

# DMM ep 2

**David:** Buddy of mine, who I'd grown up in cover bands with as kid, we were, you know, young kids, 13, 14 years old, but we were the best band in town. So we were literally playing in clubs and strip clubs. And like, if we play a strip club, they would just tell us, okay, we'll hire you guys, but you can't go back where the strippers are.

**Mina:** And how old were you during that 14, 15. It's like, you know, I won't tell you how that,

Hi, I'm Mina Tobias. And this is don't mind me a podcast designed to open up the conversation about mental health shame or judgment.

And I am Madchen Amick my family and I are doing this podcast together to not only broaden the conversation around mental health, but share our experiences and what to do in a crisis.

**David:** The satus qou for guys, as far back as we can find, you know, being a warrior, being. Tough, um, being solid, um, not showing emotion. Um, things are definitely different nowadays though, but it we're kind of in a transitional phase. I feel like

**Madchen:** before we get into the episode, I wanted to update you on Sylvester's current station.

Yesterday, we got a very out of the blue call from the social worker. He's been in a psychiatric hospital for a week after being 51 50 and then extended to a 52 50 after his manic episode. So I had been checking in every few days saying, you know, keep us updated. We want to figure out where his next level of care will be.

We want to be able to make that a smooth transition. And wasn't hearing anything. He had a hearing once you place on a 52 50, you have hearings every few days to make sure you're not being kept against your will

**Mina:** he's now in the treatment center. As of now, it's as of now. And it's actually a perfect segue into today's episode, which is all about the family.

So I want to introduce my dad, who is the very wonderful baritone voice that we're hearing right now. David Alexis.

**David:** Is it baretone?

**Mina:** Yeah, I would say it's a baretone well, basey, basey, baritone.

**David:** I'll take it.

**Mina:** Well we'll get into that because my dad is actually an R and B singer songwriter producer.

**David:** So what happens when you're in these situations and you're almost like clearing hurdles with the kids, but especially with time and every time you either get them into a hospital or you get him off the street, it's almost like you hate to admit it, but it's almost like a sublatory dinner. You don't want to celebrate. Why don't you like my God? So we saved him for another day.

**Mina:** Yeah. Like, okay. We have one more night, so let's go out, take a moment, take a breather. Well, yeah, so, so yesterday morning when you got the call at 9:00 AM I, my dad and I were golfing with my boyfriend Angelo, and I heard that this was all happening today and that we were probably going to have to transition him to a new center and it was going to be stressful.

And so I was like, yeah. I'm going to make a dinner for 7 45, hopefully by then everything will have been handled. And I think that it would be a great idea to go

**Madchen:** and it literally, it was like we squeak to the last second before dinner, like finally got him in, got him settled.

**Mina:** Which goes to how many times we've dealt with this, knowing that at 7.45

**Madchen:** Right. Yeah 745 it should be handled. And you were raring to go. You're like, let me know if I need to go down and pick him up. I'm directing a film in just over a month. So I had a big chemistry read I was supposed to do with some actors. And so I wasn't even sure. I was like, I don't know what to do.

Like, do I keep it? Do I not? So I went in and looked at your dad's face and I said, so I had this chemistry read this, supposed to be happening between three

and four 30. What do I do? Should I cancel? He just looked at me. So simply. You need to cancel your day. I was like, okay.

**David:** Madchen wants to do everything all day at the same time, no breaks.

**Mina:** So in today's episode, we are going to be covering more of our family and our dynamic, because as anybody who has either experienced a mental illness themselves, or have a loved one who has gone through it, it can be a big factor of who in your life is there supporting you? How do your family and your parents and your siblings affect your. Diagnosis. And we have quite an interesting story.

**David:** Grew up in Albuquerque. I was, uh, adopted my mother was a prison warden. Literally. She was a superintendent corrections for the state of New Mexico. And my dad was a minister. So I was raised whilst they were strict. Let's just say, and everybody that everyone was afraid of my mom.

So they knew not to make me, you know, try any drugs. I didn't do any drinking. I mean, I led the straight and narrow.

**Mina:** When was the first time that you had alcohol?

**David:** I think my first drink was in the army when I was 20. I had a, a white, Russian. Well, we were at a zap concert, Roger and zap for bounce to the house.

And, uh, so anyway, um, and early on for some of my, my father passed when I was 12 and my mother got me into athletics to keep me, you know, doing something and not getting in trouble. Cause a lot of the kids where I was from not like it was a rough neighborhood, but it wasn't hood. And, you know, most of the kids I knew did drugs.

And so I went to sport route when I was pretty good.

**Mina:** I think that's a little bit of an understatement. Yeah. You were in an all star track football and baseball athlete. And even at a extremely young age, had a lot of attention coming your way because of your athletic prowess.

**David:** I was approached by, I was 13.

**Mina:** To like these

**David:** camps for potential pro athletes to play baseball. But my mom wasn't having that and you're like, you're not going anywhere. And I didn't love baseball. So I stopped playing baseball and focus on football and track later, after another long story, I had a lot of anger issues which may be.

Um, might've been something that dealt with my mental health at the time. Um, a lot of my here. And so even though

I was one of the top recruited athletes in the country, um, for scholarships, I lost them all because of. Yeah, it was constantly fighting.

**Mina:** Did you notice that there was a change when you were dealing with loss? Did you notice that you got angry or after that? Or was it something that you always felt you had even before that?

**David:** No, I don't think that, uh, clearly I didn't deal with the loss. So the way I did it was just fight.

**Mina:** Painting the picture of some more, your mom was not only a prison warden, but she was what she was the head of the whole Southwest

**David:** State

**Mina:** and from what I understand during that time, she was gone like most of the day because she was working and traveling far to handle that.

So you were...

**David:** So my junior year, um, I had been offered scholarships from at the time, the top schools in the country, Nebraska, Arizona, state, Oklahoma, and.

She lobbied for a minimum security prison for women, because at the time in New Mexico, if you were a woman and committed a crime, even if it was a petty crime, you went to the pen, there was no minimum security prison. So she lobbied for that. So she had to move. And my coach was like, yeah, please don't take him.

I mean, he can stay with me. He can, you know, the, the show All-American basically right now on CW, very similar. And she's like, well, you know, she didn't really trust him. She, my mother was born and in 1926, my dad was born

in 1896 and just kind of had a, you know, a distrust. for white people. And she wasn't going to put me in that situation.

**Mina:** What we're talking about now was during the seventies, right?

**David:** Yeah. Well, yeah, this would have been mid seventies and so she would rather me stay at home without her. Um, so I spent my junior and senior year living alone body. Plenty. I'm getting in a big fight with one of my coaches lost my scholarships and my only option was to join the army.

While there, I was playing intermural football and the base commander, Cheryl Piadic. She said I was just the most outstanding athlete you'd ever seen and got me a workout with a then coach of Hawaiian coach told me, and he gave me a scholarship. So as soon as I got out of the army, I started playing football for Hawaii.

And soon after that, mom passed and. A buddy of mine who I'd grown up in cover bands with as kid, we were, you know, young kids, 13, 14 years old, but we were the best band in town. So we were literally playing in clubs and strip clubs. And like, if we play a strip club, they would just tell us, okay, we'll hire you guys, but you can't go back where the strippers are.

**Mina:** And how old were you during that

**David:** 14, 15. It's like, you know, we won't do that. I won't tell you how that went down, but

anyway, we'd always go to playing in bands and right after mom died, he got a record deal with CBS records, he, uh, was literally a Prince clone. He looked like him. He sounded like him and in '85, anything that looked or sounded like Prince got a record deal.

**Mina:** And before we get to further, along in the timeline now, so wanted to talk about that, that story that we love before your mom had passed.

When you were still at university of Hawaii playing football, at that point, you didn't know that you were adopted and there was a very funny kind of funny, kind of bizarre, very unique situation and how you learned you were about,

**David:** so I'm still envious of how you guys play with your hair, but I used to have a lot of hair.

And so when I got to Hawaii, I had a huge Afro and it had started to turn orange and being in the sun and the water. And most of my, my teammates were Samoans and they kind of kiddingly, but sorta, like we thought you was a moving bro, you look like you right off the boat. And so we became close friends.

So most of my close friends were all Samoan and they would always, you know, like, bruh, you know, you don't look like one nigga. And I was like, well, okay, first of all guys, let's, let's not say that. Cause that's not cool. But yeah, you look mixed, you know, you don't look like when black dude. Couldn't be blacker.

It's like my parents, you know, are both black, you know, the, the culture with a minister and a prison ward. It's like, I could not be blacker. And it's just, they kept persisting. You look mixed breath. So when one day in the dorm, I said, okay, you know what? Let's just put this to an end and went to the end of the hallway and called my mom and said, can you tell these guys that I'm not mixed?

And she said, well, You are. And, uh, that's how I found out. And I went back here. You guys are right. Then we went about her business, but the reason it's so tough is I had the best periods and you know, it didn't even matter to me that I was adopted because I couldn't have done any better.

**Mina:** I was going to ask because I mean, I couldn't imagine if I got on the phone with you guys and you're like, and I was like, yeah, Hey, my friends.

Messing around with me saying I'm something else. And you're like, well, actually, yeah, you are. We've brought you up as completely black. We're both black, but it turns out your mom is Mexican. Right. Is what it turned out to be in your,

**David:** My mother was Spanish, she was in prison and was. And was pregnant. And my mother, my adopted mother adopted me straight out of prison.

**Mina:** So she was the warden when your mother was, was

**David:** no, at that time, I think she was probably just the case worker. She worked her way up. She started as a cook,

**Mina:** but yeah, when you, when you told me that story and you just like, you're like, okay, can you hang up the phone and went back to your business? I think it just goes to show that it was, you didn't have a longing to go find your family when you would be brought up in a family that meant the world to you

And the interesting thing is, so I've met a sister since who, uh, after you guys gave me, um, 23 and me for Christmas a couple of years ago opened up the Pandora's box. I have now I have three sisters I didn't know about, but one of them knew she, she was adopted. She was only with I new, and she's been longing her whole life to find me, to find sisters, to find her parents

**David:** and, you

know, I keep trying to explain to her that, you know, she thinks her mom's could still be alive. I'm telling her, it's like, you know, I know pretty much, I know for a fact, cause I wasn't there, but that she had died in prison, but, uh, it's an interesting case study and I didn't care. It never had any interest in, you know, going beyond, you know, my parents and she still is like, You have private investigators trying to find our grandparents if they're still alive.

**Madchen:** Yeah. It's interesting how some people, if you know that you're adopted, you have this longing, cause you think that you're missing something that you don't know about, but then when you're, when you've been raised by loving parents, never knew you were adopted. It's like you don't have that hole you need to fill necessarily.

I also, I mean, I think it's important to bring up as well, that since we're having a mental health conversation that in this newer sister that you found, so she's been searching for all these documents, trying to figure out who her parents were. And so she found some documents from like a social worker that talked about how their mom was dealing with mental health issues.

**Mina:** I think it even said bipolar disorder.

**David:** She was trying to, um, uh, adopt out our younger sister Nadine. So they did an evaluation for a few months on her mental state. And apparently they found, they felt that it was bipolar and the things you were describing when they

do their weekly. You know, checkups with her was there was definitely some sort of mental illness, but they thought it might be bipolar disorder.

**Madchen:** And that the documents talked about how she, they really were trying to be good parents. They just weren't capable, you know, and that they weren't equipped. And from that, you know, self-medicating with, with drugs, which then landed her in jail, you know, it's just one of those things, again. It during that time, it's maybe not recognized enough or maybe she wasn't understanding it.

And so she got lost to the system, you know, because of,

**Mina:** and I'm, I'm curious too, with everything that's gone on with my brother Sly and us being really raw with what we're dealing with yesterday and, and moving him from a really severe manic episode through the psych ward to treatment. Does that play into, when you're thinking about your past and your relationship with your mom and learning that she's bipolar, what was it like now having a son who's diagnosed, then learning about that history.

**David:** I don't, I don't think that plays in, in terms of like, do I think there's any causation or connection? You know, a lot of people like her mom whose side of the family is crazy. Well,

so there wasn't that because every family has issues somewhere in the line. So it wasn't like, I was like, oh, my mom was bipolar. So now she's given it to us. And again, because I never really regarded her as my mother and thought about her in that way, that didn't, that doesn't have an impact, but it's just, you know, it's tough enough.

**Madchen:** And that has natural sister Nadine she's dealing with. And we didn't even know that she was dealing with bipolar disorder, like throughout the years they met. Right after you learned that you were, you were adopted after your mom died and then they, they met and Albuquerque. And like, I remember you telling the story about how you.

I saw somebody walking through the door that looked exactly like you and how kind of profound that was. But over the years, she struggled with addiction issues. So we've tried to help her from time to time. And it's just really hard. And once we were talking about our son having bipolar,

**David:** We hadn't talked to in over 20 years since the kids were small.

And so we started talking about. What's going on with him. I refer to him as Time. So when you hear me say, Time, I'm talking about him. That's what the family calls him quick story on that. I was doing recording session in New York. And one of my favorite artists was Sly and Sly and the Family Stone. And there's a knock on the door.

It was a studio in New York and a famous record producer walked in and said, you know, who wrote this? And the engineer said this, this young cat did, he's like, whew, I think you want to meet somebody. And in the room, next door was Sly. So he came in and he's like, wow. You know, I love that. I want to work with you.

So I ended up working long story short with Sly. And so Sly's first name is, you know, it's from Sly and the Family Stone, his middle name Time comes from the movie Purple Rain. My other favorite group was The Time. Anyway,

**Madchen:** Sylvester Time,

**David:** we call him Time, you, I think you transitioned to Sly better, but

**Madchen:** it still feels weird to say Sly or Sylvester.

**Mina:** Yeah. Just cause I think also I always ask him too. I'm like, do you know what growing up up until. Maybe college ish, maybe even beyond he went by Time, Time Alexis, and, and now he's switched to Sly. I don't know if this is like a part of his identity through all of them.

**Madchen:** No. So what, what was started happening is once he was going into the hospitals. And he was going in and out of hospitals in and out of rehabs, you know, because his given name is Sylvester. He got tired of trying to correct them and say, actually I go by Time. So he just started accepting Sylvester. And then from Sylvester, they started giving him nicknames of Sly. So it's almost like he's transitioned into Sylvester because of treatment and because of his diagnosis, which is just kinda, it's just kinda sad to me.

You know, it wasn't something that he necessarily chose like, oh, I want to now embrace my first name. It was sort of just done out of circumstance.

**David:** So after 20 years of not speaking to her, we started talking and we were explaining to her what he goes through. So, oh yeah, no, I went through that. It's like, what?

Second? Yes. And she said I had medicine, but I don't want to take them. I don't like them there. What were you taking? Well, lithium, I think. Maybe. And are you bipolar? Yeah, I think that's what they call it.

**Madchen:** I got that bipolar too. So that's obviously on the natural side, but then you, you, you can't necessarily look at that as like, oh, that's where it came from, because then, you know, we can get into my mom's story, but she ended up having an aunt that just out of the blue.

I found out that she was, she was in a mental institution. So it was, I was actually helping my mom move just recently. And she had all these really beautiful paintings. And so she said, oh yeah, that was painted by aunt Emily. And then she said, oh, and those were painted by aunt Lorraine. I really, and Lorraine was a, even more beautiful painter.

I just didn't know her. And I said, oh, well, why didn't you know her? She goes, oh, she lived her entire life in a mental institution. And at this point, like I had been asking her over and over again. While Sylvester was going through treatment and being seen by doctors and they kept saying, do you have mental illness in the family?

And I kept saying, no, I keep. And I kept asking my mom, do we have mental illness in the family? She's like, no, not that I know of. Then all of a sudden it was like, Could've been something that you brought up when we were trying to figure out if there was mental illness in the family, but that just goes to families, sweeping things like that under the rug and not talking about it.

**Mina:** Yeah. And I think going into our dual deck diagnosis theme, a lot of the times, especially with older generations, mental health, that wasn't really something that was educated. But addiction is something that people can recognize. And so there is this kind of misdiagnosis that still goes on today, where either they just are deemed with a personality that's crazy.

Or they just like to drink too much, or they choose to use a lot of drugs. And it's like this weird gray area where you don't even think, oh yeah, they had mental health issues. They were either. Character shamed for their misdiagnosis and

their choices in life and not being strong enough. A little quick fact about dual diagnosis, three out of four addicts have an underlying mental illness.

And yet dual diagnosis is still to this day, as we've experienced with my brother is still widely undertreated.

**Madchen:** Yeah,

**David:** I was going to say, and I think along those lines, we're finding out Times relapsed now after 10 years, you know, from the first time we dealt with. And this at this level we're seeing now not only is dual diagnosis, a way for them to get more funding, which is understandable.

But what they really mean is I think that they do. Things like depression better, or other levels of mental illness, but mania is a tough one because first of all, they're out of control. And so it gets everybody fired up. And unless you can isolate them in some way, which most of these facilities you can't do.

So it's not truly a dual diagnosis when it comes to bipolar, especially on the manic side of it.

**Mina:** And this is, uh, something that I found really interesting was you were introduced to the six common family roles in addicted households, aside from just the rules here, but just in general with our attachments.

Traits it completely has to do with your childhood. What was your relationship with your parents? Because whatever that relationship was in psychology is how you then treat your romantic relationships, relationships with your kids, how you raise them. Um, so I'm going to read you very quickly. What the roles are.

Okay, by the way, this has come coming from the American addiction centers. Uh, you can look it up online as well, and I will give you the full I'll. Just give you the little blurb. So these are the six roles.

**David:** I need to hear these cause I cried through my own things. I don't remember what I was cried the whole time.

**Mina:** So, um, role number one, the addicted. People struggling with substance abuse live in a constant state of chaos. Alcohol becomes the primary way to cope with problems and difficult feelings. And in turn, he, or she will stop at

nothing to supply this need. As a result, they burn bridges, lie, manipulate those around them, they isolate and angrily blame others for their problems.

The next role is the enable. Deny, deny, deny. This is the enablers MO. The goal of this role is to smooth things over with the family in order to protect the family in quotes, the enablers, convince themselves that alcohol isn't a problem. And in order to make light of a serious situation, they make excuses for their loved one's behavior.

Role. Number three, the hero. Yes, the family hero. That's it, you get it from there. The family hero is your typical type, a personality, a hard-working overachieving perfectionist through his or her own achievements. The hero tries to bring the family together and create a sense of normalcy. This role it's usually taken on by the eldest child, as they seek to give hope to the rest of the family.

**Madchen:** Oh, I'm the oldest child that's for sure.

**Mina:** Roll number four. The scapegoat, the scapegoat is just what you would expect. The one person who gets blamed for the whole family's problems, this role tends to be taken on by the second oldest child. He or she offers the family sense of purpose by providing someone else to blame.

They voiced the family's collective anger. While shielding the addict parent from a lot of blame and resentment, it's all your fault. You know, I never felt that. Good. Um, roll number five. The mascot. I feel like I remember somebody, I think might've been the mascot. Let's read it. Think of the mascot as the class clown, always trying to deflect the stress of the situation by supplying humor.

This role is usually taken on by the youngest child. They're fragile, vulnerable, and desperate for the approval of others. Providing comic relief is also the mascot's defense against feeling pain or fear him or herself. Mascots often grow up to self-medicate with alcohol perpetuating the cycle of addiction.

And roll number six. The last child, the last child role is usually taken on by the middle or youngest child. They are shy, withdrawn, and sometimes thought of as invisible to the rest of the family. They don't seek or get a lot of attention from other family members, especially when alcoholism is present within the family, lost children, put off making decisions, have trouble with forming intimate relationships and choose to spend time on solitary activities as a way to.

So those are the six roles.

**David:** Whatever. I have no idea, I can make it.

**Mina:** I'm wondering did any ring. Any bells for you? Did anything like feeling

**David:** part of the mascot maybe, but you know, Read it again.

**Mina:** Um, class clown, always trying to deflect the stress of the situation by supplying humor. Usually take it out by the youngest child, fragile, vulnerable, desperate for attention.

Providing comic relief is a defense against feeling pain or fear him or herself to a certain degree. But I don't think that that would be because you have always been very good about taking on situations on handling them. Like a very level head, which is kind of not ironic coming from the

**David:** I'm the sidekick I'm Robin

**Madchen:** well. I mean, even like yesterday was like such a classic example, these kind of things that happen within a family can easily break up a family, can easily break up a marriage, the kind of stresses that you go through and the way that you both deal with them can, can really. Either distance you or bring you together.

And I think it feels like I don't know what the statistics are, but I think the times that it brings people together is probably a lot less than the times that it breaks families apart,

**David:** especially because it's unrelenting, it doesn't go away. So that's something that you can work Medicaid. Right. And they're, they're at least better through the medication and it's like something that is constant.

**Mina:** Yeah. And I think that that's a part of being educated on mental health as well, because. When we first started out and you can see how anybody would take these circumstances in a different way. If you don't know. What addiction is, and that it's an ever growing, evolving process that you're going to have relapses that it's not going to be a straight line.

You then would think, oh, well, this person is choosing to not stay sober. And of course that's not to say that there's no accountability. People's choices within

mental health and addiction. Yeah. But that's, what's really tough is that for me too, as the sibling who knew him before the diagnosis, which I want to talk about next, he was always a trouble child, you know, and he was constantly getting in trouble.

He was always doing things that felt hurtful to me. So then as you deal with somebody with a mental health or a personality disorder, where does the personality come in and where does the personality disorder come in?

**Madchen:** Right. So when we were first going through the very, very beginning stages, literally morning, noon, and night, every moment of the day, searching for where do we get him?

How do we help him? W you know, calling, calling, calling to the point where, like, I just took it all on myself and your dad's. So, um, patient and calm and supportive, I just. Going going, going. And there actually became a moment where he was like, you know, I'm here too, and I'm going through this too true. And so I had to sort of stop and really evaluate that and say, yeah, you know, it's it's so it was the way I was coping.

But, but because he was able to say it in that way of like, Hey, I'm here too. I'm going through it too. Instead of maybe like other. Uh, husbands or wives might say, well, screw, you know, screw you. You're ignoring me. And I'm leaving the relationship. I think we've always had a good communication and it doesn't mean that it's always perfect, but I heard him and then I had to just change gears and say, okay, And then I let him in, on moving forward and fighting together,

**Mina:** which must've been very hard for you because you're, that's, that's how you've that in your upbringing?

That was your go-to fall back.

**Madchen:** I didn't have anybody to fight alongside me. So that was, that was what I knew. That's what I did,

**David:** because I can just see how hard it was on her. It's like, you can't handle this, some of this stuff he just has to go through and you were turned to almost. Shield him from anything that might happen.

And then just then he's really good at getting around shields. So, so then you just gotta let it out.

**Mina:** Well, yeah. So speaking of a common thing that I think we've run into that I'm sure most other people have as well with a diagnosis, which I want to explain first. With mental health diagnosis, it can happen at any age.

You can be a toddler and, and be schizophrenic. You can get your first diagnosis and show symptoms for the first time in your fifties. But for the majority of mental health diagnosis, it's in your, uh, early adulthood. And that is for a multitude of reasons. People believe that it's both the genetic and chemistry part of it, but also.

As a young adult, that's the first time you're leaving the house. It's the first time you're experiencing those triggering situations that can trigger your genetic predisposition to your mental illness.

**Madchen:** As far as I understand it too. It's like when there's a big shift in your brain that happens in early adulthood where you're going from you, I'm sure, you know, way more about this with your studies, but it goes from the thinking and it's, it's really.

Shifting to the frontal cortex of your brain, the rational frontal lobe, your rational thinking, and in that shift is when it can come about. And like you said, and that's also the exact time you're going away to college and you're drinking and you're experimenting. And so it's like the worst storm. Yeah.

Things that could happen to your brain chemistry at the first time

**Mina:** the first time you're dealing with your own financial stressors for a lot of people, uh, going through your first traumatic breakups. So all of these things can, can be triggering. Yeah, well, yeah. So for us, sly was diagnosed when he was late teens, um, 19, 19.

So that means that before. He was quote unquote normal, which that's a whole nother discussion, but I added this question that we often get is, so did you see any signs before that?

**David:** I wanted to ask you, you know, cause I'm the mascot sidekick, and this is kind of jumping ahead, but one of my favorite titles other than dad is coach.

How did you and people that I had coached in the past, because one of the things that I think helped him was he was so talented, but he got away with a lot of the stuff because he was like the guy, he was the dude, how did you guys think I was going to handle this? What am I, my son and my prize athlete.

This happening to him?

**Mina:** So my brother and I were both athletes when we were younger and my dad was our coach and he was amazing. And as anybody can probably imagine, there is a tough coach slash dad dynamic. And I think we navigated it really well, but my brother and my dad. Did butt heads, especially as he got older and especially as these symptoms started to come up in his late teens, that was something that was really tough between them.

So as far as how I thought you would handle it as a, as coach whose athlete is now getting kicked off of the team and, and partying too hard in college. Never thought that that would be something that you'd take personally. I don't know. I never really thought that you would take that as, cause you don't, you don't have a big ego.

I think if you were somebody who took our accomplishments as accomplishments of your own, neither of you have lived vicariously through us, in my opinion. So I think you never were attached to his successes as a testament to who you are. So I was just more concerned of how. The dynamic would be between you after that, right?

**Madchen:** Yeah. Well, and, and when, when people ask about, did you see it? Who knows? Like, cause he, he was such a, um, energetic, happy child, like talk to him a minute, then, like always getting into stuff. In fact to the point where sometimes when he was younger, Nonstop talks so much that we were like, we need to somehow like, get him to be able to just sit with himself and just like, not talk.

So we would just try to get him to like, go, could you just sit here? You know, we try to read a book or this is your quiet time. Or like even would send him to his room sometimes. Like you just need to like chill in your room for a little bit. And he would contrast. I loved. I know.

**David:** And I say the funny thing is when they'd get in trouble, we'd send Mina to her room yeah. And

like five hours later, we're like, whatever happened to Mina.

**Madchen:** Well, we didn't just leave her in there for five hours,

**David:** but she'd be in there, like drawing or whatever.

**Madchen:** I mean, she was content. She was content

**David:** But Time would be in there. Go ahead.

**Madchen:** Hello? No, it maybe would be, he maybe would get about 10 minutes then all of a sudden they would be like, hello.

Hey, can I come out? Hey, can I have a juice box? Can I. Can I get my toys, a juice, and then it would just be like unrelenting until he, and then it would turn into like crying and screaming.

**David:** And so we'll bringing you home from the hospital and you're nervously trying to assess, should he have been released and he's just talking a mile a minute.

Some of the stuff brilliant. Some not so, but just nonstop. Then I started thinking that's exactly what he sounded like when he was five years old, when you would sit him in his room, you're like, hello.

**Madchen:** So it's hard to say what's personality and what's time just had always had this like bubbly buoyant, constant talking personality anyway, but then there were, I think there were moments.

In middle school, heading into high school that I started noticing that something was extreme because he, of course he would like challenge. You get in trouble, you know, like all, all kids do. It's like, they're, they're always challenging the boundaries. Where's where's the wall. And we tried to be strict, but loving parents.

And we were, it was at a time period where there were so many parents. That had this concept that they were trying out saying, you never tell your child. No. And we were like, no, that's not going to work for us as has worked for this family, because we always felt like, you know, you needed accountability and you needed to do the work yourself and see what the results were.

So there would be things like if, if Times grades weren't good, then he wouldn't go to that dance or that whatever social event. And there were times where. It would be the end of the world to him, like to the point of like breaking down, crying, throwing himself on the floor, like things that he was too old to do normally.

And, and, and he even said at one point after he had had this big, like emotional breakdown and he said, mom, I think there's something wrong with me. Like, I, I, I get so overwhelmed with those emotions and I can't pull back. So during that time, Teachers along the way in middle school, high school that started bringing up the suspicion of ADHD in school.

Cause he was kind of struggling with paying attention, you know, in certain areas. And so we were basically taking it in the skeptically like, well, okay, well what are you saying? Qualifies for you thinking that he's ADHD and they would say things like, well, he doesn't pay attention to a subject matter that he doesn't like.

And we're like, ah, then we're ADHD because isn't that human. And so we just, weren't buying this big movement of people, putting their kids on ADHD medications. So we're like, well, thank you for bringing it up. We'll keep an eye on it, but we're not going to just put them on that medication.

**David:** Plus I was sensitive to that too being a minority.

The first thing they do to us is put us in special ed and Medicaid us. Right. So I was like, yeah, that's not going to happen.

**Mina:** 'cause a lot of in, in, we moved a lot as a family. Uh, we went, I went to almost a dozen schools, if not a dozen schools. And we moved for, for your work a lot of the times, or just cause we wanted to move.

**Madchen:** It's like an artist, gypsy family, like it's almost like you were a military family, but on the artist side,

**Mina:** And so we were often moving to all different kinds of communities, uh, both private, wealthy, uh, multi-racial Catholic. Yeah. Hippie schools. We've done it all. But in, in a few of those communities, we were very much the minority as a multi-racial family.

And so then that's, uh, especially during that time when we were being so sensitive to that kind of stuff, where we didn't want to be being treated with bias, And that was something that you guys had a really good job of navigating

**David:** speaking of the hippy school. The thing that was interesting is early on when they sort of try to diagnose your personality for lack of a better term, your second.

No, you're I don't know if she needed to be in your second grade teacher, but when they assessed you, for example, going into first grade, they were like, we need to speak to you.

**Mina:** Yeah. It was like a very serious, we need to speak very serious.

**David:** We think Mina might be president someday. She's like, she's just, you know, anyway, but they, they knew you were going to be what you became.

And when they talked about Time, they said, well, you know, he's a great spirit. He's sensitive. He should probably wear a hat. Most of the time he always walked on his toes so that he said he's not grounded. His shakra needs to be covered at all times. So they saw that when he was in first, second grade in this sort of hippy-ish way, and it's never changed

**Madchen:** They told us to just support you and stay out of your way and to just protect Time and keep him in the, in the most kind loving situations as possible, because he was so sensitive.

And so. Like, they didn't feel like his spirit had come into his body all the way, which is why you like walk on your toes, which is interesting. And he still to this day, I think he kind of almost tiptoes, like, it's this little so fast. It's why it's very fast. And you literally, there were moments. We were like, Mina you're stomping.

Cause you were just like, bam, bam, bam, bam. And we're like, can you just lighten up the way you walk at bit? But like, that's the contrast of your you're so grounded. And so in your soul and like such a wise soul. And probably an old soul. And then, you know, your brother, I feel like he's new and his, and they say things like, you know, the spirit chooses their parents.

**David:** That is a another, when parents blame themselves, it's like, you can't take credit or blame for what your kids do to help with that. Cause do we take

blame for Time being the way he was and having bipolar? Do we take credit for Mina being brilliant?. Or is it just who they are?

**Madchen:** Yeah. And we're just doing our best, trying to parent the boat.

**David:** We have very little to do. We just had to make sure you could get. Okay, sleep

**Madchen:** Keep a roof over your head and give you as much love and encouragement as we could.

**Mina:** So, well, I think from my personal perspective of now being 27 and you had us at 20 and 21, 21 and 22 and eight years older than me. So 29 and 30.

And I think one of the most interesting things of, of now being the age that you guys were when. You were having us. Yeah. It really does like bring to light the fact that it's like, when you're a kid, you think your parents know everything and that they've figured everything out and they're just going to like impart their wisdom and get you to that point.

But like, as I'm going through it now, it's like, you guys are just figuring it out as you go.

**Madchen:** Yeah. Still figuring it out.

**Mina:** You're young adults figuring yourself. No, I think you guys do know everything, but, but that's, that's something that has been such, so eye opening that it's like, oh wow. At 27 you had a five and six year olds.

So going back to these, uh, different character traits from family and how they support somebody, who's going through something, how has. As you learned about mental health and addiction, how has it been supporting that person and how has it affected your own mental health throughout the way?

**Madchen:** Well, for me through this process, I got to learn that I was playing this hero role my entire life, and that that's a really heavy burden.

**David:** It's going to get heavier about 2 30, 2 30. Isn't it,

**Madchen:** my mom's landing today, which I hope that she will come on a future episode and get her perspective and her generation perspective.

**David:** That's so tough. Could you imagine that. Raise us, you know, having to take care of everything and make sure we were in bed and safe and cooking and doing everything.

**Mina:** And that's something that I think you guys, through your own perseverance and the fact that you guys met each other and have been such a healthy partner to each other, that you've created such an amazing support system for the family, so that we were always prepared for this.

'cause from the beginning. We had parents who were unbelievably supportive. Didn't have that ego didn't live through their children. And so because of that, here we are today talking about it, talking about our own experiences. And as it, like, as of yesterday, get hopping in the car and call people and taking care of them when we need to, and being there for each other.

**Madchen:** Yeah. When there's this really terrible situation, like even yesterday with everything that was going on and almost like he was going to be kicked out of the new place, he went into any, I saved the day. I got everybody on the phone. And so there was this, almost this rush of like, I did something good and it was almost like the, um, made me feel worthy and I'm, and then I have to sort of take a step back and say, okay, wait, those are old patterns that I, that got grooved in from a young age.

And yes. Okay. It all did work out and it did work out for my son and there's positives to that, but it takes a toll on me that I have to be careful of. And David always reminds me of, yeah, figure out am I doing that just to be the savior or am I doing it because it really did help the situation and I have to be.

**David:** Yeah. Cause he hung up. She, she literally was doing a connected call. What do you call it? She did a three-way call with the, uh, psych ward and the new place that he was going. The nurse trying to figure out they had released him from, so the paperwork that the clinic he's in now, he was released. What, what was the mix-up?

**Madchen:** So when they gave him his discharge paperwork, it said discharged against medical advice, danger to self and others. And so. But she can't do out of a psychiatric hospital on a 52 50.

**David:** So your mom has the nurse on one and trying to explain to the clinic that was, you know, you're probably reading it wrong or you're probably not working with the right sheet.

They were, they both worked it out and they thanked each other. Everybody's like, we got it. We'll speak further tomorrow when your mom hangs up.

was like,

you know,

**Madchen:** you know, you loved that, you know, and I just was like, yeah, that's what I do go to that. But, but, you know, I have to be careful and take care of myself. And that's why I started going to therapy is that it does become overwhelming. And, um, and I got to work on all that stuff. Uh, because it can become detrimental to me and my family and my relationship.

And then, you know, also in those circumstances, even with you, it's like all the things that were coming up with your brother, we really tried hard and wanted to make sure that you didn't ever feel ignored, but he did take up a lot of the time cause he was always in trouble and we were always having to implement stuff.

And so. I'm sure that that took a toll on you and made you feel like, Hey guys, I'm over here. I need help. I need, you know, we were trying to be conscious of that. Just the fact that, that we were always having to work on things. I'm sure that was a negative impact on you and your upbringing.

**Mina:** I mean, I'm sure there is all kinds of stuff on siblings in general and just being first and second sibling, I think for me, growing up with Sly, he was the kind of person who, when he walks in the room, he sucks the energy out in a good and a bad way in the good way. He's the most charismatic person he's super effortlessly. Social makes friends with everybody always has the funny thing to say on the downside. He's not in a good mood. It can bring that kind of negativity out as well, especially when he's going through something, um, on his end he'll he'll, he'll let you know.

And I definitely felt that on my end, because then as he's going out there and getting into trouble and pushing the boundaries, I was like, well, I can see how that affects my parents and I don't want to do that. So I'm going to do that.

Everything the right way. And I'm going to be as perfect as I can and not get into any trouble whatsoever.

Just keep my head down. And I think in the process of doing that, I kind of. Maybe missed some of those opportunities too, because I became a bit more introverted. Like not as socially capable as he was when I was younger for him, it always looked very effortless. And for me, I always had anxiety. And so whenever I would go get into a social setting, it was like, I had to do a little pep talk, like, okay, look people in their eyes like,

**David:** and he was actually probably had more anxiety than you did.

**Madchen:** Yeah. He talks, he talks about that. He feels super socially awkward. He doesn't fit in like that. He's not in. And yet we're just like, are you kidding? You're like, like the little charismatic guy in the middle of the room that everybody's like, eyes go toward, you know, like, oh, is he going to say, what is he going to do?

**Mina:** But that's how he copes with it.

**Madchen:** But that's how he copes with it. Yeah. Yeah. And you definitely, like, you were always like the perfect child, like overachieved in everything to the point where we were like, Okay, calm down. Like, you know, you don't have to conquer everything. You don't have to take everything on at the same time.

Trying to get you to be easier on yourself and not have to accomplish so much, but at the same time, you don't want to discourage your child if they're going to be a high accomplisher. But we could tell that it was taking a mental toll on you.

**David:** Oh yeah. Cause I don't know how wild you would have got. Well, cause you were always, you know, again, in first grade you were the teacher's assistant

**Mina:** and that's why I don't want to necessarily say that.

Like my, my personality is completely based off. Anyone else, but myself, but you know, different things affect like how you work as a family dynamic. But, um, but I wanted to kind of wrap up this episode, talking about like, we are really privileged to be in this family. And that's a testament to you guys.

And even despite what you've gone through with your upbringing, which I want to talk about more, maybe in our next episode, do you have any, any advice for people out there that don't have a support system like this?

**Madchen:** I feel like as a family. Always we're able to fit into more privileged communities. And yet we weren't like the uber rich or the wealthy, but we were like, we really focused on trying to give you guys the best education and have you growing up.

Better neighborhoods that, you know, as much as we could, but yet never really quite fit either. Cause we didn't, we didn't have the social status or, you know, there was some social status that just came with me being a celebrity, but we still were barely scraping by financially. Cause it's just, that's what happens when you're an artist and this you're one of the top five.

Mega film stars out there, you know, making a lot of money. You're, you're just, you're making, you're making it from job to job. We were always overextending ourselves. Cause we were always trying to give you guys the best upbringing, but we still like, even through like the treatment with your brother, there was a lot of really great treatment centers that he could have gone to.

And even now could go to that. We can't afford because they don't take insurance. They don't take, and you have to just plunk down 40, 50, \$60,000 to walk in the door and that's one month. So if you're looking at six months treatment a year treatment, you know, there only are a few people that can, um, afford that.

So it's hard, but there are resources out there that you can find through like NAMI, N A M I. They will connect you to free counseling. They can point you in the direction of different treatment centers that will just take your insurance. If you have insurance, if you don't have insurance, there are like county state facilities.

We hope to work on that because those aren't a good level of care, but at least it's something. So I would say to anyone and everyone out there, no matter what your financial situation is, or the community that you, that you're in, you can go to free support services that can help you. And you just got to keep fighting.

You have to keep fighting and keep trying.

**David:** And find balanced. We have a good balance because of, you know, our diversity and our backgrounds. And, but that understand that there's no fault that not unlike you guys are talking about it being an injury to your body. Um, it's not somebody's fault that they have diabetes or.

Heart condition. So don't approach it like, oh, it's your fault that he's this way. Or, you know, just know that it's an illness and you have to deal with it as it comes day to day,

**Madchen:** It's not going to be perfect. And there's no fix. It's just the way you're going to live. Like, so if you have a heart condition, you're going to have to manage that heart condition.

There's no shame that should be applied or, or, or taken for that person that has it. You shouldn't be ashamed. If you have a heart condition, you shouldn't be shamed if you have cancer. But in general, try to try to just look at any kind of mood disorder or mental illnesses its the organ that's affected, just like any other organ in your body.

There's not just one perfect thing that's going to fix it. It's an ongoing process. I remember in one of our first like family weekends, sit downs of one of the sobriety, uh, places that, but our son was in. I remember somebody in that group saying like, you know, this is, this is gonna, this is gonna be happening for a long time and your family and your son's going to relapse many, many times.

And I remember feeling this incredible anger. No, not us. You've got to be kidding. No way. There's no way, you know, like, and I just was, so you're going to fix it. This place is going to fix it, but, you know, cause she was saying like it took her son eight years with many different relapses. Like there's no way there's no, this place is going to be the place that fixes it.

Everything's going to be fine. And here we are 10 years later. And going through very similar things, but you have to step back and really look at it with a much bigger perspective. Yes. It feels like we dipped right back in to old trauma, old problems. But if you look at the bigger picture, we are slowly.

Moving forward and things are slowly getting better. So it's almost like there's going to be these peaks and valleys along the way, but if you just keep working at getting it better and better each time, that's all you can do. That's how you. Fight to do.

**Mina:** And as the hero, you decided to create a foundation following the main hero ways and a podcast to help other people.

So, you know, there's some good and bad to that.

**Madchen:** Yes, I probably took on a little too much juggling a lot of things. Uh, currently being on Riverdale, also directing a film in the summer seemed like a really perfect time to also start a foundation and a podcast. I thank you for being so open because you avoid situations like these family groups and things, because you know, you're going to cry.

**Mina:** So no, go ahead. Put them on blast on a podcast,

**Madchen:** him being so open and

**David:** I've got a writer that's you're going to blur out my side.

**Madchen:** Oh, really? No, no, no, the contract, but that's, what's so beautiful. And why I love him so much is that he's this like strong, solid rock. That's always level level-headed, you know, really kind supportive, but he's, he's got this beautiful, loving, open, emotional side, so,

**Mina:** well, uh, thank you guys for.

Uh, opening up about this. Thank you father, who is always a very elusive character. He's not someone who likes cameras or microphones. Uh, if you ever try to look up pictures of him on the red carpet with my mother, there is maybe two or three. And so this, this means a lot to me personally. And I love you both,

**David:** you're so welcome, I'm still blacked

**Mina:** out. You are not, you don't even blacks. Come on now. Thanks for listening to don't mind me. I Mina Tobias, my mom Madchen Amick and my dad, David Alexis. Thank you very much for listening to our conversation coming up in our next episodes. Uh, my mom's mom, AKA my grandmother, uh, as well as potentially my aunt who I believe is coming into town.

We're going to go more into our family dynamic, which I find fascinating. And we'll be going into what's next for Don't Mind Me as a not-for-profit organization. Don't Mind Me. We have to come up with a no.

Thanks for listening to Don't Mind Me, I'm Mina Tobias. Don't Mind Me is produced by Aurra Studios, original music by Sly Alexis and executive produced by Madchen Amick and Amanda Brown.

Uh,

Thank you for listening to this episode of Don't Mind Me, which is co-hosted by me, Madchen Amick, and my daughter Mina Tobias. We are doing this podcast because we want to open up the conversation about dealing with serious mental health problems. If you, a member of your family or a friend are struggling with any of the issues mentioned, please reach out for help.

If in the U S go to [nami.org](http://nami.org), [N a M. Dot org](http://N a M. Dot org) or [samhsa.gov](http://samhsa.gov), [S a M H S a.gov](http://S a M H S a.gov) for further information. And if you're elsewhere, please reach out to your local organization.