



Behind the Smile Transcribed Audio

Rachel Taane

This is a podcast from Rova. Kia ora, I'm Rachel Taane Tinorau, and I am the voice of hope.

So my- my mom and my dad, they separated when I was 2, and then mom remarried, and she was with a man for- she was married him for 13 years. We moved around quite a lot. And because I'd been to so many schools, I never really had, like, a solid group of- of people, so I was bullied quite a lot.

One night, I snuck out to go to a party. I would have been about 14, 13, 14. Snuck out and drunk lots of Christophe vodka and, yeah, ended up getting raped. And so that was kind of the first beginning for me of what it was like to experience a system that protects perpetrators. So it made me hate the police, I hated the law, I hated people, I hated men because I'd had such a dysfunctional life with men anyway. So this just kinda solidified my- my experiences and beliefs of what a man is.

Moved to Christchurch and I met this group of guys, and they were- all had trauma of their own. Like, they all had broken families, and I ended up going out with one of the guys eventually. So I was with him for a while when he got me into meth.

And so I started using meth more and more, to the point that I had to start dealing it. So, by this age, I was, like, 15, 16. The more I got hooked on it, the more I needed. That was a really, really heavy life of drugs. I was, like, living couch to couch, living in sheds with my boyfriend, whoever that was at the time. But, yeah, just absolute mess.

And then I remember I'd, like, booked tickets for mum's birthday to go to this concert, and so I turned up. I remember I'd been up for, like, five- five to seven days. Went to this gig with Mum, and then I had to go into the bathroom, and I was using the bathroom because I was like, fuck. I can't stay awake. And then I heard Mum yell out, 'Rach! Rach, are you alright?' And then I was just like, fuck. This is it. I need I need to change.

So, that was kind of my moment of change for me. Like, I- I always was there as me. Like, I had these two versions of me. I had this one that had no soul, that was a full addict with just so much hate towards myself but also everyone else. And then there was the other side of me who was like a real loyal family-orientated friend that wanted to get help but just didn't kinda know how.

And then went to rehab when I was 19. Learning just basic relationship stuff because they really unpacked a lot of behaviours that I had. And so it was all around understanding the self. I tried



to, you know, find out who we were because I didn't know who I was. Like, I never really did. So once I was able to identify those, then I could start to work on my self-love more and sort of start to have goals in life.

Therapy for me was huge. There was a good year and a half, two years of, like, real solid professional help. And then when I got pregnant with my daughter, I was like, 'Right. I- I can't be selfish anymore. I've got more responsibility, which is this little little human.'

I'm on meds, so I take sertraline. I've been on them for six or seven years now. I've tried to avoid medication for so long and then was like, 'Oh, no. I do need it,' and they've saved my life. For me, it's things like grounding exercises, whatever that might be. But also my husband, Tiki, is amazing, so he understands it, you know, and I can talk to him. And the kids understand. I'm really honest with our two children. I'm really honest with them, so they understand that I've had trauma, that I've got an injury from that, which is PTSD.

For me, for, like, for advice of people, I think, and this is a thing I always say to people because I work in sexual violence prevention, and I think for me, it's like whatever happens to us is never our fault. We can't blame ourselves at all no matter what the situation is for harm that someone's put on us, but the thing that we have responsibility for is our healing. We have to heal.

For anyone that is listening to the story that is having their own challenges with their mental health, whether that's depression, PTSD, addiction slash escapism, whatever that may be, I think it's just trying to find that one little bit of hope inside you, that one little bit of self-love that's in there somewhere to know that you're worthy of getting the help that you need. There is definitely someone out there that loves you and wants you to do well, even though a lot of the time we feel like a burden or, you know, we think that it'd be better if we weren't here, but that's not true.

I can hand on my heart say that from my own experience. There's so many people that want to help, and it's just finding that one friend or that one service and, yeah, just just sticking it out.