

Transcript of “Q&A with Marsha”

- **On disclosure of treatment history & value of DBT**

<https://vimeo.com/343589911/48754f22a5>

Q1: Marsha, this question comes from a graduate student. They write: I’ve had therapy for suicidal ideation and behaviors in the past and now I’m a graduate student studying to become a psychologist. How open should I be about my treatment history?

A1: Well, that's a good question. So, here's my idea. Don't tell people that until you're very effective, until they know you well, you've done well with your job, and there's nothing that is probably going to create a problem for you. I'm a perfect example of that. I don't think that I told people anything about my past but as you can see, you're sitting here listening to life about me, I ultimately told everybody. In fact, once at some point in the game, when you tell everybody, it can improve your ability to be a therapist.

Q2: Marsha, people often write to you and say that DBT has saved or changed their lives. How do you feel when people tell you that?

A2: It's unbelievably wonderful for me to find out that the work that I've done has helped other people, which was the only reason I wrote it in the first place. So, I'm happy to hear it. Only of course if it's true.

- **On spirituality**

<https://vimeo.com/344233415/ad62243a54>

Q3: Your spirituality is a constant theme in your memoir. How much of it contributed to your effort to creating a life worth living?

A3: I hate to give you the news, but I have never counted on that. I've never sat down and thought, “how much is this helping me?” I've just thought all the time that it did but I didn't really do any of that to help myself. I did it because it was part of me.

Q4: Marsha, for some people, spirituality isn’t a big part of their life. Do you think that spirituality is necessary for creating a life worth living?

A4: It's true with me but I don't think it's required. I don't think you have to be spiritual to be able to solve the problems of your own life, and I believe that I solved the problems of my life not because I was spiritual but because I was determined.

- **On hope, helping others & having a purpose in life**

<https://vimeo.com/345146239/dcc8f63bd8>

Q5: What do you say to people who have lost all hope and who are stuck in a very dark place and cannot imagine a better life?

A5: Well, it depends on whether I'm treating them or I'm just making a comment okay. All of us can build lives that are worth living and the question is how to figure out what is it that's making it so it seems like it's not worth living. That's the first thing you have to figure out; What about my life is making me not want to live? And then you have to look at, if that's true, what would have to happen for me to want to live? Then once you get there you've got to find someone who can help you get what it is that would make your life worth living.

Q6: Do you think that helping others is what kept you alive?

A6: I think helping others helped me create a life that meant an enormous amount to me and therefore kept me happy for a long time and now allows me, I'm hoping, to make other people happy.

- **Advice to psychology students and younger self**

<https://vimeo.com/346700360/3e7153c087>

Q7: What advice would you give to psychology students or aspiring psychologists?

A7: First, you have to work hard to get good training, get well trained in how to use research, recognize that research is important. Then you have to care about what you're doing, stick with it, start over when you need to, give up when it doesn't work, and do something - you know, try again.

Q8: If you could give advice to your young self, what would it be?

A8: Oh, I would just tell me to one: love God; two: don't hurt anybody else, take care of other people the best you can, and be kind to the friends that you've got. And go swimming as often as you can. Because when I was young like that, I went swimming all the time. So, go swimming as much you can.

- **Getting out of hell, "if I can do it, you can do it" & keep on going**

<https://vimeo.com/347858257/6380eec837>

Q9: Marsha, you often say that you developed DBT to get people out of hell. Tell what you mean by "hell".

A9: Hell means wanting to be dead primarily. Hell is when you're in an extraordinarily painful place that you can't get out of. That's really what it is from my point of view. It's the experience of having unbearable pain in your life.

Q10: What's the main message of your memoir?

A10: My DBT story is, if I can do it you can do it. My desire all along, from the very beginning of everything, has been to develop things to help other people do things that make their lives better. The fact that I was able to develop a life for myself, that may have loads of pain in it in many places but it's still a good life, and I succeeded in that and I wanted to be able to show that if I can do it you can do it. The whole function of the whole thing was if I can do it you can do it.

Q11: But some might feel like it's not actually not possible for them. What if someone were to say "No, Marsha, you were able to do it because you're Marsha Linehan. You are the exception."

A11: Well I think that's an interesting way of looking at things. That I'm me and that's what made me able to do it, but that isn't really what made me able to do it. What made me able to do it was the fact that I didn't give up. If I did give up, I'd throw that away and start over. I can't begin to tell you how many times I've started over.

- **On love**

<https://vimeo.com/349059458/a6325414b7>

Q12: What makes you happy, Marsha?

A12: Being loved and having people that I can love also.

Q13 & A13: *Transcript not available.*

- **On influence**

<https://vimeo.com/355013268/35b30d5f1b>

Q14: Most authors hope that their books are well-received or are successful. How do you measure your memoir's success?

A14: Oh, it'll be successful if the story that's in it helps other people. The second thing I'd like is that people would read it and say, "how could this help other people? If she was doing this, would that help other people and if so how?" Okay. So that's why I care the most about.

Q15: Who has been the most influential or inspirational figure in your life?

A15: God influenced me the most because God loved me and God was in favor of me doing what was necessary being a good person and I always wanted to be a good person more than anything else. It wasn't so much that I was a better person than anybody else it just happened to be what I wanted in my life

- **My parents**

<https://vimeo.com/379058439>

Q16: You were born and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma and you had 5 siblings. Tell us about the house that you grew up in.

A16: *Transcript not available.*

Q17: If your parents were alive today, what would they think of you or the person you've become?

A17: *Transcript not available.*

- **In my youth**

<https://vimeo.com/381205909>

Q18: What are some of the things that you were good at when you were a kid?

A18: *Transcript not available.*

Q19: You played the piano when you were young. Tell us how you feel about playing the piano.

A18: *Transcript not available.*

- **The importance of kindness**

<https://vimeo.com/383776468>

Q20: There were a few acts of kindness that've stayed with you for a long time. One was of the police driving you back to the Institute of Living after an escape; others involved your brother Earl.

Can you tell us the story of Earl bringing you food and getting you out of the Cook County Insane Asylum?

A20: *Transcript not available.*

- **On life, a sense of purpose and what I will miss the most**

<https://vimeo.com/385268770>

Q21: If you die and go to heaven today, Marsha (God forbid!), what are some of the things that you would miss most in life?

A21: *Transcript not available.*

Q22: How do you want people to remember you?

A22: *Transcript not available.*

Q23: What is it about "helping others" that's so compelling to you?

A23: *Transcript not available.*