that they have to be a mean person, there's almost like a belief that people who say no or have strong boundaries are rude and mean. And so it could be scary to jump that ship almost, because it's like, "no one's gonna like me," and what I'm hearing you saying is right now if you are people-pleasing, you are getting your needs met in a certain way, whether that is getting some form of connection or significance or liked-ness from your surrounds, it might not be the best way to get that need met, and there might be a better, healthy way that could maybe be more congruent, give you more energy, and not be so draining all the time. It might be a weird concept for people at home right now to go, "there's nothing I get from people-pleasing." Can we just dive into that for a few minutes of what do people get from people-pleasing? I mean, I can see a couple of the things, and I used to be this person too, where you try and be that person for everybody. And at the start you are the hero, people love you, everyone goes to you for help, everyone goes to you to cry on. And it's exhausting. What are some of the things as a people-pleaser that they might not believe or know consciously that they're getting as a benefit?

Gemma: Yeah. Yeah. And this can be a triggering, controversial conversation!
toby: Yeah. Just to, before we get into it, I think as well, and you said it before, is no judgment here. This isn't to beat yourself up and go, "oh my God, I'm a people-pleaser and this is why I'm sabotaging myself," no, it's a journey, a self-evolving journey. And I think it's really important just to, like Gemma said, is just to acknowledge this as awareness, bring curiosity to it and not self-judgment and say, "ah, this is why I've been doing this. That's interesting. Okay. What can I do differently?" I ran the mindset and emotional wellbeing call this morning, and I was

walking the guys through again, you know, we can literally only respond to what we're aware of. We can only respond to what we know about, right? And part of seeing our blind spots, or part of seeing what's keeping us stuck, is that sometimes that will feel triggering and that will feel uncomfortable, but we can't change what we don't know. And so I always extend the invitation when something does feel triggering or when you do feel yourself closing to a concept, can we open back up into curiosity around, "ooh, what is it that is feeling stimulating or activating about that to me?"

One of the things, as all human beings, we have this core need of certainty. And one of the things that people pleasing allows us to do is meet that need of certainty. And so we actually get to control our relationships, or we have the perception that's what's happening. Control our relationships, control our environments, and in a sense, even manipulate what's happening in those by how we're showing up. We're getting to control- again, it's perceived control- how it is we believe other people are perceiving us. So if I behave in this way, if I do this perfect, if I do this in the way that they're going to perceive me as XYZ: as competent, as capable, as caring, as kind, as generous. Yeah? And it feels really good when people validate us in that way. Yeah.

Toby: "I love you so much, thank you, you're the best! I love it when you do this and you do everything for me," but how exhausting must it be to be on eggshells almost, because if you don't do it, you're kind of screwed. And so there's this always internal pressure, right? That's pushing you to do things that sometimes your body and your mind and your soul don't want to do.

Gemma: Absolutely. Like, to the point I can remember in the past if I was exhausted, or if I'd said yes to something that I didn't actually wanna do because I didn't wanna hurt someone's feelings, or I didn't wanna miss out on future opportunities because if I said no, I might not be invited, or I might not be asked in the future, or the relationship might be damaged. I would literally say, if someone reflected to me, like, "why don't you just make up your mind on the day if you wanna go?" Or, "why don't you say I'll have to let you know?" Or, "why don't you say no?" And my language in response to that was literally like, "are you crazy!? I can't do that!" It wasn't even within the realm of my awareness that was an option available to me. And yeah, when our nervous system: when we're operating out of a people-pleaser pattern, typically our nervous system will be very stimulated, and so it feels very unfamiliar. We become addicted to that feeling of adrenaline, and also the dependency on it.

And so it feels to an extent, you know, scary, unfamiliar, foreign to consider what it would be like to slow things down a little bit. And I know for me, before you and I even met, so I don't know, 10 or so years ago, before I was educated around chronic fatigue and some of these things that were happening in my body, I would fear just resting on the couch instead of going out and doing the

things that other people wanted me to do. The tasks that would make other people's lives easier. Because I was like, "what if I don't get up again?" So there's also the adrenaline playing into it as well. We get so much out of it. And I guess, in summary, what I'm speaking about here is we get to avoid discomfort. So discomfort in the body in terms of emotions, and fear is an emotion, but the stories of fear, because the busyness also keeps us disassociated to an extent from that as well.

Toby: So one of the needs that people could be getting from people-pleasing, is that comfort of not having to deal with some unpleasant things that maybe they're avoiding in their life, potentially. Yeah, that's really beautifully put. I think one of the battles that I see with people who are going through this and it's a pattern, but they identify that aspect of them as who they are. Like the people-pleaser, the person who does it for everybody. And is Supermom or Superwoman or Superman, and then they get to this point where it's so exhausting, but they're so stuck. They don't even know there is another option. They're so identified with themselves as that person, that they feel so stuck, and we see it in relationships especially, and we've had lots of members go through relationship breakups- and relationship changes, if both partners are willing to evolve- where the person who was a people-pleaser starts to change it, and starts to honor their boundaries and starts to honor themselves more. And it can go two ways.

One, the relationship doesn't exist anymore because the other person can't handle the fact that they're in their truth, they're in sovereignty, they're choosing themselves, and they're evolving. Or, the other person matches them and goes, "wow! God, you are so empowered and inspiring and I love this version of you too, and I understand that you don't need to be that person that you were anymore." And so we've seen lots of evolution with members, where they do go through relationships and they grow and evolve. And also they end ones that no longer serve them, and that served its purpose, but it's helped them come out the other side in this place of more inner certainty and empowerment. And exactly speaking to what you said, they've finally gained true certainty within themselves. They don't need the secondary certainty from somebody else to say, "oh, Jenny, you're doing such a good job. I love you because you did the dishes for me, and you do all these things for me." It's, like, "I'm Jenny. Sometimes I'll do the dishes and other times I won't because I don't feel like it. And that's okay. I'm still worthy." And that is that true inner certainty and empowerment, obviously it's way more than just doing the dishes and saying no to those household chores, but you get the idea. It's just an analogy, but yeah, I don't know if you wanna speak to that as well?

Gemma: There was something. For me personally, and I hear a lot of our members reflect this in the later stages of their journey as well, I had to get that sick to learn how to let go of that. And I spoke earlier in this conversation about

how stimulating it is for the nervous system and our neurology, and how we're feeding into adrenaline and overdoing and overachieving and perfectionism. If you are like me, where I was just so hell bent on not returning to myself, on not being able to sit with myself, discover who I was outside of the roles other people had placed me in my life, that will be part of the reason why disease and dysfunction and disharmony needs to show up in your life. Like, it's the best thing that ever happened to me. It's easy to resent the pain and feel bitter about the pain and where we find ourselves, and it is so helpful in us becoming ready to just take that first step, to start changing things, to be like, "I can't tolerate this anymore. I refuse to live my life in this way." And it doesn't have to get that painful. This year, has been very full for me. I've moved house, but I've also moved location, lots of growth happening behind the scenes. And typically one of the things that gets put on the back burner for me very easily when life is full, is movement and exercise. And that happened, it happened to the least that it ever has in my life. I was probably only moving my body twice a week. And yeah, two nights ago I can remember sitting on the couch and I'd just been like more achy, maybe my back was hurting a little bit, and I was just feeling more tired than normal. And that was enough pain for me to be like, "this is changing. I'm not tolerating this 'mediocre'," in my opinion and my experience, "I don't want this 'mediocre' experience of this part of my life anymore." I'm in bed early. I was at the gym barefoot first thing yesterday morning. And so, like, it doesn't have to be that these massive amounts of pain show up in our life and pain can look different in different scenarios. But can we actually welcome in the parts that are painful, rather than hating on them, rejecting them, focusing on wishing they weren't there? More like almost come into partnership with it. That helps you to become ready to choose a new way, to no longer identify with, "I am the people-pleaser, this is who I am. It is my identity. I don't know how to be different." And it's very safe to do that if we're fearing the cost or the consequences of what might happen in relationships.

Toby: Yeah, relationship breakdown, friends might not like you, change of career potentially. And I think this is really cool because it's not just speaking for people with chronic fatigue syndrome. This is speaking to people with life. Like you said, you are living a full functional life these days. You run your own show. You're an amazing coach here at CFS Health as well. And you still utilize these amazing, powerful tools, whether you're healthy or not, but we see people in society, where they keep smoking and they keep smoking, and they're smoking a packet of cigarettes a day, and then they're coughing their lungs up. And the pain is there, you see it. You walk past them every day and they're like, "cough, cough, cough," and it's like, "Jesus, what are you waiting for, man?" But yet they're not willing to go beyond that pain and see it for what it is, and potentially change it. It's really powerful, and I think for people who are actually going through chronic fatigue syndrome right now, or a more devastating, painful experience, it can be really hard. It can be really hard to kind of see that that might be actually one of the biggest problems you're facing, and it might

not be the next supplement that you are searching for, or the next pill or the next practitioner to fix you, yet maybe there's some deeper underlying roots that need to be fundamentally changed.

Gemma: Yeah. Yeah, and a conversation I like to bring around this is, can you check that you're on board with all the roles or the parts or the pieces that you're gonna have to journey through, the things that are gonna be asked of you to get the result you want? Because we become stuck and confused and perplexed and frustrated really quickly, if we are like nitpicking and we're like, "I want this result, but I only wanna have to do this part and this part, and I wanna be able to almost build your own journey. I wanna be able to negate this or to erase this part that is actually essential in getting the result I want." Where is it that you're shying away from what will be asked of you to get the result that you say you want?

Toby: I love that. Are you fully committed? I just did a success interview literally yesterday with one of our past clients, Tara Putnam. I don't know if you remember her. Actually, she mentioned you in the call actually about boundaries! She's one of these people that went through a huge relationship breakup, so painful at the time, and she was at a very low capacity, it was very scary.

Gemma: Didn't she have a daughter as well?

Toby: Yeah, she had a daughter. Yeah, exactly. And so one of the questions that was asked through our community, I asked our wider community, "have you got any questions? Post them below," and one of them was like, "what did you have to go through to get to the other side of recovery?" And I felt like writing back, saying "hell," like she had to go through hell! And I didn't, I wanted to ask the question to Tara and see what she said. Guess what she said? Hell! Yeah, she's like, "I had to go through Hell and back, I had to go through the hardest, deepest places that I didn't want to go to, the most painful places, to fundamentally change my life, and to get better and to get healthy and start living again. Now, this isn't just about mindset. This is the thing. The mindset shifts then help change the behavioral patterns and physiology in your body, which then allow healing to occur.

So Tara was significantly underweight, like significantly. So deconditioned, no muscle mass, could barely get around the house. She said that at one point she was laying there watching her daughter crawl around her, that's how much pain she was suffering in. And what happened... it's actually amazing if you think about it, like all these little things that she decided to do, little and big, you know: deciding not to be in a relationship that was toxic for her, deciding to not be a people-pleaser, and deciding to not be a yes-woman to everything, deciding to have boundaries; that actually coincided with her starting to take

care of herself, and eat more consistently, and recondition her body very slowly, but very consistently. What happened over 6 to 12 months was incredible. She went from not being able to do anything, watching her daughter crawl around her, to ditching her wheelchair a year later and going on a trip to San Francisco and dancing on a dance floor at night in a bar with her sister, and now she's recovered and she travels the world, and she's taken her daughter to Mexico, and just like unbelievable. But if we actually look back and connect the dots, it all comes back down to these choices we're making back then. Like you said, it's like she could have kept going around in circles forever. She spent \$30,000 on treatments before she joined our program, which I didn't even know. And then if we connect the dots, it all comes back to those decisions, the harder decisions that up until that point was avoided, did the deep healing occur and the progress being made. I wish she was here on this interview right now. Gemma, what are some tips initially, just for people who are identifying with this? They lack boundaries, they're feeling stuck, they're going, "but I just don't even know who I am without people-pleasing." What's some tips? And by the way, guys, We're on a short podcast. Gemma runs monthly coaching sessions at CFS Health. There's literally five deep-dive workshops that go for an hour each, to help you through this stuff. Obviously these are, small starting tips to get you started, obviously we can't help you in the space of 30 minutes on a podcast!

Gemma: These tips are going to be beginner tips.

Toby: Cool.

Gemma: One of the first things I love is building the awareness. I said earlier we can't respond to what we don't know about, and often we wanna skip over the awareness stage. It's really important that we make space for the awareness, we collect that data. And forgive me if I've said this already, I can't remember if it was on the call this morning or in this conversation, if we try and proceed into an action plan before we fully understand what the problem actually is, what are the important parts of the problem? For sure we're in action and we are doing, but we can't actually be sure that plan that we're actioning is even relevant to the pain we're in, because we haven't taken the time to understand the pain. Which is uncomfortable. And typically what happens when we sit in awareness is that pain will rise. And that is great, because like we said before, pain can be a really beautiful motivator to help you and prepare you to be ready to truly change this thing. And so, one of the biggest tips I have is to just observe what's happening. Don't even try and stop people-pleasing. Just notice it. Increase your awareness of, "oh, I just did it again. Oh, it's happening again. Oh, it happened over there. Oh my gosh, I even think this thing is me playing into that people-pleasing pattern!" And then what I'd invite you to do is record some of those in a journal, and you could even have two columns: so on the left hand side you could be recording where you're noticing this behavior

and these choices showing up, and on the right hand side, just start getting curious about what it would look like if you decided to change this? What would the alternative be?

Another thing that can paralyze us when we are looking at creating change is, if we believe as soon as we see a problem and we see a solution, we have to activate the solution straight away, when the solution, we're like, "oh, that feels really scary, that feels really uncertain," and it's so much pressure and it becomes burdensome. Awareness and action are separate. And so can you allow yourself to sit in this awareness space and just get curious? "Oh, I think this is something I might like to start saying no to in the future," or, "I think this is something that's gonna have to come out of my schedule or out of my routine so I can have more time for myself, so I can spend more time in nature." "I'm noticing after I spend time in this relationship, gosh, I just feel so heavy."

Toby: Could be friendships, as well. Not just intimate, but like any relationship. Yeah.

Gemma: Yeah. Just switching on and notice- again, you would need to have awareness to, "how is it that I felt leading into this friendship catch up? How is it that I felt during it? What did I feel afterwards? What am I believing about myself after spending time with this person? All of this is really brilliant awareness to then decide or get clear or get curious about what might I want instead? What might serve me? What might feel good for me? And just start playing around with that, and actually write it down, and you'll be surprised how much can shift just by bringing awareness to something.

Toby: Yeah. So true, because the next time you go out to that social meeting or next time you get asked, you might go, "hmm, maybe I don't really want to go to that, actually." Start making that choice for yourself. Fascinating.

Gemma: And so just one other tip that I would give, and it links into this anyway, is just start carving out some pockets of time that are empty in your week. Just for you. And you don't have to know how you would wanna spend them, but again, you get curious about this and intrigued by this of, "oh okay, cool, there's space just for me here. What would feel good? What do I want for me right now? Is it that I just wanna have a nap? Is it that I want to go for a swim in the ocean? Is it that I wanna go and see a movie?" "Is it that I wanna read a book or listen to a podcast?" Whatever it might be. That is what is going to help you to begin understanding who you are and what you want, which is then going to feed into more confidence when you start actioning and creating these shifts and changes, and bringing in boundaries around, "oh, I'm actually gonna start saying no to that thing, because I have clarity and I have confidence to what it is that I want instead."

Toby: Yeah. I wanna get into boundaries in a second, some tips there too. I'm just laughing because the other thing about people-pleasing that we actually haven't spoken to and not many people do speak about, is the resentment that the people-pleaser can feel when the same kinda love and output isn't reciprocated! because you are setting the bar so high of giving, giving, giving, most people don't do that. And we can get so upset and our expectation's gonna be so high. You said it at the start, our expectation's can be so high and the standards so high, that it's impossible to ever be satiated. That satisfied feeling, like you said at the start. And I think that's important to think about too, is it's like, "look at the standards I've set for everyone. No wonder I'm so pissed with everyone!" It's fascinating. Can we move into boundaries? Some tips there too? So like they've identified, they've been journaling, they're realizing like, "wow, look at all these areas that I've been doing this," How can people start to- and again, we have a whole one hour workshop in the program on just boundaries alone- but just again, some beginner tips here, maybe some solutions or options for people. How do they like go about just setting some boundaries? And I know you always say, like, start small. Like they don't have to be the big, hard ones to start

Gemma: It starts with self-inquiry. You can't set a boundary if you don't know what it is that you want. You can't ask for something if you're not clear on what it is that you want. And this is where a lot of conflict comes in, because most people, the heavy majority, are communicators through a place of what they don't want, so: "you've done this," "when you did this, it made me feel..." "I don't like it when you..." "you should have..."

Toby: Pointing, pointing, pointing. Yeah.

Gemma: And so even if this person is willing to receive that criticism, and is so invested in doing whatever it is that you need, you still haven't even told them what it is that you want. You've just told them what it is that you don't want. So the best that they can do is stop doing that; they're not being empowered to meet your needs.

Toby: No. And even then, when we focus on what we don't want, we get more of what we don't want. Negative reinforcement's one of the worst ways to get anything. They talk about that with kids and they talk about that with dogs. It's not really a smart way to go about it. This is fascinating.

Gemma: You will have heard me say this over and over again, but all boundaries are with ourselves first. Boundaries are not for other people. They're with and for ourselves, and it is our responsibility and our role to set the boundary and then continue to honor the boundary over and over again. And to be able to do that, we have to be clear on what it is that we want. And so the language that we wanna uncover and starts with self-understanding and self-

reflection and going inwards is, what is actually important to me that's not happening here? How would I describe that? Is it respect? Is it patience? Is it communication that I want more of? And when you've been able to identify what it is that you want more of, what is the purpose for having the boundary in the first place, how would you describe that thing? What does communication mean to you? Does communication mean I get to feel like we're on the same page? I get to understand what it is you need? I get to feel like I'm being listened to and I'm hurting what it is that I need? I get to feel like we're invested, that we're connecting? I get to feel understood? And what is it that's important about communication in that specific instance as well?

Because if we can't ourselves name what it is that we want, explain what that means, and then give an example of what it would look like, and we're the one that wants it, we're the one that needs it? It's very unlikely someone outside of us, not connected to our body, not connected to our nervous system, not having our personal experience, is going to be able to understand.

Toby: Yeah. No one's a mind reader.

Gemma: Yes! There is no mind reading. And so the first step is, yeah, that clarity from within ourselves. Well, the alternative would be, "Blah, here's my problem. You fix it. You figure out how to manage it. You be different.

Toby: Kind of this 'victim mentality' stuff. We have a saying at CFS Health: "be a victor, not a victim." We have a whole training on it because it is easy to fall into that pattern of blame and complain and not take control of the situation for yourself.

As you're talking, I'm thinking about selfishness. The word 'selfishness'. And I'm thinking, there's this common feeling as a people-pleaser that, "but it's selfish to think about myself." I can just hear people saying that right now, "but I don't want to be selfish, that's bad if I'm selfish," even to the point where boundaries could just be about owning what you want in the sense of what you want in your own life. We have a lot of people who are so committed inside the program right now, and they're so dedicated, they've got their routine and structure down pat, they're doing their movement plan with our movement coach, and they're feeling really good and they're on track, and there's that almost that 'healthy selfishness,' and dedication to their self, to their craft of what they're moving towards in their life. How do you overcome that idea that being personally selfish for the right reasons is a good thing versus a negative thing?

Gemma: So two parts to this, two ways I wanna answer this. The first is coming back to remembering that you are feeding off this pattern. You are not actually showing up honestly and truthfully and in your power, in your relationships.

To me, that's unloving and that's unkind when it's in our awareness. Yeah, of course some of this stuff sometimes we're not aware of. And we're using that pattern, like I said before, to feel a sense of control, to feel a sense of certainty, to manipulate how we're being perceived. And there's a level of selfishness in that. And then the other piece to it as well, one of our other core human needs, is contribution. Growth and contribution. So overdone, but also just hits the nail on the head: can't pour from an empty cup.

Toby: Yeah, You can't pour from an empty cup. Yeah.

Gemma: I personally feel and believe that it is selfish to show up in this world anything other than nourished, anything other than full from within, because that's where people are gonna get your best. That's where you can perform and truly be of service to other people. And like how many times have you been around someone that really needs to go and take care of themselves, in whatever way that might be. It might be they just resent their career and it really needs to change, or there is a relationship that needs to change, or maybe they just need to start fueling their body with nutrient-dense foods. Hydrating themselves better, going to bed earlier, spending time in whatever it might be, spending time in nature, and they're not pleasant to be around, to the point where we have this experience of, "gosh, I really wish that person would take care of themselves. That would actually be so fruitful for me if they were to do that."

Toby: Wow. I love the question that my old mentor said to me, which was, "what are you like to be around?"

Gemma: Yeah, and this is going to immediately impact the type of people you are magnetizing and calling in or repelling away. For me, the highest form of intelligence and success is somebody who knows what they need and gives that to themselves. And they're the types of people that I'm really interested in spending time with.

Toby: So beautiful.

Gemma: Just some different perspectives on the whole 'selfish' piece.

Toby: So good. Okay, so we've got one tip for boundaries, which is knowing what you want. That's the first thing. Can we get, just before we wrap it up, what's one practical tip: once they know what they want, whether it's with themselves, so you know, they're, "all right, this is what I'm doing," or if it's just with another person where they've gotta communicate their boundary, what's a little tip or beginner tip that they could just start to apply?

Gemma: Love this question. So my answer would be in both instances to ask for permission. So if it's in the relationship with yourself, that could look like closing

down your eyes, deep breathing, bringing physical touch to your body- so maybe your hand on your heart, your hand on your belly- and doing a really honest internal check-in of, "am I on board with this? Do I have permission to move forwards with this?" And if it's a no, not resenting that, but actually getting curious about that and listening, because that's gonna be the next step that moves you towards a yes.

So if it's like, "ah no, this thing is coming up, or this thing needs to be addressed," before it would feel okay? Beautiful! That's the next mini step, right? So that would be in the relationship with self. And then this is just... relationship with others, this is so important, is we can have done- and some of our members love a journaling session, like lengthy, lengthy journaling, had the epiphanies, "oh my gosh, this is the thing I need and oh, makes so much sense now, and this is how I would explain it, and it's actually not even that big of a deal and I can't wait to share it." And sometimes too there can be a real anxiety and nervousness about asking for what it is that we need. I still feel this sometimes in some of my relationships.

And so we feel when we go to have that conversation, we've been in the process, we're familiar with what's about to happen, we're familiar with what's about to go down. And then this other person might have just walked in from their day at work.

Toby: This poor person!

Gemma: Or they're just sitting down with their cup of tea, right? And we forget they haven't been in that process with us. They don't have all of this backlog of understanding of this conversation we wanna have. And sometimes, especially if we're feeling anxious and we're like, "gosh, it's so hard to even just get the first word out," we just go straight into it. And there's so much power in pausing and actually sharing, "Hey, there's something that's really important to me that I'd love to have a conversation about. Are you available for that?"

Toby: "Is there any time we could talk about this sometime?"

Gemma: Yeah, "when would it suit you for us to have a conversation? I'd love to bring you into my world a little bit. I'd love to share with you some of the reflections I'm having and some of the stuff I've got going on at the moment. Would you be open to hearing that?"

Toby: That is beautiful compared to: "you are not this, you are not listening, you are not doing that." No one wants to be told what they're not doing. But I love that enrollment of, "I'd love to share with you my reflections of what I've been thinking about lately." Already there, it's like the brain goes, "oh yeah? Tell me about it. I'm interested." That's so interesting. That's such a good tip, to enroll in that way.

Gemma: And it's important to respect and honor and know as well, even though that might feel disappointing. And it depends on the nature of the relationship too, for example, like an intimate partner or a husband and wife, but versus a friendship will look different. But in say, let's use the example of an intimate relationship, "when in the next 24 hours, can we make some time to have this conversation?" So then you've got the certainty around when it's gonna happen, and respecting that if someone says no to you, they've got their own shit going on as well. And if they're not available for the conversation, you're not gonna get the outcome that you want anyway.

Toby: Yes.

Gemma: And so it is of service to you when you hear a no sometimes in that instance, or it's very revealing of where this person will be able to meet you in your needs and in your relationship. If it's a flat out no and there's no capacity or no availability for that conversation, that's very helpful information as well.

Toby: And what does a person do when- whether it's intimate or not intimate, just friendships, relationships- where there is a no? "I don't want to talk about this."

Gemma: I think something else that can be really beautiful in the self-understanding before going into a boundary-honoring conversation or boundary-setting conversation is being clear on what is my line in the sand here? If it was a no, how important is this need to me? Because there are so many people in this world that will be willing to meet us in our needs. And when we attach to one individual person having to play that role, things get really difficult and challenging, and we feel stuck and we feel like we can't have what it is that we want, because we are dependent on that one person behaving in a certain way before we can have what it is that we want.

And it will also help you too to, on the other side of things, be flexible in like, "oh, actually there is some space for flexibility here, and can I bring that to the conversation? Rather than being like, this one, really is a non-negotiable for me. This one really is a hard line for me," when that doesn't actually need to be the case.

Toby: And vice versa. If it is a non-negotiable, you can express in that, "this is actually really important to me, it's like a non-negotiable, so we do need to talk about it." And then if you get a no, then you kind of know your answer. And if you get a yes, then great, you can explore that. Margot Miller, who did a success interview with us recently too, her whole conversation was about boundaries. And to finish this off, she spoke about how, when she realized that a lot of the friendships, the relationships in her life actually weren't serving her, and it wasn't like she needed to even express it to them.

It was like she needed to express it to herself and have that realization of, "these old friendships are draining me so much. These work environments, these XYZs are really draining me." And I think that's also powerful to realize too, what's energy draining and what's energy gaining for you in that space?

And I'd highly recommend you go watch that too, because she speaks about what you've been talking about, Gemma, all these different scenarios of how to handle it and how to get into that certainty within yourself, or flexibility, and both sometimes. So absolutely amazing. Anything you want to share before we wrap up today's call? This was absolutely brilliant. We went deep, as we always do.

Gemma: Just, yeah, just the last piece in that, and listening to you speak about that, is her ability or her willingness or what it would've taken for her to admit to herself, "oh damn. These relationships are not the ones that can meet my needs." Part of that is she would've stopped negotiating with the truth and reality of who those people are. She would've come into acceptance of, okay, I'm being shown. They're giving me the no, or I'm consistently feeling let down, or that the relationship is falling short of my needs.

Toby: Yeah, or her health isn't good in these situations and her health is showing her the signs.

Gemma: Yeah. And one of two things can happen there. We can either accept that and choose ourselves and our health thriving, happiness, which by the way is painful and a process. Or if we continue to negotiate to try and change that person, to try and convince them that they need to be different, to try and just get over it, and get over our needs, is what I'm saying there, we're literally subscribing to pain and suffering. We're literally subscribing to more of what life has already shown us. Distinguishing between the two and getting really honest about what it is that we want, and then I spoke before about we really need to be able to own every step along the journey to the result, not just pick some out and cast some aside and demand that, "I should still be able to get here, I should still have this result," that's definitely an example of that.

Toby: Absolutely brilliant. Thank you so much for coming on and sharing all your wonderful ideas and concepts and teachings, you know? This is, life changing work, so I so appreciate it and I can't wait for more of these to come out. Brilliant.

Gemma: Love it. Thank you for having me.

Toby: Thanks, Gemma. Speak to you soon!

Toby: Hey, I hope this video was really helpful for you. If you haven't already, please hit the like button and feel free to leave a comment: what was your takeaway, your insight from today's video? It's really helpful to actually write your learnings down. We seem to embed it better and it seems to help us move forwards with life.

Here are three ways we can help you right now, whenever you are ready:

The First way is make sure you add yourself into our free information recovery group on Facebook. We'll leave a link in the description below. It's a really supportive, encouraging place. There's no negative venting, you can ask questions to other people. There's something like 7,000, 8,000 people in there right now, and I'm sure by the time you're watching this video, there's even more. So go over there right now. We share success stories, we share our latest free trainings that come to the public, and we always share upcoming information about upgrades inside our program, and also when we offer free webinars or free information nights that can further help you with your own recovery.

The Second way we can help you, which is one of my favorite, is through all our free trainings. We're gonna leave a link in the description with our favorite free trainings that we know can help you start your recovery, whether that's through our baseline training, which will help you stop pushing and crashing, our three stages of recovery, to figure out exactly where you're at and know what to do next, or my favorite, which is our guest panel workshop, which was actually exclusive for our members. It was so damn good that I actually asked them, "can we share this to the public?" They all said yes, all five of them. So thank you, past members! They share their five recovery secrets and it's really powerful. There's tears, there's "aha" moments, there's real key insight and inspiration. And so whether you're a 1/10 and you're really struggling right now, or whether you are further along in your recovery journey and you are integrating back into life, we have you covered.

The Third way we can help you is through our actual paid online recovery program, the Mentorship Recovery Program. And if you are interested in getting proper help, a holistic, comprehensive plan, professional coaching from the best coaches in the world- whether that's with mindset, movement, nutrition, restorative movement, reconditioning, integrating back into life, integrative medicine, baseline, structure, routine, accountability, all things health and life- feel free to apply for the program today. All you need to do is click on the form, CFShealth.com/form. Fill out the short two to three minute form application, and the team will be in touch with all the details that you need to know about the program via email.

So make sure you check your spam folder for all the free trainings. If you've sent through an application, please be patient. My team are real people, okay?

They're not robots. So if we don't get back to you within seconds or hours, it's okay. We will get back to you! If you don't hear from the team within two to three days, that means that it's basically gone to spam or junk and it's gone missing, so please send a follow up email to the team at info@cfshealth.com. If you have any questions, go check it out, but I would highly recommend adding yourself into the free group right now, go click on that link in the description. Go download all the free trainings. Honestly, the whole reason why this whole thing started is because when I went through this myself, it was so painful and so excruciating that I didn't want anyone else to have to go through it.

And some of these free trainings are so damn valuable, back then I would've paid thousands of dollars for them. We've had so many comments and emails and posts saying, "oh my God, the baseline training was a game changer for me." "Toby, I've been doing this now for three months and I'm feeling so much better, my symptoms are decreasing, I've got more stamina, I've got more energy, I'm able to do more things." So, you know, whether you are learning from us and consuming our content through our free format, I'm so stoked. Whether that's in our paid program, I don't really care either way.

All I want to make sure is that you are moving forwards, you are starting to really implement this work. And that's really what it's all about. Once we implement, we make change, and we start to move forwards. Sending you a ton of love. Of course feel free to consume as much of the YouTube videos as you like. There's so many really, really great ones, new and old.

Sending you a ton of love and speak to you very, very soon.

All the best for now.