

ENCORE: Mental Wellness & Creating Healthy Relationships!

[00:00:00]

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I want to begin by thanking you and welcome you to the podcast today and ask you just to tell our listeners a little bit about yourself.

Guest: I'm majoring in science pre professional studies for pre-med. I'm from Minnesota. I'm a senior in high school, college, sorry. And I'm a I plan on taking a few gap years before going to medical school.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Oh, that sounds great. I always start with this question for each of my guests. How do you define mental wellness? How do you know when you're in a good place mentally?

Guest: I guess mental wellness is difficult for me to define. I asked my friends about what they thought like topics in mental wellness really were, and I think a lot of the time I was thinking more of mental illness, not mental wellness.

Guest: I guess I don't have a clear definition, but certain things that I think about when I think about mental wellness are having a schedule is really important, I think, and then also having like good habits, exercise and eating wise, is when I have like close relationships with my friends, but I think it all stems from having a good, healthy relationship with myself.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: [00:01:00] Wow, that's a wonderful way to begin. I really appreciate the fact that you said what I think most of us often experience, and that is, you don't really have a concrete definition of mental wellness. You use mental illness to define mental wellness. And that's really one of the purposes of this podcast, is I really want to educate people what mental wellness is so they can do exactly what you're doing.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: That if we know what mental wellness is, then we put into place, or we become more aware, a system that encourages and cultivates mental wellness. I like to use the definition from the World Health Organization. It's obvious, but we don't want to define mental wellness by not being depressed or not being anxious.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Our mental wellness is a state of well-being where we can realize our own abilities. We can cope with the normal stresses of life, we can work productively and fruitfully, and we're able to make a [00:02:00] contribution to our community, our family, and our workplaces. I often like to say, life is a lot more like a video game where things come at us.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And we have to be able to navigate them. And part of what you're already doing, but maybe not naming as this is how I cultivate mental wellness, is you're thinking about, Oh, I do need a system. I need a daily plan. I need to pay attention to sleep. I need to pay attention to exercise. And you said a really important thing that if I'm going to be mentally well, I have to have a certain amount of self-awareness.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And I really want to congratulate you on that. It seems obvious. But self-awareness is the foundation to mental wellness. It's also the foundation if somebody suffers from a mental illness, that it isn't that if you suffer from a mental illness, you don't have self-awareness. What I've learned as a clinical social worker, some of the most healthy people I work with are people who have worked through and recovered from [00:03:00] mental illnesses, and self-awareness is a key component.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Today, in the spirit of self-awareness, you have picked a topic that I want you to introduce, and we're just going to have a think tank about that topic. So, share with our audience what your topic is.

Guest: Yeah, I just chose relationships, which is pretty broad. Mental wellness is really important for me in the sense that if I'm not caring for myself first, it's hard for me to have good, strong relationships with others.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: That's the tricky part. Our relationships with others really reflect our relationship with ourselves. And we're always going back and forth between what I call self-care, self-development, and also taking care of the relationships that we have in our life. Off the top of your head, tell us, what is a healthy relationship?

Guest: One of the most important things is balance, where you're not putting so much in, like a lot more in than the other person or the other way around, they're putting a lot more in than you.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Part of what you're saying is, I need to look at the balance of how much I'm [00:04:00] giving, how much they're giving.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: The thing that you're saying indirectly that I think really should be punctuated by me is, You are actually putting effort into learning about relationships, learning about friendships. I think that is so wise because I think we often think relationships and friendships just happen. We don't really have to learn what is a healthy one, what is not a healthy one, and I often think that gets us in a lot of trouble.

Guest: I think overall, Evaluating relationships like does this person when I'm around that make me better or am I providing like a service to them too? That's also important. I think those are really important to me when evaluating I guess not necessarily evaluating because I don't ever just be like, oh is this friend good enough or not?

Guest: But just like looking back when I'm with this person How do I feel do I enjoy providing something for them and the same back at the end of the day? Does this person make me a better person or not?

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: The word I use for that is mutuality. Is this relationship mutual? Not mutual [00:05:00] once I had clients who every week they sat down and they mapped out their life and they made sure everything was 50 50.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: They came to therapy because they were mad at each other all the time because it's hard to make something 50 50. But when we go to another model that I teach when it comes to mental wellness is Dan Siegel's model. Dan Siegel, when we're mentally well, we're in a river, and our mind is Fairly peaceful, fairly calm, we're happy, and we stay in that river by being flexible, adaptive, coherent, and resilient.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: energized and stable. That idea of mutuality does mean that we at times have to be flexible and adaptive. So, you might have a friend who's studying for the MCAT or just needs to be out of the social scene for a while and people don't take it personally. People are supportive, send them something to drink as a sign that we really hope you do well.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: That kind of spirit that Siegel really asks us to cultivate in our daily actions really helps relationships to be mutual. There's two things I [00:06:00] want you to think about. You're in the life stage of adolescence. Begins at 12, ends at 25. Most people think adolescence ends when teenage years are over. But neuroscience has taught us that the brain has this huge developmental period where it matures into its fully adult brain.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And it takes from 12 to 25. Human development, Erickson is a model that I often refer to. He says the first part of adolescence is really who am I? And the I and the seeking of self and developing and discovering self goes all the way through life. But it's most intense in that 12 or 13 years. While we intensely focus on ourself in the first part of adolescence, as we begin to become a little bit older, around 20, Erickson's next stage is can I love, which is why I think it's really fascinating that you, a college senior, chose the topic relationships, and we often think of that as I hope someone loves me.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: [00:07:00] I hope someone is good to me. But Erickson's intent was, can I put somebody else first? Can I give to others? Can I find the balance in the mutuality between myself and another? So, I often use the metaphor of the early part of adolescence, we're working on the capital I. Who am I? The latter part is we're trying to help that I be a lowercase, an italicized lowercase that's flexible and can really be what's good for me and what's good for someone else.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And I'm really interested in just your response to that when we're talking about relationship.

Guest: What you're saying, the development stages really makes a lot of sense. What we talked about earlier is like self-care has to come before. Like interpersonal relationships. I think that I am at a stage where when I put others before myself, it actually does make me happier.

Guest: And I don't know if that's just normal development, what was described, but I think it's just kind of something that I've realized if I do something [00:08:00] nice for other people, and I'm pretty sure this has been shown that the more you smile or the more you do things for others, the happy you are as a person as well.

Guest: In the stage I'm at right now, in relationships that I have, I've been I enjoy like what you were talking about. If someone I know has like a test or something coming up, just checking in with them, sending them a text or whatnot saying good luck or asking them how it went the next day.

Guest: Things like that actually throughout my day, like very little things I've realized make me happier as a person overall too.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And would you say that part of yourself has developed more now than maybe when you were

Guest: 15? Oh, I would say it's developed like within the last few months and I hope it continues to foster throughout.

Guest: The rest of like my adolescent stage, but I would say that even looking back at myself just maybe even like the fall of senior year, I would say I was definitely a lot more egocentric and put myself before others all the time. And it wasn't until the last few months that I've realized like putting others not necessarily like above myself, but also looking out for other people.

Guest: And providing things for them when I don't get anything back [00:09:00] actually does bring me happiness.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I think it's so great you have the self-awareness to notice this really natural shift that developmentally just occurs. I always like to say that the first part of adolescence, young people are exquisitely egocentric.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Just incredibly egocentric, and that's not a judgment. They grow out of it, and you're actually just demonstrating that, and you noticed. And I think sometimes, I remember a number of years ago, a client said to me, I'm so sick of me, and I said, got any solution for that? And he goes, yeah, I think maybe it's you and we, that thinking so much about myself as we do in early adolescence, there's a lot of big questions, we have to try new things, we have to discover things, so there is a lot of thinking about it.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: That's why I call it the Capital I, and now you can see that you're shifting and that focusing on others is actually bringing you happiness, which is what we want with [00:10:00] mental wellness. It's helpful to think about that this life stage, which focuses a lot on, I needs to make that transition to you and to we, what are the really important roles for.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Adults who are teaching, coaching, parenting adolescents is to help them make that transition where they're not so self-focused. Knowing that our culture really overemphasizes it at this time, it's essential that all of us working with teens really encourage exactly what's happened naturally in you, that you have found yourself reaping happiness, joy, satisfaction, in really being part of supporting and cheering your friends on.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I'm wondering if there's, besides the happiness, is there anything else you're learning as you balance taking care of yourself with being more curious about others?

Guest: One thing that I've noticed is, a good way of how you put it was saying being more curious. The more you are interested in others, there's a quote that I heard that said [00:11:00] like it's better to be interested than interesting.

Guest: And I've tried to live like that once I've heard it. I've realized you can learn so much more from other people too. If you just keep asking them questions, people love to talk about themselves, but I also like love to learn more about my friends. It doesn't even have to be my friends, just more about people I'm in class with, more about people that I'm sitting by when I'm eating lunch.

Guest: Things like that. There's a lot that I have to gain from other people. So, I think that's one thing when you say, you and we first before myself. I think that is one way that I see that in my life and it's not necessarily happiness But it's just like more experiences that I get obtained from other people.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I always say people are fascinating they're just fascinating because we often go into relationships, you know When we're in adolescence and even in early adulthood just with the assumption that everybody's like our son And when we begin to get curious and ask people about themselves, we realize oh, there's a million ways to live life.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: There's a million ideas that people have and different perspectives and really different [00:12:00] experiences. So, I think that's great that you can actively see that you're doing this. I want to share with you one of the mental wellness tools that I teach about relationships. It's the idea that we share ourselves with each other a little bit at a time, and the whole time we're doing that, we're really assessing without even knowing it, if this experience of sharing who we are feels safe.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: We share facts about ourselves. Most of the time when we share facts, people aren't really negative. Maybe somebody would say, Minnesota, it's so cold, but it's a fact, right? Then you would share an interest, and if somebody belittled It's very possible that you would then begin to be careful in what you shared about yourself.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: The next thing that we often share when we're developing relationships is our opinions. Think about when you share an opinion and somebody has the opposite, and they're very judgmental, they're not curious. That's different than if you share an opinion and they're like, Oh, I don't think about it that way.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Can you share me what [00:13:00] your perspective is? And then the next part is emotions. And then the last part is values. So, we don't share these in a linear way. It's much more like a spiral. And the whole time we're judging. Without even knowing, is it safe or not safe? Can you think of a time when it didn't feel safe and it shut you down?

Guest: A good example of that is like political views. A time that I felt more uncomfortable about sharing my opinions and values are definitely like a political climate in which majority of the people aren't aligned with me, and what you're talking about with friendships, though, where you navigate that, whether you're going to share that or not, making that decision, I've realized that the friends I've cultivated here at school, now I feel comfortable sharing my opinions despite having opposite views as a majority of my friend group.

Guest: But at the time when I first came to the university, It was a topic where it's one comment would be made and I'd just be quiet. Like what you're saying, I can really relate to [00:14:00] how each time as you grow closer to people you evaluate what's safe to share and what's not. And as the closer you grow, you become more open to share.

Guest: But at the beginning, it's obviously more difficult and you're afraid of judgment.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And if we don't learn, because being in healthy relationships is something that has to be learned, even for people who come from fairly healthy families. This is a really complex world we live in now. We have lots of difference.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: We don't really have a set of values that everybody shares. One of the things I really see you doing is you're really You're noticing what's happening and you're being, you're remaining open. It's really easy. I think for people, if they don't understand, Oh wait, your opinion and your values often are in line.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Somebody can have different values and different opinions, but you can still be friends. And we have hundreds of years of examples. Even politically, until [00:15:00] the last 10 years or so, we had lots of examples of people who were in Congress who were on different sides of the fence, but went to lunch together.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Part of what I want to encourage you to continue to do is what you're doing, is when that first, ooh, we're not in the same values,

or we don't share the same opinions. There was a part of you that stayed in the boat and kept rowing, that kept trying to find a mutuality, even though there was difference.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And that really is what I call psychological intelligence. And psychological intelligence is when we notice the dynamics, we notice the difference, and we make room for them. The model I use is my story, your story. One of the things that I remembered learning in college was one of my classmates said, You always have to listen to people who think very differently than you, because that will help your [00:16:00] decision gain information that you can't have if you're only listening.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: with someone like yourself. And that's true when it comes to politics, but it's also true when it comes to having really good friends and you're not discussing politics. That people's needs are really different. I want you to think about if we look at we share ourself, our facts, our interests, our opinions, our emotions, and our values with people and you use the value of mutuality, you want your relationships to be mutual.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: What could you do to continue? To create those kinds of relationships, just given the little bit of information I've given you today.

Guest: I think what I've realized works for me is, sometimes people will hear someone have a different value than them and then it completely changes their view of that person.

Guest: But I think that's not really a fair assessment. It's you became friends with this person for a reason. You really enjoy being around them. Why do you have they have one value and it's okay, you can no longer be friends with them. I think being accepting of other people's values [00:17:00] too is really important to having healthy relationships.

Guest: But then also knowing when's the right time to talk about your differences, sometimes There's certain environments that are obviously not as welcoming to talk about it. Say, for example, you're like at a party and someone expresses some value that you differ from them from, obviously the party environment's not the right place to talk about it.

Guest: Then I think another important thing is say, someone for one week, they express a different value than your different emotions, something like that. I

think that's also not the time in your relationship to talk about that. I think you have to figure out, like, when are the right times to talk about these things?

Guest: Who are the right people to actually continue relationships with that, even though you're different, you want to talk about them with? Because there are certain people where it's, maybe they do have different values than you, and you learn more and more as you hang out around them. That maybe you are different people, but then there are people that may have different values, but you are supposed to be friends and you are supposed to be together.

Guest: And I think just giving your relationship the course [00:18:00] or the relationship, the time to run its course, the time, the moments will come when you're supposed to discuss your differences.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And that's why I think healthy relationships. The people in them are very conscious of when, of timing, of when is the right time to talk.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Can you give us some examples, if someone had a different value than yours, and you were going to be curious, how would you bring that up, that you wanted to hear more about their perspective?

Guest: Okay, I'll just give an example. So last year is the election, and my house, we have four people in it, like three of them were on the opposite political party, as me, conversations would still arise and they were all really healthy, like no one would end up yelling at each other or anything, like upset, but it was more of trying to get an understanding.

Guest: Of other people's views. But I would say like how those conversations would come up, it would be like someone would maybe make one comment and then another person in my house would go back on that comment I guess, and be like, wait, what about this? And then it would lead into sometimes like hour or two [00:19:00] hour long discussions when we're like eating dinner and continue after.

Guest: And they were always super entertaining and like you said. It's really important to understand other people's views, people that are so different from you. And I would say in high school, I was a lot more immature when people had different values than me. Like I was saying, I would just not even give them the time of day.

Guest: But at the end of the day that was just me blocking them off and I was no better of a person by separating myself. I was effectively harming the relationship just as much as they were, too.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Define a little bit more of the dinner conversations. Were the dinner conversations everyone talking from their point of view in a way trying to change the other person's point of view?

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Or was anybody there going, I know my point of view. At this point, I'm secure in it. I just really want you to help me understand why you have your point of view.

Guest: I guess it was a mix of both. It was more of not so much convincing because everyone kind of realized, like, where we stand is where we stand.

Guest: But at the same time, it was like trying to understand [00:20:00] this is why I'm saying this. I think it led to both. Parties becoming like slightly more moderate and realizing like the downfalls of both parties.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: So, what did you have to do emotionally within yourself to? Regulate your response to the difference

Guest: I think that's really important because there are certain times when Politics for example would get me really angry and people's political views would get me really angry So I guess regulating my emotions was a Mainly just deciding which conversations to have and which conversations to pass on.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And why do you think your reaction was anger when someone's value or viewpoint was different?

Guest: I think the main thing was just how upset I was at the situation like in the United States at the time. Anger a lot of the time would stem from like I said immaturity. I think you just jumped to that.

Guest: But also, there were a lot of things that I thought, like political views at the time, were more about actual values, too. And I thought there were certain [00:21:00] comments that were straight up just hatred. And I think like with hatred, I guess comes anger. And I think when I saw comments that were made by certain political parties or whatever, that were more have like more racism, things like that where it really just stems from hatred.

Guest: That's what would get me angry. Part of the reason that I was able to have conversations later was also that my understanding of like how my friends actually viewed a subject. wasn't actually hatred, like they didn't have that. So it was, getting a better understanding of why they felt certain ways instead of just making an assumption based on one political figure.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Isn't it interesting, but not surprising, that we started talking about relationships and we end up talking about relationships within the political realm? Why do you think that is?

Guest: I know what started it was like you talked about values, And the E, and then also like conflicts. And the easiest way to think of like a conflict within a relationship.

Guest: I think a lot of the time stems from something [00:22:00] such as politics, especially in the United States at the current moment.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: One of the things that, the list of how we share ourself, I call it social intelligence, that we want social relationships. We need social relationships. We're wired to have them, and we do that by sharing parts of ourself.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: One of the things is we know is we never change someone's value. There are no words that change someone's values. There's only experience that changes one's values. It's interesting to me I've been a therapist for 36 years, not until the last five or six years did anyone ever put politics and relationship together.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I never had anyone in my office upset because of family members. It just never happened, but it happens all the time. I'm not saying that's bad or good. I'm saying this is the water we're swimming in, and what people want are friendships. And it's, we do need to be conscious. I think we have to have much better relationship skills in 2022 than we did in 2010 because [00:23:00] we have so much anger around, I don't know if it's the values or if it's our desire to be right and agreed with.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: There seems to me to be this real energy of I am right. The values have always been different in this country. People have always been on this side or that side, but there wasn't quite the spirit of, I need to be right. I want you to think about how you think that energy of, I want to be right ends up affecting how we are when it comes to our most important relationships, whether it's family, friends, or dating.

Guest: Our values are shaped from our experiences. And that's one thing I haven't talked about that I started to realize. It made me think, like I said, I came from a family with certain political beliefs. I was completely influenced by them and where I was, my upbringing, and then starting to realize that's the same for people of the other political spectrum and having an understanding of we had such different backgrounds growing up.

Guest: Obviously we're going to feel differently on certain things and like our values will change based [00:24:00] on our experiences. I think acknowledging that is one important thing. Also, another thing you talk about, like you want people to agree with you to be right and wrong. One of my friends and I have two different views.

Guest: We both think that everyone should have health care, but we both disagree on how it should be accomplished. Think at the end of the day, you have to understand like there are certain issues where there isn't a right and wrong. It's important to accept other people's backgrounds that make them form their values.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Yeah. Even when the issue, you see it, the issue is right or wrong. People still come to it with a really different experience that has shaped that value.

Guest: Yeah.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And so, when we're talking about healthy relationships, values really are a piece of it, but it's really impossible to have a healthy relationship if we don't have the communication skills to be able to listen to opinions that are different than ours.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: or if we don't have the communication skills to share our opinion in a way that's [00:25:00] connecting. Healthy relationships, we're always striving to be connecting and not disconnecting, and that's where anger becomes cancerous, because anger is always disconnecting. But when we just talk about everyday relationships, we do need to be able to communicate Our opinions in ways that are connecting, but also we need to be able to listen to other people's opinions in a way that is open and connecting, but we also need what we call emotional intelligence.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And so, we often, I think, are focusing a lot on our values now. And not quite as much on social intelligence, of being able to communicate and share our opinions, as well as emotional intelligence, which is

being able to regulate our emotion, regulate our anger, when people don't think the way we think.

Guest: I think one thing that we haven't talked about that I think is really important, why I have such strong friends too, And we can have these conversations we all love each other, and express that I will just say oh, I love you guys.

Guest: And it [00:26:00] goes both ways. I think that is really important to being able to have difficult conversations with people. At the end of the day is that you really care about them. Yeah, no matter what they say, it's like you still will do anything for them and they the same for you

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: So, which do you think came first the ability?

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: To have difficult conversations in a connecting way and that cultivated more love or was the love there and you could have the difficult conversations.

Guest: I was thinking about that as I spoke and to be honest I don't really know. I think they maybe go hand in hand. You like grow closer by having the difficult conversations.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: I think what you're talking about is levels of intimacy that I define intimacy. As the ability to share our opinions, our emotions, and our values with someone in a mutual way, and the more we can do that, the more intimacy we have. But when [00:27:00] something breaks that mutuality, those opinions or emotions, or values aren't shared in a way that's connecting, there's disconnection, then people have that person usually not so close to them in the circle of intimacy.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: So, we all have, our inner circle, and then our next, circle of friends, and then our next circle of people. But for people where there's disconnection, we might see them every day. We could be living with them, but we don't have intimacy, which is really that shared mutuality of who we are. As we get ready to wrap up, is there anything else you want to comment or ask?

Guest: My emotions my values everything with people and like you were saying the more open other people are the more Open you will be so I think just me saying like how I feel about a certain Topic or [00:28:00] being like I really

feel like sad or like I really appreciate you sharing something like that I think makes other people more willing to share their feelings too.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Because it's safe.

Guest: Yeah, exactly.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: We cultivate healthy relationships really through safety.

Guest: Yeah.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: And the mind, we don't even have to go to school to learn is it safe or not. The mind is always scanning for safety. And what might be safe for you may not be safe for me, just given our backgrounds. And that you come from, it sounds like a background that really cultivated Pretty healthy relationship.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: What I like to remind people is some people come from backgrounds where the relationships weren't healthy. But they can actually learn to have healthy relationships. One of the beautiful things I've learned as a therapist is some of the people that I have worked with came from a lot of backgrounds with trauma and they have worked through that and really learned how to have really healthy relationships, sometimes healthier than their friends who didn't have trauma because they had to put time into [00:29:00] it.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: It was great to have you on the podcast today. This was really superb. Thank you so much for your time. Yeah, thank you for having me. I learned a lot too. After two years in a pandemic, I think it's safe to say, we all look at relationships somewhat differently. So, I hope to continue this important conversation.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: But let me leave you with six inner challenge insights from today's podcast. Insight number one. If you're not happy with the relationships in your life, Don't despair. Be a bit more intentional. Start by giving to others what you hope to receive. Be the friend, family, and community member you want others to be to you.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Start with being kind to yourself and work outward. Bad hair day? Put on your favorite shirt. Your ride is late? Give them the benefit of the doubt. Good relationships with others and ourself start with kindness and intentionality. Just a reminder, are free. Insight number two.

[00:30:00] Adolescents are exquisitely self-absorbed as they work on answering the question, who am I?

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: But if you're above 18, Is your I a capital or lowercase I? Too much I causes problems with you and me. Insight number three. Are you interested in diversity and inclusion? Guess where it starts? Not in the boardroom, but between our ears. Yes, in our minds, it is natural to feel some discomfort with difference, but don't let that discomfort block you.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Become curious and try to understand the difference, just like our guest on today's podcast did. Whether it's a political view, a love language, or a way of life, let others share with you their values and perspectives. Insight number four. In relationships, we share who we are. Yes, facts. [00:31:00] Interests, opinions, emotions, and values.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: In intimate relationships, we're able to share our opinions, emotions, and values in a mutual and connecting way. Intimacy is not just for romantic relationships. When we don't have enough intimate relationships, We can feel lonely and unknown. Inner work helps us to clarify our own opinions, emotions, and values.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Emotional, social, and psychological intelligence are tools that help us with mutuality and intimacy with the people we care about. Insight number five. We don't need intimacy with everyone, but it's a beautiful thing to connect to those we meet along the way. Look the cashier in the eye and ask how they're doing.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Unplug as you move through the day and notice people around you. Open the door for someone whose hands are full. Connect with the barista who makes your latte. Or the person who walks by with a cute [00:32:00] dog and help the senior citizen who's struggling to put his walker in his car's trunk. You might be surprised at how these small acts of kindness lift your spirit.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Insight number six, the foundation of mental wellness is I, you, and we. I'm podcasts, but for now, if you want more information, please Go to my website, MJMurrayVachon.com, and under podcast number one, you can learn more about mental wellness. Podcast number 6, 7, 11, and 12 will increase your knowledge about emotional, social, and psychological intelligence.

MJ Murray Vachon LCSW: Thanks for listening, and as you move through your week, tuck your device in your pocket and sit back and relax. Get face to face with someone and get to know them better. This is your Inner [00:33:00] Challenge.