



**Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, Episode 70
An Unexpected Antidote for Anxiety, Fear and Stress
-- Produced By Suzie Price**

Transcript

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Suzie Price: "Grief is the proper response to all change, all transition, all loss." That's what bestselling author, therapist and personal consultant, John Lee shares. He's back with us today. He's talked with me in Episode 43, which was of our top five episodes in regard to people listening and commenting on. And today, we're back talking with John about our emotions. It's an uplifting episode, even though we are talking about grief, anxiety, fear and stress. We have an honest and open discussion. And again, it is uplifting and it's appropriate for our time right now as well. I think you'll get a lot out of it. And I can't wait to share with you. Michael, hit it.

Intro: Welcome to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, a show designed for leaders, trainers and consultants who are responsible for employee selection and professional development. Each episode is packed full with insider tips, best practices, expert interviews and inspiration. Please welcome the host who is helping leaders, trainers and consultants everywhere, Suzie Price.

Suzie: Hi there, my name is Suzie Price of Priceless Professional Development and you're listening to the Wake Up Eager Workforce Podcast, where we cover everything related to helping you and the employees and the organizations you work in, build high commitment, low drama or wake up eager workforce. I'm the managing principal and owner of Priceless Professional Development. I've helped thousands of leaders across a multitude of industries; hospitality, higher education, construction, utilities, consulting, recruiting, consumer goods, insurance, in many, many industries we work in the past 16 years. This is our 17th year. We provide resources to help leaders engage with, understand and effectively manage employees throughout the employee lifecycle. So we provide insight and tools and resources on hiring for onboarding, team building, leadership development, succession planning and conflict resolution. And of the key things, and I'm spending a lot of time on these days is training and certifying others to become experts in our signature 6 week certification program. It's a pre-planned course spacing. And you basically complete a test and use our materials and become either a Certified Professional DISC Analyst, Certified Professional Motivators Analyst, or TriMetrix Expert Analyst. So I'd love to you have you check that out. It's of our key resources. We're getting a lot of feedback on positively these days. And that's at pricelessprofessional.com/certification, pricelessprofessional.com/certification.

Suzie: I'm also the Executive Producer of the Wake Up Eager Workforce podcast. And we share here tools, tips, expert interviews related to every aspect of your employee's stay with you and your work in an organization to create a wake up eager workforce. And the directory of all our episodes is, can be found at wakeupeagerworkforce.com, wakeupeagerworkforce.com. I'd love any feedback from you. I have gotten feedback now that I've been requesting it, and I really appreciate it so much. I've gotten emails, you can do an email, you can use our purple microphone that we have on all of our show note pages and on our directory page to record a message that we could use in a podcast or just record a message really quickly. It's very easy. You just look for the purple microphone, click on it and speak. But if you have something in an



episode that inspires you, you find great results or you show, it shows you something new or have a suggestion on someone to be interviewed or a topic you'd like to have us cover, or maybe you want me to interview you, reach out. I promise you it'll be seen. You would just go to our show notes for today's episode, which is pricelessprofessional.com/anxiety or pricelessprofessional.com/suzie. If you go there, you can send me a message, S-U-Z-I-E, or you can go to wakeupeagerworkforce.com. Any of those places will get to the place you can leave us a message or send me a message.

Suzie: Today's episode is Episode 70, the title is *An Unexpected Antidote for Anxiety, Fear and Stress*. And this is my discussion with bestselling author, therapist and personal consultant John Lee. I recorded this episode with John on April the 24th, today is Friday, we're about 6 weeks into the coronavirus stay at home directive. And so we're coming up on Mental Health Awareness Month in May. And we've all been experiencing more highs and lows, more joy, because we have a little bit more freedom and more time to think and feel, and then some more anxiety because everything around us has changed, and so we were talking to John about ways to handle or process or move through the anxiety that we're feeling. And I love this episode with him. He's such a great man, full of heart, no pretense, a lot of experience and happy to share it. And shares it in a very humble, authentic, no airs, real kind of way.

Suzie: What we cover in this episode is we talk about there is a difference between anxiety and fear. And that matters because it helps us understand some of our feelings. We talk about this anecdote that he talks about it around grief, and it sounds like this and that would be depressing to talk about, but it really is uplifting because we're all have pieces of that grief around things we have lost, transitions, change. So he talks about how that grief is a proper response to all things that we're going through and how to allow it to serve us. And I think it's a, if you haven't heard this before, I've known about this some, through the years, I met John back in 2001 and had a little bit of understanding, and I've grown to understand this a little bit, made a huge difference for me. And I'm still learning, of course, and I'm so happy to share this information with you. He talks about the 4 elements of working through grief that'll help us work through the stress, anxiety that we're feeling so that we have more energy and less stress, and we can be more present with people. Be more empathetic. Still take action and do the things we need to do, but do it more effectively because we don't have this fog of pain and suffering in the way of us being present with people. We talk about why we avoid feelings, and there's some surprising truths that he shares in actually feeling our feelings. You know, I know we're a professional business, you know, we, but you know what, the business of people, we all have feelings. And you know what we resist, persists. And so understanding that and working through that is powerful. And today we touch on it with John.

Suzie: And so we'll tell you a little bit about his background. He truly is a pioneer in the field of therapy and personal consulting. Been doing that now for about 40 years. He's known for his work in emotional intelligence, anger management, emotional regression. He's in demand as a consultant, teacher, trainer, coach or speaker. He's a bestselling author of a book called *The Flying Boy: Healing the Wounded Man*. And he's written 23, probably got 24 or more books now, just told me that he had been commissioned to write another book, I didn't get to ask him what the topic was. But he's been on Oprah, 20/20, Barbara Walters, The View, CNN, PBS, NPR, been interviewed by Newsweek, New York Times, Los Angeles Times and dozens of other national magazines and radio talk shows. He's considered the therapist's therapist, so he helps others train and mentor others. And so he has a special talent. And you'll see that today.



As I mentioned, I interviewed him with an episode, episode 43, *What to Do When I'm Angry*, and you can go look at that, we'll have it in the show notes for this episode. But if you want to go check it out, go to pricelessprofessional.com/anger. John actually taught me the method that we talk about in that podcast. He has a method called the "Detour Method" that helps you understand how to work through feelings. And I use it all the time with others and on myself. He lives in Austin, Texas that is where he's doing his quarantining with the coronavirus. And let's go to the episode right now.

Suzie: All right, John. Thank you for being here today.

John Lee: Yes, I'm very glad to be here with you again, Suzie. Thank you so much for having me.

Suzie: And we have a topic today that is on a lot of our minds. And some of us are experiencing this a little or a lot, and it is a topic of anxiety. So talk to us, since I know you work on this with your clients and you've written about it, but talk about anxiety and what it is.

John: Well, I'll tell you a little bit about what it is and a little bit about what is not. Anxiety in the truest sense, Suzie, is the fear of the unknown. What's going to happen with the virus? What's going to happen with my life? What's going to happen with my death? Anxiety in the truest sense, and in the dictionary definition, says that it is the fear of the unknown or the unsettling feeling of the unknown. It's the mystery of the unknown. And fear, and this is a big distinction here, fear is really about the known or about the object. Fear has an object and anxiety doesn't have an object. So let me explain what I mean. So, like, if you're afraid of dogs, then all you gotta do is make sure your environment, there's not any dogs around. And that fear will be negotiated and dealt with, and you won't be afraid that day or that week because there's no dogs around. Anxiety is, "Well, what's going to happen now?" Anxiety is, "What's going to happen if I get sick?" So it doesn't have an object and it's a real, real unknown. Now, what we do, a lot of people do, I do it, lot of people do it, is we use words like that interchangeably as if they mean the same thing. But they really don't.

Suzie: Ok, so there is a difference, and anxiety is the unknown.

John: Right.

Suzie: And both of those can cause us stress. But my sense is that if the fear, if fear is known, then while there's some stress with it, it's like we can kind of do something about it. Whereas anxiety, this could be greater stress because we don't feel like we have control or we feel not empowered or something, right?

John: So what we do with anxiety is we engage the illusion of control and hope that the illusion will turn into reality. So it's like, "I don't know how long I'm gonna live. Ok, so I'm going to diet, exercise, I have injections, whatever I gotta do to create the illusion that I'm in control of aging, I'm in control of when I'm gonna die." And of course, we know that's just not the case.

Suzie: Right?

John: So fear has an object, if you're afraid of flying, that's your fear, don't fly, you'll be fine.

Suzie: Got it.

John: But what you're saying is both causes a lot of stress. Anxiety really, really causes a lot of stress, but there's a way in which people try to kind of numb out around anxiety. But what I want to emphasize, is what you said, is both causes stress. And the world right now is at a level of stress that we've never seen before and we don't really know how stressed we really are. And we won't know probably until this is over. And then we're going to see a lot of post- traumatic stress syndrome. Those poor people that are working in the hospital and the first responders and the people working in in the retirement homes, I just can't even imagine, you know, they're just gonna, you know, sit down and not get up for about 6 months.

Suzie: Yeah. Right now, they're just coping or doing what they have to do, foot in front of the other.

John: Right. Right.

Suzie: To serve. Right. Right. So fear, anxiety, anxiety is a word that you're seeing on all the headlines. I mean, that is being highlighted quite a bit here, fear is wrapped up into it. And it is because of what you said, the world is at a level of stress never seen before. And I think that some of that is situational for some of us, and some of it is actually I don't know if the situation is going to create a disorder. I mean, I've known people who have had anxiety disorders, so before any of this was going on, they have high anxiety and have maybe fear of going out or could be less, maybe there's a continuum. So...

John: We don't really know. You know, it's like you and I were speaking earlier that, you know, we don't really know what is true about all this virus stuff. day we hear what people think is the truth. The next day we hear the opposite of that.

Suzie: Right.

John: And that's the way they after map, we don't know what it's going to be like. Nobody does.

Suzie: Right.

John: But I can tell you, you know, of the things that I've about a lot during this time in the house is that, you know, 2/3 of the world live in much worse conditions than we do now, even with the stay at home orders.

Suzie: Right.

John: Now, people don't like to think about this because, you know, most of us have a pretty good preoccupation with ourselves, but there's people in Haiti and the Sudan and Africa, they walked 5 miles for their water every day.

Suzie: Right.



John: You know? And they come home to barely something to eat. And they live in a condition that we wouldn't put an animal in.

Suzie: Right.

John: So of the things that I've looked at is, just how entitled we've become to a very cushioned, soft, well-fed, well-housed, well-healed life. And I'm hoping, hoping, hoping that this is going to change some of that.

Suzie: So you think we should be less well-fed and less well-healed? Or you think we should use it more for others or?

John: Oh, well, mostly that. Yes. Because we're doing that now more than we have in a long time. And so my hope is, is that that would keep going. Now, see, I think that what I'm hoping for is just this sense of gratitude for what we have, even right now, you know, it's like that saying on Facebook where it says, "Our grandfathers went to World War II and lived in ditches and ate canned food, the least we can do is sit on our couch and watch Netflix."

Suzie: It does help set the context. So when we're feeling restless or even anxious about things, I guess maybe that's a coping mechanism as well, to just kind of recalibrate and remember what is here and what is working. And that, you know, to me, that always is more aligning to think about that, you know, and that we always come through the pride in being who we are and that we will make it. And the pride and a good sense, not arrogance sense, but an empowering thing. What say you?

John: Hopefully the thing that's going to come out of this, to a great degree, is love and compassion for others and a deep gratitude for what we have. And a deep sorrow and grief for all those that had to pass so that we could become full of gratitude and more compassion.

Suzie: Right. So let's talk about grief. I'm going to jump around in our questions a little bit, we'll come back to some of the others. But I was reading your blog and you talked about grief and I'm going to read a quote that you shared, and then I'm going to get you to just talk about it a little bit because, you know, somebody might be listening and saying, "OK, so deep sorrow is going to lead to more gratitude." A lot of people run from feeling their deep sorrow and grief. Let's just talk about that and see what you see and know about all the people that you work with. So, here is of your quotes on your blog, "I believe grieving is the doorway through which we step in to our maturity and our humanity."

John: Yeah, that's been a longstanding teaching of mine. And of the sorrows in this time of the virus and all of the deaths that's happening, that grieving is an adult saying that you have to be mature, but also, the more you are able to grieve, the more mature you are and the more humane you become. So when I wrote that blog, what I was seeing, and I talked about it in the blog, so is, you know, like on the media, there's no grief in the faces, for the most part, of the media because they have to put on that media face, you know? And I'm sad to say, there's no grief that I can see in our President, regardless of what party people vote for. There's a true story about Abraham Lincoln that he would get reports during the Civil War, he'd get reports about how many people had died during a day or a week. And the history of him, talks about how he would go up into his bedroom and weep and wail for the losses, the staggering number of the losses, and see we just don't make much room for grief. And part of that, now this is very

controversial, and some of your listeners are not going to agree with this, but part of that is, is because we sort of live in what Robert Bly called a "Sibling society." And basically what that means is, is a lack of grown ups, a lack of people who really, really do have foot in grief, foot in joy, but they're solid and mature. And by sibling society, it just means that there's, all of it is sort of the same. And we don't have mentors to show us how to grieve, we don't have rituals or ceremonies. See there needs to be a really, really powerful ritual and ceremony for these grandfathers and grandmothers and people who are dying and their family can even be with them. So I want you to question me more on this thing about adults in society. What do you think about what I said?

Suzie: Well, several things that made me think of a good friend of mine who lost both of her parents last year and really struggling with allowing herself to grieve. And then somebody else just died this weekend. And so I just was talking to her and she's like, "I can't, I can't go to the funeral." You know, she's going to go down there. But it was you know, I was talking to her about allowing herself to feel it, that she wouldn't get lost in it. But she's, you know, very, very uncomfortable. And then the other thought I had was, that that made me think of that. And the other thing it made me think about was about our politics and the media is, I think sometimes the way people are trying to deal with it is to try to take action to help, you know, and it is, it's doing two things, that helps them feel better because they're trying to help. It causes them to, though, push away those feelings.

John: Yeah. Yeah.

Suzie: They feel like maybe, like it's almost like the practitioners who are working day in and day out, they feel like they have to just keep going. So not making excuses. But I know for my friend, she's just kind of a goer, you know, and she's just a wonderful person. And the pain is so deep about losing her, both of her parents that she doesn't think she can go there. And I keep saying you can go there and you'll feel better if you do.

John: Yeah, the grief express felt and expressed, this is the weird thing; the contradictory thing about grief, grief felt and expressed actually gives us energy afterwards.

Suzie: Yes.

John: When we hold in sadness and loss and grief, we get tired and we feel drained. But we live in a society, and this is just my take on it...

Suzie: Right.

John: We live in a society where you're always supposed to be happy. And you're not supposed to just descend into grief about anything, you know, I remember when I was 13 years old, my grandfather died and he was like the rock of my life, I loved him so much. But as we were going to the funeral home, my Dad took me aside and did what many, many, many Dads and Moms have done and said to me, "Now don't you break down and cry because it'll upset your Grandmother."

Suzie: Yeah.



John: And it was it was his way of saying, "Now we're going to get through this, we're not gonna cry, we're not going to be sad." And that kind of is the impulse that animates most people in this society. You know, if you go to a good Southern funeral, most of the people at the funeral home are kind of laughing, joking, "Oh, Suzie, my God, I haven't seen you since high school. How you doing, hon? What's your, you've got a good family? What do you do for?" You know, and there's the person lying in the casket, you know?

Suzie: Yeah. Yeah.

John: So grief is, you know, like compassion is a doorway into maturity. Love is a doorway into maturity. Service is a doorway into maturity. But so is grief. And that's one door that stays closed to most people.

Suzie: I think the fear for folks and like I'm not a master at this, but I have done my own level of therapy. And so, you know, like, I had a situation this week that was pretty dramatic and I just like grieved, you know, it's real. I mean, but it's only, the only thing is, as I knew, that I could sob and just be upset. And then it just and it was something that is pretty dramatic, but I moved right through it. And, you know, there's remnants and stuff, but I was thinking to myself about what we were going to talk about. And it's like, you know, I don't know how I got here because this is not the example I grew up with. But, you know, therapy and work and dialogue and studying and learning from people like you, I'm okay; I'm going to be okay. And so how do we get there? How? I don't know what the how, I couldn't go back and trace my journey that got me allowing myself to do that. And like I said, I'm not saying I got it figured out, but I do allow it.

John: Nobody really does, Suzie.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Each individual, and like we say, people grieve in their own ways. But grief is the proper response to all changes, all transitions and all losses. It's the proper response to all change, all transitions and all loss. So that doesn't mean you break down in your car and sob. But when your little girl or son goes to school for the first day, that's a huge transition. The little kid has been with you, you know, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and now they're gone.

Suzie: Right.

John: You know, and then now they're going to go to college and go off on their life. And people, you know, are afraid to grieve. So here's the things that is required for people who, if they want to grieve. Number one, first thing is we have to know that grieving is a part of life and we become conscious of the fact that we have to grieve these changes, losses and transitions. Second part, for grief, for really somebody who wants to grieve, is that they have to have a community of people of support who will not try to talk them out of their grief prematurely.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: That's a big one that most people don't have. Most people, if they do descend into their grief, there's like 10 people telling them, you know, "Now don't go there, you'll get depressed."

Suzie: Right.

John: But one of the forms of depression that's caused in many people is the repression of emotions and feelings.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: I mean, there's biochemical depressions, certainly, but there's also just this holding in and holding onto feelings that I don't want to do. The third thing for grief that's necessary, is to ritualize it. And we don't, we're not real big as a culture on ritual. So a ritual might be, you know, you pull out a picture, several pictures of the Grandfather you lost at the nursing home but couldn't say goodbye to and you say goodbye to those pictures and him once a week, 3 times a week, once a month until you feel you know that you've got that out of you. And then the last part of the grief is to have a ceremony to signify that the grieving period is over. And most people never get to that fourth part. So a ceremony is something that happens one time after the completion of rituals. And you usually, you know, like if once you get through a divorce say, you bring together the people that helped you get through it. And you have some kind of real letting go ceremony and a real gratitude ceremony for those people who helped you get through it.

Suzie: So if we go back to what you said earlier about Lincoln going upstairs and weeping when he would hear about the losses, he knew it was a part of his life. And if he didn't have a community, he knew to go get away and grieve.

John: Right. Right. Grieving can be done alone. But here's the thing that most people don't really understand. Grieving is really supposed to be done with others. See grief is a scary place. Grief is a dark place. And yes, we can do some of that by ourselves. But ideally, ideally, it was, you know, all indigenous cultures and what's left of them and the history that we have, it was usually the whole community that participated in the grief of their elders or their children or their loss, because when you have, you know, 10 people, 5 people in your life checking on you, taking care of you during a really, really, really sad time, you can actually move through your grief a little bit faster and deeper because you have a net of support under you. See most people don't have that net. Some people are afraid that if they ever descend in their grief and start crying, that they'll flood Austin, Texas. And that it will lead to depression.

Suzie: Yeah. And would you say that unexpressed grief, so, you know, all the change that we're going through right now, and, you know, the heightened anxiety, they're related, I would guess, that my understanding is that anxiety is unexpressed emotion as well. Is that right?

John: Yes. Unexpressed emotion about the unknown.

Suzie: Yeah. OK, that makes sense.

John: Like, I'm going to be 69 in a few months and I don't know how long I'm gonna live. So one of the things that I teach and write about is that once you reach a certain stage in your life, you really like you know, the truth is, is that I've got far fewer years ahead of me than I do behind me. And so to prepare in some ways, not in a morbid way, but by grieving my past and my youth, it allows me to enter into this stage of life more confidently and deeply and serenely than if I am still trying to hold on to my youth and not accept the grief of that loss, which then allows



me to go into my 70s and hopefully my 80s, and basically, each stage of life really requires some level of grief. Again, the thing that I keep saying is that the proper response to all loss, all change, all transition, is grief. And in direct proportion to how you can grieve, you're setting yourself up to have a whole lot of joy.

Suzie: Yeah. So that whole holding it in just makes it last longer.

John: That's right.

Suzie: Then it clouds everything too, I guess, you know, to me it's like I see me walking in a fog, so I can't see my way or see me clearly walking ahead.

John: You know, unfelt sadness, sorrow and loss can often just turn into rage and bitterness and resentment. If somebody can't grieve the loss, say of their youth, they will be bitter and some people be bitter and resent the people that are youthful around them. But if they can grieve, "That was that was my time. It's a loss. It's a change. It's a transition." Then, you know, you can bask in the light and ecstasy of those young people instead of envying them.

Suzie: Yeah. Instead of being charged by it. So people right now, I really love how you say, "Grief is the proper response to all change and all transitions." So right now, there's lots of change, lots of transition. We've lost what feels like our freedom, for a lot of us, people are losing their business. Some people are up close and center with people they hadn't spent all that much time. There's a lot of opportunity for grief and upsetness this right now.

John: Yes.

Suzie: What would you say, you've kind of got your grief formula here, have to know it's a part of life, have to have a community support, you ritualize it, ceremony. How could we use that formula towards some of the feelings some folks are feeling now, the anxiousness about the unknown?

John: Well, see, you know, ideally, ideally, and I'm just going to make it a metaphor, ideally at 9:00 at night, my whole neighborhood would come out and say a prayer or have a thought or a tear or a bunch of tears and maybe just name the people that they have lost or name the people they're afraid they will lose. And then, you know, by 9:30pm, everybody go back in their house. But see, we just don't see people grieving these changes and losses. We see people trying to negotiate them, but not grieve them.

Suzie: So negotiating them is like what? What would that be? How would you see that? What would be like?

John: Negotiating it on lots of different levels, like, you know, we're all gonna go get our masks to negotiate this.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: But see, we're not going grieve I can't see your face anymore.

Suzie: Right.

John: Your beautiful face is no longer visible to me. We negotiate by trying to create medications and drugs for. We negotiate by trying to give money to people and food to people, which are all right things to do. But, there's no one holding that woman who lost her husband and could not even touch him, there is nobody holding her.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Loneliness is what's holding her, if anything, you know, trying to get through it with a stiff upper lip. But there needs to be somebody who can hold that person's grief for that loss. But we just don't do that, many, many people now it's changing with generations, but many people were raised with this idea that you just don't show these emotions in public. You keep that to yourself, and so that's exactly the wrong thing to do, you know, is keep it to yourself. You don't go around telling strangers and everybody that you lost somebody at the retirement home.

Suzie: Right.

John: But you openly share those emotions and feelings of that loss, so, yes, we negotiate. That's right. And now, if we could grieve along with that, to me, that would be equally as right.

Suzie: So let's go get the masks, let's go get the medications. Let's be the action-oriented that we're seeing through, you know, the government and in people trying to help. But along with that, let's go upstairs and if we don't do it on TV, let's go do it up in our room like Lincoln did.

John: Yup, yup.

Suzie: Grieve it. Feel it. And then that will bring a sense of kindness or tenderness to our doing, maybe.

John: You know, women have been saying this, Suzie, it's kind of a sexist thing to say, but it's true, women have been having good cries.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: For as long as I guess there's been women.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: And men didn't say anything good about crying hardly at all. But when a woman says, "Oh, I had a good cry last night." You being a woman, what's that code for? What's that mean.

Suzie: Relief. I let it go. I felt what I felt. I feel better.

John: Had a good night's sleep, you know.

Suzie: Yeah.



John: But see, we don't have good cries. We don't have good cries. And what you were talking about, about this major loss that you had, you let those feelings come up and out. You didn't die. You didn't go crazy. You didn't get institutionalized.

Suzie: Nope, and it didn't last forever either. But it felt so much better. And then it's like, "Okay, now I did need to take action and step in on some things," and I just did it. But I was cleaner for it or I was less crazed or whatever, I don't know what the word is, but...

Suzie: You were less charged up with an emotion that had you just swallowed or stuffed or bottled up, the actions that you took would have been half-hearted at best.

Suzie: Yeah. Yeah.

John: Half-hearted at best.

Suzie: Well, and I think what happens is, when you do hold it in and I, you know, I was and, you know, can still be really good at this, too, holding it in and then just not being present.

John: Right.

Suzie: And so then you don't really have it to be with anyone or to pick up on like, "Oh, you know, there is more here." Like you're saying, you know, being able to be with someone, no one's holding the woman who lost her husband, sometimes the woman who lost her husband is not going to let you hold her, just because of our society. But if we're in a loving and open place, we can hold them with our heart and they can feel that, right?

John: Yes.

Suzie: That is probably what you do all the time as a therapist, right?

John: Yes. Very good. That is very well said. Most people that I work with over the last 35 years, if I say to them these two questions, if I said, "Do you feel like you have a lot of sorrow or sadness in you?" Most people that are working with me in therapy will say, "Absolutely, I know I do." And I go, "And what are you afraid of in regards to letting it out?" I've heard this response almost word for word, at least thousands of times, "Well, if I start crying, I'll never stop."

Suzie: Yes. Yes.

John: Thousands and thousands of times. And the first time I heard it, it came out of my mouth.

Suzie: Yeah, yes.

John: The second question is, "Do you know that you have anger in you about stuff?" They all say, "I know, I do. I think I do." And I go, "If you let it out, what keeps you from letting it out?" "Well, if I ever let it out, I'm going to tear your house down. And then I'm going to tear Austin down. Then I'm going to tear the world down and I'm gonna go crazy," you know. And I go, "No, you're not."

Suzie: Yeah.

John: But that's how it feels both for sadness and anger, and the fear is that if I ever descend into it, I'm afraid I won't come out. Not only will you come out, you'll come out, I remember one time I was working with this guy and he hadn't cried, he was like in his 50s, and he hadn't cried since he was 12, he said. And so we did a lot of work and we did deep grief work, and for the first time he had a cry. And so he came back the next week and I said, "So how was your week?" He said, "Oh, God, John, it was the sweetest week ever spent. It was like a load was lifted off of me. I could hear the birds sing, I could smell the flowers, me and my wife made love like I've never made love before." And I said, "Well, would you like to go there again today?" He said, "No, no, I've got a business meeting and I would just like to talk about some things." Never forget that guy because it was like just a classic answer, like you know, "Last week was good, and could make this week better, but don't ask me to go there."

Suzie: Yeah. So even though, even though he felt better, it's human tendency to still push it away.

John: Absolutely. And I said that in lectures and workshops, you know, that I'd rather take a sharp stick in my eye than have to do, you know, do deep grief work. But I go to it when I need to because once I got my tears back, I swore I would never let anybody or anything ever take them away again.

Suzie: And why do you feel that way?

John: Well, cause I lived so long, way up into my 30s, where, you know, if you repress your grief, you repress your joy. And if you repress your grief, you will tend to try to repress the grief of those around you. And so I had repressed my grief. And Lord knows, you know, when I was a young man, you know, a woman would cry, my first thing was, how can I get her to stop crying, "Baby, baby, baby, what do you need? What can I do? Just stop crying. Please stop crying." You know, and you will even see that in movies, you know, a woman breaks down and it just throws the fear of God in man. He's gotta get her to stop. And so I stopped when I was 13 and I didn't really sob until I was 33.

Suzie: Wow.

John: And then once I got that back and I realized that I didn't die, that I did come out, My God, how much lighter I felt then. Like I said, I can be around anybody who need to grieve now, because I know what it feels like. I am not going to repress your sadness. If you need to be sad and you want me to hold you while you do it, that's fine with me. But Lord, did that take 100,000 hours of therapy to get there.

Suzie: Yeah. So today we've got people feeling the sadness in all kinds of ways. So if they can access or allow their feelings to flow and, you know, so say somebody still is a little uncomfortable with crying and maybe they don't have a huge support network or even a couple of support networks, people that they trust to cry with or to back them up, what are some things to help them through? You know, help them express grief.

John: Well, I've told people this again, in workshops and lectures and books and stuff, grief doesn't always come with tears, grief is an attitude. It's a way of being in the world around loss and transition and change. And sometimes, a lot of times, tears will come.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: See I feel like I'm in a grief mode for, that's why I wrote that blog in part is I feel like, you know, I'm in a grief mode for all these people that are just suffering so, so much. But in the 6 weeks that I've been feeling that, I haven't cried once, actual tears, but I feel the grief in me very, very deeply. Well, I'll take that back, last week, there was something on television about the baby who died of the virus that brought tears. So, you know, but also one of the things I know, you know, I talk about from our last time is, I say most of the time, grief will also go hand in hand with anger. A lot of times when I'm working with an individual or in a workshop or something, somebody might start grieving. And then as they're grieving, sometimes feelings of anger will start rising because see, if you turn off one, you turn off them all. And if you open up, the one, you start opening, the all. And what we're doing is what children do before they are talked out of or educated out of their natural feelings. You'll see a two-year-old crying, one minute, next minute he's looking, he or she is looking at a flower in ecstasy. And the next minute he's stomping his feet because he wants some more sugar. And animals are that way. Animals go with what they feel, go with what they feel, adults have been told, "Don't feel, don't talk, don't exhibit, don't display it." And so many of us become these somewhat feeling less automatons that just go to work, go to work, go to work, go to work and miss the ecstasy, miss the anger, miss the joy, miss the tears.

Suzie: Right. So it's interesting, as time has stopped, we can't go to work, we can't do all the things that we would normally do to keep going or pave over feelings. So I would say that that has to do with why we're more anxious now too because, right?

John: And also, like I said to you earlier, it's why I have more clients than I've had in years. When you're sitting at home and you're not working 8 or 10 hours every day, but your home, emotion and feelings start bubbling up. People go, "You know what, I've been meaning to deal with some of these emotions and feelings that I know I've got to deal with. And now I actually have time and opportunity to deal with them," in a way I still look at this situation with grief eyes, but I also look at this situation as a recalibration period for a lot of different things, including prioritizing ourselves in ways that we may not have done in years past.

Suzie: So when you think about prioritizing ourselves, are you thinking about self-care or are finding time to do the grief, to do the therapy? What would you say about what, how that would a different?

John: Well doing all of that, but also, you know, this little park that's by my house, I see more Fathers and Mothers playing with their kids today that would never be there because Dad's at work, Mom's at work. So there's a bonding that's taking place. People, I was getting my car serviced the other day, and this young black man was working. He was 19, 20, something like that. And out popped out of my mouth, this phrase of, "Young man, how's your family doing?" And it got, he looked at me like, and the way he looked at me was pre-virus, I wouldn't have stopped and asked about his family.



Suzie: Right. Yeah, that's true.

John: And he said, "Oh, well, thank you for asking. Mr. Lee. All my family's doing okay. Well, how's your family?"

Suzie: Yeah. Yeah. So we're being just by the change. And if change brings grief, it's causing us all to kind of be more present or more personable.

John: Connect.

Suzie: Connect. Yeah.

John: I mean, almost every day I text, email or call, and my first words out of my mouth is, "How are you and your family holding up?" You know? And lots of people are doing that. People are giving money like we haven't seen since really 9/11. But 9/11 I'm gonna say this, though it's not exactly right to say in, the aftermath of 9/11 lasted about three or four weeks. This is gone on month after month, going to go on month after month. We're seeing levels of generosity that that we haven't seen since the Great Depression.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: People are just pouring out their talents for free. They're sending millions of dollars to aid in the food crisis. I mean, you know, see, my grief is there, but also, I have tremendous joy, one of the things that the body can do, Suzie, is have multiple feelings and emotions at the same time. The brain is only equipped to think one thought at a time, but the body can be sad, be angry, be joyful. It can have multiple emotions running through it any given time of the day. And so, yes, when I'm talking about grief, yes, I'm talking about anger. But I'm also talking about ecstatic joy in some of the things that's happening in this world that I get to see before I pass this plate.

Suzie: And, you know, that's such a, I love that you differentiate between the mind and the body because we can, that's the other thing that can be confusing sometimes because I have very deep emotions and be very upset about something, as I was earlier this week. But at the same time, I mean, very quickly after that, you could have this, you know, "Man, I love my husband and man, I love my work." It's like, it's a little confusing sometimes if you're not used to it, you know? And I actually had somebody this week tell me that, around that situation, and she was like, "Well, I can't believe I feel this way and this way, you know, about what was going on." You know, so you can. it's almost like it feels like it's conflict. But if we just realize it's just emotion and it's all okay. Like that person I was talking to, was feeling judging herself for it, to be so like I feel so this way, and some of it was about feeling like a victim about some things, but then I also am appreciative of these things, you know, but we can hold all those emotions all at once.

John: Pain is linear. The body is circular.

Suzie: Say that again.

John: The brain is linear. It works on logic and reason and linearity.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: And the body is vertical and circular. The body goes up and ascends into the heavens. It goes down and ascends into grief. It goes into joy and ecstasy and love. So the body is circular and the brain is linear. And what most people are doing right now with the virus, most people are in their linear brains trying to come up with solutions, which is right. But I'm saying is, is we have to have some circularity of emotion and feeling along with our linear brains. But the Western society that we live in and operate in, is much more comfortable with thought than feelings.

Suzie: But then a funny thing is, is our thought will be better and clearer if we actually feel what we feel.

John: That's right.

Suzie: That's so funny.

John: I've been teaching that for 30 years. When somebody, I'll say, "So what's going on now? What's going on? What do you need to work on?" And you'll see them go up into their brain and they go, "Well, I don't really know what it is, I don't really know, you know, how to describe it." And it's because they want emotion and feeling to adhere to linearity. So I'll say, "You know what? Let's just stop thinking for a minute. I want you to close your eyes and take a few deep breaths and just know that you're safe here." And sometimes tears will start running down their face.

Suzie: Oh, yeah.

John: But see, talk therapy, which is still the predominant form of therapy in this country and in Europe is, "Let me use my mind, help me use my mind to figure out how I feel." And I've said in workshops, I go, "Listen, if I can just help you get those tears and some of that anger out, I promise you, then your thinking will clear up. And together we can find a way out of whatever kind of darkness you're in."

Suzie: Yeah. So the level of anxiety that people are feeling, like one of the solutions, if anxiety is up, just trying to tie all this together for what we started with, is so I'm might some ramble for a second, guide me. But, so the anxiety, so I'm trying to talk my way through this. But in a way, so anxiety is fear of the unknown. And if we could say, if we started to understand that our emotions are linear and they have value and they're important, that maybe we would have less anxiety if we just got comfortable with the circular nature of emotions, the up-down, and just didn't fight it so much, but just said, "Well, that's just how I feel." And then just kind of find healthy ways to release it. Then maybe we'd have less anxiety. Like, so if I'm feeling frustrated, my kids are home, I don't have children, so, but I do empathize, so I'm feeling scared about my business, which I really, I'm not worried about that, but I worry about so many other businesses, so I feel all of that, like the grief you're feeling around people. Then you'll feel less anxious, which will help you be more presents. Talk me through this.

John: Well, one of the things is that when we get it, that we're not in control of the unknown and we can relax into that. That's a big part, the reduction of anxiety. A second component, and a

major component of the reduction of anxiety and fear is to be gained through a subject, a topic, that we don't even have time to talk about, nor am I knowledgeable enough to talk about it, and that is to have some kind of connection to what we would call the sacred or the divine. The greater that connection is, the deeper that connection is, that tends to allow us to get to the Serenity Prayer, "God help me change the things that I can, and I know that the things that I can't," and I've said the Serenity Prayer like 700 million times.

Suzie: That's ok. Yeah. Yes.

John: Yeah. And just accept the things that I've told people for years and years and years. And I'll say, "Well, I'm just so angry right now at my husband. I'm just so angry and I don't want to feel that." And then my response would be, "It's just a feeling. It's just a feeling. And you'll let that pass. And then another feeling will come up. Then you got gotta know, that's just a feeling." You know? And all you gotta do is just do what kids and animals do, and that's just feel it, and then it'll just dissipate and go out of you and something else. But don't think because you're really angry at your husband, you have to go home on and hit him on the head with a frying pan, because it's just a feeling. And that, "Just a feeling," can allow people to descend into their feelings if they don't attach this false belief that if I have grief, I won't be able to go to work. No, grief is just a feeling. Sadness and sorrow, is just a feeling. But so is joy and happiness and ecstasy, just feelings. Okay?

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Is that a good place to close?

Suzie: Yeah, I love it. Yeah. Can we talk, real quickly check in with you about your stay at home experience.

John: Yeah. Yeah.

Suzie: How long have you been sequestered? You mentioned about 30 days. Is that about right?

John: 6 weeks.

Suzie: 6 weeks?

John: Yeah. I did something I kind of am glad I did in a way, but in a way not.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: Just a feeling, you know, I took this thing very seriously when they said if you have preconditions, I have a little bit of high blood pressure. Not much. And I had a heart attack 10 years ago, so I took that into consideration. And so I sheltered in place for 6 weeks. And so I'm tired of it. We started sheltering in place like 2 weeks ago or 3 weeks ago, you know, when it became really mandatory. But I'm doing really well with it. And I think that's partly because I have a faith that things are going to not only ultimately turn out all right, but actually be better than they were before. And so that's part of it. And then I have just a tremendous support



system. I have 5, 6, 7 people that I've known for 30, 40, 50 years that, you know, are in touch on a regular basis. And that just means the world to me. I mean, like when I got a divorce 8 years ago, I went into deep, deep, deep grief and I had all the support in the world. And so it didn't scare me to go into it, like it doesn't scare me now. And so, you know, again, I live in a comfortable house, not a palatial house. I have a park nearby. I have 3 geriatric dogs sitting right beside me as we speak.

Suzie: Yeah, they're great company. Yes.

John: Just don't get 3 dogs at the same age at the same time.

Suzie: Oh, all kind of hobbling along, huh?

John: All 3 of them. But they're great. So I kind of miss going into restaurants, miss going to movies, but I am doing okay. Surprisingly so, because I've always wrestled with low grade depressions, high depression, and I just haven't experienced any of that this last 6 weeks.

Suzie: That's amazing. And it sounds like to me, as you were describing it, the biggest thing has been having a support system.

John: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Suzie: And not only in your home that feels supportive to you, but then your puppies, your old guys or gals. And then all these friends, you know, all of that can make a big difference.

John: A huge difference, huge difference. I wish that for everybody that if Anna created a support system and many, many men especially, did not have the wherewithal to do or they think they don't.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: And so I remember when my former wife and I got together that first year, she made an observation and she said, "You know, even in the first few weeks when we were together, I noticed you would not go one single day without calling or sending a letter to your friends." And I said, "That's right, because for over 3 decades I was a lone wolf and didn't think I needed anybody." And now at this stage in my life, she and I got together when I was about 45. "I know that life is not meant to be lived as a lone wolf, and I'll never stop connecting with these people as long as we live, as I live.

Suzie: That's wonderful.

John: All right, dear.

Suzie: All right. Well, what's your books could listeners read and gain insight from right now?

John: Yeah, probably the best one for this would be a book by Random House called *Growing Yourself Back Up*. And the subtitle is *Understanding Emotional Regression*. And see a lot of people are in a very regressed state right now.

Suzie: Yeah.

John: And they're saying, you know, like the people who are going in and the shopping carts full of bottled water. That's a regression. That's an immersion into fear. And in a way, they're in their fight/flight or freeze mode instead of their adult brain who is not going to hoard this stuff and take it away from people. So a regression is sort of a return to somewhat childish thinking or immature thinking. And so this book is recommended by a lot of clinicians for the general public.

Suzie: Last bit of advice, what's one thing you would say to everybody right now?

John: Calm the hell down, and be smart and considerate of those around you, especially that, you know, calm down, and be very considerate and compassion for those that are around you. Wear your masks. Stay that 6 feet apart. And really, really try to reduce that anxiety and fear as much as you can, because the more your body is relaxed, the least likely viruses will attack it. See, if it gets tight and holding on and gritting or teeth, we're just, you know, gonna attract, if not a virus, headaches, migraines, stomach problems, and that's more than you meant to hear, so.

Suzie: I love it. So it goes back to, kind of finishes up what we talked about as let the feelings flow through because they're just feelings.

John: Just feelings.

Suzie: Just feelings. Thank you, John. You're wonderful.

John: You've got to do this. You've got to, I don't know who you've got to work for, Huffington or somebody, this is great blog stuff.

Suzie: It's my joy. And it's great. It's even better when we have somebody like you on here. So thank you for that. And thank you for your wonderful time. And see you at the restaurant, and the movies. And us all healthy, eating well, very, very soon or as soon as it's meant to be. Meanwhile, we'll hang onto our mental health. Best way for people to reach you? Is John Lee books and seminars that link, or?

John: johnleebooks.com.

Suzie: johnleebooks.com, okay, we'll have a link to that in the show notes. All right. You are wonderful. Thank you so much, John.

Suzie: I hope you found value in what John and I spoke about today. Some of my key takeaways is that we are capable of multiple feelings and emotions at the same time. And I think when we, in fact, I just had a conversation with somebody about this, where she said, "You know, gosh, there must be something wrong with me because I feel this way, but I feel exactly the opposite way." And it's like, that's normal. You know, if we can allow it and just say, "Ok, it is normal for our emotions to not be linear, for our body to be circular." And what's the word he used? I think he said vertical or horizontal or whatever he said, but it implied movement and that we need to let the emotions move through us because it's normal to have the feelings and they are just feelings. It doesn't mean that we have to act on them so much and it doesn't define us.



He didn't use that word, but that's those are my words. And that if we can find a support system that will allow us to move through emotions and not judge them and allow them to flow in a healthy way, that will actually work better and that will actually help our brain, our linear brain, problem solved better. That grief and all emotions felt and expressed equal more energy, you know, and the more we hold it in, that's the more grief we feel, not less. So we, some of the old lessons that we've been taught or that we've experienced about holding it in, really don't work. I thought it was interesting, some of the quotes he said, "We don't make much room for grief." And he's really noticing that now because he works with so many people who haven't expressed grief and are now troubled in their life. And, you know, he knows now that a lot of people are feeling grief through all the changes and real loss and feelings of loss in their schedule, but real loss of people they love. So, you know, repressed grief is repressed joy. And so we can just take all that to heart and find our support system and find ways to just allow the emotions to healthfully flow through us.

Suzie: So I appreciate John taking time to connect today and hope that this benefits, this episode was beneficial to you. If you have any comments, reach out and share those with me at suzie@pricelessprofessional.com. And you can also go to our show notes today at pricelessprofessional.com/anxiety. There you'll see a transcript and you'll see all the notes and everything we cover, if you want to go back through that. Also see all of John's contact information and the book he mentions *Growing Yourself Back Up*. I have that. I have a new bookstore, if you go a pricelessprofessional.com/bookstore, you will see John's book there, as well as other books that I recommend. And a couple of mine, books that I recommend on this podcast. And it's a new bookstore that I've created. So you'll see resources there at pricelessprofessional.com/bookstore and you'll see John's book there *Growing Yourself Back Up*.

Suzie: I want to mention real quick that I've created some resources that I've been sharing with people, it's working remotely resources, and it's for waking up eager. It's 25 or more, I think there's even more, complimentary tools that we've created. And if you go to pricelessprofessional.com/wfh, W-F-H. And that's working from home, short for working from home, lowercase pricelessprofessional.com/wfh. You'll get access to those resources. I have things like, there's a complimentary working from home DISC style report. I've had hundreds of people complete that, takes about 10 minutes to complete comes directly to you. It's just a fun little dip, a dipping your toe into the DISC assessment, but it gives you some tips on your style and then other people's style and it gives you some specific tips to you around things that you need to maybe think about in regard to working from home that'll help you feel and be more successful and effective. There's also a working from home in peace worksheet that might be helpful. There's some leadership best practices. There's 3 lessons that I learned from 9/11 that apply to today that I share and a sample huddle team meeting, there are stress management, feeling better type tools and resources, this podcasts will be added to that. And then I have some resources for teens and young adults, one of which is a student TriMetrix assessment. So helping your teens and your high schoolers who are at home right now have some time, capture them, get them to take that assessment and help them start thinking about their best career direction so that they craft a career to create their own wake up eager future. So we always talk about people being a fit to their work, so helping them understand what their strengths are naturally, and then finding the careers and the study areas that align with that. And that's the student TriMetrix. So all of that is stuff that I had fun creating and it helped me feel effective and empowered and a way for me to be of service. And most all of that is complementary, and you'll find it at pricelessprofessional.com/wfh.



Suzie: So that's our episode today. I'm going to close with something I'm going to read that when I read it, it was a good reminder. And I think it might be a good reminder to everyone else, too, about what we're going through right now. And it was shared by my functional doctor, who helps me with different wellness stuff, you know, fitness and functional medicine and supplements, and her name is Dr. Nicole K. Williams, and she's at vivicarewellness.com located in Atlanta. She has a lot of help with others remotely. And I've had all of my family members work with her, but I love what she shared on her Facebook page at Vivicare Wellness and it is words that help us be respectful, thoughtful and helpful as we work with each other. And it's been widely circulated, and you might have seen it already, but I think it's worth it, I want to have it in the show notes, if you go to pricelessprofessional.com/anxiety. But it is a reminder for us all to stay present with each other and ties a little bit to our message today and helps us be more empathetic.

Suzie: The title of the statement, she didn't write it, it's unknown, we don't know who wrote it, but she shared it at vivicarewellness.com and on Facebook, and the title is We Are Not in The Same Boat. "I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We're in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be or vice versa. For some, quarantine is optimal. A moment of reflection, of reconnection, easy and flip flops with a cocktail or coffee. For others, this is a desperate financial and family crisis. For some that live alone, they're facing endless loneliness. While for others, it is peace, rest and time with their Mother, Father, sons and daughters with a \$600 weekly increase in unemployment, some are bringing in more money to their households than when they were working. Others are working more hours for less money due to pay cuts or loss in sales. Some families of 4 just received \$3400 from the stimulus, while other families of 4 zero dollars. Some are concerned about getting a certain candy for Easter, while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend. Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money. Others want to kill those who break the quarantine. Some are home spending 2 to 3 hours a day helping their child with online schooling, while others are spending 2 to 3 hours a day to educate their children on top of a 10 to 12 hour work day. Some are experiencing the near death of the virus, while others have already lost someone from it, and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it. Others don't believe this is a big deal. Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this 2020. Others say the worst is yet to come. So friends, we are not in the same boat. We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different. Each of us will emerge in our own way from this storm, and it's very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance, not just looking, actually seeing. We are all on different ships during the storm, experiencing a very different journey."

Suzie: So a good reminder to stay present with yourself, to stay honoring of other's journey, to take care of yourself and be well. So take care. Stay safe. Be well. We'll see you on the next episode. Thank you.

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