

SUFFERING OPTIONAL

SEASON 1, EPISODE 3

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[Uplifting theme music plays]

DIANA: Welcome to the third episode of *Suffering Optional*, where DBT meets the Dharma. I'm Diana Partington, and in this episode, I'll be talking about wise mind from DBT. And my co host, musician, Dharma facilitator, and all around awesome human, Madeline Finn will tell you the story of the Buddha and how his story relates to making decisions and living your life from your wise mind.

[Theme music ends]

MADDIE: Well, howdy, everyone. Welcome to DBT and the Dharma. My name is Madeline Finn-

DIANA: And I'm Diana Partington-

MADDIE: And we are here today to talk about Wise Mind and the middle path.

DIANA: Beautiful.

MADDIE: A riveting tale-

DIANA: Excellent.

MADDIE: -Will be told today.

[DIANA and MADDIE laugh]

DIANA: A riveting tale will be told. Maddie's got things in store for us.

MADDIE: So my first question is: what is Wise Mind?

DIANA: Mhm

MADDIE: Because I feel like I know what it is, but I'm not sure if I know what it is, so give me the Cliff Notes.

DIANA: Mhm! So in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy...

MADDIE: Mhm.

DIANA: Every skill that we teach is really about helping you get to your Wise Mind.

MADDIE: Oh!

DIANA: We talk about three different mind states.

MADDIE: Okay?

DIANA: And this is- actually, is a really great mindfulness tool is to be able to determine which mind state you're in.

MADDIE: Mmm.

DIANA: So let's tune in! What mind state are you in, Maddie?

MADDIE: Ooh!

DIANA: So, one mind state- there's three of them, and it's a Venn diagram, so they overlap.

MADDIE: Okay.

DIANA: Emotion Mind. Emotion Mind is when things run hot. So, you know you're an Emotion Mind if it feels so urgent that you have to send that text right now.

MADDIE: *[Overlapping.]* Mhm, mhm

DIANA: It's gotta go. and you gotta keep sending texts until someone responds. That is definitely emotional. y

MADDIE: I've never done that. I don't know what you're talking about.

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* No, neither have I, neither has anyone else out there. Nope, nope. Nobody knows what we're talking about. Ooh, I'm moving on. So Emotion Mind is really urgent. Emotion Mind at its worst, commits a crime of passion, like you walk in on your lover and then you kill them.

MADDIE: Oh, terrifying.

DIANA: Sorry. It might be a little bit much.

[DIANA and MADDIE laugh]

MADDIE: It started hot and it ended terrifying.

[DIANA and MADDIE laugh]

DIANA: But that's like, absolutely at its worst. Does that make sense?

MADDIE: Mhm. Yeah, yeah.

DIANA: Like, where you're just out of your mind with emotions.

MADDIE: Mhm.

DIANA: Okay, so the other mind state is Reasonable Mind. Now it sounds like Reasonable Mind is where you'd want to be.

MADDIE: Wait. Can I ask a quick question about Emotion Mind? So, a lot of the examples you brought up were kind of like... negative examples, for lack of a better word? I really like soccer. So how do I know if I'm getting in my Emotion Mind when it comes to my soccer?

DIANA: If you are a soccer hooligan, you're probably an Emotion Mind.

MADDIE: Oh, so when I go to the games and I yell and I'm high fiving everybody up and down-

DIANA: That's great.

MADDIE: But is it Emotion Mind?

DIANA: Yeah, okay, fair enough. It can be Wise Mind.

MADDIE: Okay.

DIANA: You can be in your Wisdom Mind, high fiving people and having fun. When you start throwing punches, then you're an Emotion Mind.

MADDIE: *[Overlapping.]* Never done that

DIANA: But here's the thing, is Emotion Mind can also be, "I don't want the party to end."

MADDIE: Mmm.

DIANA: If you go, you're not throwing punches, you're just throwing them back. Or you're like, "Oh my God, we're having so much fun, we won, let's go on a bar crawl!"

MADDIE: Got it.

DIANA: "I'm gonna go to work tomorrow morning, but it's so much fun, I don't want it to end"

MADDIE: Got it. Okay? Cool. That checks out.

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* That's also Emotion Mind.

MADDIE: So that's Emotion Mind. So what is the flip side of Emotion Mind, then?

DIANA: Reasonable Mind.

MADDIE: That sounds very reasonable.

DIANA: Doesn't it sound good? Why would we need Wise Mind if we can just be reasonable?

MADDIE: So tell me more about that.

DIANA: So Reasonable Mind's great, right? Reasonable mind... you're thinking through consequences. I was thinking you want your CPA, you want your attorney to be Reasonable Mind.

MADDIE: Got it.

DIANA: You want them to be logical, think through consequences, be strategic, right? Emotion Minds usually not very strategic.

MADDIE: Okay.

DIANA: So what's wrong with that? It's cold. It doesn't take into account emotions. And here's the thing is, emotions are important. We need them. Emotions are motivators. They're great motivators.

MADDIE: For sure.

DIANA: And they're not necessarily bad. Sometimes people who are Reasonable Mind people get analysis paralysis, where they're so caught in all the possible contingencies they can't take action. And then, on the other hand, they can be very cold and cruel, because empathy, compassion, these are emotions.

MADDIE: Oh.

DIANA: Yeah.

MADDIE: Whoa.

DIANA: So Emotion Mind, Reasonable Mind. We have an overlap in the Venn diagram. That's the famous Venn diagram in DBT that you can check out on our website.

MADDIE: Whoop whoop!

DIANA: When you're in Wise Mind, you can honor your emotions and feel your emotional experience while thinking through consequences.

MADDIE: Mmm.

DIANA: What I like to think of is that you're tapping into your deep wisdom, right? So it's the intersection of emotion and consequence... I think Reasonable Mind- what I've come to realize is Reasonable Mind can be very should-y.

MADDIE: Oh!

DIANA: "You *should* know better. You *should* have done this."

MADDIE: Got it.

DIANA: Right. And so anyone who's living in that space where their Reasonable Mind is- Reasonable Mind is scolding them knows how painful that can be, and your Wise Mind is not going to scold you like that. Wise Mind- What I love about Wise Mind is... Wise Mind takes accountability for your actions. It's not that you're shirking responsibility, it's that your Wise Mind is also compassion for the context. Has compassion for the context. Has compassion for you. So when you're in your Wise Mind and maybe you've made a mistake, you can hold accountability for that mistake. You can think through how you might want to change things. And you can also hold yourself with compassion.

MADDIE: Very nice. Okay. So, to me, that sounds like... Wise Mind is almost the middle path. And I know you know, from Marshall Linehan and talking about the middle path, and I know from all of my Buddhist-y knowledge that the middle path is this thing the Buddha found and then began to teach. And it's really a core principle of the Dharma, is this- this middle way, this middle path. It reminds me of the story of the Buddha. Am I allowed-? I'm gonna tell the story of the Buddha. I'm gonna just-

DIANA: [*Overlapping.*] Yeah, absolutely.

MADDIE: -Wing it.

DIANA: Maddie is gonna tell a great punk version [*MADDIE laughs.*] of the story of the Buddha. So hold onto your seats.

MADDIE: Buckle up buttercup. Here we go!

DIANA: And you will get a sense of what Maddie is talking about with the middle path-

MADDIE: *[Overlapping.]* I think so.

DIANA: -As we go through the story, because I'm sure people are like, "Well, what the hell's the middle path?"

MADDIE: Yeah. So... basically, the Buddha, long story short, grew up in a very rich house, was in a very high elevated society, wore nice clothes, had nice things, had whatever he wanted.

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* Well, he's a prince

MADDIE: He was a prince, exactly. So he had literally everything- like, think about a trust fund kid, he was a trust fund kid-

DIANA: No offense to trust fund kids, we love you too.

MADDIE: I love you as a trust fund kid, but think about this, he could have anything he wanted, whenever he wanted. He never knew anything unpleasant. He was just-

DIANA: But wasn't that- weren't his parents- weren't- his dad was trying to do that, right?

MADDIE: Yes, they were trying to keep him sheltered.

DIANA: But his mom died when he was six days old. Do you think his dad was trying to protect him from the pain of that loss?

MADDIE: I wouldn't be surprised.

DIANA: Doesn't that seem-

MADDIE: That sounds like a dad thing to do.

DIANA: Doesn't it?

MADDIE: Sure.

DIANA: Yeah, like, just, you don't have to f-, his dad's probably reasonable mind.

MADDIE: Oh!

DIANA: Dad's reasonable my dad's like, okay, as long as I can insulate my son from-

MADDIE: *[Overlapping.]* Anything ... horrible.

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* Death, disease, all of that.

MADDIE: All of the bad things, put him in a bubble. And so as the Buddha started to grow up, he starts to realize that he's miserable. He's unhappy-

DIANA: Even in this palace of luxury-

MADDIE: Everything that's great, all the good-

DIANA: All the pleasures-

MADDIE: Anything you could ever want-

DIANA: Anything pleasure- So think about that. You're a prince, you're in a palace. You have everything you could ever want, except for your mom... just saying!

[MADDIE laughs]

MADDIE: But he's unhappy, and so he's like, "I need to try something else." And is like, "Well, what do I do? What can I do to find happiness?" And he's like, "I guess I'll just do the exact opposite of what I've been doing." So instead of experiencing all the good things, all these pleasant, amazing things.... he is actually on a wagon out of his city, and he sees a dying person and a person who is sick, and he starts to see an aging person, and he's like, "Whoa. This is crazy. I guess that must be it. I should go pursue all of the bad things, all of the unpleasant things." And so-

DIANA: I love this thing that I've heard said is that he kind of discovers death, disease and decrepitude.

MADDIE: Yeah.

DIANA: I love that word, decrepitude.

MADDIE: It's a good word.

DIANA: It's like the falling apartness of our bodies-

MADDIE: Exactly.

DIANA: Right?

MADDIE: So he starts to notice this, and he's like, "Oh, bingo. That might be it." So he starts to hang out-

DIANA: What do you mean by it? What's it?

MADDIE: What's gonna help me not be unhappy, right? Like "I'm gonna lean into this suffering so much that I get so used to it that it's-" You see what I'm saying, right?

DIANA: Okay, wait, okay, so I'm leaning into it so much that I will become impervious to it?

MADDIE: Essentially, I don't know exactly what he was thinking. All I know is he started hanging out with this crew.

DIANA: *[Sarcastically.]* You don't know exactly what he was like?

MADDIE: No, I've never-

[MADDIE laughs]

MADDIE: He starts hanging out with this crew. I've heard them called the ascetics. And he starts hanging out with this gaggle of- of men - I'm assuming they were men - who basically just leaned into the suffering and the pain. And he was living on a grain of rice a day. He was starving himself. He was... hanging himself from trees in weird positions. He was really getting into all of the unpleasant stuff about life. He did that for a while, and then found out, guess what? Shocker! It didn't bring him happiness. And so it's then that he starts to think "Well, maybe there's a middle path here. There's a way that-"

DIANA: What about the lady?

MADDIE: The lady, oh, I do love the lady. So essentially, he's like dying, straight up, and this lady, her name is escaping me in this moment, but this lady finds him and is like, "Bro, you can't live on one grain of rice a day. You have to eat something." And so she makes him this bowl of porridge, and he's eating the porridge, and he's like "Oh, maybe I should try something else." And what it is is it's this middle path of not necessarily only all the best things, or only all the worst things. It's- the being able to hold the reality of what's happening in each moment. So being able to hold the reality of, "Yes, I am starving from only eating one grain of rice a day, and this lady has given me a nice bowl of porridge." And this is what I also love about Buddhism is, these are stories, right? But it's cool to think about how he tried both, and he's like "That ain't it. This is- this isn't what I'm looking for." And through the kindness of a woman, which I love, starts to see, maybe there's another way, and this way is the middle path. So when I hear you talk about Wise Mind, to me that seems like the middle path, because Rational Mind can be all the unpleasant things, and then the other side is, is the flip side of that? It's like black and white, which I know we'll get into in some later episodes. But-

DIANA: Right? So in- in the middle path story, in the story of the Buddha, there's the pleasure versus the pain, embracing one or the other. There's for us in DBT we've got embracing emotions or embracing logic, and what we find is that middle path is that space where you honor both.

MADDIE: Exactly. Yeah.

DIANA: And so in this life that we have, that has many opportunities for pleasure and a lot of pain, walking the middle path- then I think what I'm understanding is, when you're walking the middle path, you can hold both.

MADDIE: Yeah, well, you can hold whatever's present.

DIANA: Whatever's present.

MADDIE: You can hold whatever's present, and you can hold reality. You can be with what is.

DIANA: So you can be with your pain. Be with pleasure-

MADDIE: Not cling to it.

DIANA: You keep bringing up that word clinging.

MADDIE: I love to talk about clinging. Yeah- that's- you got it. That's it. My work here is done. But wise mind middle path, they're pretty similar, from what I can see,

DIANA: So let's just explore Wise Mind a little bit more.

MADDIE: Yeah.

DIANA: And sometimes I have clients who tell me "I don't have a wise mind..." because the noise, the cacophony of their emotions, is so strong it's hard to hear their wisdom. And I like to say all of our skills are about turning down the volume of Emotion Mind, and for some people, turning down the volume of Reasonable Mind, so that you can tune into the Buddha nature. You can tune into that part of you that is so deeply connected to your wisdom. If anyone's listening and they're like, "Well, I don't have a wise mind." I can tell you that, in my experience, everybody has a Wise Mind. Sometimes you dismiss your Wise Mind. Sometimes you'll hear a little bit of it. But one of my favorite things to do is to tell people "You can give your Wise Mind a voice." So I think for you, Maddie, your wise mind voice is the Buddha maybe?

MADDIE: Oh, for sure.

DIANA: Yeah. I've had clients who Dolly Parton is their wise mind.

MADDIE: Oh!

DIANA: If you hear Dolly in your head, like, what would Dolly do? It's kind of like what Christians do is, what would Jesus do? And then you're trying to listen. Well, what would Dolly Parton tell me to do? What would my grandmother tell me to do? Sometimes people say, What would my therapist suggest? Although I do just want to caveat that Marsha Linehan, who created Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, says that 50% of all suggestions from therapists are bullshit and not going to be helpful.

MADDIE: Are you dragging therapy right now?

DIANA: I am a therapist, and I am just saying that this is what Marsha Linehan says, because therapists, we tend to speak from our own experience, right? What worked for us should work for you, and it's not necessarily true. And so one of the things that I like to drive home over and over and over again to me, the point of therapy, the point of listening to this podcast, or whatever things you're trying to do on your growth journey, the point of all of it is to help you listen to your own Wise Mind, not your therapist's Wise Mind. So you might pick Dolly Parton, right? But eventually you're gonna let go of that scaffolding, because you'll be able to hear- because maybe Dolly Parton's wisdom is not actually your wisdom, right? Maybe there's some things that the Buddha said that were jacked up and don't actually fit your situation.

MADDIE: Sure.

DIANA: You know what I mean.

MADDIE: Yeah.

DIANA: So... and certainly your therapist or your parents or whatever, that you want to be able to hear your own wise mind and really be able to discern. It's that discernment, right?

MADDIE: Yes,

DIANA: Discern. "Is this my Wise Mind?", and that's the question that we have people ask.

[Uplifting theme music plays]

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[Theme music ends]

DIANA: Is this my Wise Mind?

MADDIE: And my- the thing that I love about this is because, how do you start to know? Is this my wise mind and to me, it's practicing mindfulness. It's practicing-

DIANA: Because you have to be able to hear yourself right? No, absolutely, I think that's the thing. And one of the most fundamental skills that we have in DBT that, to me, is a mindfulness skill. Am I in Emotion Mind? Just identifying what your mind state is right now. So right now, I'm vibing with you. We're talking about this stuff. I feel like I'm in my Wise Mind. I feel really grounded and connected, but I'm thinking like, if you're listening, tune in, what's your mind state right now? Are you feeling like... urgency, intensity? Maybe you're in Emotion Mind. So you're just tuning in, like, the basic, first fundamental mindfulness to me, in DBT, other than practice, is noticing your mind state. Am I in Wise Mind? Is this a Wise Mind choice? And if you can't quite hear your Wise Mind, you can just start by noticing if you're in Emotion Mind. "Ah, this is Emotion Mind." And so when you notice Emotion Mind, then you're like, "Okay, hold up. It's not usually a time to act, because you're not going to think through consequences. So that's it. In terms of mindfulness, what's your mind state? And if you notice that you're in Emotion Mind, that's when you want to take that mindful pause and step back and then do whatever skills or tools help you get into your wise mind.

MADDIE: Yeah, I feel like it's such a place to be able to find some clarity. And you talked about that space, if you've not heard this quote, Viktor Frankl is a phenomenal author, and he's got this book called 'A Man's Search for Meaning'. And in the book, he has a quote that in between stimulus and response, there's a space. And so I often think of mindfulness practice-

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* And that space is your freedom to choose.

MADDIE: Yes, exactly. And so I like to think about mindfulness practice as getting our reps up so that this space can continue to grow, and we can continue to get that space from there, and it's a peaceful place to be so that Wise Mind feels like it's almost just residing in that space a little bit. So that you can take action.

DIANA: I love that. So you know, when you're in Wise Mind, you're not- it's not urgent, right? So you can feel that emotional. "I gotta, I gotta do this thing right now. I gotta do it right now. I gotta act. I gotta act." If you just take that pause, that's the mindfulness pause, it's the- it's like the slowing down, and this is literally why we practice right, so that you have the opportunity to slow down before you pull the trigger on whatever your impulse is that is connecting to your wise mind. The middle path.

MADDIE: I love this.

DIANA: Middle Path is slow.

MADDIE: It is slow. Yeah, I find the middle path to be, like I said, just a peaceful place to reside, a peaceful place to be. And I also think it's important to say that it's not- it's not something that you have to be in all the time. Going back to what we talked about in the previous episode, of returning is the practice. If you notice that you're not in Wise Mind, keep coming back. Keep coming back, because that's where the work is. Exactly. I think that's important.

DIANA: Yeah, I think it's really important to stress, but we're not thinking that you have to be in Wise Mind all the time. It's that you need to be able to access it.

MADDIE: Yes, that. I love that word. Need to be able to access my Wise Mind. I need to be able to access this middle path. I need to be able to see it. And that's why we practice to see clearly, so that we can respond wisely.

DIANA: Say it again.

MADDIE: We practice so we can see clearly. And once we can see clearly, we can respond wisely.

DIANA: Right. Beautiful.

MADDIE: We did it. I think that- I mean, is there anything else you want to add that feels like a lot to chew on-

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* I know- I feel like there's something in the middle path. So we have a skill in DBT called 'Turning the Mind.' And it's like you turn your mind towards what's skillful, right? You turn your mind towards the skill, towards your Wise Mind. So when we talk about the middle path, I can just see in my head walking down this road and not falling off into the ditch on either side, and there's maybe... some kind of temptation on either side, but you're just staying steady.

MADDIE: Yeah, staying steady. And it's cool. And this is where I rest in Buddhist lineage too. I'm like, "Man, if Buddha did that, I can do that. I can walk that path." So many people before me have tried the all pleasant stuff and the all unpleasant stuff, or the all Emotion Mind, the all Reasonable Mind. And we have evidence to say - doesn't make you happy. So focusing on that middle path and focusing on that visual is, I think, really powerful to be like, "Okay, I can do this."

DIANA: I'm just curious about this happiness thing. I remember I went to dinner once with a Russian psychiatrist.

MADDIE: Of course you did.

DIANA: Yes, I did. And he said, "What is this with these Americans? And they always want to be happy, don't they understand that life is suffering?" and so I think about that obsession with

happiness, because in some cultures, happiness is not joy and elation, like we often think of it here. It's contentment.

MADDIE: Exactly.

DIANA: And calm and peace. And so I just feel like it's worth defining that.

MADDIE: Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, it's-

DIANA: Because I think the elation is probably on the pleasure side.

MADDIE: Totally.

DIANA: Right?

MADDIE: Totally.

DIANA: But the calm and the peace,

MADDIE: Lasting happiness is the distinction I like to make... lasting happiness. So my teacher's teacher has said, "If your happiness is of this world, the world can take it away."

DIANA: Oh, that's so brutal,

MADDIE: Right? But that's what this practice is. It's learning to be able to have contentment, to be peaceful, to be tranquil with whatever arises and not making it so that, "okay. I have to be- I have to have this pleasant situation. I have to have this amazing situation."

DIANA: *[Overlapping.]* In order to be happy.

MADDIE: In order to be happy, or I need to like-

DIANA: Or to be- I feel like the word content-

MADDIE: Content. I like content-

DIANA: Peace, contentment-

MADDIE: Yeah. I need to have this in order to be content, I need to not have this. In order to be content, I need to roll around in my suffering and in my pain, because that's where I'm comfortable, so that's where I'm going to find content.

DIANA: Oh, oh, yeah. Wait, wait, wait, we got it. We have to stay with that for a second. I mean, that's because how many of us have done that, where we get so comfortable in our suffering, that we get attached to our emotions?

MADDIE: Oh, totally.

DIANA: You know where we just like it's so hard to connect with your Wise Mind, because your suffering is familiar.

MADDIE: Oh, absolutely. The only thing I loved more than my wife when we met was my self hatred, right? Like I would just roll around in it. And even though it was unpleasant, even though I felt so can- like comfy in it, but it doesn't last. It's not lasting happiness, and it's not real- like real happiness, real contentment, real joy.

DIANA: Yeah, and I mean wallowing in your suffering is clearly not happiness. But there's, there's some there's a comforting there's a seductive comfort too

MADDIE: Absolutely. There's so many things in the world and in our experience that we can cling to to try and find lasting happiness. And when we let go of those things, and we start to walk this middle path, and we realize that all this contentment, all of this peace, all this tranquility that we are so desperately searching for exists within our immediate view, within this path, within this second, within this moment.

DIANA: That is so hard to trust.

MADDIE: It is, absolutely, and we'll talk about this in another episode, but that's like one of the hindrances to practice, is that doubt that arises, which is why I come back to Buddha nature and why I practice. Because I might not believe it now, but the 16th time I tried to get sober, it made me believe it, because I was still, like, going running to this thing, searching for lasting happiness. And lo and behold, it wasn't making me happy.

DIANA: But, I mean, I think when you pick up a drink, it's not so much lasting happiness as relief.

MADDIE: Relief. But why search for relief? If it's... aren't you trying to keep it going?

DIANA: You reach for something, whatever it is that we're reaching for, the thing that relieves our suffering in the moment. So like in DBT-

MADDIE: Yeah.

DIANA: What we talk about is unskillful behaviors or a refuge. I talk about it that way because it makes sense. It's the thing that you're reaching for that feels like it's going to relieve your suffering - and it probably does - Is the problem, right?

MADDIE: Well, it's pleasant.

DIANA: It's pleasant, and it- so it relieves the suffering temporarily. But the reason that we consider it unskillful is because of the consequences. It usually comes with very aversive consequences, and so what we're trying to do with skills is we're trying to self- like you're clinging to substance abuse, right? Because it's the only way to deal with the pain from your trauma, the only way that you know.

MADDIE: Because we're searching for what? Lasting happiness.

DIANA: Okay.

MADDIE: Right? Like or contentment?

DIANA: Contentment, I don't there's something about the word happiness that-

MADDIE: No, I love that.

DIANA: We're searching for contentment.

MADDIE: So if I pick up this drink and find this relief. I'm going to be content.

DIANA: And you might be-

MADDIE: Exactly.

DIANA: -In the moment.

MADDIE: But it's not lasting.

DIANA: It's not lasting.

MADDIE: And it creates consequences.

DIANA: And it creates consequences.

MADDIE: But we continue to go towards it over and over and over again. So that's what I'm saying. Like the 16th time, I went back and it happened again, I like, wound up in this space where I was miserable, just like the Buddha. I wound up in the space that was miserable. And I think sobriety is actually a really interesting way to talk about the middle path, to be able to talk about, like, Wise Mind. Wise Mind for me, I don't know it's- but does that make sense? Like it's just this...

DIANA: No, ta- talk more about the- sobriety is the middle path. I don't drink, I don't use any kind of mind altering substances. I don't even drink coffee, because I feel like I am an emotionally sensitive person, and this is a lot to manage, and I manage it better sober.

MADDIE: That sounds like a Wise Mind thing to say

DIANA: That feels like my Wise Mind, right? But I know for some people, complete abstinence sounds very extreme. And so when you talk about sobriety as the middle path, abstinence doesn't sound like the middle path, moderation sounds like the middle path. So talk to me about that.

MADDIE: For me, it's less about the thing, it's the relationship to the thing. So for me, sobriety reflects this middle path because it reflects Wise Mind to me. I know the consequences that happen when I reach for that drink. That's my rational side.

DIANA: Your rational, reasonable mind.

MADDIE: Yeah, rational-

DIANA: Knows the consequence.

MADDIE: Knows the consequence. So if I really stuck in that, I would probably never go to a bar again. I'd never play a show again. I would know, "Oh, that's, that's bad news bears."

DIANA: Just to be clear, Maddie is a fantastic musician, [maddie laughs] which does involve playing music-

BOTH: In bars.

MADDIE: Right, and early on in sobriety, like, I probably wouldn't have done that because it was the wise thing for me. But- so there's the rational side, and then there's the emotional side of like, "I'm such a fuck up, like things are awful. I need this drink I- I like", or even like thinking about it in sobriety wise, I- Yeah, it's that, like whole "I suck, so I can't have this. I'm not allowed to have a drink because I am XYZ, I'm bad." There's this moral issue to it, whereas the middle path is me being able to say, "Okay, drinking does not work for me. Alcohol and I... it always ends up for me, coming back to this place of needing to apologize to people or throwing up" or just, you know, it's a horribly unpleasant moment.

DIANA: Unpleasant.

MADDIE: Unpleasant. And so I'm gonna, I'm gonna stick with this wise moment where I can be aware of both things, right? Because it's not about shutting everything out. It's about being able to hold both things and to see what makes- seeing clearly! So you can respond wisely!

DIANA: So you don't end up falling into the ditch of the self hatred and loathing... and the- the abstinence, the white knuckling it- of abstinence maintained by self hatred, that sounds awful. And then you have, over here, you have the terrible consequences of not being abstinent, but it sounds like when you're walking the middle path and you're in your Wise Mind. It's not coming from self loathing. It's coming from self compassion.

MADDIE: Exactly, exactly this- I mean, getting sober for me turned into, instead of taking things away from my life, it was adding.

DIANA: You know what? I have heard that over and over and over again from people who when they move into sobriety, and it could look like a lot of things, you know, could look like working a program could look like... a friend of mine started this clear life movement that's like, just about living clear, free from substances. It's a journey that ends up adding things to your life.

MADDIE: Exactly.

DIANA: And I think when people are in a deprivation mentality about it, about any of these kind of changes, it doesn't have to be about substances. When you feel like, "Oh, I don't get to"

MADDIE: Yeah.

DIANA: "I'm not allowed to." That actually almost feels a little bit Reasonable Mind-y, doesn't it? Like, "Well, you don't get to do that. You don't get to do this." But it's more when you start to see the ways that your life opens up. And I feel like that happened to me with DBT skills. So I was going through DBT as a client, and when I first heard about skills, I was like, "This is the greatest thing ever. It's so good. I love it." And I was like, "Skills, skills, skills, skills, skills." And then I realized how hard work, hard work it is. And I also was looking around. I was like, "nobody else is doing this. Everybody else is being unskillful. Why should I be so skillful?" And so I stopped being skillful, and I went into this incredible willfulness about it, and I was like, "I don't give- I don't care. I don't care." And then what I realized is, even though it was really hard work, it was adding so much to my life, right? And that's that space, I think, when you're in your wise mind, you can see clearly where your wise mind decisions are not a deprivation, they're adding to your life.

MADDIE: Cause you have to be able to see the path to move forward. Yeah, that's why I love this idea of the middle path. It's like, okay, I can move forward. That's where peace resides. That's where.

DIANA: That's where this peace and contentment lasts.

MADDIE: The lasting-

DIANA: Lasting contentment. We're just gonna have a beef about this lasting happiness, aren't we?

MADDIE: I love it.

[DIANA and MADDIE laugh]

MADDIE: So, actionable thing for folks to take home today. What do you think it is? What would you say?

DIANA: I think it's just - ask yourself what your mind state is. Is this Emotion Mind? Is this my Wise Mind? Is this a Wise Mind choice? Like literally, you could write down those three questions and have that be what you're mindful about this week.

MADDIE: Your anchor.

DIANA: Your anchor, your anchor! Your anchor could literally be, "Is this my wise mind?"

MADDIE: Bingo.

DIANA: And just coming back to checking in, checking in, is this Wise Mind? Is this Emotion Mind? And also, of course, pick someone if you feel like you can't hear your own Wise Mind. Pick, pick like, you know, I'm going to be really honest with you, Maddie, I was struggling a lot this week, and I kept hearing you as my Wise Mind-

MADDIE: Awww!

DIANA: It's true, because when we've been talking about this podcast and talking through these concepts, I'm learning so much from you, and so in my little dark night of the soul, last week, I heard your teachings.

MADDIE: Aww.

DIANA: I mean the Budd-

MADDIE: *[Overlapping.]* The Buddhist teachings-

DIANA: But the facilitation-

MADDIE: The facilitation of Madeline Finn, yeah, I love this. Well, that makes me really happy to hear. I hope that the folks listening feel the same way about about us and what they're gaining. And yeah, it's such a pleasure to sit here and talk with you about all this stuff. I'm so excited to keep unraveling. It's gonna be good. It's gonna be good. It's already great.

DIANA: This was Episode Three.

MADDIE: Episode Three.

DIANA: And so stay tuned for Episode Four.

MADDIE: It's coming soon, exactly. All right. Catch you on the flip side.

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MADDIE: Thanks for hanging out with us today. Walking the middle path has been such an important part of my own healing and recovery, so I'm super grateful to share it with y'all. Maybe you have somebody in your life who needs this too. So my challenge to you is just text them this episode. We're grateful for our team. Stephanie shinbaum, Florence Lumsden, Holly Jenkins and the homies at Tink

DIANA: Maddie, I think we owe them an Easter egg.

MADDIE: Okay Diana, if you insist. While I was listening to this episode, I realized there is a little treat regarding the Buddha story that you might find interesting. So, newborn, little baby Buddha was visited by a Brahmin, and this dude told his dad that he would either become a great king or a great religious leader. His papa wanted him to be a king, so naturally, he shielded him from everything unpleasant in hopes that he wouldn't encounter the kind of suffering that leads to spiritual growth, ie, the gift of desperation. Shocker! It didn't work, and that's why the Buddha left the palace in search of answers for the problem of suffering. So remember, kids. Pain happens. Suffering is optional.

DIANA: What is this? Reading Rainbow?

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