Atlas O. Phoenix - Aug 10 2021

**SPEAKERS**

Molly Joyce, Atlas O. Phoenix

**Molly Joyce** 00:00

What is resilience for you?

**Atlas O. Phoenix** 00:00

Um Okay. That's a lot of things. You know, I'm a child abuse survivor, sexual assault survivor. Financial abuse from a parent, survivor, emotional, verbal, spiritual assault survivor. And so I'm also someone who has bipolar disorder, PTSD, and unspecified dissociative disorder. So I'm kind of working with a lot. And I lost a significant friendship relationship last year. And it actually officially ended five months ago. And so I'm in the process in the last 18 months I've done since that breakup, but, since it didn't really initiate but we were trying to take space last year, I did 250 hours of dialectical behavioral therapy, lost 40 pounds, and decided to transition this year. And so I came out to my community already. And I changed my name to Atlas logo in Phoenix. And I picked Phoenix because I'm a Scorpio and we have seven symbols. And the first symbol is a spider. The last iteration is Phoenix. And with everything that had happened within a year, I had really risen from my ashes. And it just seemed appropriate to have that to have that as a last name. Atlas is the strongest Titan God in Greek mythology, stronger than Hercules ogoun is an African mythical warrior. And Phoenix, you know, is a mythical bird that flies to the Sun incinerates to ashes and rises from its answers to do the same thing again, with more perseverance. So I feel like resilience is a combination of, you know, self awareness, self love, self care, understanding and compassion for oneself. And that builds trust within oneself. And that builds the concept and idea that you can protect yourself. And that you can defend yourself and advocate for yourself. And that you don't need to be codependent are except relationships that are being codependent with you. It means interdependence, it means intersectionality. It means, you know, collaborating with other people that are similar than you, if you're so used to doing it alone, it means you're not alone. It means your story, once it's told and shared with other people, can be someone else's Survival Guide. So that's kind of what resilience has meant to me in the last 18 months.

**Molly Joyce** 03:16

That's great. Thank you for sharing. And the second question is, what is isolation for you?

**Atlas O. Phoenix** 03:25

Isolation when I felt it was lonely and stark. And it was hard to breathe both physically and emotionally. It was heartbreaking. It was earth shattering. It was constantly questioning your purpose and point in life and whether you had given enough and whether you were being punished by the isolation.

**Molly Joyce** 04:05

Thank you. And then kind of the opposite of that, what is connection for you?

**Atlas O. Phoenix** 04:11

Connection is respect and love, kindness and caring. Eye contact in more than just looking at someone's iris but actually looking into their pupils when you speak to them. Connection is opening your body language, not crossing your arms, not folding your fingers into each other, but opening your arms. And either if you're sitting at a table, putting your arms to your side or opening your arms on the table, putting your phone away and out of sight. When you're at you know, when you're meeting with someone whether you're in their house or at a coffee shop, or putting it in your pocket and turning it on silent or vibrate it means listening reflectively which When, which means when someone talks to you, you repeat what they say, and ask more questions to get closer. It means when you do speak, you speak with love. You speak with truth, integrity, dignity. Connection also means laughter. It means sharing of yourself and thanking the other person for sharing with you. It means at the end of a hangout, making plans for another hangout, or at least saying you're interested in having another hangout, and also being grateful and saying that you're grateful and thankful for the current hangout. And the special time that you spent together. It means when you see a stranger, you make eye contact, it means maybe you wave because maybe that person's having a bad day. And maybe they could use a smile. You know, it means going into your community, and asking, "How can I be supportive?" "What do you need?" I think connection just spans. We are all connected. Whether repeat whether people realize it or not, we're all connected. And we're all we all have the same needs. Like I never like to say I'm different from somebody. I'd like to say I'm unique, just like everybody else. And I also feel like we have the same basic needs. But we have uniqueness about each and every one of us that can be valued by every one of us. That's what connection is for me.

**Molly Joyce** 06:38

I really love that. And the last question is, what is darkness for you?

**Atlas O. Phoenix** 06:51

Darkness is soul searching. Darkness is trying to become aware. Darkness is getting in touch with what your feelings are telling you. Because sometimes your feelings although valid, your feelings are always valid. Sometimes they're not justified. Sometimes they're just assumptions or interpret interpretations or confabulations, or conclusions. But without data, they're not facts. And that makes your feelings unjustified, though valid, valid. And so darkness means going into yourself and figuring out what is not working and deciding what you need to make things work for you.

**Molly Joyce** 07:38

Great, thank you. I love all these answers so much.