

TRANSCRIPT OF AUDIO FILE:

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

THERAPIST: Hi. How are you doing?

CLIENT: Do you have a cold?

THERAPIST: No.

CLIENT: This smells. Like somebody got sick or Vicks or something.

THERAPIST: Oh, it's the tissues. The tissues with Vicks in them. I don't like them.

CLIENT: Oh, good. You got a bunch of them?

THERAPIST: I think I have some others.

CLIENT: Plus lotion. Do they make some with cereal as well, right? Something that, you know, shovels the snow as well. Let's see. What did we talk about last time? It was quite significant, right? Oh yeah, the need to protect my mom. [00:01:15]

Well, I guess does that like, if you feel you want to protect someone, does that in your head make them feel or seem the catalyst? I don't know if that is a connection that's mainly in my head or not. It's funny like this didn't even occur to me until now that, you know, why did she have to listen to all that view? Why couldn't, why couldn't she have stood up for herself and, you know, told him to shut up and, you know, left him? Why did she keep, you know? [00:02:17]

I don't know what's, you know, kind of general and everyone feels and what is peculiar to me and I should think of getting rid of or thinking differently about. I guess, you know, everyone would want to, everyone would feel protective about their parents and the people they love, but I guess in my case it feels, I guess it feels helpless maybe and that I don't really trust her to do things for herself. I don't know. [00:03:54]

And when she does do something by herself then, you know, I'm pleasantly surprised. Well, you don't need my help. That's, that's a relief. I guess it's just like how a parent feels when they're bringing up a child. Finally, she went to the potty by herself or something like that.

THERAPIST: Yeah, but that assumes that the child will develop in to an independent adult.

CLIENT: Why? I probably assumed that.

THERAPIST: With your mother?

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: What is the mechanism in which, by which she'll change?

CLIENT: What do you mean? [00:04:55]

THERAPIST: Well, why do you assume that the way your mother is now won't be the way she'll be in the future?

CLIENT: I suppose I, you know, we're all, we're both in a trajectory of growth or, you know, trying to achieve something and she with her teaching license and me with, you know, like writing and stuff. So, I feel like both of us will, you know, she will, you know, eventually get the

lay of the land or something in order to not, yeah. Maybe that makes me think that, you know, she's on a trajectory of change. Do most people think otherwise? Do they think that is who we are, this is how it will always be, or?

THERAPIST: It depends on the person. [00:06:10]

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: Maybe you assume because you're growing and changing and reflecting on your life and thinking about, you know, how you want to grow that, you know, your mom won't because you see that she that the two of you as so tied.

CLIENT: Maybe. Yeah. One was the reflection of the other, maybe. I know for myself I want to change and I want things and go on to achieve certain things and I'm hoping, you know, those achievements will make me more positive, more confident person. A happier person and I guess I am assuming and hoping for the same for my mom. I just, that's the way that I think of me. A work in progress. Yeah. It's, you know, I mean I think that's the we're in transition. And it's because we're here and, you know, immigrants. I kind of, I don't know if I would have felt this in India. [00:07:49]

The thing is that adds to the sense of impatience that I have with myself mostly and my mom too. Just get there already. [00:08:55]

Perhaps I think that the two of us are the only people who transitioning or trying to achieve something. I think others already have it even though now I'm beginning to see, but not feel, that like, you know, that they're actually also trying to get somewhere.

THERAPIST: If it were true that everybody's already gotten so, you know, gotten to where they wanted, you would be my only patient.

CLIENT: Really?

THERAPIST: Well, don't you think people come to therapy because they want to be something more than or different than they are now? Why else would people come? [00:10:05]

CLIENT: Probably I would think people come because they are depressed and means they are in a place they don't want to be. Change their thoughts and feelings. Maybe like situations. I guess. I don't know why I feel I should just, you know, without hard work and all of that just, you know, make it magically. And the sense of aloneness and grief. [00:11:40]

I don't know. I just don't understand why people are very positive. It's like why are you so, why do you have such a good, solid realistic sense and you get it through? Yesterday, I went to school and had to meet the, my professor, he's a writer and he's saying very teacher good teacher of writing. But if only I could get him to focus I think I could learn something from him. He kind of asked me about my background and I really didn't want to share it and after I told him know I mean a little bit a few things I just felt really bad about myself. You know, ashamed. He asks, you know. Probing questions. Okay, why are you doing this? Why are you doing that? [00:12:54]

In class he was like do you guys, you know, hang out together more I was just thinking he has no idea of the sense of resentment some of us may feel for each other, you know? Well, maybe I sense it in others. Maybe they don't have resentment. Some of them are actually nice and happy and chat with each other. I roll my eyes at times. [00:14:00]

He's like, oh, he makes a clear distinction between writers who don't have to work and writers who do and why you should think that I am so proud and I thought, you know, like very pathetic about myself. I'm like yeah, I'm working. I came to this country since I was 15. So, I was like kind of like you should take that in to account. That's not important to me at all that I work. I despise that. I despise those years. I don't know why I'm such childish about this. Is that the right adjective?

THERAPIST: Childish?

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: What, how do you describe as childish? [00:15:13]

CLIENT: I used the wrong word.

THERAPIST: What do you think he was trying to say to you?

CLIENT: That I should be... I don't know.

THERAPIST: I mean that's why I'm asking because I don't know what he was trying to say to you.

CLIENT: He just said take in to account that you'll have to work. It's like he said those who, you know, live off trust funds and don't have to work or those that have to work. He was just saying be appreciative of, you know writers these days, living in Boston and trying to make it. Trying to write because it's so expensive here and this and that.

THERAPIST: Yeah, I didn't understand where he was going with that. [00:16:11]

CLIENT: Yeah. I don't know what it means to take in to account.

THERAPIST: Do you know what it means?

CLIENT: Yeah. How I'm supposed to take it in to account. Keep telling myself oh, that's okay. This is not a very nice consolation prize. And like the web site who almost said yes. I thought that it said yes, but it said no. Building the web site and, you know, it's just in the back of my head I'm feeling, you know, you guys are just using me. You know, you don't care one bit about what I really want and it's just and they send five or six e-mails every day. Do this. Do that. Do this. Do that. It's like, you know?

THERAPIST: To the web site that you volunteered for?

CLIENT: Yeah. I feel like a mule or, you know, like a beast of burden just carrying on without really having a say in it.

THERAPIST: Why did you volunteer? [00:18:20]

CLIENT: I felt so angry, so wronged at hearing that I was led to believe that they'd accepted it and then suddenly they said no and so I just felt really wronged. I think he said that I felt that something that was given to me had been taken away or something. So, it's and then instead of crying and needing myself I just yeah. I guess that I thought they were saying their so busy and all that. Maybe I'll relieve their burden and do something nice for them. Just get to know these horrible monsters known as elders. You know, they're a heartless group, in my head, you know. So, and that's what they look like, you know. Let's see it from their eyes. Maybe I'll learn something.

THERAPIST: Well, then you feel taken advantage of. [00:19:32]

CLIENT: Yeah. I know. I just feel like, I mean see that as a negative thought process that I should learn how to avoid. I volunteered and I was thinking will this take too much of my time and, you know, I just went ahead and did it. So now I shouldn't regret it or, you know, like beat myself up over it. I should learn to manage and I should, you know, learn to speak up for myself. Like, you know, I cannot help you these days. I'm busy and I'm still feeling wronged and taken advantage of because, you know, I knew what I was getting in to.

THERAPIST: So, how did I'm infuriated in them, with them translate in to oh, I'll work for you for free?

CLIENT: I don't know the feeling in my head.

THERAPIST: Yeah. I'm trying to understand that link.

CLIENT: I don't know. It's just automatic.

THERAPIST: Usually people you feel wronged by and angry with you don't then ask, volunteer to help. [00:20:43]

CLIENT: I can't explain it, because that's just how I think. Or thought at that time. Horrible just starting everything on to me and the e-mails that said that they needed help with the website. Not addressed to me. It was like an internal conversation and that person just forwarded it to me. Yeah, I mean like I said, I thought that if I relieved them of some of the burden then they'll, sometime will free up or they'll, you know, take pity on me and or not pity, but you know, like feel obliged to reconsider or reread or a revision or they'll just see that I'm a nice person maybe. I don't know. Yeah, that's thinking. Yeah, like if someone you're angry with and has maybe wronged you, actually, not, you know, just in your head wronged you, but actually wronged you if they it's a very kind of thinking that, you know, you make them feel bad for you. You appeal to their conscience. I'd like to think.

THERAPIST: You make them feel guilty.

CLIENT: Yeah. Perhaps. Or kind. You appeal to their kindness.

THERAPIST: But do monsters have kindness? [00:22:36]

CLIENT: Is there monsters in my head? I made them monsters. They're not actually monsters, right? I said those words a lot. They really are monsters, aren't they? Like my dad. You know, there's no need to appeal to his anything. Perhaps only to, you know...

THERAPIST: And there was originally a piece of writing that you submitted, right?

CLIENT: Yes.

THERAPIST: So, they're supposed to reconsider your writing because you're helping them out? It seems like apples and oranges.

CLIENT: Yeah. I know, but. So, they said to resubmit and so when I do resubmit it won't be just oh who is this? It's this woman who was giving us this beautiful web site, you know? There will be that sense of obligation. A little bit, right? I mean they won't just, they'll read the piece differently, I think.

THERAPIST: But then you have this feel that or wonder whether they're publishing your piece based on merit versus guilt. How could you ever know? [00:24:00]

CLIENT: At this point, I don't care. I feel like I am convinced of its merit because I have command. I shouldn't say that. Well, like you know people have liked other writers and liked readers and liked. It's, I know it's on merit than it's important to be out there. Yeah, it's so much of what gets published doesn't mean the pdf of the latest version, the version that I was supposed to be in. And it's all, mostly, their friends. So, you know, it's whatever. You know, they all think that they're, you know, they launched a web site, launched a magazine that is going to be so important. So, you go to work and, you know, giving voice to writers who are writing important things. Who are those writers? They're their friends. So and at this point I don't care if they it out of guilt or obligation or relief or like. [00:25:26]

THERAPIST: So, you would like you're hoping to put them in a position where they don't feel they have a choice?

CLIENT: No. I'm very sure that the choice, I mean.

THERAPIST: Well, less of a choice.

CLIENT: No. I mean...

THERAPIST: So, if you feel obligated to someone, then you have less of a choice by definition.

CLIENT: Yeah. Perhaps. No, it's really is just in my head that I wanted to know them because if I didn't get to know them better I'll think all the editors will just continue to be heartless monsters in my head. So, I wanted to rid myself of that weird assumption.

THERAPIST: Have you?

CLIENT: I don't, I haven't got to know them that well. I think I'm getting better. Very slowly.

THERAPIST: Do you see them as kind?

CLIENT: I'm sure they are.

THERAPIST: How do you see them?

CLIENT: I don't know them that well at all actually.

THERAPIST: Do you see them as less monster than you did before? [00:26:49]

CLIENT: Probably not. I see them as more helpful since I really don't know anything about technology and all these ideas in mind and no idea how to do them and whether they're feasible or not. It just makes me feel very bad because I mean the whole friends things looking at whoever else are you going to solicit. They're right there and you've seen their writing and you like them or maybe you feel like in different ways. But I don't know it, I just feel like there's no space for my voice. You know, like, I mean of course, you know, like Americans are going to want to read stuff written by Americans, other Americans, but then it just feels like when will I get to be the commentator? You know, like I'm also writing about immigrant lives and, you know, like most people their publishing are Americans and then we need that. You know. It just feels like, you know, you not going to be part of that thing. You feel excluded all the time, so. [00:28:45]

Yeah, I don't know if I see them less as monsters. I don't know if I'd resubmit. I just want to get done with the web site and do my own stuff at that time.

THERAPIST: Do you think you offered your help because you were hoping to be included by those who excluded you? [00:29:45]

CLIENT: Yeah. It's this funny kind of a relationship I have not just with them, but like other things at large. I just, you know, I felt excluded for so long that then I also have this other contradictory feeling of, you know, I don't know if I want to be included. You know? Because the whole like the few meetings that I've had with them about the web site and one time the guy said oh, I should invited you to the Cape next time we have a party or something. And I just kind of winced inside. I was like oh, I don't know if I want to do that. So, I want to be included and I don't want to be included. I feel like they will take away my uniqueness or the thing that makes me, me or something. I don't want to lose it. I guess that's the feeling, the similar feeling that I have about traveling in the US. I don't really like to do it. I don't like to go on long drives. Like driving down the highway experience. [00:31:38]

THERAPIST: What don't you like about it?

CLIENT: I don't know. Just so monotonous. I feel really affected by it. It's like death by landscape. Yeah and I feel even more wrong when I think of my mom and me and like us together struggling and wanting and me wanting to represent that struggle in words and have it included in the larger narrative of American life and that not being you know? So, I feel wronged. [00:32:37]

THERAPIST: By flocking to those who exclude you, you're just perpetuating the narrative.

CLIENT: What do you mean?

THERAPIST: Well, by wanting, by seeking out approval from those who have already disapproved of you. That's just perpetuating the narrative. It's not changing.

CLIENT: So, are you suggesting I shouldn't submit them or?

THERAPIST: I'm not suggesting what you should or shouldn't do. I'm suggesting what, what your behavior and thoughts mean.

CLIENT: Yeah. Yeah. That's why I'm locked in this position and I don't know what to do to change it. I would really like to change it because I don't think I will succeed before I have changed it. I just won't see my own faults and they are there. Not just behaviorally, but in my writing. Like my professor took one look at the first couple paragraphs and was like oh, this story is great, but you have to do this to make the language better. So, it's like they're there. They're objective and I just don't seem to see them and or... [00:34:00]

The university was the first time that I actually felt very included. My god, I was so spoiled. I was really, really spoiled because like the teachers really liked my work and they gave me that award and then I said oh, I'm going to drop out I can't pay my fees. They gave me \$5,000 to be able to finish and it was really just, I was like at the center of my universe.

THERAPIST: How did it feel?

CLIENT: Oh, very good. I was, you know, on cloud nine. Because I was pampered, appreciated, encouraged, loved. I was blinded by all the love. I couldn't see the others. The fact, I mean I could and, you know, there was all those politics were going on. People were, you know, hating the favorites and all that, but I didn't care. I achieved it. [00:35:40]

I finally I have affirmation, you know. Here not so much. Because, you know, I've already been disillusioned and I'm kind of carrying that disillusion with me, so. And I am very, I don't have blinders on. I can see the others and I can see the good in their writing and then I have the sense of oh, you guys are Americans, obviously you'll get published very quickly. Because you

actually are the narrative. You know, you were invited. I have to kind of do acrobatics and bend myself in weird ways to seem or to show that I belong or you know, I have something interesting to say. I was thinking that yesterday. I felt very bad that I was thinking that way. [00:37:00]

THERAPIST: I don't agree with you though. I mean you know more about the writing world, but I think that in your current experience speaks to many Americans. It's a land of immigrants.

CLIENT: I mean I agree. That's, that's what I would say. But, then why is it that people don't want to read about it?

THERAPIST: Why do you say that?

CLIENT: Because there's a lot of stuff, the stuff that gets published is mostly from Americans and not from like immigrants. Like, you know, Asian Americans or you know.

THERAPIST: I don't know. It seems like Americans are very interested in the immigrant experience. Then if you look at percentages, I mean part of it is probably a percentage. The number of people who submit who are from the US or born in the US versus Asian American's I'm sure the percentage is pretty low. Maybe represented in the publishing versus, you know, in terms of the initial population. [00:38:09]

CLIENT: Yeah. I would like to say that makes me feel very debilitated. I would think the other way because it's stuff that I cannot change myself. Except through improving my writing.

THERAPIST: I guess maybe the larger point being that there are ways to seek out the narrative. I mean in a way taking on this magazine or this web magazine is like yeah, I mean, it's seeking out the narrative. Seeking out validation in the narrative. Of being excluded or being wronged and the only power you feel is to make the other people feel a chained to you. That's the only way in which you feel empowered.

CLIENT: I don't know. No. I don't think that I changed to be like that's the reason why I'm feeling sad. Because as my professor said yesterday, making the web site will not result in publication. You know, it will result in contacts, but not publication. And I know that. I mean that's why I don't even know if I'll submit again because then they'll think oh now, you know, she will think we're obligated to her which, you know, I don't feel that at all. I just feel like I said I just I think I wonder if they're reading the piece a second time and if it leads. I have done the changes that make it more powerful in the other language and all the issues are taken care of then they'll know that the piece was written not by a stranger because that makes it very easy for you to reject if it's bad, you know. [00:40:00]

But the certain need is on the border, you know. Because I feel like now I've been on the border for a long time. It really is like it. It's like coming from Mexico and not being close to the boarder, but now I'm on the fence. So, they will see that okay, this not mean this person is someone who's helped us out is writing it. If it's on the edge, then I'm at fault. In instead of out. And if it is, and if indeed I fall out maybe they will, they will give me some feedback as to how I could be in. You know. I don't know. Like this piece is not even that important to me because, you know, working on my model and it would have been nice to have a magazine publication. [00:41:07]

THERAPIST: It seems like it's not a perfect analogy, but you're sort of switching roles with your, you're sort of becoming your mother's role visa vie the magazine. Sort of wanting someone to feel obligated to you to give you a second chance. To feel like they might owe you something if it's only to sort of take your, you know, put your notch up your piece a little bit above other people because they think not only do they know you, but you've helped them. You've given them free time.

CLIENT: Yeah. So, they're supposed to be my mother?

THERAPIST: No, you are making someone feel obligated to you.

CLIENT: Oh, like my mother makes me feel?

THERAPIST: Yeah. Like her handing you over the bill for the rent. How can you cast me out so quickly? You owe me.

CLIENT: That's a negative way of thinking and damaging and everything.

THERAPIST: No, I'm certain it is. I think it's really healthy. I think we should continue helping you. What kind of question is that?

CLIENT: I don't know. It's the patient is concerned how to, she wants to know how sick she is. Yeah.

THERAPIST: Do you want to know that about yourself?

CLIENT: Yeah. I should.

THERAPIST: No, don't ever do that. Well, it sounds like what you're saying is that your anxious. Those questions in part come out of anxiety.

CLIENT: About what?

THERAPIST: Well, in this case, being sick.

CLIENT: Yeah. I mean. I'm so deep in to it that I don't completely know that yes, I'm strong. So, now that you kind of, I think what you're saying is wrong and maybe I will be able to get out of it.

THERAPIST: Well, it's very limiting and it makes you feel terrible.

CLIENT: Yeah.

THERAPIST: This whole scenario. I mean it sounds like you feel miserable with this volunteering. It's not something that brings you joy and pleasure or makes you feel good about yourself. [00:43:30]

CLIENT: It does actually. A little bit. Just because I'm really good at it and they are very happy with it and they're encouraging or they're saying you know good job with that. You know, there is that is there affirmation. I feel good partly doing it, but then when this negative thinking comes in to being that oh, you know, they're just using me. They won't want to publish me. That is when I feel miserable. I mean you're right, I do feel miserable, but I have that positive sense as well.

THERAPIST: I think we need to stop for today.

CLIENT: Okay.

THERAPIST: I will see you on Monday.

CLIENT: Did that insurance thing...?

THERAPIST: Did you call them?

CLIENT: I did. It's just so impossible to get through to them because all I could do was leave them a message about my address change and I don't even know if they processed it. I didn't even get to talk to a person.

THERAPIST: We'll figure it out. I know it's really hard. Thank you for doing that.

CLIENT: Yeah. I'll keep trying.

THERAPIST: Okay. Take care.

END TRANSCRIPT