

**Audio Transcript for Episode 508: “Extroverts and Introverts Talk Mental Health” with Jessica McAuley and Bianca Mujica**

*Please note: This transcript has been lightly edited to remove filler words or sounds.*

**JESS MCAULEY:** “I have to make sure that I am keeping myself on the right track of ensuring that both me, I am getting my recharge time, but that I am also again tending to the important relationships.”

[music playing]

**CHAD MOSES:** You’re listening to the To Write Love on Her Arms podcast, a show about mental health and the things that make us human. I’m your host Chad Moses, and in each episode, we’ll be talking about the things that can often feel hard to talk about, like depression, addiction, self-injury, and suicide. We’ll be sharing stories and exploring big themes like hope, healing, and recovery. If any of the topics we discuss or the stories we share feel too heavy for you, know that it’s OK to pause, to restart, or to stop altogether. As we discover new stories, we hope to remind you that your story is important.

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**CHAD:** Maybe you look forward to the solitude that comes after a long day of work or spending the weekends in nature with your dog. Maybe you find energy and comfort in game nights with friends or loving the opportunity to meet new people. Or, perhaps you find yourself best suited somewhere in the middle—reading books in the company of loved ones. But how do those varying preferences, those gauges for recharging and feeling restored and rejuvenated, affect our mental health? Are they connected? Do they share the same space? We’re curious to find that out, so today we’re talking about introversion and extroversion, and how they tie into the mental well-being of a person. To help us, we’re going to be joined by Jess McAuley and Bianca Mujica.

Jess McAuley is an introvert, a Virgo, and a new mom. She is a Niagara, Ontario-based arts worker and performer, as well as co-host of “The Introvert’s Guide To…” podcast. And Bianca, a member of TWLOHA’s Communications team, is an extrovert and a Mexican-American queer woman from Texas who can often be found eating lots of pasta or creating art.

With all that being said, let’s get started.

[music playing]

**CHAD**

This conversation is a bit less nitty and gritty than some of our episodes earlier in the season. This is really going to be diving into your experiences knowing that we’re not experts in personality typing, we’re not the mental health professionals ourselves, but we are experts of our own experiences. So we’re hoping that this conversation can definitely give some space and grace to people that feel introverted or extroverted, maybe different ways on different days. But let’s start just with conversation, Jess, in your words, what does it mean to be an introvert?

**JESS**

I find that such a tough question to answer just because, you know, my I, myself and I know a few people, it’s hard to generalize a complicated social preference in who we are as people into one sentence. But if I had to create a few characteristics, I’d say it’s a social type that prefers to recharge in solitude, there’s a

preference of environment that may have less stimuli. It's something within our control, a maybe more introspective person that maybe likes to listen and take in the stimuli rather than be in charge of it. So I do try to keep things as general as possible. We all have very specific needs as as people and I know, there's a lot of introverts that seem to be extroverted, and I'm one of those people.

### **CHAD**

Yeah I love that, that idea that dynamic of energy flow, kind of what direction? And where do you find yourself on that spectrum? Well, to mirror that question, Bianca, when you identify and when you self disclose yourself as an extrovert, what are you hoping to encompass? What are you hoping to communicate? And in what way does that feel true to you?

### **BIANCA**

At the very core of being an extrovert, it's really about feeling energized by people, by being in an environment where other people are there. And if that's just like, y'all are sitting next to each other, and reading and not really talking, for some people, that might be enough. For others, it may be like going out to somewhere where there's a lot of people, maybe you don't know anybody, but just being in that public social environment. For me, it's a lot of being around people that I know and feel comfortable with. And I'm feeling energized and refreshed by spending quality time with people that I consider, like, good company. So again, like Jess said, it is very nuanced. And there's a whole spectrum, so it ranges for people. But for me, it's really just about, like, feeling fulfilled and energized and recharged by just being in a social environment.

### **CHAD**

I feel like it's super important to kind of hone in on that point that these terms introvert and extrovert, they're not one size fits all, that you're gonna have people, Jess as you were talking, like, I totally related to that, like, I've often called myself a socially conditioned introvert. Like, I know how to behave in big busy settings, like music festivals, and whatnot, but when I'm there, like, I'm hoping for the individual contact, like kind of put it under a microscope. And if there's a million people there like, yeah, I just want to know about the person right in front of me. So we all kind of take on different roles for that. And I think this past two years has really exposed new definitions, new facets to what it means to be introvert and extrovert. I'd like to see what these past couple years have looked like in, in your world as we were dealing with quarantine rules, as we were doing social distancing and physical distancing. What did that look like as an introvert, maybe even how did technology and podcasting fulfill or leave gaps in your introverted lifestyle, Jess?

### **JESS**

Whenever there was the announcement that we're going into a lockdown, there was a lot of, you know, obvious panic there. There was a lot of fear going into that. But then there was this other side I didn't want to admit of, oh, no, we have to stay home. We just have to be alone. Like, it really was something that I felt okay moving into. I think it was just as time was going on, I started to use this as a positive moment where I could actually name the people that were in my circle that I knew I needed to cultivate and continue the relationships, and to tend to those relationships, making sure I'm not dropping the ball on anybody. And I think for me, that was, you know, working in the art sector, you tend to get inundated with people, especially as you start projects, there's more people coming into your life, there's more contact that needs to be made, and being able to slow down and take things in bite sizes was incredible for me. I think it wasn't until like maybe closer to the end, where I started to realize that I was missing more of the social stimuli, I was missing the crowds and a certain energy and that's when I realized that my cup was empty at that point. I do need to go out, I do need to meet new people, my cup needs to be filled and going back to that, to that metaphor, but it works so well.

## **CHAD**

And BIANCA kind of same question to you, what have these past couple years looked like as an extrovert? And maybe even with your specific role within To Write Love on Her Arms?

## **BIANCA**

It has been quite a journey. I used to think that I fell more into like the ambivert label, where you're kind of in the middle of both, but after experiencing quarantine and the pandemic, I have never felt more assured in being 100% extroverted. It was really, really hard to be away from my friends who lived like 10 minutes away from me. And it was really hard to be from my family who lived 10 hours away from me. And I had already been working remotely for TWLOHA for maybe a year, almost a year when the pandemic started. And so I was already working from home, and my partner had a job at the time, that was very long hours. And so I would just be at home all day on my laptop, working. And it could get really lonely. And it was really hard because I had this dream job that I loved with an organization that I was super excited to be working for. But I felt so drained and tired, from being home by myself in the same tiny cramped apartment all day without anybody to talk to. And occasionally we would have meetings, or we would do some sort of live event. And I always loved being a part of those. But I would jump on them, I would try to join every possible meeting, I could just to get some form of interaction. And so my partner who is very, very introverted, would get home after a long day of work and be tired and not want to do anything and just want to relax, and I would be like, please talk to me, I need, I need something I need, like, any form of attention. I just need to interact with a person and it was a strain on our relationship because we were very much at odds. He needed to relax and that was being by himself. And I wanted to relax and that was us being together. And I had never been put in a situation where I couldn't go and get those social interactions that I was looking for.

## **CHAD**

Yeah, let's all be sure to vote no, on the next round of should we have a pandemic or not? Thank you both for sharing a bit about that you know, it's almost the lowest hanging fruit of the question of "How'd your last two years look like?" but I think it is important to see the, both the gap and experience and also the common ground that's still shared in that. That kind of leads into you know, this next question of, to what degree do you believe being able to put a finger on who and what you are your introvert, your extrovert, your ambivert status? To what degree is that woven into a person's mental well being?

## **JESS**

Well, for me personally, I do struggle with depression and anxiety. And already I have a tendency to not ask for help. I'm somebody that just wants to have the answers. I want to be the fixer. And a lot of the times, my loved ones confuse that with resiliency, but it's something that I, it's thinly veiled over me that I just don't want to reach out. And being an introvert who already prefers to be alone, I confuse that with my "recharge time." And I put that in quotations where it's really just a mental condition that's pulling me back from actually seeking care. Having a child now, I did just have my son six weeks ago, asking for help more than ever is, I don't mind being alone, I really, really don't. And I love my son so much. And I feel that a lot of the times I'm taking this maternity leave going like, wow an introvert's paradise I'm at home again, this is no problem for me. And slowly over as the days go by, I'm thinking to myself, you know, there's something changing within me and it's, now I need to really pull that apart. Am I, am I okay with being alone? Or am I just accepting being alone right now on something that could be a real mental journey for me? Like this is something that is absolutely new, it's life changing. I am a completely different person than who I was before I had my my son. But yeah, I would say that they do get interwoven, and they do get confused for the other. And it's certainly something that you do have to ruminate on, when you feel that something's not right, or something is too comfortable. And when something is too comfortable,

that is not where proper change happens. We, change happens when we're uncomfortable. So why is it that I can't reach out to my loved ones and talk to them? Is it that I am enjoying my own time? Am I enjoying my own company right now? Or is it that I'm just inhibiting myself from picking up the phone and calling my mom, calling my sister and asking for help? Or seeking actual professional care?

### **CHAD**

Now that's beautiful Jess, it calls to mind, you know, something I've been ruminating on for several years now, the idea that finding healing within yourself does not necessitate healing being self manifesting, right, like having some other people to bounce your life off of can still be possible even as an introvert. Maybe it doesn't mean a group therapy setting. But certainly, it doesn't necessitate you having to find all the answers within your own experience, your own wisdom, but you're still able and invited to have other people's part of your journey. So thank you so much for sharing. And again, to see the other side of that coin, Bianca, how important is it for an extrovert to identify as an extrovert and how that's gonna have, you know, ripple effects across your mental health journey?

### **BIANCA**

I think there's two sides to it. I think, for one thing, being able to identify as an introvert or as an extrovert, wow, helps you see the things you need to keep your mental health in a good space. So if you are able to identify with a label, and that helps you find what you need, and that helps you kind of figure out the things that are going to help you find more balance and a healthy lifestyle, that is great. And I think that has been part of my experiences, understanding what I need, and being okay with that, even when it's at odds with what I'm able to do. And that kind of goes into the other side of the coin, which is, when you struggle with your mental health, when you have something like depression or anxiety, it can be really difficult to go out and interact with people. And a lot of times the things that you're struggling with are directly telling you not to do those things. So I think there also needs to be this acknowledgement of, sure I'm an extrovert, but I don't need to put the pressure on myself to live up to this label, if I'm not feeling capable of that right now. And I think sometimes, the idea of feeling imposter syndrome as an extrovert is so funny to me because there's no competition for being an extrovert but it still happens in my head. I'm like, oh, I'm feeling really depressed today and I don't feel like going out. So maybe I'm not really an extrovert or maybe I am an ambivert. I've been lying to myself this whole time. And so for me, a lot of my mental health is like, I have one little doubt, and that seed just grows and spirals. Yeah, so being around people kind of, it can, it can go both ways on that front. But I think it's, from the extrovert side, it's definitely a balancing act, because you have to do what nourishes you, but you also have to allow yourself the space to struggle and not be okay.

### **CHAD**

Yeah, so you both in the past couple questions kind of illuminated that when your introverted or extroverted self is not getting what you need, how isolating that, that feels. Bianca, you described the idea of, you know, kind of self doubt. And, and Jess, you described kind of this lack of momentum, this lack of, you know, even as an introvert doesn't mean that you're, you know, energy-less, it just means you, you find that energy through unique spaces. So I understand that, that sense of feeling isolated when those needs aren't met. But I think it's important to acknowledge that it's possible to build some guardrails to keep yourself on a track of self care throughout this. So Bianca, we're going to start with you. What have you kind of found as an extrovert, so be things to hold you in balance with yourself when your needs aren't being met? What have you implemented in your life to make sure that your extroverted self is fed?

### **BIANCA**

Therapy is the biggest thing for me, therapy 100%. I enjoy it, one because it's in person. Well, it used to be in person, it's been virtual the past couple of years. But just having interaction with somebody is great.

And even if it's about like, some very difficult topics, I'm very much a verbal processor. And so being able to not only like, talk about things, but also to be able to interact with somebody in a very meaningful and impactful way, does wonders for me. Also making sure that I see somebody that is not the person I live with, at least once a week. And that could be virtually, if that's what the circumstances require. But ideally, for me, it would be something in person. Also just going outside. Like, even if I can't see people just getting outside of the environment that I'm in and being in a different space, in a time where we literally could not see each other, sometimes that was all I had, and it really did help just to have sunshine and feel like I know that I can't talk to people but I'm walking around my complex and I see that there's a lot of people that live here and so I know that like we're at least like all kind of experiencing this thing together.

#### **CHAD**

That proof of other's existence. Yeah, it can be super grounding. Jess, how about you? What happens when your needs aren't met? And what have you put in place to cultivate a way to make sure that you are true to yourself, that you're safe, that your self care is maintained?

#### **JESS**

I am a stationery nerd. So for me that looks like a calendar. I absolutely can lose track of time. When we were in lockdown, it was a vortex, like this vacuum all time was just sucked into this one space and, and you'll lose what day is it, really we're already in like June and it was March that we went into lockdown? So I found that having a calendar now that we're moving out of this, being able to see, okay, this is the day that I'm going to have me day, I'm going to have a few hours to myself, I'm going to go for a walk, and then I'm going to come home, do some more me time. On this day, this is family day. Now I need to check in with some friends, I have a lot of reminders on my phone to make sure that I am contacting my best friends, that I'm checking in with Phil, my co-host for the podcast, and we're grounded in our show. I have to make sure that I am keeping myself on the right track of ensuring that both me, I am getting my recharge time, but that I am also again tending to the important relationships. I find it is so easy for introverts, for us to forget that, you know, we may need our space, but those people that are in our lives, they need us too, and they need us to be present for them. So how can I show up for them? Is that looking like maybe a text message once a week? Am I going to call them when I, when I feel I can be on the phone for a long period of time? Is that making sure that I go for a coffee with a friend? It's different ways that I can show up for somebody. And I think the more that I'm conscious about it, the more that not only is my mental health improving, but I know that I'm, I'm making a better difference for myself in the long term. I really am filling up my cup that way.

[music playing]

**BECKY EBERT:** Hi, it's Becky Ebert, TWLOHA's editor and producer. I want to talk to you for a moment about something specific: T-shirts. To Write Love on Her Arms has always sold t-shirts as a way to help fund our mission—the mission of hope and help. But the products we sell in our store do so much more than help us financially. Each piece of merchandise is a conversation starter. It spreads the TWLOHA message to someone who may not have found out about us otherwise. So whether you wear our shirts, hats, hoodies, or rain jackets, we want to thank you for bringing a message of hope and help wherever you go. To see our latest designs, head to [store.twloha.com](https://store.twloha.com) now and use the promo code **PODCAST20** to receive 20% off your entire order.

[music playing]

#### **CHAD**

So the next question is going to be a twofer. In a bit of it's going to be kind of playful, working definition crafting. So what does it mean to y'all to socialize? And what does alone time mean to you? And relatedly in your experiences, is it more helpful to have this socializing time? Or does it kind of hurt? Is it exhausting? In the same way, alone time? Is that something that you are looking forward to? Is that something that you see as helpful? Or is that something that you dread?

### **JESS**

If I may, I find planning alone time, I'm better at planning that than I am planning dates with my husband. I really enjoy planning the me time, it is my, what is going to make me happy, what's going to spark joy for me? Does that look like going to my favorite cafe downtown with a book and just people watch? Or is it going to be four hours of playing Minecraft? What is it going to be right? I think it's anything that's going to spark joy. And something that I can also be productive with, as weird as Minecraft to be productive, I know a lot of folks see it as a distraction. To me, I actually can physically build something. And if I'm building something, or if I'm working with my Tombos and Copic markers, that's something that's putting my hands to good use. And to me, that's really great me time. That's something that I can walk away with from the day and go this was my time, right? And what does socializing look like? It can be as simple as that phone call, something that's just I'm checking in with somebody and or am I going to the dreaded party? Introverts and parties, we don't really mix that well. But it's something that's going to help me be a part of a dynamic. And if I'm being a part of a dynamic in some way, I know that I myself am a human and growing because of that. I find if I allow too much me time, I'm not going to grow. And especially being an arts worker and being a writer and needing to bring the human existence onto the stage, I need to be able to nurture that part of myself. So socializing is very important as an arts worker.

### **CHAD**

Bianca, define socializing, define alone time and which one serves, I guess, a greater purpose for you?

### **BIANCA**

For me, socializing is when I get to see people that I don't live with. Granted, I used to live in a house with like nine people and so it was always kind of socializing. But, Jess is like that is a nightmare. Oh, no, thank you. It was only for one month, but it was still way too many people. So for me socializing is now that I only live with one person and technically two animals. It's getting to see people that I don't live with, that I don't see on a daily basis, even if I interact with them through text, getting to engage with them face to face, or computer screen to computer screen. And being able to just spend time together, whether that's like watching a movie, or just listening to music or having a very engaged conversation, playing the game, whatever it is just being able to spend time with people that ideally I have something in common with. And alone time is pretty much when I'm alone. But for me, the ideal alone time is going to be when I am able to do something that I enjoy. So that would be making art projects, likely with Tombow markers as well. I don't have Copic, but one day. There needs to be a balance, like anything else. Because if I have too much of one, then I will inevitably start to feel burned out. So I think obviously, as an extrovert for me, the socializing is going to be what I seek out more. But after like a full weekend of just hanging out with people all day, every day, I do definitely look forward to like Monday after work, just getting to sit at my desk and work on an art project and like, not worry about having to be at a place or having to have like, my, my social meter up.

### **CHAD**

I'm wondering for the both of you, if you ever, maybe it's just me, find yourself actively daydreaming in an experience that feels outside of your personality sets. In the moment say, Jess, you're in a highly dynamic, highly social atmosphere. Do you ever play mind games on like, how? How do I shrink this? What would it take for this to feel more introverted-friendly? And in the same way, Bianca? Do you ever

find yourself playing with your markers and thinking, man, this would be made so much better if I could instantly turn this into a social thing? What would that, what would that look like? To what degree does kind of active imagining of changing your environment into something that suits your needs?

### **JESS**

I think when I'm in a social situation, I find that I'm constantly already looking for ways of escape. So if I am looking for ways to make this more comfortable, so a more, a one-on-one experience. I know I've been at a few parties where I have, you know, locked in on somebody and this is the person I'm going to be with for the rest of the night. You know, I find ways to do that for myself. If I can make something more comfortable, I'm going to act out on it. But other than that, I mean, like it's never been like, you know, oh, gosh, I you know, I really wish I wasn't here or I wish that this you know, there was like maybe less people I think it's more so finding ways of just coping in the situation for me. I don't think I've like really, you know, daydreamed about making the situation different, if that makes any sense.

### **CHAD**

Yeah so you found a way in order to kind of cope. I love that word of coping so like if you know, there's gonna be, you know, 40 people in a room, who are my one to two that I can hang out with. Bianca, what's that look like on the flip side? What's it look like when you find yourself in a space that an introvert would love? And you're thinking, God, just give me people? How do you, how do you affect your environment to make that happen?

### **BIANCA**

It really depends on the context. Um, say I'm doing an art project. For example, if it's something small scale, I will rarely ever be like, man, I wish I had somebody here to just talk to, because I'm usually listening to a podcast or watching YouTube or doing something to keep my mind occupied. But if it's a really big project, then I love having people there to work with it on, especially if it's other artists who I know would enjoy it too, and who I feel like would contribute something really meaningful to it. So if I'm just like, creating something on like, a little canvas, then I'm perfectly fine by myself. But I do have this like, giant wall canvas. Um, it's on that wall, but I'm not gonna show it right now. Because it's a work in progress. But, um, there have been like, anytime somebody comes over, and I know that they enjoy art, I'm like, Hey, come help me with this. Like, I just want other people to be a part of this. And it makes me really happy to engage with people in that way.

### **CHAD**

I'm wondering if either of you have seen or read or heard something and pop media or otherwise that that either really helped you understand you a bit better, maybe a picture-perfect rendition of what it looks like to be an introvert or an extrovert, that's helped you identify those pieces within yourself, what those may be, and or on the flip side, have you guys benefited from seeing or reading or hearing something that made you understand the other side of the coin a bit better?

### **JESS**

It was definitely Susan Cain's Quiet Revolution. She's an incredible author. She's spoken at TED a couple of times. She's somebody that really narrowed in on the difference between somebody who is introverted and somebody who is shy, which introverted and shyness, you know, a lot of times we've put those two together, oh, if you're quiet, and you're shy, you must be an introvert. And that's just not true. You can be an introvert and not shy and that shocked the world. So for me, that was certainly a resource that I went to, to start sort of defining what introversion was to me and of course, there was the Myers Briggs test, that was just a nice little launch pad that was something just to get you started right. Susan Cain was somebody who I look to, and I think being as well in, in theater school. Being around more introverts, I

thought I was an extrovert for so long. I thought I was a lonely extrovert because I really liked being around people, but I still prefer to be alone and I never took it upon myself to go out and find new friends and new experiences, so I thought there was something wrong with me until I started talking to other people like me and I was in a social situation that was comfortable. So I think meeting other introverts and finding little bits of yourself and other people was what helped me define more of myself in the introverted world.

### **BIANCA**

There's definitely moments where I've experienced something that I've seen in like a movie or a TV show, and it clicks. Like, when you're watching a movie, and somebody like goes into the bathroom just to get away from people, and the sound kind of drowns out and everything's muffled and it's just them. I experienced that once at a party where there was a million people and I knew a small handful of them. And I was so tired. And I just went into the bathroom. And it felt like a movie moment, where I was like, the world is literally drowned out behind this closed door. And that was, I think, a really big moment for me to be like, I can definitely see how people feel energized by having this all the time. That was not my experience. And it, it was foreign to me up until that moment. But I do want to touch on the idea of introvert versus shy, because that is something that I completely relate to. I think a lot of my shyness comes from anxiety, and this like, obsessive thought spiraling pattern that my brain likes to do. And my partner who is very introverted, is not shy at all.

### **CHAD**

You know, at To Write Love, we often talk about the importance of asking for help, it's okay to ask for help. But help can be a nebulous, ambiguous term. We also believe that it's important to be able to ask for what you need, and that's going to be different depending on how you interact with the world, whether extrovertedly or introvertedly, that could look like boundaries? It could look like space for one and togetherness for another, it could look like a break or it could look like a movement intentionally towards quality time. So how have y'all navigated identifying what you need, in turn identifying that as a sense of help balancing that with finding the courage to ask for it? It can be uncomfortable on both ends of the spectrum, to ask for something in that directive terms, how have you all kind of lived out ways of seeking that help naming what you need, and finding a way to do that in a way that feels dignified?

### **JESS**

I don't mean to plug myself here but on, on my podcast, it is the motto of say what you need. At the end of every episode we, we ask so what did we learn and majority of the time is, I need to say more often what my boundary is, I do need to be unapologetic about what I need. But something even deeper is that's a skill. It takes practice. You need to practice saying no or yes, you, you need to practice. You need to practice sitting down with yourself and having those tough conversations about what I need, about what it is going forward that's going to improve my quality of life and especially the quality of the relationships around me. Am I taking on too much or am I taking on too little? Am I spreading myself too thin? Am I not paying attention to something in my life? Or am I allowing myself to be a part of something that's quite toxic to my life and I need to learn to take a step back from that? I would recommend practicing different sayings within yourself that are comfortable. So you don't have to straight up say, no, I don't want to do that. But it could sound like something else. So I had to practice different sayings. Like, you know what that sounds like a great idea, I am going to think about it, though, can I come back and talk about that with you later? That's something that's really comfortable for me. So laying down those boundaries, practicing has been absolutely key. But saying what you need is not easy. And I am empathetic for those that are practicing and they're stumbling. And they're getting themselves involved with something they don't want to do. And it feels like a thicker mess to get out of. So I would just go easy. Going easy on yourself has also been key to success.



**CHAD**

It's kind of this tacit admission that you're not going to be the best at it yet. That doesn't discount the value of that, we get to like you said earlier Jess, when you are uncomfortable that that's an invitation for growth. And the hope is that in time we can yeah, care for ourselves a little bit better in the midst of that. Yeah, you totally rocked that question and answer. And also absolutely no shame in the self plug. If you didn't do it, we are going to do it for you. So it's out there. Introverts Guide to Podcasts. Bianca, how about from your perspective, what's it look like to kind of balance that, that courage of asking for help and identifying what the things are that you need?

**BIANCA**

As an extrovert, as somebody who is usually known for being outgoing and bubbly and talkative, there can be a pressure to maintain that persona. And a lot of times that feels like it's at odds with struggling with things like depression and anxiety, it can feel conflicting, when you're going through something that kind of dampens the part of you that you're known for. So, for me, the biggest thing is reminding myself that it's okay to be whatever I am, or need to be in any given moment. And allowing myself the grace and the patience to just experience this, let it be what it is, and not try to fit myself into a mold that I may have fit into yesterday, but don't today. Boundaries, again, I think is going to be extremely important for anybody. And I think they look different for everybody. But for me, it means accepting when I need space to myself, accepting when I need rest, and accepting the fact that sometimes recharging is going to be alone time, it is going to be not socializing, it's going to be just having a night at home. And knowing that it's okay to not be at my full extroverted-ness, 100% of the time.

**CHAD**

Just that theme of practice, it was revealed to me recently that the term baby steps, it doesn't necessarily have to be about the length of the stride. We imagine you know, babies, tiny people, tiny feet, tiny steps, but also imagine a baby who's just learning how to walk for the first time. Those baby steps are going to be a wider base than when we get our stride down pat, and those baby steps will be wobbly. And those baby steps, you're expecting a fall. So like you both said, have grace for yourself in whatever direction you're moving. If you have any parting thoughts, parting mantras, parting questions that you wish I would have asked that I didn't get around to, now is your time to speak or forever hold your peace.

**BIANCA**

I would just tell people that if you're looking for a middle ground, pets are a good way to go. You get that interaction, get another being, another life around you without necessarily having to hold a conversation.

**JESS**

With that being said, actually, um, for the introverts that are listening, don't be afraid to go to a restaurant by yourself. That's quite controversial, I've realized and I would highly recommend bringing a book, headphones, whatever it is, if you want to be in a social atmosphere, but don't necessarily want to be with somebody, going to a restaurant is a fantastic way to do that and people watching is really fun. So I would definitely recommend taking yourself out on a date.

[music playing]

**CHAD:** Thank you so much to Jess and Bianca for being a part of this conversation. We're grateful for your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives with all of us. As mentioned during the interview, you can hear more from Jess by checking out her podcast called "Introvert's Guide To..." As for Bianca, she'll be adding her voice and creative mark to TWLOHA hopefully for years to come. And to you,

our listeners, whether you identify as an introvert, extrovert, or ambivert, or perhaps you are just figuring all that out, we hope you can see those needs and preferences as guidelines for how to show up for yourself, for how you can set boundaries and also how you can ask for support. You are not a burden for needing solitude. You are not needy for desiring the company of others. So wherever you are on the spectrum, thank you for tuning in. We're so glad you're here.

[music playing]

**CHAD:** We hope this episode has been a reminder that your story is important, you matter, and you're not alone.

If you're struggling right now, know that it is OK to reach out and that there are people who want to help. Part of our mission is to connect people to the help they need and deserve. You can find local mental health resources on our website [twloha.com](https://twloha.com). That's [T-W-L-O-H-A.com](https://T-W-L-O-H-A.com). And Click FIND HELP at the top of the page.

If you're in the US or Canada, and need to talk to someone right now, you can always text our friends at Crisis Text Line. Simply text the word TWLOHA—that's T W L O H A—to 741741. You'll be connected to a crisis counselor. It's free, confidential, and available 24/7.

For a list of crisis support resources for listeners living outside of the United States, please visit [twloha.com](https://twloha.com) and click on the International Resources tab.

Finally, if you've enjoyed this episode and you want to hear more, we really hope you'll subscribe wherever you get this podcast. And if you can do us a favor, we'd really like for you to write us a review. It'll help more people find this podcast and the mission of TWLOHA. If you have any feedback or questions, please send us an email to [podcast@twloha.com](mailto:podcast@twloha.com).

A big thank you to our friends at Copeland for the original music on this episode. The To Write Love on Her Arms podcast is produced by Rebecca Ebert. Music assistance was provided by James Likeness and Ben Tichenor. And again, I'm Chad Moses, thank you so much for listening. We're glad you're here.