



Episode 98: Why It's Easier to Talk About Football Than Feelings

with Dr Naren Senthil Nathan

If someone asked you how you are today, you'd probably go for the throwaway answer, 'Okay.' But when asked to elaborate, would you know where to start?

It may seem to be easier to simply say that you're doing fine even when you're not, and avoid conversations about our struggles and emotions, and focus on small talk about the weather and sports.

In this episode, Dr Naren Senthil Nathan discusses the difficulties we often encounter when it comes to being open and vulnerable with friends, family and colleagues. We do a deep dive into how vulnerability and self-disclosure can be the pathway to authentic relationships, ones where we can feel that our emotions are safe.

Podcast links

Check out our [Permission to Thrive CPD membership](#) for doctors.

Find out more about the [Shapes Toolkit](#) training, talks and workshops.

[Sign up here](#) for more **free** resources.

Join the [Shapes Collective FB group](#).

[Email Rachel](#) or reach her on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

Find out about the [Resilient Team Academy](#) membership for organisations

Check out the [Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management](#) if you want to attend the Leaders in Healthcare Conference.

Are you interested in joining our You Are Not A Frog retreat? Or perhaps you have some questions about failure? Drop us an email at hello@youarenotafrog.com to let us know!

[Episode 89: What to do About Bitching and Backbiting with Dr Edward Pooley](#)

[Free to Think](#) by Nancy Klein



Guest links

Connect with Naren: [Twitter](#) | [Email](#)

[GP-S](#)

Quote to remember:

‘Being vulnerable is not a sign of weakness. Just because you speak about things that are affecting you doesn’t make you a weaker person. In fact, it makes you stronger.’

What You Will Learn

It’s not easy to bare your soul to another person. But showing kindness towards yourself also includes allowing yourself to be heard. In this activity, you’ll be reflecting on your current situation and how you might be open to the possibility of being vulnerable.

First, you can identify what you’re feeling or going through at the moment. Then, you will assess your mindset and perceptions of mental health issues, your attitude towards expressing your feelings, and the potential dangers of suppressing your emotions.

Next, you will determine how you can practice vulnerability, self-disclosure, and compassion. At first glance, these words may seem like abstract concepts. But by writing down concrete steps you can take to practice them, they become tangible goals. These three things will help you form authentic relationships and foster a bond where your emotions feel safe even when you let them out into the open.



Lastly, you'll figure out how you can build trust with someone. With all that in mind, the activity below can help make opening up easier and allow you to connect with people, especially your loved ones, on a deeper and more meaningful level.

Activity: Learning to Be Vulnerable and Compassionate

Is there anything you're struggling with right now?

What are your views on mental health problems? Do you talk openly about them?

How do you think suppressing your emotions could affect your life and relationships?

Vulnerability and self-disclosure can be practiced. A simple conversation at the end of a long day, even just hanging out with someone can help them be more open



and vulnerable with you — and also allow you to become vulnerable and share your feelings more openly, too.

List down five ways you can practice vulnerability and self-disclosure. What small things could you disclose to make a start?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Out of those five ways, choose one and do it with someone you know.

How did you feel after the exercise?

Do you feel that it changed your relationship with that person? Did the interaction encourage them to open up to you?



Are you always able to tell if a person is struggling with something? Sometimes, it's hard for us to take a step back and assess what we need in certain situations. That's why you need to **listen to your body** and also **pick up on signs of stress in other people**.

What are your tell-tale signs that you're stressed or overwhelmed?

Observe someone close to you. **What is their usual behaviour? What do you think would be the key indicators that they're feeling overwhelmed or stressed?**



Self-compassion is key to being vulnerable and asking for help. **You need to love and care about yourself enough to acknowledge when you need help** and know that you deserve to be helped through whatever it is you're going through.

Write down kind things about yourself. It can be things you're proud of, things you like about yourself, or things you know you deserve.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

If you notice someone is going through something difficult, in what sorts of different ways could you offer help? List down at least five things you can do for them.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



5. _____

It's not always easy to show vulnerability to other people. **But there are things you can't handle alone — and know that you shouldn't.**

Just as you would want to reach out a helping hand to a loved one who's going through a rough patch, you should reach out to others when you're having a hard time instead dealing with things alone.

List 5 different ways in which people could help you when you're struggling

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Who would it be helpful to share this list with?

CPD time claimed:

For more episodes of *You are not a frog*, check out our website www.youarenotafrog.co.uk follow Rachel on Twitter @DrRachelMorris and find out more about the [Permission to Thrive](#) CPD membership for doctors and online and face to face courses on surviving and thriving at work at www.shapestoolkit.com

