

The Lovelight Stories

PODCAST

Ep: 21 | Health Trauma: Moving through "Paralyzing" Circumstances with Diana Ashworth

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00:01.50

lovelightstories

Diana it is so lovely to have you on the love light stories podcast today I um got connected to you I believe through Pamela Hillman who has been a guest on the show previously and. Um, I won't spoil it but I know that you work with Pamela and um I was just delighted to hear that you wanted to be on the show and share part of your story I think you actually reached out to me and um, getting to know you a little bit and your story has just been an honor so welcome. To the podcast.

00:34.13

Diana Ashworth

Thank you so much. It's so exciting to be here.

00:39.55

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, well we have a lot to get into today I feel like um, there's been some really difficult pieces in your story. But also there's there's a lot of light at the end of the tunnel which we'll get into later but can you just help us feel. What it was like to be you at the beginning. Um, when you were witnessing the abuse of your grandfather and kind of where your story began.

01:07.14

Diana Ashworth

Um, when I was witnessing the abuse I was about from when I could remember about age 10 and I saw him verbally abuse my grandmother and physically and it was hard being me because I didn't know what to do. Because I saw him do this but I had no father figure in my life. He was the only father figure I had but he wasn't mean to me so I was kind of torn. So my emotions were torn both ways in of.

01:35.48

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, right? How else did it affect you like what did it feel like to be you How old were you at this time and like what were the thoughts going through your mind.

01:50.28

Diana Ashworth

Is um yeah I was about 10 and the thoughts that were going through my mind were I'm never getting married if this is what marriage is like you know I didn't want anything to do with a man or guy or anything because I was like are all men like this.

01:56.60

lovelightstories

Oh Wow! interesting.

02:06.22

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, and you are married now right? So you did yeah all congratulations. Well I'm I'm glad that you were able to work through some of that but also okay so I think at age 12

02:08.10

Diana Ashworth

So yeah, yes I've been married 21 years yes thank you.

02:25.97

lovelightstories

He passed away is that right? Yeah and so explain what happened thereafter and just your experiences and how that affected you.

02:26.17

Diana Ashworth

Yes, he did.

02:38.29

Diana Ashworth

Yeah, um, at age 12 I came on from school and usually he would come and greet me and stuff and I'd have snack to my mom got home from work. Well that day he didn't um and I didn't and I call his name but he didn't come and I went in the room. And I saw his pills knocked over and his fists were balled up really tight but he wasn't breathing um and it just shocked I went into complete shock but even in shock I was able to call the ambulance and you know he ended up passing away and calling for her home and.

02:59.95

lovelightstories

Honey.

03:13.57

Diana Ashworth

I know that's ah that's a lot for a twelve year old to do you know, but it was just very hard for me and my emotions and feelings. Um I didn't know what to do I never lost anyone that close to me and it was just devastating. So.

03:15.50

lovelightstories

Yeah.

03:28.49

lovelightstories

Wow so you actually found your grandfather first that day and you you had to call the funeral home even wow that is a lot for a twelve year old I mean even doing that now the thought of it would be so.

03:33.49

Diana Ashworth

Um, yeah, yes, yes, and the right.

03:47.43

lovelightstories

Difficult. Wow Wow. So so what happened after that like how did you end up processing all of this.

03:49.65

Diana Ashworth

He.

03:56.18

Diana Ashworth

Um, you know the grief I process um pretty quickly because you know you have to go back to school. Go back to your life but I still cried when I got home from school every day I would lay in this bed. Um, it was just.

04:07.49

lovelightstories

And.

04:13.62

Diana Ashworth

I couldn't get over it. You know I was just it felt like I was just stuck and stagnant in that place.

04:18.85

lovelightstories

Wow Did your family like were they available to help you through that like were there discussion.

04:24.35

Diana Ashworth

They were but you know they were but my mom's family. It was like they don't express love Well they don't say I love you or you know I was told by my grandfather if you cry you're weak.

04:36.20

lovelightstories

Um.

04:40.75

lovelightstories

E.

04:43.28

Diana Ashworth

And so it's like I didn't cry I didn't want to show my emotions and I didn't until I was probably in my twenty s I have all that was been up in me. So.

04:48.65

lovelightstories

Oh Wow Yeah, okay and you know as as you're you were grieving your grandfather's passing basically did. Did any of the thoughts about your grandmother's abuse and like the relief of that on her passed through your mind like were you processing that dichotomy still that you kind of mentioned where he was nice to you but tough on her.

05:20.41

Diana Ashworth

Yes, because she completely changed. It's like she was in a shell when he was alive you know didn't go anywhere. Didn't do anything she started to like go places. Um, she had the freedom of you know, doing things without him yelling or screaming or hitting her.

05:24.47

lovelightstories

Yeah.

05:36.42

lovelightstories

Oh Wow yeah.

05:38.18

Diana Ashworth

You know so it was just what it was just amazing her coming out of that and I process that too you know because I was like I felt good for her. You know it's like she escaped it. You know I know he he was deceased but at least now she could have somewhat of a life.

05:46.96

lovelightstories

Yeah, right? Yes, interesting wow and and again at 12 years old to process all that and.

05:59.40

Diana Ashworth

Um, yeah, right.

06:03.33

lovelightstories

And watching your grandmother come back to life in a way which is really sad to say if if I can phrase it that way. Um, and and you dealing with this grief and also it sounds as though not knowing exactly how to even process those emotions at such a young age without like.

06:10.83

Diana Ashworth

Um, guest is like a right.

06:21.92

lovelightstories

That family dynamic of of really talking about your feelings and expressing those. Yeah Wow So what did you come to learn from that whole experience like looking back on it now. Yeah.

06:26.79

Diana Ashworth

Um, by.

06:34.73

Diana Ashworth

What did I learn from it I you know I learned that you should share your emotions you know and I learned life is short and to cherish it because you know God you know this isn't our home.

06:46.82

lovelightstories

Yeah.

06:53.49

Diana Ashworth

It's you know this is temporary and while you're here. Do what you can.

06:53.81

lovelightstories

Right.

06:59.37

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, so much wisdom in all of that Really? Okay, so if we can I'd like to transition into another difficult point in your story. Um, and and that's your your health and I'll let you share about that.

07:05.64

Diana Ashworth

Okay.

07:15.24

Diana Ashworth

Um, and.

07:19.18

lovelightstories

Um, and yeah, go ahead.

07:19.51

Diana Ashworth

Okay, well I was diagnosed after I had my second son at age 22 with 3 rare brain conditions. Um, the first one was hide your stuff list. It just fluid on the brain. And the next one was Kari malformation where it's basically your brain stem slips into your spinal cord and then they have to go and surgically push it up and then I had another 1 intercranial hypertension where my brain pressure gets too high.

07:42.18

lovelightstories

E.

07:54.88

Diana Ashworth

And it causes horrible horrible debilitating headaches. So I dealt with these conditions for years without having to have brain surgery. Well they got worse and I had that surgery. Um I had 3 brain surgeries fine no problems.

07:57.23

lovelightstories

Yes.

08:02.78

lovelightstories

Okay.

08:12.19

Diana Ashworth

Okay, um I had another surgery may sixteenth two thousand and sixteen because my brain stem was slipping into my spinal cord and they told me I would die if I didn't get it. They good. You know it would um that part of your spinal cord. Um, it would um.

08:22.13

lovelightstories

Oh my gosh.

08:32.13

Diana Ashworth

Affect your breathing in your heart that I said okay you know I didn't want to Die. So of course I did it Well I woke up and I couldn't fill my legs and I told the nurse that was in recovery I said I can't fill my legs and they did a mri. And it showed them that I had um had a massive stroke in my spinal cord and it paralyzed me from the waist down.

08:58.43

lovelightstories

Wow and did they say whether that was just a coincidence that it happened during surgery or was it kind of part of the surgery for some reason. Okay.

09:11.11

Diana Ashworth

They said a blood clot cut off the blood supply from what they could see and um they said that's what happened to it.

09:20.83

lovelightstories

Um, wow that it and and that's huge right? You you were already dealing with these 3 rare brain conditions and then you go into surgery after having 3

09:23.12

Diana Ashworth

Yes.

09:33.63

lovelightstories

Good ones and you're trying to essentially save your life with this surgery and you wake up and you're paralyzed that is I mean devastating I guess you could say um, what was it like for you when you woke up like.

09:33.67

Diana Ashworth

Um, but.

09:38.20

Diana Ashworth

Correct.

09:45.76

Diana Ashworth

Um, yeah.

09:50.15

lovelightstories

When you discovered that you couldn't feel your legs. What what? What were you thinking? What were your thoughts.

09:55.81

Diana Ashworth

I was very depressed. Um I I wasn't mad at God or anything but I was just really depressed and I wanted to kind of shut off from the world. You know I didn't want any visitors I didn't want anybody to see me I was just kind of bitter too Very bitter.

10:04.16

lovelightstories

And.

10:12.74

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, ah.

10:13.65

Diana Ashworth

Because I was like why did this happen to Me. You know what did I Do you know I was just asking all these questions and through all this time. What I would do I brought my computer with me to the hospital. Um, because I knew I would I was going to have to have recovery but I didn't know it was going to be what happened. But anyways. I Would just sit on my computer watch preachers and stuff and Journal. That's all I do men trying to process everything. Yeah and I was seeing a psychiatrist but it's still it was still a lot to go serve.

10:36.25

lovelightstories

Wow Yeah, just trying to process it I mean.

10:49.32

lovelightstories

Okay, yeah, so were you seeing a psychiatrist previously to deal with all of this or was it like once this happened you decided to start processing that way. Okay, okay, yeah, which um.

10:55.89

Diana Ashworth

Yeah I was I'm seeing one before.

11:07.90

lovelightstories

Is so important I think everybody should see um either a counselor or or psychiatrist or whatever. It's like a maintenance thing to begin with and then when you've got um trauma in your childhood and all kinds of things that we go through. It's just.

11:17.50

Diana Ashworth

Um, further.

11:20.00

Diana Ashworth

Exactly exactly.

11:24.12

lovelightstories

Um, so important. So thank goodness you already had that support from a psychiatrist that you could lean on without um, the extra stress of trying to find someone and everything during such a difficult time. Wow. Okay, so was there anything else. You did to.

11:34.99

Diana Ashworth

In here.

11:43.78

lovelightstories

To cope or how did you move through that experience of waking up I mean it wasn't even overnight it literally was you went into surgery and you woke up and life was totally different.

11:57.31

Diana Ashworth

Right? I Um, yeah, that's exactly how it was um, you go in the hospital walk in you live in a wheelchair you know? um I um had met a friend in rehab.

12:02.94

lovelightstories

Oh.

12:11.11

lovelightstories

Um, okay oh really wow.

12:11.21

Diana Ashworth

And the same exact thing happened to her and yeah and she was paralyzed so we both were learning the new avenues of being paralyzed getting around you know, even operating a wheelchair was hard I never done it I knew nothing about it.

12:26.75

lovelightstories

Right? yeah.

12:29.96

Diana Ashworth

You know? and so me and her we got real close. Um and we were kind of helping each other leaning on each other and I leaned on God a lot too though because I knew God had a purpose because they told me, they said you should have died on the table and I and I was like I should have died on the table and then they said yes because they said people who have these kind of strokes do not survive.

00:00.00

lovelightstories

And what a blessing really it was that you were able to meet someone in Rehab where you were able to lean on each other that you had this shared experience.

00:11.74

Diana Ashworth

Yes, it was it was it was a blessing. She's a very very sweet girl and like I said we were both going to do the same thing so you know we really connected with that.

00:22.20

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, and I feel like this is something that you know takes a long time to process and move through and heal from and I mean maybe you're you're still not healed from I don't know that's my question but like when and how did you begin to.

00:31.30

Diana Ashworth

Um, yes.

00:41.53

lovelightstories

To heal.

00:44.65

Diana Ashworth

Um, it was 202021 um is when I started to really heal is when I could tell the story of what happened to me and not cry.

00:54.44

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, oh wow.

00:59.10

Diana Ashworth

It's when I wasn't oneing the doctors or being mad. You know I was really I just had this peace and I prayed to God for this piece to get through this so that's when I started to kill. Yes, it was a definitely spiritual. Um.

01:05.74

lovelightstories

Um, yeah I was going to ask how you how you found that piece so it was really through prayer in God yeah.

01:19.70

Diana Ashworth

I prayed and I just didn't know you know what the future held for me as far as you know my health issues and all that. But I knew that God wouldn't bring me this far to leave me so I knew there were something on the other side and I had a purpose.

01:26.42

lovelightstories

Um.

01:30.57

lovelightstories

Oh for sure. Yeah, oh I Love that what resilience and strength really that that takes to to get to that point into.

01:41.88

Diana Ashworth

Um, yes, and.

01:46.16

lovelightstories

To be declaring I have this purpose like my life is not over and God is with me and it's true like you're you're maybe paralyzed but you still have so much to offer and um, do you feel like you've fully healed or is it just like this ongoing.

01:51.84

Diana Ashworth

Right? yeah.

02:05.71

lovelightstories

Journey or are there still pieces that are difficult or.

02:09.51

Diana Ashworth

No, right now I I really do feel that I am fully healed honestly them as I went through a I went through a grieving process. You know I went through a lot to get here. You know.

02:16.97

lovelightstories
That's so beautiful. Yeah.

02:26.98
lovelightstories
Yeah, oh I'm so happy for you that that you've gotten to that point and um, you sound so much strong you sound so much more stronger and you've come out with this wisdom too.

02:27.46
Diana Ashworth
And I really feel that I am.

02:33.25
Diana Ashworth
Okay.

02:41.85
lovelightstories
From that experience and really the experience of your childhood and as well. Um, is there anything before we transition into what you're doing today. Um, and your purpose and all of that is there anything that you want to say about anything else that you've learned about life the wisdom you've gained.

02:43.90
Diana Ashworth
Um, thank you? but.

03:00.10
lovelightstories
Anything to share with those who are going through a difficult experience currently.

03:05.51
Diana Ashworth
Yeah, you know difficult times and you know in life and you know just difficult things will come up obstacles you know, but they don't have to stop you. You know a trauma you know you don't have to let it.

03:19.96
lovelightstories
Um, yeah.

03:23.39
lovelightstories
Hey.

03:24.44
Diana Ashworth
Define you you can move on from it and you can take what you learn? um from about the trouble while you're in the trauma or while you're in that hurt and while you're in that pain and that dark place you take what you learn and then when you're able to do that and help someone else. You know you've healed.

03:40.83

lovelightstories

Beautiful I Love that and just to hear you say that too when you're able to take the pain essentially and turn it into that purpose. You know you've healed and what a beautiful.

03:43.74

Diana Ashworth

And that's what I do.

03:53.76

Diana Ashworth

Um, right? yes.

03:57.99

lovelightstories

Picture that creates and you know it's interesting too I mean of course that's why it makes sense have you on this show but that's what this is all about is like people being able to share their personal stories and turning their pain into purpose and I actually use that that phrase often and.

04:11.42

Diana Ashworth

Right.

04:15.96

lovelightstories

And then the other side of that is is for us as listeners too to better understand these difficult things we walk through as humanity and to be able to better understand and empathize through that. But it's just.

04:22.97

Diana Ashworth

In the.

04:29.98

lovelightstories

You know, depending on what side of of the Story. You're on whether you're experiencing something similar or or not like there's just so much to learn from those who are willing to share their pain so that it can be declared in purpose and I just.. Thank you so much in in honor that you have chosen to do that because it's just so life giving I think there's more more value to it than we even really realize yeah and I hope it's helpful and um, healing too for.

05:00.84

Diana Ashworth

Right.

05:08.39

lovelightstories

You to share this story publicly like you said it wasn't until 2021 where you really started to get that peace and start being able to talk about it without um, really re-experiencing that pain and

crying and stuff and um I'm sure the more you share it the more. That healing strengthens. Perhaps I don't know if that's correct to say. But yeah.

05:33.47

Diana Ashworth

Yes, it is correct. Yeah, the more I share my story and the more I'm able to take what I went through and share that with others the easier it gets on me, you know that piece that I have I was talking about earlier. It just um.

05:44.20

lovelightstories

M.

05:51.60

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, wonderful. Well let's transition into the light in this story which is really what you're doing now and how you've taken.

05:51.39

Diana Ashworth

It's a piece only God can give you so.

06:05.44

lovelightstories

Your experiences and really found that purpose. So can you share? um with us all the service and good work that you've been able to do even though you've had these physical hurdles to overcome.

06:20.44

Diana Ashworth

Yeah I can um actually I started I had this jerk in 2016? Um, in 2017 I started working for hospice and I you know would go talk to the families talk to the patient that was. You know passing and help them help that transition. You know that was very very inspiing for me and me being able to be there with them during that time I can't tell you how beautiful that was you know? um.

06:50.56

lovelightstories

Wow.

06:55.90

Diana Ashworth

And then in 2019 I'm met Pamela Hillman and um she is the founder of life change legacy and it's a prison reentry program and what we do we have she has 4 workbooks and we. Minister to the women in prison with the workbooks we go through the workbooks answer questions minister mentor. You know all of those things so I work with her now and I'm her admin and then I do also the um.

07:32.76

Diana Ashworth

Mentorship program I help the mentors you know do what they did need to do how they need to reach out kind of teach them things and stuff like that. Um, and then I work with the national

incarceration association. Um, and this this association is for families who. Don't have anywhere else to turn they have loved ones that are incarcerated. Things are going. You know bad sometimes and they need help navigating the system. So That's where we come in So I've worked with them since Twenty Twenty Twenty one? um.

07:54.90

lovelightstories

Um, okay.

08:09.20

Diana Ashworth

And I also work with I'm also a certified relationship relationship coach ah live coach and trauma coach and I got that certification at the coach training academy in Canada.

08:20.12

lovelightstories

Wow. Okay, so not only have you found a purpose you have found multiple purposes melded into one and they're really focused together I mean they seem to go hand in hand with each other but you are a busy lady. Yes.

08:37.30

Diana Ashworth

Um, yes, ah.

08:39.44

lovelightstories

Well I mean what? a great way to give to the world through such a perspective of your own experiences and I'm sure it it just like infuses your you're able to better like em. Well. I'm sure you're able to better empathize really with those that you're working with and serving and um, just wonderful. How did you get into the incarceration area of things.

09:12.12

Diana Ashworth

Well I met Pamela she was speaking and um, she was talking about. You know her ministry and what she did and I started to as a mentor you know and I said I'm just going to mentor for a year or so. You know god can speak to me through it and then I'll be done. You know I thought I would help someone but well I did it and an actuality mentoring helped me I thought I was going to be helping the person that it helped me you know by showing what I've been through.

09:30.17

lovelightstories

Um.

09:45.39

Diana Ashworth

And all that and then it you know I was able to really connect with the um mentee you know and so that's why and then you know also I've fought depression for over 12 years okay and the thing about it is.

09:50.86

lovelightstories

Wow.

09:57.86

lovelightstories

And.

10:04.73

Diana Ashworth

Depression and mental Health is a stigma around it. You know people don't want to talk about it. They're like oh well, you'll be okay, just take antidepressant or don't mention it you know, whatever it's just a huge stigma but I like I said I thought it for years but see these women are on the inside they are in prison.

10:06.13

lovelightstories

Yeah.

10:15.20

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

10:24.44

Diana Ashworth

But you can be in a prison out here too in the real world. You know with mental health and depression and I fought that prison for so long and I think that's why I identify with incarceration. Um ah arenas So well because.

10:28.57

lovelightstories

Um, yes.

10:42.58

Diana Ashworth

Ah, what I've went through goes to me like a prison you know.

10:43.84

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, what a great way to yeah what a great way to put it I mean to really for those who haven't experienced it like even using that frame of reference is really helpful. To better understand and break down that stigma of not understanding mental health. Um I mean that makes so much sense. Wow well.

11:08.42

Diana Ashworth

Um, ah.

11:10.14

lovelightstories

Um, Diana I just thank you so much. Um, is there anything else you want listeners to understand or any last parting wisdom you'd like to share before we wrap up.

11:20.40

Diana Ashworth

Yeah, you know I just want to you know, let people know that you know bad things happen. They will happen to you but don't let it control you. You can move on. You can get through obstacles. You can redefine your purpose you can redefine your life. But don't ever give up.

11:54.97

lovelightstories

You are a living testimony of that.

12:02.31

Diana Ashworth

Yes, thank you.