Interview 46 – Female, 18, Barking & Dagenham

Interviewer:

Can we start by talking about what you’ve put in box 1 please?

Interviewee:

Emotional Isolation.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Interviewee:

I feel like, it’s lonely if you experience a certain feeling and you can’t really talk to anyone about it. As if you’re sad about, I don’t know, stupid stuff and you’re like ‘Oh, no one will get this’, so you’re just like feeling alone in your feeling and everyone else is just you have to like keep up this social façade that you’re happy and you’re really not. So, that’s a way people can experience or that’s a way I experience loneliness sometimes. And, yeah, it’s just no one gets and you’re just like then ‘fine, I will deal with this my way’.

Interviewer:

Uhum. When you say social façade, can you tell me about that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I think people our age have a tendency to upkeep this social presence, like on your social media you’d never post that ‘oh yea I’m going through this crap’ but everyone does go through it but everyone just posts happy pictures or in vacations and stuff like that.

Interviewer:

How do you feel about that?

Interviewee:

I mean it gets exhausting sometimes cause you really just want to talk about what you’re going through but you can’t because then people are be like ‘ah that this the one with issues’.

Interviewer:

Hmm. So, sounds like it’s exhausting that you can’t really express how you feel.

Interviewee:

Yeah, but you, like, you can if you find an outlet like therapy or something but I mean it’s not something everyone wants to do. Like I can barely find time for myself so I don’t think I can go to therapy or even afford it, things like that.

Interviewer:

Sounds like what you’re saying is people put up this social sort of persona just so that no one’s going, yea no one’s gonna put a sad picture on on on social media or express their sad feelings.

Interviewee:

Yeah, that, that mask, I, I usually say this to my friends, I’m like ‘we’re all wearing a mask on a daily basis’ while we’re like ‘hi, yea I’m the clown for today’ but underneath you’re really just a sad person that really needs help but you can’t really ask for it because you’re the funny friend.

Interviewer:

Uhum, when you say that underneath you’re a sad person can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

No, no really [laughing].

Interviewer:

No, not you.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

but yea in general.

Interviewee:

If you, if you’ve been, for example if you’ve been abused as a child or you’ve gone through some kind of trauma like you went through an accident and you have this new found trauma but you can’t really deal with it so you’re sad because you can’t talk about it and it’s what you feel on a daily basis that you’re actual, you experience anxiety every time you’re faced with a such a situation but you can’t really talk to your friends or your family about it because everyone expects you to be fine.

Interviewer:

When you say everyone expects you to be fine can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yea, um, in our society or our culture and being black British and everything, people are like

‘oh yea, black people are resilient’ and well, I have things that bother me too, I’m scared of things too, well what do you mean? Yea, cause like, it’s like you can’t really be you half the time because there’s this social expectation of what you’re supposed to be or the kind of person you’re supposed to be in public or how you portray yourself. Cause my mom’s always like you have to do your hair because you know you can’t go out with your natural curly hair like that you have to comb it down you have to straighten it because there’s this social expectation that that’s how your hair should be.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

It’s long. It’s just, just let me alone, you know, but you do it just, you get used to it and then all of the sudden you get lost in that, that, that becomes you now. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Sounds like you know, you experience a sense of pressure, a social pressure to be a certain way.

Interviewee:

Yea, and sometimes it’s not bad, sometimes it’s imagined but you have this, this sense of expectation on you that you’re like, ‘I have to do this’ even, no one says it to you but you feel this ‘I have to’, ‘I must do this’ kind of thing.

Interviewer:

When you say that it’s imagined, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it’s um, I, for me, when I was at school still, I had this, I always had to be in this certain grade range, so it’s like, um, I can’t get below a ‘C’, and it’s no one, my mom wouldn’t get upset, like she’d be sad if I don’t get an ‘A’ but she wouldn’t be, like, it wouldn’t be the end of the world but I always had this thing with me where I have to get like better than a ‘B’, I have to do this, and no one says it but it’s just there. It’s like unspoken.

Interviewer:

Hmmm. So sounds like there’s that sense of pressure that you or an individual puts on themselves. No one says it but they’re just…

Interviewee:

It’s just there. It’s like, it’s like a cloud – it’s not raining, but like it’s going to rain, kind of thing.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

It’s like a burden. It’s like carrying a load all the time. Like heavy is the head that wears the crown, right?

Interviewer:

Sorry?

Interviewee:

Heavy is the head the wears the crown [smiling].

Interviewer:

[smiling]. Um, what does it say here in the [referring to the paper]?

Interviewee:

“No one gets what I feel”.

Interviewer:

Can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

It’s just, you can’t really, I get upset about little things but that’s just who I am I wouldn’t get mad if you took my charger but I would get mad didn’t put it exactly where I put it back. And if I get upset about that and I say ‘I’m upset because you didn’t put my charger’, everyone’s like ‘it’s not that big of a deal’, so no one gets that, so one understands why I feel that way, but it’s just, it’s just, me, it’s just how I am.

Interviewer:

And, how does that make you feel when no one understands you?

Interviewee:

To be honest, I just, I, I find an outlet – I go for a run, just get it out, find a way that could cry I will cry, if I could just go somewhere or really quiet and just scream really loud if I’m allowed then I can do that or read a good book.

Interviewer:

Mmm.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And when you said ‘emotional isolation’, can you tell me more about this?

Interviewee:

Yeah, it’s like when no one gets what you feel, you tend put yourself in this like on a corner, in like, not physically but in your in your feelings, like you feel a certain way and you just stop there, you just stay there in that zone but people can’t really tell because you’re in that corner away from all of them but with them you’re like ‘I’m fine’, so they get this ‘I’m fine’ but you’re not okay…kind of thing. You’re by yourself emotionally with no support of friends cause you kind of just push them away and not make them really understand how you feel.

Interviewer:

mmm. so sounds like what you’re saying is you sort of psychologically put yourself in a corner

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Because you feel that no one understands you.

Interviewee:

Uhum. Emotional isolation. What I think, anyway.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

I don’t know, cause I haven’t really done it for a while but when I did it was depressing, I was always by myself and whenever someone like ‘I’m fine, I don’t, I don’t want you here, this is my space, just move out of my space’. But, yea, it’s fine.

Interviewer:

Hmmm. So sounds like when people kind of wanted to reach out or wanted to hang out you kind of push them away.

Interviewee:

Yeah. Sorry mom, but yeah.

Interviewer:

How did that make you feel when you when you were pushing people away?

Interviewee:

It gets lonelier and loneliner and then you just can’t deal with it anymore and then you try reaching out but then people are like ‘well, we tried to but you were just like in your own like’, ‘well I need you now, I thought I could deal with it but I couldn’t, I need you now’.

Interviewer:

Mmmm. And you mentioned social media earlier, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yea, on your Insta, for example, you are never going to put a bad picture of yourself on your Insta except if you’re (10 min [….]) private one but I my, I have only one and it’s constantly on private because I don’t want people…. [10:07] my things but yeah, um if I’m sad I’m not going to put a picture up on insta ‘hi, I’m crying right now, send help’, but I’d put a picture of me being the best while behaved, smiling, happy person then people will think oh that’s how she looks all the time, you know, her hair is always done, she’s wearing dress, nice heels but that’s not me, there’s days I look like a gragoody […] doll.

Interviewer:

Cause days what?

Interviewee:

There are days I look gragoody an. But I’m not gonna post that.

Interviewer:

What is that?

Interviewee:

It’s a doll. It looks so bad, it’s just cursty, it’s ugly but yea you have your days where you’re just like ‘today I’m not bothered to even get out of the bed and take a shower’ but you’re not going to put that on social media, are you? So you have this, there’s an online you and there’s you you.

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel when there’s two different yous, the online and the real?

Interviewee:

It’s like a constant juggling [between the online you and the real you], you can’t drop either of the battles so there’s a permanent rejuggle, your arms get tired and you’re like ‘I need a break’ or you can’t really take a break unless you go offline for a while and then when you come back you have to work double hard to keep up with all what you’ve missed, so it’s hard, long, it’s exhausting but yea.

Interviewer:

So sounds like social media makes you feel exhausted.

Interviewee:

Yes, it’s tiring, cause everyday you get like a 1000 messages and you have to talk to all those people and people are like ‘oh, you didn’t reply to me on time’, you’re like ‘I have a life, an actual life, you know’.

Interviewer:

It also sounds like social media puts you on a pressure.

Interviewee:

Uhu, because your friends are, if, um, if you don’t post like, stuff for like two weeks and all your friends are going out they’ll be posting that and you’ll be like ‘right, I’m alone so I need to go out’ and then you have this pressure on you to go out and just go to a nicer place and then your friends are like ‘oh yeah that’s it where did it go? You know, that was a nice party!’ ‘Yeah it was’. But it’s not because you worked hard to actually get to go to that party just to hear them say that so that a pressure you feel on on social media.

Interviewer:

Sounds like what you’re saying is you worked hard to get to that party just so that they ask you ‘oh, how was the party?’…

Interviewee:

Yea and then you just act like if casual but it’s not. You’re not gonna tell them ‘oh, yeah I worked really hard to get to that party just so you could ask me how it was’ but ‘it was just, it was alright, yeah it was a regular thing for me’ but it’s not **[12:53??]**.

Interviewer:

You said that you worked so hard to get to that party, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Ok, like, the **13:02 […]** car boot on one side I forgot to buy the tickers on time so I had to go get the tickets on the day and they were like stupidly overpriced but just because my friend had gone to it I think it was, oh yes she was going to the lovebox festival and I wasn’t and I wasn’t going to any of those ones so I was like I have to go to this one just so I have like I’ve gone to a festival as well this summer so I had to pay like a £100 for one ticket and I didn’t have, I had fun but it was, it wasn’t you know, it was like a sacrifice I had to make so it was working hard to get the money in the first place and then paying for it I know I was paying way more than I should have if had just bought the tickets on time and yea but things you do right?

Interviewer:

mmm. How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

Just tiring, you’re constantly just like **[…]14:00.** And friends going on holiday now and, and next month and a couple of weeks’ time and now I have to go for holiday as well because she’s going on holiday then she’s going to be ‘yea, you should have come with us like, ‘ah, I’m going on holiday too’, so, double work but yeah… worth it. Is it? worth it? Maybe, maybe not, you never know.

Interviewer:

Hmmm. So sounds like what you’re saying is because your friend went on a holiday you felt like…

Interviewee:

I have to go too so there’s imagined pressure too, so it’s like. You’re not being forced to, you don’t have to but you feel the need to.

Interviewer:

And I think you mentioned something along the lines of the double pressure.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

Because there’s the actual pressure of, your parents are like ‘right, you have to do this, this is what we expect’, oh yea, your parents are like you have to do this and then your friends are over there like ‘come on, man, you have to do this’ and then there’s work and then there’s school if you go to school cause I don’t anymore but then you, there’s work, and then there’s, it’s just a lot of expectations and things that you have to do, like how do you find time to talk on the phone and then work 8 hours a day and get 8 hours of sleep and it’s just long.

Interviewer:

Sounds like things are overwhelming or can be overwhelming.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it gets overwhelming and then you have your lazy days in.

Interviewer:

It also sounds like when you, when you see your friends going on holidays, that makes you want to go just so that you know, you, yea, it’s that kind of social pressure, it sounds like.

Interviewee:

Yeah, just like you match up to, everyone’s doing this, I can’t be left out, like the time everyone had 9-7s I had to get 9-7s cause all my friends had 9-7s. And then it was ridiculously expensive. You had to.

Interviewer:

Is there anything else you want to say about box 1?

Interviewee:

No, that’s it.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much, um can we talk about box 2, please.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it’s like you’re lost in your thoughts. You know those moods you get when you just put on your headphones and just stare out into space, kind of things, like that’s lonely especially if you’re listening to like slow songs and it gets so sad, then it just hits you, like there’s this wave of sadness, **(I couldn’t even 17:14)** wave cause it just comes out of nowhere, you just, wow. I’m upset and you just start crying for no reason but yea and I’m the kind of person who bottles up inside, not healthy in any way but I do it cause I can’t talk about it, I don’t want to, I don’t want to say the wrong thing that would hurt someone else, just feelings, so then I’d deal with it and it gets so sad and lonely in there cause it’s you, it’s **(….17:49)** my head is the most dangerous place cause then you get this this thought that just pops up out of nowhere like you’re a bad person because you think this, in your own head you’re like punching yourself for something that may not even be that significant but it’s your thoughts, you can’t really fight them, yeah, just get lost in your head is so lonely. And you can’t really explain it so it’s like one of these things that ‘what are you thinking about? It’s like ‘ahhhh, nothing’, because you can’t really find the words to say exactly what it is you’re thinking about. I can’t come to you and be like ‘Right, Sam, I’m punishing myself in my head right now, have a nice day’.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel being in that situation.

Interviewee:

Like, I want to cry and cry for hours and then go to sleep and wake up and it’ll all be fine but it doesn’t work like that cause you can cry, then go to sleep, then wake up but if you don’t actually do something about it it’ll still be there. So I just, I cry when I need to and then I do something I enjoy like write or dance or sing and listen to not depressing music just nice bobbly, upbeat and then, and then you kind of come out of your head for a while, just, yeah, or you watch a good show, like I love thrillers and, and inside a criminal mind, those documentaries about the mind, so if you watch those, like for a second you’re separating yourself from your thoughts and going into the mind of someone else and you’re like ‘maybe mine is not so bad, after all’, so yeah.

Interviewer:

Um, just going back to what you said earlier, it sounds like because you get lost in your head and that’s when you start judging yourself for thinking about these thoughts.

Interviewee:

It’s just, it’s like when you feel, like if you listen to those songs, for example, what song can I say, yeah, Ed Sheeran song – perfect. Everyone’s like happy and in love and you’re like ‘wow I don’t even have a boyfriend, damn’. Then you start thinking ‘oh yea, what’s wrong with me, why don’t I have one? Maybe I’m not good enough for this person’. Then you start like, ‘right, that’s wrong, you shouldn’t think that’, then it’s just this constant dilemma – it’s like two voices in your head and then there’s you in the middle getting flogged by both of them for doing contrasting things that are antagonistic to each other, so it’s just like, great, good job. Yeah.

Interviewer:

Sounds like you start self-doubting yourself.

Interviewee:

Yeah, and then you punish yourself for doubting yourself. So, it’s like it’s this constant cycle but you’re like ‘right, I feel bad, I’m a bad person’, ‘I’m not a bad person, why did I think that I’m a bad person’, then you’re like ‘but I am a bad person for thinking that I’m a bad person but why did I think that I’m a bad…’ it’s just it goes on and on and on, it’s like a never ending loop.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel being in that situation?

Interviewee:

Honestly, honestly, I’d rather not think, think at all, just take away the brain, just take away the brain for a second just put it down, wash it, clean and then put it back, you know, start over again but it can only turn the page not change the book.

Interviewer:

Mmm. Sounds like you get bothered by your thoughts.

Interviewee:

Yeah, sometimes.

Interviewer:

And you find yourself being stuck in that recurring thought pattern where you think about something, then you judge yourself for why you thought that way…

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And you thought about thought and what you thought about it, it’s okay, it’s not okay.

Interviewee:

Mmm. So then you get to, it just, you have to just stop and like right this is enough me for today, let’s go do something that concerns someone else like do a good deed, help someone out with their shopping or give someone money or go for walk and just smell flowers, flowers are nice, flowers are good things, they help you and yea, you just have to find something that you actually enjoy and get out of your head cause being in there is lonely, no one is in there with you but you and your thoughts.

Interviewer:

Mmm…..is there anything else you want to say about box 2?

Interviewee:

Naw, I think that’s fine.

Interviewer:

Thank you. Can we talk about box 3, please?

Interviewee:

Yeah, I said ‘physical isolation’. It’s like you move away from where every people are. I have a phobia of crowds so I can’t be in crowds or I pass out so I have to do deal with that at some point in my life but not right now, I’m fine but yeah, so if there’s a crowd of people that I tend to not be in that area even if I need something from there I’ll stay away and like ‘right, when they move, I’ll go’. That’s me wasting my own time cause I have other things to do but just because there’s people there I can’t go there. And, it’s so, all my friends are so proud people, they’re proud people so they’ll be in the crowd and I’ll be by myself, I’m like ‘can we go again alone, lonely?’ you know?

Interviewer:

Can we what sorry?

Interviewee:

Can we go again alone and just lonely by yourself and everyone else seems to be having fun and you want to have fun with them but you can’t cause there’s a crowd and there’s people there. I could walk with people but not a crowd. Yeah, I can walk in circles but not crowds.

Interviewer:

So it sounds like when you see your friends for example going into crowds and then you not being able to do that makes you feel lonely…

Interviewee:

Left out, yeah. Fear of missing out so you, that’s why I drew this thing here [referring to the drawing on the sheet], like it’s this he’s leaving like vicariously through her phone so like he’s not part of the crowd but he can see all what **(24:54…)** like, for a second, you’re in there but not there, not physically there but you’re there, so it’s like there’s live feed of something – you’re not at the party but they’re live feeding it so you can watch the live and then **25:07 ‘**oh yeah turn it up’ **25:08** but you’re in your bedroom under your duvet [laughing].

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel when you’re in that situation?

Interviewee:

I’m fine, I like being there because it’s better, like you don’t have to deal with the smell, ‘oh I don’t like that smell’, ‘oh, I don’t like the way that person looks’, ‘oh’ you know. You get to see it and you’re like right, I can expose myself in my bedroom and no one will judge me for judging other people but…yeah.

Interviewer:

So you said like this whole idea of the fear of missing out, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

You know how I said because my friend went to France I had to go on a holiday as well? It’s because I’m afraid that I don’t get to see all the things she’s seen and I’ll go to every place she goes whenever she goes on holiday just because I want to be able to say ‘oh yeaah, I’ve been there too’, cause I don’t miss out but you do, you always miss out on something cause maybe the time she went the cherries were blossom in Japan and the time you went the trees were all there but you’ve been there you just didn’t see the same things or maybe the sky is gloomy that day the day she went and when I went it was so sunny so she missed out on sun and how it hits the wave and how they were shines in the light but she didn’t get to see it, I did so she missed out on that. You’re always missing out something, always, but, so.

Interviewer:

So sounds like, if your friends do something you want to do it too just so that you don’t miss out on those things.

Interviewee:

Yeah on the experience of it I know how that feels too like, drinking, I never used to drink alcohol but now I do cause I turned 18 and they were like right we’re all going out and we’re gonna get drunk and I was like right I wanna know how alcohol tastes too and I started, that was it, I drink alcohol now, hi [laughing] but yeah.

Interviewer:

Sounds like you wanted to fit in also just so that you can be included.

Interviewee:

Yeah because, if I’m going out with my friends, I’m not going to just sit down with a bottle of coke while all of them are having vodkas and things.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel having to do something just so that everyone else is doing?

Interviewee:

I don’t like it, it’s not ideal, I’d rather do what I want to do but it’s the fear of missing out again, I don’t want to be left out. Yeah. I want to do it, I want to be able to have a say in the conversation cause you can’t talk about something you’ve not been through so, yeah.

Interviewer:

Again, which goes back to, yeah, if you, if, yeah cause you’d be included.

Interviewee:

Yeah, cause then if everyone’s talking about that and I be like ‘yeaah, you know what I’ve been there too’, I relate, you know, but if you’ve never done it, you’ll just be like, oh observer number 1 up in the stance you know but you actually in the plain field.

Pause

I think box 4 relates to that as well cause you’re in a group of people but you feel like you’re by yourself cause you can’t really talk about what they’re talking about or what they’re talking about if you’re the only Christian in your friendship group, your friends are all talking about ‘oh yea, it’s Ramadan’, ‘oh, what you doing for Eid?’, I can’t relate to that, I don’t celebrate Eid, I just be there, sit down, watching them talk and okaaaay, and then Eid will come, I wish everyone Happy Eid but I can’t really partake any ceremonies cause that’s not my religion. Yeah.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

Not that I want to change or anything but for once let’s just put all of that aside and exist as people, ‘right, you have veins, I have veins too’, kinda thing, but yeah life would easier.

Interviewer:

Sounds like what you’re saying is sometimes being around friends and not sharing somethings like religion or other things can make you feel lonely.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it does. It’s like your views on sexuality, **30:03** religion and all of that, sometimes you just have to tone it down for them because if you get too, it might just, and you don’t want to lose your friend so you’re just like, right, avoid the conflict and just go for whatever they say, majority wins.

Interviewer:

So, it sounds like what you’re saying is sometimes you may not necessary express your true beliefs about something just so that you don’t get judged or you don’t, just so that you fit in.

Interviewee:

Yeah and you don’t fall out with your friends because they’re your friends, right? **30:36-30:46** (Whatever thing bff) yeah.

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

How do I feel? Because, I feel like you’re suppressed, like you have like you have always, if you’re a kettle bubbling or we always have to put a lid on it and someday the lid is going to blow over, that’s it, game done…but you have to constantly be watching the pot, you know? So. It’s like an extra tray to carry, an extra plate on the table, you have to wash that again, you have clear that part of the table again even if no one’s eating from it but its there.

Interviewer:

When you say you have to clean it time to time, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yeaah, it’s, okay, like, some views I have are like very controversial, so to avoid my friends saying right you can’t think like that, but I can, I already do, so to avoid that, you have to like right maybe I could try looking at it from a different angle, from a different perspective and try to see things the way they do and you can see what’s wrong with the way they think but you can’t really tell them ‘oh yeah you’re thinking wrong because it’s not the way I think’, they’ll just tell you flat our you’re wrong, I’m right, so you just constantly have to like brush off, it’s like painting over the wall, not dealing with the cracks and you just painting over it it’s like ‘it’s fine, new wall paper’ but there’s still a crack in the wall, yeah.

Interviewer:

How do you feel about that?

Interviewee:

Like it’s gonna crumble one day, all of it is just gonna fall down. And that in itself is frightening but yea, cause it’s like you’re putting so much work and effort to just make sure this thing is fine and just one day you know, one day it’s all gonna come crashing in and you’re gonna start from nothing. So it’s like ever present, constant fear. It’s just always there, like right this friendship is gonna end one day but when…kinda thing.

Interviewer:

So sounds like what you’re saying is you may not necessary sometimes express yourself just so that you don’t get excluded so you basically keep everything inside you, inside you and inside you and then one day you might or they might explode.

Interviewee:

Volcano, yeah.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

Like, I don’t want that to happen. That scare me. So then you have to work just you have to work hard again to make sure that your fear **(33:39 fear?)** doesn’t happen but you know it’s gonna happen anyways you know, you just fighting the thought that it will. So you have to, you fight your thought that it will and then you’re scared that it will and then you have to like fight physically to keep, to make sure it doesn’t happen but then it will eventually, it’s like knowing you’re gonna die but you just don’t know when so you just like right I’m gonna do everything I can to stay alive, but you’re gonna die anyways so why bother [laughing] yeah.

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel when you have to, when you feel like, you know, you keep everything inside a bottle?

Interviewee:

Overwhelmed and, and hidden, like I’m hiding, it’s like I’m in a shell, like you know?

Interviewer:

Mmm. So you basically put ‘social’ in box 4.

Interviewee:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And you basically have you or somebody and that’s the, there’s a shield or there’s some sort of…

Interviewee:

Yeah, it’s like a glass case, it’s not visible but you’re always in it it’s like a bubble, your bobble, your space, like, don’t come too close but stay around so I can see you but you can’t really, you don’t really know what’s going on in the bubble but you can see the bubble, it’s fine but you just see it but you can’t really experience it. So even if you’re at a party, you just sit down on the couch and be on your phone, you’re at the party but you’re not at the party, if that makes sense. Yeah.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

I don’t feel left out cause I get to say I was there but it’s not really where I want to be.

Interviewer:

So, it sounds like you’re there just so that you can tell others that you were there.

Interviewee:

[Saying at the same time I was saying ‘you were there’] I was there. ‘Yeah, I took this picture, did you not see it on my snap?’ but I didn’t want to be there, I wanted to be in bed reading my new book but I had to.

Interviewer:

And was it this box that you talked about your Muslim friends celebrating Eid and you being kinda left out because you don’t share the same religion, was it this box or was it box number 3?

Interviewee:

I think it’s both because then you get to see their Eid clothes, you know, you get to see all the cakes they’re having but you, you’re not Muslim, you don’t go to their house for Eid, you stay in your house and maybe Eid is on a Sunday and you have Church, you know, but maybe you’re a Buddhist and you have to meditate between 4 and 7, kinda thing, so, yeah. I think these two overlap a lot [referring to box 3 & 4]. I think they do.

Interviewer:

Can you tell me about their overlap?

Interviewee:

Yeah because there in box 3, you’re like physically not there and you try to experience it through the phone or your laptop or something.

Interviewer:

To experience what?

Interviewee:

Whatever these people over here [referring to the box]

Interviewer:

Your friends might be?

Interviewee:

Yeah, but then box 4, you’re like there but not there at same time so then you’re not really experiencing what they’re experiencing but you’re just physically present so it’s kinda like they’re both contradictory but overlapping at the same time, cause, yeah.

Interviewer:

So in box 3, you’re saying that you’re not there physically with your friends if they’re at a party or at a concert but because like you have your phone or social media and you can experience…

Interviewee:

Whatever they’re seeing.

Interviewer:

Whatever experiencing or seeing.

Interviewee:

But in box 4, you can’t, you’re there, you’re at the concert with them but you don’t like the acting stage so you’re just there watching them have fun, yeah. So you’re just like ‘okaaay, when is mine coming up?’

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

Conflicted, cause what do I really want? Do I really know what I want or isn't what I want what everyone wants? Is it? would my friends think differently if I wanted that thing instead of the one everyone likes? What would my mum say you know, what would my dad say? Kind of thing, yeah.

Interviewer: 38:37 mins

And with box 3 you know when you said that you know you're not physically with your friends but because of social media you get to experience what they are seeing, how does that make you feel when you know that they're experiencing you know in real and then you are you're not there but then you're there with them but then you're experiencing seeing what they're experiencing through social media?

Interviewee:

It's like thank God for whoever thought of this. You know? Like whoever did this thank you but it's like I wish I was there but then I was like would I like it if i was there i don't like loud noises i don't like crowd would i really like it you know but then it's like it's fine i wouldn't but I'm at peace like i get to still see it so like when everyone's like oh did you see when he jumped to the crowd? ‘Yes, I did!’ ‘But you weren't there!’ ‘But I saw it’, yeah yeah.

Interviewer:

And then with box for you’re actually there at the party...

Interviewee:

but you don't want to.

Interviewer:

Sounds like the fear of missing out is there… but even if… just so that yeah, the fear of missing out… it's played out and when you do go and join so that you don't miss out you feel like you don't want to be there but you're there just so that you don't miss out yeah so that you you you can say that you were there so that you can fit in or be included.

Interviewee:

It's like when I moved to Africa for a bit because my mum was like right you need to you need to chill with life cos I was stepping out she was just like you need to chill so go home stay with your aunt and just see life from another angle and boy did I see life from another angle and it's just it's just like wow these things go on right ok so I may be in the bad place but I'm not as bad as that guy over there, so, great, you know, and you are so much more appreciative of yourself and of how far you have come as a person you know it's just like what doesn't kill you make you stronger kind of thing and great you are ready for the next level you’re ready for the next thing though and the next korfball that life will throw at you and you rise above it because then you think of that experience and your like I remember that time this is still not that bad you know so yeah it gives you a new outlook.

Interviewer:

When you said that you know when you went back to Africa and you saw these things and it makes you realise that you’re **(41:52-53 certainly?)** in a bad place.

Interviewee:

Yeah I may be in a bad place but I'm not as bad as the guy over there.

Interviewee:

Can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

Yeah it's like when I was 13 I wanted to just be the rebellious child yeah I wanted to dye my hair because I know my mum hated things like that but I did it because I knew it would piss her off, I did it [laughing] and I wanted to get piercings so I pierced my ears because they were never pierced it's just like ‘why?’ [Referring the Mom], ‘because I can. You can't tell me what to do!’ Yes she can, it's just ‘right you need to go back home and see what other people deal with there!’ [Referring to the Mom here] and then I went I went to school there for a bit and there were children who go to school without lunch I was like woo it was a shock. It was. And I was the one begging to come back, I was like ‘mum I took out the dye, took out the piercings i will be fine just make me come back she's like ‘no, you’re staying there for a whole year’ and I did until I was 14 and then i moved back and i was like right I need to step up my game you know [laughing] cos you can't really help them they are children in this streets and they don't have home they don't have parents and I am like I have a mum and I'm here making sure she's miserable on purpose you know and there are people who want a mum and they can't even they don't even have that choice so.

Interviewer:

Is there anything else you want to say?

Interviewee:

I think that's fine.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much.

 Interviewee:

You're welcome.

**PART 2**

Interviewer:

Can we start by talking about box one please?

Interviewee:

I feel most socially connected to people when everyone is just being themselves you know I don't care if we're not talking but no phones no distractions just us and nature and just it's like going to the park and just sitting by the river then you just looking at other people like children playing on the swings and laughing you're connected to that even if you're not on that swing yourself so you're like ‘aww look a baby’, kind of thing but if you are on the train or at the shops and then you’re just like ‘right there's someone on their phone and you don't even know what's going on you know you could be, everyone's just engrossed in themselves - I'm connected to you when you let go just loosen up a bit just let go it's like a hook at the sea you go fishing you're connected to the ocean when you let the hook into the sea not when you know when it's on your shoulder like that no one cares and everyone’s just by themselves see you more connected when you’re away from everything that you're not present like where you are, where you really want to be, no phones no laptops no music even, let the birds sing, you know, and it's it's peaceful, it's nice.

Interviewer:

So sounds like what you're saying is if you would like to be somewhere where you can actually be there physically and and and and and psychologically.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, because it’s not just physical, it's just everyone is everywhere all the time but I'm most lonely in places where there are people because everyone is just in themselves and no one is really making the connection to anyone and we're just like right ‘I sent you a text’, ‘you could speak to me’ [someone else responds], you know.

Interviewer:

When you said everyone is in themselves, can you tell me more?

Interviewee:

Yeah it's like you are constantly thinking about what you’re thinking you know you're not considerate of other people like I need to get to the till first but that other person is dealing with depression you know and you just you just want to cope and they managed to come out of bed to get to this shop and you are fighting because you want to go first, kind of thing. ‘I'm busy’ yeah, ‘I am dying’ [refers to the response by the depressed person in this], you know. ‘You have a life to look forward to’, ‘I know I'm dying’ [the other person speaking] yeah, kind of thing, yeah.

Interviewer:

So you put the park as your option as the place where you feel most socially connected.

Interviewee:

Yeah, cos everyone, no one goes to the park and is just constantly texting there's people sitting there on their laptops for sure because some people work best there yeah it’s because it's so calm and they are children running around, that's the one place I'm actually happy children run around, not at the shops, ‘no, sit down, eat your food’, but yeah yeah.

Interviewer:

It also sounds like you like the idea of not using your phone when you're there.

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah, i mean I'm on my phone a lot because I am either at work or at home for most of the time but when I go out I make sure i leave my phone I'm not I don't touch it at all except if i'm going to a party then I have to obviously take pictures and post things but if i want to go out I go out without a phone, it's fine, it's perfectly fine.

Interviewer:

What did you write down there [referring to the box]?

Interviewee:

I said peaceful, you see others smiling and simply existing. yeah.

Interviewer:

And you said simply existing can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yeah they are just, they’re just being human beings not Paul who is the executive manager not George who works for Waitrose or something just hi I'm a person kind of thing, no strings attached, just no pressure, just you, you know, just for one day I can wear slacks and shorts and just a t-shirt and just go out be myself, I don't have to wear a suit.

Interviewer: 48:44

So sounds like what you’re saying is sometimes yeah it is pressurized and stressful to have to, it sounds like what you're saying is it's nice when you don't have to pretend to be something or have to be you know in that cycle or in that sort of rat racing of being somebody or at the pressure of being somebody or wearing something…

Interviewee:

Yeah, someone who everyone knows it's like being a celebrity all the time that's a job that's like that's a full time job just constantly being right people know me as the feisty one I always have to be feisty. ‘No’, just for one day just take a break just relax just do your do yoga or something.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel when you feel like you’re in that situation where it’s about you know like George [referring to the picture] or it’s about these things that you mentioned about executive directors, celebrities.

Interviewee:

Yeah, it’s just, i feel bad for them to be honest because I'm not at that place yet and I don't think I will ever get there cos i don't want to but i feel bad for them because I’m just like I don't even know, like when was the last time you didn’t have to smile for the camera or you smiled because you genuinely wanted to smile when was the last time you didn't have to shake someone's hand even though you're a germaphobe you know like things like that you have to constantly you just feel sad for them you’re just like wow I'm sorry you know, it's like you’re constantly around drama it's like even not drama is like that, it’s drama drama.

Interviewer:

And you like going to the park because you feel that none of that stuff is there.

Interviewee:

Yeah it's like the one place on the planet I can say this the one place where you don't have to be anyone but you. That’s why I go to the park every Sunday. Mom? What? I’m going to the park, she’s like fine, bye. She knows that it's a routine so I go from like in the evenings because it's quiet in the evenings it's just especially in the summer it's just so warm and windy at the same time it's just fun, nice and just chilled.

Interviewer:

Sounds like what you're saying is sometimes you feel that you can't be you.

Interviewee:

Yeah, no one can, you can't be you all the time because then people are going to be like ‘you can't be like that’ and ‘don't judge me’ just, you don't know me, don't tell me what I can or cannot be just let me be me, you know but yeah, going to the park you don't have that, no one tells you ‘right, someone's here at the park wearing a t-shirt’, ‘yeah you're wearing a vest’, ’ok!’, no-one cares, everyone's just being themselves.

Interviewer:

So you feel like out there in the real world, you feel that you have to be always at your best or you have to you know be vigilant in your, everything…

Interviewee:

Yeah, you can't laugh wrong, you can't smile wrong you can't choose wrong you can't, there is no right or wrong way to do those things but there is this pressure and this expectation like you have to do this this way, every other way else is wrong I like eating bread inside out there's nothing wrong with that but you have to bite from the top down, ‘no! I eat inside out’.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel?

Interviewee:

It’s like the lid thing again you always have to put a cap on it like you can't just open the champagnes, goes everywhere be careful don't shake the bottle, put it down. Constant routine, routine behaviours, ahhhh ok, everyone feels like a sloth you know, they move so slow, everyone's tired all the time, yeah.

Interviewer:

And do you normally go with people to the park or is it just you?

Interviewee:

I don't go with my friends I go by myself to the park. I go with my mum once in a while, nice mother-daughter time but I mostly go by myself.

Interviewer:

Is there anything else you want to say about box 1?

Interviewee:

It's like just find your space, really, it doesn't have to be at the park maybe you're more connected to people when you're watching everyone go by, sitting in the streets or something - just find your space and be yourself.

Interviewer:

Is there anything else?

Interviewee:

No that said.

Interviewer:

Thank you, can we talk about box 2, please.

Interviewee:

Yeah. I feel most lonely when I'm on the train, I hate train journeys it's loud and it's just ugh, everyone is lost on the train. You know where you're going but you're lost because you are like that's not really who you are is it but that's who you are on the train, hi, you know, you don't speak to people on the train everyone's just like don't touch me kind of way but you're a touchy person in real life aren't you, but that's a train standard of who you are. I hate it it's just. And at the shops ahhh that's why I have to go for a walk for a bit because it's just like right people, things in the way, everyone everywhere, and looking you know, ughh, no [laughing]. And it's just so lonely you're just so alone and you might be shopping for something but you're so alone and you could be in a crowd but you’re by yourself even if you're with people you are by yourself.

Interviewer:

Sounds like what you're saying is you might be in a large crowd of people but could still feel lonely.

Interviewee:

Yeah that's a very possible thing and it's something I deal with every day. I don't, i like being in my bedroom my mum would say this any time any day I like being in my bedroom hold up doing something totally relaxing like reading I like reading so much I love books, so but going out and just seeing people, you’re like someone **(55:30 hit/live?)** there, you know. Someone would be struggling there and someone would walk right past them (**55:34 no something....).**You're so alone when you're with people.

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel when you’re in a large crowd of people like a mall and feel, yea, you’re alone.

Interviewee:

Suffocated. I need to get air, I need to leave. I just need to get, I need to breathe, I need someone to breath, it’s like I need to get out [laughing], feel trapped.

Interviewer:

And how does that make you feel when you’re in the train?

Interviewee:

I just want the journey to end that’s why I always have air front tube, always, constantly because then I just plug them in, full blast music, and just go somewhere else for a while because I don't want to be there but it's the quickest way to where I need to get.

Interviewer:

And when you say you don't want to be there, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

I don't like trains. They are beautiful machines I think they should be admired but not sat in. I don't like trains at all I don't know why maybe it's the atmosphere. The worst station green park station that's the, it is hard it is annoying it is loud it's crowded it's the worst but what you know I need to pass there.

Interviewer:

Yeah sounds like you don't like loud sort of places or busy…

Interviewee:

I don't. I feel like I'm an introvert and extrovert, if that makes sense, cause if I know you, i won’t shut, I would talk and talk and talk but if I don’t I’d be the most quiet person ever [laughing].

Interviewer:

Sounds like in front of strangers you don’t, you can’t be, like, you’re not yourself or you can’t…

Interviewee:

I think that’s the real me, to be fair, just not, I wouldn’t talk for, I’d be smiling at you and be thinking the saddest things, but, yeah.

Interviewer:

Sounds like when you’re with strangers, you might have to put a persona.

Interviewee:

Yeah, I saw this picture once where the lady was standing in front of a wall of masks, and she was like choosing which one to present to the person behind them **(57:58 - present?)** or sit behind them, that’s how I feel every day, like why? Who are you and what side of me do you want to see? Would I want you to see, rather. Yeah.

Interviewer:

When you say that that’s how you are, like, putting, just trying to choose between what image to portray to people, can you tell me more about that?

Interviewee:

Yeah, to you right now I’m me whose doing this, to my mom me who didn’t do the dishes last night that are on the sink that’s annoying. To my step dad it’s just the one who we don’t get along and to my real dad it’s just I don’t even know and it’s just this, no one who ask about me would tell you the same thing like there’s my friend who would think ‘oh yea she’s the loudest human being ever’ and then there’s my friends like ‘she’s so quiet, she’s the sweetest little thing’ and there’s another **(58:59 – another/also?)** ‘She’s so rude’, but you know [laughing], yeah.

Interviewer:

How does that make you feel being in that situation when you have different…

Interviewee:

Divided. I feel like all of them I’m me to an extent but I can’t really be all of those things to the same person because they might try to make me into what I’m not, they’re like ‘right, I don’t like this bit so I’m gonna change that’. ‘No, this is my masterpiece, this is my design’, you know.

Interviewer:

And what did you write here in [referring to box 2]?

Interviewee:

Everyone seems lost.

Interviewer:

Oh, like this relates to shopping and train?

Interviewee:

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer:

So, I guess, it sounds like what you’re saying about box 2 is, because you’re surrounded with strangers and very many people, even though like you might physically be around people but because you don’t know them, you know, it’s too many people, that can essentially make you feel…

Interviewee:

Lonely.

Interviewer:

Is there anything else you want to say about box 2?

Interviewee:

No, thank you.

Interviewer:

Thank you very much.