Things I want to talk about in therapy today:

* **ANXIETY:** 
  + About people visiting + my party, making it difficult to sleep
  + About flying in general, and also about family dynamics
  + Financial - NEXT YEAR!
* **Birthday:**
  + Was a lot of crying, some good some bad
  + Reached out to Dylan in a way that I shouldn’t have to ask for support
* **General self-care:**
  + Social media usage is a lot
  + Weekend of being sick was meh

Quick moment here to discuss what came up in therapy today -- that’s the most I’ve cried in therapy ever. It wasn’t a lot, but it was more than nothing, which is the most I’ve cried in therapy ever.

I talked about how one of the reasons why I am so anxious about bringing together my people this weekend for this party is because I’ve told myself for many years that I am not capable of creating a community that is loving and supportive and cares about me nor my people. I know that this isn’t true, but it’s hard for me to not have that narrative in the back of my head since I have never been successful at this in my adult life yet.

As I was talking about this, I began to dig into where this belief came from. And I realized it stemmed mostly from college. I felt like there were so many times that I saw people who seemed to have the perfect friend group who cared about them and was willing to go to so many lengths for them. It seemed so *easy* for some people to find their people. And yet, I couldn’t seem to find my people. For the first 2.5 years of college I was surrounded by the *wrong* people. People who were toxic (Elvis, Miles, etc.), people who weren’t uplifting or supportive, and people who didn’t really seem to go out of their way to want to make me feel special or loved or appreciated or respected. This all came to a head on my 22nd birthday when I was in the woods with Yeng, Sam, and Matt and I felt like the rest of my friends had abandoned me. And I remember feeling awfully awkward that Yeng and Sam seemed to be going out of their way to try to make me feel better about the fact that no one else seemed to really care about me. To be fair, looking back on this memory now, the fact that I had Sam and Yeng to go out of their way like that is a blessing and I definitely shouldn’t take that for granted. But I do remember that it was a really hard time in my life where I felt a bit abandoned and mistreated by my larger friend group, and I felt a lacking of community, especially after quitting water polo. I really felt like an outsider and my depression at the time was only making things worse.

Since then I’ve had a lot of anxiety (even more than normal) about bringing my friends together and relying on my friends to be there for me when I need them. It especially hurts when I think of the people that I compare myself to who seem to have these perfect communities who love them and look out for them and show them love, especially on days like their birthday. And then I look at my friends… and Claudia forgot it was my birthday. So did Paige and Tori and Morgan, until the very end of the day. So did Dad and Wesley, until the rest of my family reminded them. I had one gift from my mom to open on my actual birthday, which was so sweet of her. But it made me realize that all of those times that I have really gone out of my way to make sure that a gift was in someone’s hands on their birthday (and even days before in preparation) to try to make them feel special… those actions aren’t reciprocated.

That was when I started to cry in therapy.

When I realized that I have been let down by my friends and family a lot in the past. I have gone way out of my way to try to make people feel special and loved and cared for (on their birthdays or otherwise) -- and I haven’t always felt that in return. It makes me question why I am going so out of my way for these people if they aren’t willing to do the same for me..

It was something I haven’t ever admitted out loud before, because it sounds ungrateful and it paints my friends and family in a bad light (and also I worry that it erases the times when these people really are there for me and when they really do show up for me).

But I do think that I have been holding onto this thought / worry / anxiety / frustration for years, and it is time for me to finally release it. I think it is holding me back.

Lori suggested that I turn the effort that I put into others, this love and care that I painstakingly do for others, and flip it inward into myself for the week. That I look after myself this week, and make sure that I am cared for and looked after and loved by myself first and foremost.

A few things that I am also going to try to do this week:

* Rewrite the story in my head. Even though I haven’t necessarily been as successful as I’d like to be with my community in the past in my adult life, I am still working towards building that idealistic community of mine. And I’ve already made amazing efforts in a short time, and I am slowly getting there. My hard work *will* pay off. Also, I am deserving of a loving and caring community.
* Stop comparing myself to others. First, just because they come across as having it all figured out doesn’t mean they do have it all figured out. There is a lot more to their stories that I don’t see. Also, even if they do have a great community and it seems effortless, it might have required a lot of effort, and I shouldn’t discount that. There’s always more than what is shown on the surface.
* Finally, I am going to sit with these emotions. I am going to allow myself to feel these things fully and let myself acknowledge the pain I have been keeping in and the disappointment, anger, fear, and other emotions that I have pushed down and ignored. I will tackle them head on. I will continue to work through them in my next therapy session so that I can let those emotions be heard, and eventually, I can move forward and let them go.

I am confident in my ability to create the community of my dreams. But damn, it is not easy.

This treehouse warming party is the first step of a LOOONNNGGGG road ahead. It won’t be easy, it won’t happen overnight. But something that I do need to keep reminding myself:

It’s supposed to be fun.

I can have an amazing time at my party this weekend. It’s the first time in a LONG time that *I* am bringing a bunch of people together. Where one of the only similarities of the group is… well… *me.*

Jeez, I don’t think I’ve brought this many people together like this since I was turning 21 years old. This is a **huge** step for me!

I am really, really proud of myself for putting in the work and getting this far.

I’m nervous, obviously.

But I am excited. And no matter what happens, as long as I stay my true authentic happy optimistic loving self, and as long as I show myself the love that I deserve and need…

Everything will be okay.

More soon,

Jess

Age: 25.