

Episode 114: Martine witnessed horror at 16

Do you remember the stress of being a teenager?

As an adult, you might look back on that time in your life with fondness. You had no bills to pay, and no worries about where to live, because you were still at home with your parents. You didn't have to buy groceries – the food was just there. You could get a job if you wanted some extra spending money, but you didn't really HAVE to work. Why didn't we appreciate that time more?

But in reality, teenagers DO worry about things. They worry about grades, and whether they'll be able to get into a good college. And if they do get in, if they can afford it without racking up a ton of school loans. They stress about body image, and about fitting in with their group of friends, and sometimes there's some family conflicts that can be part of the stress. Then there's dating and relationships, and that's a whole subject in itself. And on top of all that, they have the pressure of having to decide what they want to do with their life.

So in spite of the fond memories, being a teenager isn't always easy.

Today you're going to hear my guest, Martine, talk about something she experienced when she was 16 years old. By all account, she was a teenager with a pretty good life. She lived in a decent house, with her parents and her sisters. She went to school and she hung out with friends. Life wasn't perfect of course, but she was happy.

She certainly wasn't worried about her family's home being invaded by armed men in the middle of the night. Until it happened.

Twice.

Scott

For what we're talking about today, where were you living at the time?

Martine

I was living in Haiti, and Haiti is in the Caribbean. It is the same land as the Dominican Republic. I was living in Haiti with my mom, my dad, and my older sister. I have another sister who was in New York at that time attending college. I lived in the capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince. We were living in a nice home in a beautiful neighborhood. It was a pretty nice life, I would say - living in Haiti. I was 16 years old at that time.

Scott

But you didn't grow up in Haiti...

Martine

Part of my life, I did - the latter part of it. Initially, I was born in New York. At that time, my parents lived in Africa. I ended up showing up because my mom was traveling and visiting her sisters - she has 8 sisters and a good portion of them lived in the States at that time. So she decided to visit them, and there goes Martine that said, "Okay, I'm coming!" So I was born in New York. I mention this because that's not where I lived - we lived in Africa. So, when I was

born, a few months later, my mom went back home to Africa. I left Africa when I was 9 years old to go live in Haiti.

Scott

Part of the backdrop to the story is the fact that your dad was politically active. What does that mean?

Martine

Yes. Just so you know, to this day, I'm trying to find answers as to what truly was my dad's career because I was a child and I only experienced what I experienced when he was around. What I do know is the reason why we ended up growing up in Africa part of our lives - my sisters and I - is because, at the time when my dad was young, he wasn't afraid to speak up. He was in the military at some point in his life in Haiti. The reason why he ended up going to Africa was, at that time, there was a slew of young students like himself who were fleeing the country as a result of the government in Haiti not wanting them in the country because they were very vocal, young men. The political environment at that time did not want that. So, from what I understand from speaking to my mother and people who knew my dad, he was hiding several times from the government. They were out for him. Africa was one of the places that several of them decided to flee to. Some of them went to Canada and some of them went to the States, but we went to Africa. The decision to come back to Haiti when I was 9, as I mentioned - at the top of the conversation, from what my mom has shared with me - was because the political environment back then was better and my father felt that it was safe for him to go back - hence, why we went back.

Scott

Let's talk about what happened. This was a December evening and your dad wasn't actually at home, right? What happened that night?

Martine

He wasn't at home. It was December 30. My birthday is September 19. I'm mentioning this because my dad had put together an amazing sweet 16 party for me a couple of months before that night on December 30. My mom and my older sister were home. My dad was away visiting my middle sister who was attending college. That evening - it has been over 25 years now - what I do vividly remember is being invaded and strangers coming into our house. There were a lot of them - I can't make out how many of them, but there were a lot of them. I remember very clearly that this young man was young. He was probably slightly older than me if I were to guess because I could have seen him in the glare. They broke into the house and he got into my bedroom, and I almost got raped. I looked at him and I said, "Don't do that to me, please." I don't know if it's because he saw my face - that desperate face - and was thinking, "She's as young as me." All he did was take the chain that I had around my neck - that my dad had given me - and walked away. My mom and my sisters also experienced traumatic moments that evening. Guns were pointed at them. There were lots of fear, I remember. We did not know what was going to happen and just pray to God that they would leave. They did leave after wrecking the entire house. Every December 30, my mom, my sister, and I would always remember that night and how lucky we were, honestly, for surviving it. Who knows why it happened? We don't know who those people were and what they technically wanted. They took all the jewelry my mom had and everything we had in the house. Yeah, it was in December.

Scott

I'm trying to picture - if I was the father and away somewhere, and my family got attacked like that, I would feel pretty guilty. Even though it obviously wasn't his fault, he must have had some guilt that he wasn't there to protect you

Martine

100%, Scott. Back then we didn't have the luxury of digital communication like we do today, so he heard about it the next day as a result of my mom going out of our way to get connected with him through phone cards and whatnot. As soon as he heard the news, he was so upset. I remember, when he came home - he left my sister early, which is already a big trauma for her because she had plans to do all these things with her dad visiting her for New Year's and whatnot, but he had to leave early to take care of his wife and other children. When he came home, I remember that I hugged him so much and cried. He was so upset and furious. He was saying a lot of things. My mom tried to calm him down because he was saying things like, "I'm gonna get a gun! This is crazy! I need to protect you guys!" but my mom was like, "No, you're not doing that. You're not seeing these things." He was really, really upset.

Scott

Of course, that's instinctive. That happened in December - just a few months later since May. Can you take us through what happened then?

Martine

In May, we got invaded again. It was a quiet night. I was in my bedroom. My sister was in her bedroom. My parents were in their bedroom. It was about 3 o'clock in the morning on a weeknight. I heard this loud noise - I mean, it's Haiti - and I was thinking, "There are noises outside and things." It's a quiet night, so you would hear a lot of noise for whatever reason, right? But then, that thing was so loud that I instantly felt something was wrong. So, I opened my bedroom door to find my mom and my dad because I was like, "Is it an earthquake? What's going on?" I did realize and notice that there was no electricity in the house because I couldn't turn on my bedroom light. So, I opened the door. My parents' bedroom was not far, so I ran over there and my sister's bedroom - they're not far from each other - and I saw my mom, my dad, and my sister. We were all frantically looking at each other. My dad peeked to see what was going on. The front doors were open and we notice a bunch of people. When I say "a bunch", it was at least 5-6 people with weapons, firearms, machetes, and knives in every single corner of the living room, in every single corner of the house. It happened so fast, Scott.

I do remember my dad pulling me, my sister, and my mom - because we were closer to my bedroom - into my bedroom and shutting the door. We could see the people invading the house just breaking the bookcases, breaking chairs, and shouting in Creole - which is the mother language of Haiti - saying, "Where's the money? Where's the jewelry?" I could hear my dad saying, "What is going on? What is this?" I guess as soon as my dad realized we were invaded, he picked me up. I said, "Dad, what are you doing?" He was like, "You gotta jump out. You gotta go. You gotta find a way to go." I was like, "Where am I gonna go?" He was like, "I don't care. I'm going to push you out the window and I just want you to run." I was like, "It's 3 o'clock in the morning. How am I going to do that?" Mind you, if you jump out of my bedroom window, you would land in a ditch. Then, from the ditch, you could walk a little bit more. I mean, when I say "walk", it's a few miles to get to the main road. So, in my head, I said, "Okay, I see what he wants me to do." When I say this, this was not even 5 seconds - like it happened so quick. I was like, "Okay, I get it. You want me to jump out, land in the ditch, and just run to that main road." I realized that's what he wanted me to do. But in my heart, I was like, "What's going to happen to you? What's

going to happen to Mom? What's going to happen to my sister if I leave?" All of that was going through my mind in, like, 2-3 seconds time.

Then, the next thing I know was my dad picking me up and me putting my legs out the window. Then, a shot happen. That's when we realized the invaders were also outside of the home. They saw my legs about to come out of the window to escape and they fired at me, but I escaped the shot. Obviously, I'm here talking to you and you're listening. The shot just missed me. The reason why the shot missed me was that my dad pulled me back and I fell on my back. At that moment, we were like, "Honestly, we're screwed. This is bad. There's no way out. If they're outside surrounding the house, the neighbors are probably awake and seeing what's happening, but they can't help us. We're screwed." I honestly knew that all of us were going to die at that moment. It was over. It was done.

As soon as I fell on my back, I got up and we were all holding one another - my mom, my dad and my sister - praying to God that they would not open my bedroom door because maybe they can't find us or maybe they don't want us. I was completely wrong because a man opened the door. As soon as he opened the door, he had his gun in his hand. He pulled my mom and my dad, but he left me and my sister. At that moment, I held my sister's hand. I said, "We have to go hide somewhere. I don't know why they don't want us now. If they're going to come for us after this, we can't get out of the house because they're outside. Let's go hide in the bathroom." As I'm speaking to you right now, my hands are sweaty. I didn't know what was going to happen next. So, I was in the bathroom with my sister and that's where I saw everything - that's where it all happened. I had to create, like, a fist and put my hand in my sister's mouth so that she wouldn't scream. I had my other hand on my mouth so that I wouldn't scream.

The bathroom door where we were hiding was not completely shot. I never asked my sister actually about this - it's something that I may have to ask her one day. She never mentioned it to me if she was able to see what I was able to see because she was behind me with my hand in her mouth. So, I was looking and all I could see was the mid to bottom part of my parents' body laying flat on the floor - I couldn't see anything else but that. At that moment. I didn't know what happened. I didn't know if they were alive or not because I couldn't make out what was happening. I could hear the invaders talking and seeing things but I couldn't really make out what it was. For a good - I don't know - like, 5 seconds, they were saying stuffs and I could hear my dad answering them, then that's when it happened. I heard the shot. When I heard the shot, it was like a "two-step thing". I heard the shot. My heart skipped. Then, I looked at it and saw the pool of blood growing and growing and growing and my heart skipped again. At that moment, I couldn't make out if it was my dad, my mom, or both of them that got shot. That's when I said to myself, "My life is going to change."

At that moment I was praying to God that they would leave. I was thinking to myself, "Are they going to come to us now - my sister and I?" But then, I heard them say in Creole, "Let's get out of here" and they left. When I realized that they left and I heard my mom say, "They left", I opened the bathroom door and went to them. I realized my mom was not the one that was shot, but it was my dad. He was laying on the floor with his head in the pool of blood. He didn't pass at that moment because of the way when he was shot - it was not instant death. So, he was awake, but I don't know if he was aware of what had happened because he kept calling my mom's first name. Scott, I don't even remember how we got in the car with him, but we got in the car. I had his head on my lap in the backseat. I was looking down at him and holding his head. My entire body was full of blood and I could smell it. I was holding his head and looking at his eyes that were, like, not focused. I said, "Dad, hang on tight. We're gonna take care of this."

Mommy's driving. We're gonna go to the hospital. You're gonna be fine. I'm okay. They did nothing to me." He left me when I was 16.

(Whimpering)

After 25 years, every year, every moment - honestly, I don't know if it's because of my daughter who is now 16 - I look at her and I'm like, "This was me. I was a baby."

Scott

You said he actually died 2 days later. So he was in the hospital. Did you ever feel like you got any communication from him at all during that time?

Martine

I did. Because he got into a coma, I went to visit him. Actually, the night before he passed, I was in his room and I held his hand. I held his hand, looked at him, and had a whole conversation with him. I said, "I love you so much, dad. A lot of what I do, I do it with you and for you." To this day, I don't if it's my mind tricking me at that time or if I honestly felt him squeezing my hand when I spoke to him. I remember saying to him, "I'm gonna be okay" and I honestly felt his hand squeezing mine. I also told him to not leave me, ever. I said, "You're coming back. You're gonna be fine. You're gonna wake up and we're gonna be together. Never, never, never leave me." I honestly believe that he hasn't left me because of a lot of things that I've been able to accomplish in my life to this date. Truly, in my heart, I believe that he is activating. He's there - I just can't see him. I'm being honest.

I remember that I didn't even know I was going to have a baby. Scott, I didn't know I was expecting my daughter. On the night before my doctor's appointment, I had a dream. I saw my dad handing me an infant in my dream. I've plenty of other examples of things that have happened in my life where he has shown himself - I've lost loved ones over the years and I've known friends and family that lost very close people - and he was very, very active in my life for the first 3 years after he passed. When I say "active", I would see him in my dreams every single night. Then, there was one night - I remember clearly in my dreams - that he and I were having a conversation. He was telling me, "I have to go now, but I'll always be there. Now, I have to go. I can't keep doing that. I have to go". That's when I realize that he was like, "Wait, you got to take care of you, too. You have a life." Believe me, right after that, I was no longer seeing him as much as I was seeing him before - if that makes sense. Every now and then, over the years, he showed up in some shape or form, which is amazing.

The funeral was the saddest day - I was going to say that it was one of the saddest days of my life but, honestly, it was the saddest ever day of my life. I was 16 years old. There were so many people. People were standing outside of the church. People were standing inside the church. It was packed with people. During the service, I decided to go up and speak. I have never shared this before, but I remember looking at the crowd and it was blurry for me, and I remember feeling this strength just building inside of me - mixed with anger and resilience. This force was building inside of me as I was talking and speaking. I remember I didn't have any written speech or anything. I just remember talking about my father, what he has done in his life, and how I'm going to be an extension of him. I made that declaration that day. From that point on, I was feeling so empowered. I had this force in me that, honestly, was the foundation and opportunity to do something with my life - despite this - to keep him top of mind and not to disappoint him. When we got to the cemetery and they were closing - I remember feeling that he was not in

there - that box, I remember feeling that he was in the air. I remember feeling his presence around me and I said, "I'm gonna be fine."

Scott

I can imagine - part of the problem with how to respond to this or how to go forward - the fact that these invaders were never identified. I mean, how big of a deal is it that you never got justice?

Martine

It's a big deal. It's a big deal. It's one of those things that my mom, my sisters, and I had to just accept. It was not long ago when we were like, "You know what? We just gotta move on guys. We're never going to know why. We're never going to know if December and May were the same people or not. We're never going to know their motives. Maybe dad would have been able to tell us. Maybe there was something that he knew that we didn't know. Or we're never going to know." So, we fought - when I say "we", I mean my mom and my sisters fought - for many years over the last 25 years, struggled with the thought that we'll never have justice, and had to accept that this is what it is.

Scott

When you don't have that closure, you have to create your own closure.

Martine

That is correct. As I mentioned to you, at first, I was angry. I took that anger, and it was really the foundation of my resilience and the way I dealt with it, which is not the ideal way. Honestly, I feel I didn't mourn enough, I wasn't grieving enough, I wasn't crying enough, initially, because I was honestly trying to escape the pain and hiding behind my schoolwork and doing well at work because I was working and attending college full time. I was just on a fast-forward mode. I was like, "I gotta do this. I gotta do that." I was constantly studying. I wasn't living my own life. Later on, now, I realized what was happening, that I was running away from facing the truth of what had happened, that it's okay to cry, it's okay to grieve, it's okay to remember them and take a moment.

That night, when I had the dream, my dad was like, "I'm leaving. I'm gonna go. I have to go." I woke up and I was like, "Oh, my gosh, wait." He's really not here. So, I decided to celebrate him more and more. I decided to - especially when I had my daughter and then my son - engage with them even today by sharing with them about their grandfather, what he did, and the funny things he did - that's my way of keeping him alive. Also, every time I do something, every accomplishment or failure or whatever experience I went through, I make sure I bring them up into the mix - even though he's not here, I would have the conversation with him. So, that's how I deal with it. I deal with it in my mind. He's physically not with me, but he's spiritually around me. I'm from Haiti. In the Caribbean, we believe in symbols. So, 2 years after he passed, I would notice a lot of different signals and signs that his presence was around - from butterflies to unexpected flowers in the middle of nowhere. I mean, I have a laundry list of things that I know I saw that confirmed that he has always been around and continues to be around me.

The way I deal with it is, like, I just have the mindset of "It's a matter of time for us to see each other again" and "I seek guidance like I would have done if he was around." I have a conversation with him when I'm stuck with something. I'm like, "Dad, how would you do that?" Call me crazy, but you'll find me having a conversation and it looks like I'm having a conversation with myself, but I'm actually talking to him in my heart.

Scott

Do you have any ideas why your family was targeted not just once, but twice?

Martine

I do have an idea. I do believe we were targeted, to begin with. It wasn't a random invasion. Although in Haiti, unfortunately, things like this happen often because of the nature of the environment and dynamics there, but I do believe we were targeted. When I talked to my mom, I tried to find out from her cues - it's also hard for her to understand. I do believe we were targeted. Now, the reason why we were targeted is something I can't answer. As I said, I feel like that's the part where my dad could have, at least, communicated for a little bit. There's something he probably knew that we didn't, or he meant to tell us but he didn't - I don't know. I feel like, if anything, he'd be the one to be able to explain this to us. I mean, knowing his background, from what I know and heard, and from what my mom experienced with him, he was part of the political system at one point when we got back. In fact, one of the things that was provided for him was a chauffeur when he was part of the justice system at the time - the institution. He would have the chauffeur pick me up from school. On one particular day, another chauffeur picked me up. We didn't have digital communication, cell phones and things like that. I noticed the car, but I noticed a different chauffeur. That's when I found out that my dad had made the decision to not send me the regular chauffeur, but to send me this new chauffeur. Later on, I found out that the original chauffeur that was supposed to pick me out got shot driving someone else. That was part of the institution where my dad was. My dad was in the car behind that car that got shot. So, that's why I believe 90% that we were targeted - I don't know why till this day.

Scott

But obviously being politically active, he may have made a few enemies - although it seems like the invaders, were looking for valuables, jewelry, and things like that.

Martine

That's where I'm not clear. I was like, "Is it a target? Is it an invasion?" because those things happen in Haiti. So I don't know.

Scott

At the time of his death, you and your dad were very close - like, together all the time - and he was going through sort of a transformation himself. What was happening with him?

Martine

He was. I remember the day when he picked me up from school and we went grocery shopping. I remember him making me laugh because he was very funny in the supermarket, and we were very engaged. My dad used to drink a lot. He was an alcoholic, honestly. I have so many questions for him and it's crazy, Scott. The questions I had for him were questions that would be open for me to ask him at the age of 16, and I didn't get a chance to do that. I was like, "Wait, if you're an alcoholic, there's a reason behind it." But I remember being 13 - that's when I remember having a conversation with him. I said that there's something called AAA - I didn't even know what it was. You could go talk to people. I really want you to be better because you drink too much. I was 13, so I didn't understand people with addiction or whatnot. There's usually a reason behind it, but I didn't get that part - I didn't get to that part yet, so I didn't understand. But long story short, he was going through a transformation - thanks to me - because I had a conversation with him when I was 13. I said, "Dad, I love you so much, but I

don't love you like this. I want you to change. Would you do it for me?" That's when he was very thin. He had lost a lot of weight back then. He said, "You know what? Yes." Three years after that was when he passed. He was gaining weight. He was active. He was no longer drinking. He was the healthiest man ever, and that also got me upset. I was like, "Why? He was just getting back on track and not being an alcoholic anymore. He had just decided that because I had asked him to leave the political system. I don't know if this is the right thing for you to do, dad." That was 3 years before this whole thing happened. Then, he left and he went back to the education part that he did in Africa, and he did it in Haiti. He was teaching at a school. I was in his classrooms after school. He enjoyed teaching the students. He had left all of that. He was a brand new man. Then, this happened.

Scott

That's gonna add to the injustice of the whole situation - the bad timing.

Martine

Yeah.

Scott

What have you done since then? You've made quite a few advances in your own life career-wise. You have your own business. Were you just channeling all your anger into success?

Martine

Yeah, that's what I have concluded happened. Absolutely. I've always been a type A kind of person. My mum tells the story all the time, in Africa, when I was in kindergarten, I'd come home and she used to go to me and say, "Martine, put your book back down. You just got home. Relax. You could do your homework later" because I would literally get home, open my backpack and start doing homework. She was like, "Wait, take a moment before you do your own work." So, that's me. I'm always the one who is like, "I want to be the team leader for the presentation. This is how we're going to do it." Like, that's always been in solid me.

Scott

That's unusual for a kid. Hey, exactly.

Martine

So, with that and the anger, I was just this fireball, just wanting to do-- so yeah, I went through college full-time while working a full-time job. At one year, I was working two full-time jobs and going to college full time. I was like, I could do anything. I'm blessed to say that I did very well for myself and my career. I worked in corporate America for 4 years before I was laid off as a result of the pandemic. This job that I had-- the first time I was assigned to travel to Asia for work, I remember thinking about my dad because that was one of the wishes that I had told him that I wanted to travel to Asia with him because - even though we lived in Africa, we were going to Europe, we came to the States, he had been to Brazil, he's a world traveler - he's never been to Asia. I remember having a conversation with him saying, "When I graduate high school, we are going to celebrate with a trip to Asia." That obviously did not happen. So, my career in corporate honestly gave me the opportunity to manifest them again. I went to Asia several times. I've been to Europe. I got promoted several times and learned a lot. That's one thing I've accomplished that I'm very grateful for.

Today, not only do I have a business, as you shared - I love it so much - I'm also an adjunct professor. So, I'm in the higher education field. Guess who was in that field? As I mentioned

before, it was my dad. He was a teacher as well, for Hyatt. I have to add that I recently became a notary public out of nowhere - it's another story. When I shared that with my mom, I said, "Mom, I had this situation happen and I'm gonna go through with getting my notary public certification." She was like, "Did you know that your dad was a notary public as well?" I was like, "No way!" Well, I guess he's manifesting and showing me all these things. What's next?" I remember I spoke to my mom the other day. I said, "What is it that dad did that I have yet to do? Can you tell me so it's not another surprise?"

Scott

You want to predict your own future. Well, you mentioned that you're a professor. What you didn't mention is that it's at three different colleges. You are really driven and you have your own podcast. What's your podcast about?

Martine

Yes, I do. I have a podcast. It's a video podcast called "Visualize and Create." That's what my moto is. I've been on that journey of visualizing what I wanted. I even remember being an assistant at my corporate job and visualizing becoming a manager and thinking how am I going to create that transition. So, I'm in this constant visualize-creation mode. So, I decided to open up the video podcast to curate amazing individuals from all walks of life around the globe who have created amazing lives for themselves not only in business, but also in their lifestyle, health, and careers. They come on the show to share their journey and also share how to the ones who are tuning in, who wants to probably do the same thing. Maybe they're teachers and they get that inspiration from people who they can actually relate to and give them the tools. So, that's my podcast.

Scott

It sounds like that's the perfect outlet for you to help people in that way.

Martine

Yes.

Scott

Tell people about your website and how they can find you.

Martine

Thank you, Scott. Yes, for you listening, I would love for you to visit my website - martinecadet.com. There, you'll have the opportunity to connect with me on social platforms. I invite you to message me directly. I love connecting, so do not hesitate. I'm the one that answers my messages. Just mention that you heard the episode. I love to support you in any way I can. Everything is on my website - my podcast link is there. You can also download the podcast should you want to. Martinecadet.com is my website - you'll find everything there.

Scott

And we'll have links to all that in the show notes as well for anybody that wants to contact you or listen to your podcast or anything. Just one final thing - it just occurred to me - when you were all in your bedroom at that second home invasion, your dad was trying to get you out the window. One of the last things he did in his life was trying to protect you and, everything you've done, since then, is an honor for his memory.

Martine

Absolutely. Now, I have pictures of him all over my desk. As I'm talking to you, I'm looking at him. He's alive. He's all well and done.

Scott

I know this is not an easy thing for you to talk about. I really appreciate you sharing your story with us.

Martine

Scott, thank you so much for creating this space and participating in my healing process.

Scott

This past May, Martine and I ALMOST met in person. We were both at a podcasting conference in Orlando. I did meet a lot of people there, but when there's a couple thousand people attending, you just can't meet everyone. At one of the sessions which I had planned to attend but didn't make it, Martine told a very abbreviated version of this story about her dad. Some of the people who heard that, and know about my podcast, came and told me "there's someone you have to talk to as a guest on your show". But by that time it was toward the end of the conference, and Martine had already left to go home. Big thanks to my friend Wendy, who was at Podfest, and was able to connect us so that I could get Martine's story out to you.

Recently, I did an episode with a young woman named Courtney. It also involved losing a parent, but in a different way – it was about medical assistance in dying. If you haven't heard it yet, it's episode 112, called "Courtney's mom chose when to die". And have some tissues ready. I knew this would be a popular episode, but even I was surprised at all the positive feedback. This might be the most memorable story that's been told here on the podcast. Many of the compliments came from the listeners in the Facebook group – and Courtney herself is in that group and was able to respond personally. If you haven't joined the Facebook group yet, come on over and join in the discussions – it's at [WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/WhatWasThatLike).

I also got some emails about that episode, as well as this voice mail, from Lucy:

Lucy

Hi, Scott. My name is Lucy and I'm from England. I just wanted to let you know how much I love your podcast. Every episode is so different and interesting. I particularly enjoy the way you interview each guest gently without interruption - just letting them tell their story. I was moved so much by the episode "Courtney's mom chose to die". I thought it was so beautiful and so heartbreaking to have that chance to say goodbye without your family having to see you die in agony but in peace. Spending our last hours together loving each other seems beautiful to me. It's making me cry now writing this. I have to say I cried ugly through quite a lot of it, which was awkward as I was at work at the time. Anyway, I will stop rambling on and say thank you. I love your show. I hope it keeps going for many years to come. Thanks, Scott. Bye!

Scott

And there's something else I wanted to mention today.

If you're like me, you have a list of podcasts on your phone that you subscribe to. New episodes go live, and you have them ready to listen to automatically.

If you could somehow go back in time to your list of podcast subscriptions from a year ago, or 2 or 3 years ago, there's a good chance that there would be shows on that old list, that you are no longer subscribed to. I'm the same way.

It's something I've noticed about some shows. When they first come out, or when I first discover them, they're great. They're excited about the content, they put a ton of effort into it, it's just a really good show. But over time, something happens. Maybe the host or the production team gets bored, or they run out of stories, or something – but the show just gradually becomes not as good as it was in the beginning. Or maybe it actually becomes a really bad show. Of course, the creators of that podcast never intended it to happen, but it still declined and listeners started to just leave.

The reason I'm mentioning that is because I want to make sure that never happens with this podcast. I don't want to fall into the trap of complacency and end up with a show that's boring for me and boring for you. So I always have that thought in my mind – to deliberately be aware of not letting that happen. If you, my listener (and by the way – you're my favorite listener) – if you ever start to notice that things are starting to slip in that direction, please let me know. I want to always put out episodes that make you really look forward to the next one.

Okay, on to this week's Listener Story. If you're new to the show, we end each episode with a Listener Story – just a short story, like 3-5 minutes, called in from a listener. If you have a story that's interesting, you're welcome to call it in to the Podcast Voice Mail line – 727-386-9468.

This time we're hearing from Kathy, about a time when she was a child, and got lost.

Stay safe, and I'll see you in two weeks.

(Listener Story)

Kathy

My name is Kathy and this is a story about the time when I got lost in the Mojave Desert as a little girl. I grew up in Southern California. My family spent a lot of time camping in the Mojave. On one trip, when I was about 11 years old, I wanted to tag along with my dad, my brother and a friend of my dad's while they went out to hunt rabbits. I had a hard time keeping up with them. I tried to take a shortcut to catch up. When doing so, my foot slipped off a rock and it was punctured by the thick sharp point of a century plant. Since I was only wearing canvas sneakers, the point went through the side of my foot and I was bleeding quite a bit. My dad came back to find me. When I showed him my foot, he told me to go back to camp. I guess he assumed I knew how to get back. Well, I didn't. Before I knew it, I was hopelessly lost as I kept walking and found myself atop some huge boulders - some as big as a car. I started climbing down. This time, I was getting worried but not too much. I found myself on a boulder that was too big to jump off to the next one, so I laid on my belly and started sliding down. I thought I was touching the next boulder, so I let go. Well, I wasn't touching and I fell hard under that rock. That was it. I started crying and screaming, "Mom! Mom!" I had no idea if she could hear me, but she did. After a few minutes, she kept calling my name so I could find my way back to camp. Needless to say, my mom was fuming mad. She called my dad, sobbed, and said, "I hope he doesn't get any rabbits." I was just relieved to be safely back at camp