

Sometimes when we share the innermost parts of ourselves we leave the encounter feeling like we've been stripped bare, sometimes even flayed on the altar of vulnerability. It can even feel like a hangover - like you can't face the world and your whole self is now too tender to even try.

THIS IS SUCKER PUNCHED

I have spent years on a quest to find the perfect pots and pans. Stainless steel is great, but not convenient. Non-stick is so easy, but not the best cooking experience. Cast iron is a beloved classic for a reason but sometimes I just need something light that will wipe clean easily. And then I found Our Place. If all the other cookware had babies, the Always Pan and Perfect Pot would be their perfect little progeny. I have the spice color and I kid you not, I'm in love. They look great sitting on my stove top when I procrastinate doing the dishes and they have reignited my love for cooking. They come with super useful accessories: I love the bamboo steamer basket for the pan and the fact that the pot doubles as a dutch oven (it's oven safe - how cool is that?!). Visit BeckyLMcCoy.com/OurPlace to stock up on the perfect holiday gifts and get yourself a little something.

Brené Brown - an author, professor, and researcher who focuses on vulnerability, shame, and leadership - coined the term "vulnerability hangover" and the world has been better for it ever since. In TED talk "Listening to Shame, Brown defines vulnerability as "emotional risk, exposure, uncertainty." One of my favorite Brené Brown quotes comes from her 2015 book *Rising Strong*, "Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it's having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it's our greatest measure of courage."

Vulnerability hangovers make us feel weak and powerless, but when we choose to be vulnerable, we show great courage. Even if things don't work out in our favor.

I was part of a Bible study once where I was really struggling to fit in. I kept waiting to feel like I had made some kind of connection, but something wasn't working. I decided to increase my level of vulnerability; I know I can come off like I have everything together, so I shared that I had recently been diagnosed with anxiety and depression. I had hoped to be met with vows of support, or at

least some sympathy, but no one even acknowledged it. They just awkwardly moved on to the next prayer request. Looking back, I should have known that few people in that space were emotionally equipped to receive my vulnerability. It was a painful lesson with a wound that took a long time to heal, but its scars have helped me to learn when the situation is safe enough for vulnerability.

I recognize that situation, plus the ensuing vulnerability hangover would be enough to make some of you build a cinderblock bunker for your heart, but hear me out: it's possible for people to care for your vulnerability tenderly and to walk with you through the hangover.

By the time I went to seminary in 2017, I'd started to experience a lot of tension in my faith. Did I believe the right things? Was I living them in the right way? Was I even asking the right questions? It was lonely for awhile; I wasn't sure who was safe to talk to (I'd learned that lesson the hard way!) and didn't want answers to "trust God" or read my Bible more. I wanted a faith that wasn't primarily an intellectual experience, but I had no idea where to begin.

And I was terrified to say any of it out loud. What if I was vulnerable and was once again met with no support. Could I withstand that again?

I picked a few people who were feeling the tug to lean into a more somatic, holistic spiritual life. I couldn't even use those words yet - "spirituality" still felt too out of bounds and "holistic" felt too woo woo for me. I shared some of what I'd been thinking and wondering and experiencing and was met with as many enthusiastic "me toos!" Instead of being met by apathy or judgement (I'm not sure which is worse), I was met with curiosity and kindness.

With each exercise in vulnerability, the hangovers became more tenable and I gained confidence. And I learned how to figure out who was safe to share with.

Am I really good at being vulnerable with people in every area of my life?
Not in a million years.

But I'm learning that the vulnerability hangover doesn't mean I'm not safe. It means I've taken a risk, a risk that could result in deeper, more trusting relationships with my friends and with myself.

Here are a few books to help you learn more about vulnerability:

- Daring Greatly by Brené Brown
- Vulnerability is my Superpower by Jackie Davis

- You are Your Best Thing by Tarana Burke

You'll find links to these along with a full transcript of this episode at BeckyLMcCoy.com/podcast/78

Solve all your cookware problems with Our Place's Always Pan and Perfect Pot. Dress up your kitchen with one (or all) of the great colors to choose from! Did I mention the accessories?! Pot holders, steamer baskets, and the most gorgeous trivets. They've always got great sales going on, no coupon necessary. Shop at BeckyLMcCoy.com/OurPlace

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If you found this episode encouraging or helpful, share it with a friend and remember: just because vulnerability is scary doesn't mean it isn't safe or not worth it. You're doing great.