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Amy Morin:

Welcome to The Verywell Mind Podcast! I'm Amy Morin, the editor-in-chief of Very Well Mind. I'm also a psychotherapist and a best-selling author of four books on mental strength. Every Monday, I introduce you to a mentally strong person whose story and mental strength tips can inspire you to think, feel, and do your best in life. And the fun part is we record the show from a sailboat in the Florida Keys! Don't forget to subscribe to the show on your favorite platform so you can get mental strength tips delivered to you every single week. Now let's dive into today's episode!

A lot of people have walked into my therapy office over the years saying things like, "I shouldn't be depressed. I have a great life," or "I don't want to take up a therapy slot. You probably have a lot of people with bigger problems than I do." For some reason, we have this idea that mental health problems only happen to people who are struggling with big problems, and if you haven't gone through enough horrible things, you shouldn't need help. But we don't tend to do that with physical problems. We accept that some problems can't be prevented, and we recognize that it's okay to get help, even for minor issues. If only we treated mental health the same.
The truth is, even people who are genuinely happy might have a mental health issue, and they might develop something like depression or anxiety. It might have something to do with a change in their environment, but not always. Sometimes it's biological and you don't need to have a diagnosable mental illness to benefit from getting help. You might find it's helpful to talk to a therapist because you're stressed out or because you want to learn more about yourself.

Here to talk about this topic today is singer, songwriter, and record producer Andy Grammer. He's had a lot of popular upbeat songs, and he's probably best known for his triple-platinum single, “Honey, I'm Good,” which peaked at #9 on the Billboard Hot 100. He recently released a new version of his song called “Saved My Life," which is in honor of his mom's best friend who he said saved his life by being there for him when his mom passed away. He encourages people to acknowledge who has saved them when they were at the lowest point in their lives. Make sure to follow him on Instagram to watch some of the stories of people who acknowledge those who've been there for them. And Andy often surprises people by showing up and singing to them.

Despite being known for being so happy though, Andy says he's struggled with depression. Some of the things he talks about today are how he's gotten help, what he's doing to manage his symptoms, and how he wants all of us to help other people who might be struggling. Make sure to stick around until the end of the episode for The Therapist’s Take. It's the part of the show where I'll give you my take on Andy's strategies for building mental strength. So here's Andy Grammar on why even happy people can get depressed.

Amy Morin:
Andy Grammar, welcome to The Verywell Mind Podcast!

Andy Grammer:
How we doing?
Amy Morin:
I am great. How are you?

Andy Grammer:
I'm doing pretty good today.

Amy Morin:
So I was bummed this summer I know that you came to Key West and we happen to be down in the Keys, so I had really hoped to go to your show when I was out of town, but we are grateful that you came, but sad that I missed it.

Andy Grammer:
Of course. Yeah.

Amy Morin:
Something that I'm not sad about is the fact that you have started talking a lot about mental health lately. What made you decide to start doing that?

Andy Grammer:
I never really identified with it before, and then the pandemic came and just totally rocked me. So hard. Something about not being able to run around and play shows and to some degree be distracted from myself, forced me to be quiet with myself and I did not like that. And it made me spin out in a number of ways that finally got me into therapy and I'm just really grateful for it. So I think it can be sweet because I think a lot of people see me as just all the time, happy guy, making joyful, hopefully uplifting music. So hopefully there's something about if the happy guy was depressed, maybe that gives you permission to be depressed.

Amy Morin:
Were you afraid at all that coming out and talking about the fact that you struggle too might affect how people see you because you are known as this happy guy who sings these really happy songs?
Andy Grammer:
You know what, it has so much less to do... I'm not scared of how other people see me that much. The initial step was me to myself was the hardest.

Amy Morin:
How'd you get to that point where you said, "Yeah, I'm going to reach out to somebody?"

Andy Grammer:
I think it was being unhappy for so long, just being... I hadn't had it before where I just couldn't get away from it. There was a sadness that wouldn't leave and I had never experienced that before. And so at some point you take stock of like, "Whoa, I've been sad for a long time now and this is not my normal state." So something's got to change. And I think it's me, crap,

Amy Morin:
Right.

Andy Grammer:
I think it's me. Uh-oh. So taking that step, that's why I think it's good to speak out about it because there was definitely a stigma in me. I don't think I had a stigma towards anybody else and when anybody else would say it or get help or whatever, I'd be like, "Oh my God, that's so good for you. I don't need it. But that's real. I'm glad that you're doing it." And it just took me to get low enough to jump that chasm for myself and I'm so grateful I did. And I don't think people need to wait until they have a crazy breakdown. They can just make it more of a priority. I think that's the biggest thing that's shifted for me is that how I'm feeling in my brain has jumped on the priority list. It was really low before. It was kind of like achievements were high and my wellbeing was low-

Amy Morin:
Interesting.
Andy Grammer:
... which is kind of crazy.

Amy Morin:
But it's something that a lot of us do that we tend to put ourselves fairly low. And when it comes to mental health, it falls down on the list. And then there is this stigma that comes with... We wouldn't be embarrassed to tell somebody that we went to the dentist, right?

Andy Grammer:
No.

Amy Morin:
But yet when it comes to, "Hey, I went to talk to somebody about my mind," the most important thing, sometimes there is that stigma where we think, "I don't want anybody to know this," or "I don't want to talk about it."

Andy Grammer:
Also, I just think that, I don't know whether you found this in your friend circles or social circles. The last two years have been exceptionally hard. So I don't think that I'm chronically depressed. Maybe I don't think I was. I think that I actually was like... It was really hard. So it even more gives the reason after going through a pandemic, a world event that had a lot of huge effect on so many of us, that there should be zero stigma right now about saying, "I don't feel so good. Is there anything I can do about this?"

Amy Morin:
For most I think we should be more concerned if somebody's like, "Hey, this is awesome. I'm doing more awesome than ever."

Andy Grammer:
Yeah, yeah.
Amy Morin:
When the world is falling apart, it's okay to say, "Gee, this is kind of stressful." What about what you had envisioned therapy to be compared to what it was actually like? How did those two things line up?

Andy Grammer:
I'm trying to think. For me again, the hardest part for me was just the internal debate of whether I was someone that needed this. And giving over to the idea that I was. That was the big thing to jump. Once I did that and got into it, then it was a little bit in like I hadn't talked to a therapist before, but that wasn't too hard. That was like, I usually would show up to the therapy session and go, "I don't have anything to talk about." And then an hour goes by and you're like, "Oh, I talked the whole time [inaudible 00:07:52] that." I didn't know that was going to happen. Perfect. Yeah, there's just a lot of self work. There's a lot of self-learning. There's a lot of like," Oh, these are the patterns in my life that I can self-knowledge. How can I run this ship that is Andy better?"
And oh, there's a lot of things I can do that I can't find by myself. So it's like we all need help in so many different areas and it's somehow, for some reason there's stigma and it's harder to get help in this area.

Amy Morin:
And I think I happen to be a therapist, so I know that when people come in, they're often surprised to learn, I'm not going to tell you what to do. I'm not going to manage your life, but I'll help you learn about yourself. And people seem to be kind of relieved to be like, "Oh, okay, I'm still steering the ship here. I'm just going to learn more information about myself." And we often do find those patterns pretty quickly between the way people think, the way they behave, the way they feel, and they just haven't recognized them before because they didn't have an objective person to say, "Hey, have you ever noticed this?" Or, ","Let's take stock of that.

Andy Grammer:
Have you ever noticed this? I mean, for me it was like, "Oh, there's a version of who I think I am. And then there're some actions that I'm taking or some things that in my life that I don't like about myself." And so I think a lot of time, like for me personally, I was cooking my own books. So at the end of the year, you look at you're like, I don't know, like your taxes, and you're like, "Oh, all the things that would be deductions, [inaudible 00:09:17] not. All the things that would bring my bottom line lower, let's just pretend those don't exist. You can't live like that. There's a truth to that is very calming. When you get better at speaking your truth and owning your truth, that is the way to peace, in my opinion.

Amy Morin:
Yeah, absolutely.

Andy Grammer:
Because the cognitive dissidence that occurs when you are pretending to be something, not even to the world, again, the world... I don't even care about the world, to yourself when you're pretending to be something that you are not in the moment, that will make you unhappy.

Amy Morin:
And did you find that therapy helped with that-

Andy Grammer:
Yeah, really.

Amy Morin:
... that your therapist could either point out, "Hey, you said this, but this is what your behavior is," or "What does it mean to you that this is this label or your identity wrapped up in this one thing," or anything like that?

Andy Grammer:
Yes. And creating space for you even to say it out loud. Like sometimes it wouldn’t even be him pointing it out. It would be me saying it, things out loud. Being like, "Oh, got it." It was kind of a crazy thing to realize that in certain areas I was low on context with myself.

Amy Morin:
Yeah. There’s something about it. If somebody else says something, then sometimes we want to defend against it. If somebody says, "Gee, you're bad at this," or, "You're not good at that." But when the words come out of our own mouth, we believe it. We're like, "Oh, maybe I do struggle in this area." Or, "Hey, I just said I don't care what people think," yet in the next sentence I said, "I went and did this thing I didn't want to do because I wanted to make somebody happy." What is-

Andy Grammer:
Exactly, what's going on here? Yeah. Learning self knowledge, really learning yourself, learning your routines, learning what works for you and then it’s not rocket science, but you have to create the space and the time and the courage to learn yourself.

Amy Morin:
And why do you think we’re so reluctant to do that?

Andy Grammer:
I can only speak to myself. I think that I really identified as someone that had it all together. It was hard to pull that from my clutches. I have things together, I know how to do this. I'm a good one. And being smacked in the face with just the truth, which is like, "No, you're not. No, you don't. No. Are you down to like..." It's not that hard. We can make some shifts in your life and we can do some internal work to set you straight. But that was really, really hard for me.

Amy Morin:
And what were you afraid would happen if you acknowledged, "Yeah, I don't have it all together all the time."
Andy Grammer:
I don't even know.

Amy Morin:
Yeah.

Andy Grammer:
I don't even know. It's just a big red "don't go there." It's kind of an irrational fear. I don't know.

Amy Morin:
And it's one of those things, you know it and then, but doing it. So I'm a therapist and my book often ranks as the number one book in the world on happiness. And yet I came out with this article not too long ago where I said, "Hey, I wrote the number one book on happiness, and guess what? I still see a therapist." But yet I kind of held my breath to see what would happen. Everybody was like," Hey, that's great." Or, "Of course you do."

Andy Grammer:
Of course.

Amy Morin:
And it wasn't like this huge revelation. And I thought, "Huh. All right then." When you start first started coming out with this and saying you saw a therapist, what kind of response did you get?

Andy Grammer:
Awesome. Great. The world didn't end at all. I mean in general, people pulled closer and then backed away. That has been my experience. Everybody goes like, "Oh, me too." As opposed to like, "Oh, that guy's crazy."

Amy Morin:
Right. I think we're getting to the point where we're realizing that seeing a therapist doesn't mean you're broken or there's something horribly wrong with you. It just means, "Hey, I want to be the best version of myself." And what's wrong with that?

Andy Grammer:
If you do the analogy to the physical, like, "Oh, I need to go work out because if I don't, I won't feel good." It's exactly the same. But because it's kind of invisible, I think it's a little more opaque and confusing. But it doesn't have to be. It really doesn't have to be.

Amy Morin:
And I'll often hear people who say," Well, I don't really want to open a can of worms right now. Now is not a good time in my life to start talking about difficult things."

Andy Grammer:
Now is not a good time. Yeah.

Amy Morin:
Right. Did you find, when you started doing therapy, did things start to get better for you right away? Or did things get worse before they got better?

Andy Grammer:
I don't think they got worse because I was spinning out so hard. But it took a second to... What happened immediately is that truth feels really good. We're terrified it's going to feel bad. But when you were just truthful with yourself, that is like a balm to whatever you're feeling right now. And especially if you share it in different situations with other people. And sometimes groups is really great for that. I think that truth is one of the ways out.

Amy Morin:
Oh, I love that, because I agree. And we often lie to ourselves. We have this facade and I can only imagine as a public figure perhaps you feel that even to an amplified degree
of who people think you are versus maybe who you are behind closed doors sometimes.

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. That's why I think that 12 step groups are incredible. I think that therapy's incredible. These are places where you can practice truth or not great at it. I can't speak for anybody else. I was not great at it. And if you'd asked me when I was younger, "Are you truthful?" I'd like, "Yeah, of course." And now if you say, "Are you truthful?" I go like, "I am really working on it. I'm doing my best."

Amy Morin:
There's this thing that we do sometimes when we work with kids and they say like, "Hey, I saw a dragon last night and I did this fantastical thing." Instead of asking them like, "Are you telling the truth? Are you lying?" Sometimes we just say, "Is that true or something that you wish were true?" And they can really quickly say, "Hey, oh yeah, that's just something I wish were true." But I think as adults, we do a lot of that too. We have things that we wish were true and we struggle to let go of them or hold onto the fact that, "All right, maybe this isn't exactly true about me all the time."

Andy Grammer:
I just think that everyone listening should know that we all have our own personal work to do. The way that we all have our own physical work to make sure we stay healthy, it is undeniably there for you. You have personal work to do. You have parents, no matter how great they were, you got work to do around it. Some of us have addictions, you got work to do around it. You just have to keep your brain running good. There is personal work and you can deny it for a certain amount of time before you find yourself in a really tough spot.

Amy Morin:
Oh yeah. Well said. And there's never going to be a convenient time to say, "Hey, I'm going to now set aside two hours a day to work on myself or something like that."
Andy Grammer:
Yeah.

Amy Morin:
Life is hard. It never gets to be super easy and calm in a way where people sometimes think, "I'll go to therapy then," or, "I'll work on myself later."

Andy Grammer:
And if there's any way to make it feel less intense, the fact that everyone has to do it should make you... I think what gets tough is when you're two in your own zone and you're like, "I'm the weird one. I'm the only one with problems. If I actually start to deal with these, my whole world will fall apart." It's like, 'No, no, no, everybody, everybody's got it." Welcome to life. Welcome to the game of being a human. This thing that you don't want to do or that you're afraid to do is a part of being a human. Jump in, let's go. I promise you're going to be fine.

Amy Morin:
And as a therapist, I had the privilege of hearing people come in and they'll say things like, "Oh, I'm struggling with this thing. Nobody in my life knows about it. I'm so embarrassed." Or, "This is so tough." And what they don't know is the person right before them probably said something very similar. And because we don't really talk about our problems, our struggles, and what we're going through. We often think we're alone in these things when we're not.

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. It just goes back to learning how to be truthful with yourself is so much harder than I expected. I'm almost 40, I'm 38. Took me to the last couple years to really dig in on being truthful with myself. And I think it just... I don't know. I wish I hadn't taken that long, but then it is what it is. It is what it is. So if you're listing, don't wait. You can just get in. If you feel weird, you feel bad, you feel like you're struggling, there is personal work that's waiting for you and you should do it.
Amy Morin:
So then what's the benefit? How is life better now than it was then?

Andy Grammer:
That goes back to living in truth, man. When you are living in truth of like, "Oh, this set of actions makes me feel terrible, this set of actions, I actually always feel better." And then being honest with yourself about where you're at and how you're doing. And then, yeah, it's really about learning how to play yourself better.

Amy Morin:
Oh, I like that.

Andy Grammer:
And then you're happier. But it takes a little bit of like, "Wait, I don't know how to be myself." You're telling me I don't know how to be myself. And that's weird to own. And the truth is like, "No, no, you don't." If you're in a space where you're depressed or you're unhappy or upset there's probably things you can be doing that differently that will work better for you.

Amy Morin:
And you never know until you try, right.

Andy Grammer:
Yeah.

Amy Morin:
You keep saying, "This is what works for me. It may not work for you." Which I appreciate because what works for one person doesn't work all the way across the board. But-

Andy Grammer:
No.
Amy Morin:

... no, so often we're quick to say, "Well, I'm not getting into yoga because that's not my thing." But maybe somebody's never tried yoga, but they're quick to rule it out. Or somebody who says, "Therapy wouldn't be my thing." Well, how do you know until you try?

Andy Grammer:

Yeah. I think a lot of what makes people unhappy is the cognitive dissonance of who we think we are and then who we actually are. And when you start to put those together and there's a lot of self-acceptance that I've found around that of in my therapy sessions, a lot of times I get into black and white thinking of "I'm good," or, "I'm bad." And learning how to hold a little bit of space for, "Oh, I had a bad day, made some decisions that I wish I hadn't made." I'm not going to beat myself up over it. I'm going to fight to have a better day tomorrow or today at the end of the day. I'll make the second half of my day great because the first half was not good. And then self-knowledge learning what environments or what situations you could put yourself in to have your head be better.

Amy Morin:

Yes. Yeah. So a couple things you just said. So the labels that we have for ourselves, either the ones we had as kids or the ones that we place on ourselves about who we are and then whether that even lines up with who we are. When I was a kid, every teacher would write on my report card that I was painfully shy and I never spoke. Well then I grew up and I have a podcast and I'm a public speaker, but that still plays in the back of my head.

Andy Grammer:

Totally.

Amy Morin:
I'm the shy kid, I don't talk. And so if you put me in a room of people, sometimes I'll still sit in the corner and be the one who doesn't talk. And then I remember it just because my third grade teacher said I was really shy. I don't have to be that person anymore. But sometimes those labels really stick with us.

And then the other thing that you said that was super important is about our environment because sometimes we always think it's an inside job. When we're struggling, we're stressed out. Well, maybe it's the stuff around you. Maybe if you're trying to be healthier and you've got a bowl of M&M's on your desk, you're going to waste your energy all day long trying to resist that bowl of M&M's or-

Andy Grammer:
Totally.

Amy Morin:
... if you're in an unhealthy relationship or you work at a job that you hate, it's really tough to be mentally healthy no matter how many times a week you see a therapist.

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. Learning your own patterns and then analyzing them.

Amy Morin:
Right.

Andy Grammer:
Really good.

Amy Morin:
Powerful stuff.

Andy Grammer:
I don't think... It's not rocket science. It's just that we're in our own way a lot. And I'll just go back to truth like that, to me, has been the biggest gift has been getting to a place
where I was dark enough to be then forced to be courageous enough to be truthful. For me, that makes me happier.

Amy Morin:
Had the pandemic not happened, would you-

Andy Grammer:
I don't know.

Amy Morin:
Yeah.

Andy Grammer:
That's terrifying.

Amy Morin:
Right.

Andy Grammer:
I'm really grateful... I had enough going on that where I was just kind of running at a really high speed. So the distraction was high. And again, it's not all black or white. It wasn't like I was a terrible person and now I'm a great person. It just means I was a little bit less unhappy. I was just on a call with the Surgeon General this week. We talked for 40 minutes and I love his book. I don't know if you've read it. It's called Together.

Amy Morin:
I haven't.

Andy Grammer:
It's so great. And it's all about loneliness and I think loneliness as it plays big into mental health as well. And one of the things he talks about is that when you're alone, you can either be lonely or you can... Which is a negative word and we're judging ourselves. Or
it can be solitude, which is a cool word if you're using it correctly. And I didn't have a lot of solitude in my life. I didn't have a lot of spaces where I was just okay with being alone with myself. And that's been something that I've really worked on since getting into therapy.

Amy Morin:
I like that. To sit alone in your thoughts or to be alone with yourself is really, really scary for a lot of people. And so we surround ourselves with noise and chaos and things like that so that we don't have to listen to that own voice in our heads.

Andy Grammer:
And so the pandemic was like literally, you can't go anywhere, you cannot do anything. You can't be distracted by these things. You have to sit alone with yourself for a certain portion of this day. And it drove me nuts.

Amy Morin:
Understandable. Yeah.

Andy Grammer:
Was brutal.

Amy Morin:
But I also know that you talk about the influence other people can have on us. So you have this song, Saved My Life and I loved the thing that you did on Instagram maybe a month ago where you showed this... You show up and surprise this woman at work because she said somebody else saved her life. Can you just talk a little bit about that song and what it means?

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. We've been doing a lot of those little surprises and it's so sweet. I think that sometimes we just need to create this space. What music can do sometimes is create a space or an opening in us to feel something deeper. And this song saved my life. I
wrote about my godmother, who’s really showed up for me in a way that I needed badly. When my mom passed, I was 25 years old and Lee was my mom’s best friend. And so she just started really showing up for me in a lot of the mom roles. And I was hurting. I was low, I was... Up to that point. I hadn't had too many things really rock me. Life had been fairly easy. And that was the first time that I really understood deep pain and felt numb and confused. And so she was helping me in these really beautiful ways, but I was also numb and couldn't really even appreciate it.

I got it. I got all the help, but there wasn't a lot of recognition for it. So sitting in myself getting quiet over the last two years, I was able to look at how important her role was in my life and I got to write her this song and this a casual phrase that I just think you should know, You Saved My Life. And I've gotten to sing it for her on stage. But then it's really sweet to now send that into the world and have it be what I'm saying, where it creates a space for people to share that with each other. I was at a show a couple months ago and I start the song and a mom and daughter are in front and they just start balling and they're kind of like dancing bawling. If you've ever had that experience at a concert. It's like you're happy and you're enjoying it, but you're also overcome with emotion.

And the girl somehow got a note back to me that she had just been in rehab and her mom had stayed with her the whole time and been her rock through rehab. It doesn't even have to be that dire. But we all have someone in our life who's really, really shown up for us in an important way. And they're heroes. They're freaking everyday heroes that are all around us. Do you have someone that you're thinking of right now?

Amy Morin:

I do. I have lots of people. So I was 23 when I lost my mom, and then when I was 26 I lost my husband. And just hearing you talk about that, my friends that were there for me when I was at the bottom of the barrel, absolutely saved my life.

Andy Grammer:

They really showed up for you. And it's also, that's what I love about music too, is that you can just go so deep quick. So we've been doing these little surprises. We have a
texting service and we send out who showed up for you and do you want me to come sing this song to them and you can tell them how they showed up for you and then I'll sing this song. And so it's been these little moments of just deep beauty and emotion and love. We just had on tour this girl who was adopted got to tell her parents how much they meant to her and they shared. And then we sang the song and everybody's crying. It's so sweet.

In Utah there was this lady who wrote in and was the palliative care team at the hospital, at the Children's Hospital. Literally saved my daughter's life and were really sweet, super sweethearts while they were doing it. So we went in and she got to tell them face to face. And then we played the song and everybody's freaking dying of awesomeness. But we've done and we just keep doing them over and over and over again. It's very addicting, once you start.

Amy Morin:
I can imagine.

Andy Grammer:
There's so much beauty in showing up for each other in this world that happens. I haven't had an interview yet where I've talked to someone like you and I go, "Is there someone that you have?" And the person goes like, "Oh my God. Totally I have." So that's the other thing is like, 'Man, I try to give a platform for that. That is happening all the time and it's beautiful. And bringing it back to mental health, if you start to do this work with yourself and align with your truth, people will show up around you that love you and care about you to help you.

Amy Morin:
Yeah, absolutely. And sometimes it's those little things that people do like when you're at the bottom of the barrel and somebody takes you to lunch, sometimes it just makes all the difference in the world.

Andy Grammer:
All the difference.

Amy Morin:

And we hear so much bad news these days. You turn on the news and there are just so many horrible things going on. It's wonderful to hear good news of like, "Hey, here's some good things going on behind the scenes. These people were there for each other. They called each other, they texted." Whatever it was, when somebody was going through a hard time check out how awesome this person was and how they showed up to somebody.

Andy Grammer:

There're these stats that every hour a thousand babies are born or something like that. This, what we're talking about, is happening all the time every day. People are showing up, but it's not something that gets shouted out or a light shined on it because it's usually fairly personal. But when you look around the world and you're just out in the world, you're looking at people and be like, "Someone's really showed up for that person. Someone showed up for this person." The barista has an answer to this question that I would ask her. I know you have someone that has really shown up for you. This is the invisible thread that we're all super connected.

Amy Morin:

Yeah. And the fact that we sometimes don't even tell those people, right? And we just sweep it under the rug or we think they know or we say "thank you" or like you say, at the time, we're not able to be in a place where we can really show our appreciation to them. But how powerful that can be when you go to somebody and say, "Thank you."

Andy Grammer:

So powerful. I think that we're lacking situations like this right now that require people to lean in and share. Before we go on stage every night with my band, we put a chair in the middle of the room and someone has to sit in it and then everybody just has to say what they love about them. It is not rocket science. It's not a crazy thing that... It's not complex. It's just like, "Oh yeah, just tell them what you love about them." And those are
unbelievable experiences to hear how people see you and what they love about you, to be able to share with someone else what you love about them. It's down back to basics and there's always tears and everybody always feels incredible when it's over.

Amy Morin:
We know gratitude's powerful in saying, "I'm thankful I have these friends in my life. I'm thankful for that person," but there's something so much more powerful when you actually go to that person and say, "This is what I appreciate about you. Thank you for being in my life," right?

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. I don't know why... I'm really interested in why it's so hard to do that or why there's not enough... Why it's not as easy to do that in this current situation. I'm fascinated by it.

Amy Morin:
Right and for some reason, it feels awkward sometimes to reach out to somebody and say, "Hey, by the way," and it's uncomfortable. Or we don't know. Nobody's ever going to be upset that you shared with them that they saved your life.

Andy Grammer:
Yeah. Everyone will always be happy if you share that with them.

Amy Morin:
Right. Is there a place where people can go to hear some of these stories that you hear?

Andy Grammer:
Wait, what do you mean?

Amy Morin:
Because you hear all these amazing stories of people saying, "Hey, this person shared my life." I can send people to the video online, the YouTube video.

Andy Grammer:
Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Go to the video. I post a lot about it. We’re doing another one today-

Amy Morin:
Awesome.

Andy Grammer:
... in New York City. And so we just found a story of someone who, I forget exactly what the story is. I’m going to learn about it once we leave. But it’s a very emotional text of someone’s like, "This person saved my life in this way."

Amy Morin:
Awesome.

Andy Grammer:
And we’re going to go bum rush them at their apartment with the friend and play the song and get connected again. I think that it just takes a little bit of impetus and if you’re listening and you’re one of the people that can be the impetus for it, everyone’s so grateful. Just take one little step of telling someone. Another thing that we’ve done for birthdays is especially over COVID when no one could get together, I wrote out a little list of small little questions of “What have you seen this person grow in the most in this year? What about this person makes you laugh? Why do you love this person?” Like five simple questions and have all the friends write it on their birthday and send it to them. I got one. It blew me. It was like, "Oh my God."

Amy Morin:
Right.
Andy Grammer:
I just sat and read the answer to these five questions from probably 20 or 30 people in my life that are close to me, and I just wept and felt so close and so connected to them. Yeah. We want more connection and that's okay and that's cool. It just takes some people to start it.

Amy Morin:
Yeah. And that it's really powerful for a mental health to be on both ends of that spectrum, to be the person who thanks somebody, but to also know that we can be that person to somebody else.

Andy Grammer:
Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

Amy Morin:
So I love that you are sharing that and that you are encouraging all of us to do that. So Andy Grammar, thank you so much for being on the Very Well Mind podcast and sharing your story with us.

Andy Grammer:
You're a gem. Thanks for having me. I really appreciate it!

Amy Morin:
You're welcome!

Amy Morin:
Welcome to The Therapist's Take! This is the part of the show where I'll give you my take on Andy's strategies for managing depression. Here are three of my favorite strategies that Andy shares.
Number one: find somebody that you can be truthful with. Andy said working with a therapist helped him live in his truth. He said he also appreciates things like 12-step support groups who help people be honest. I'm grateful that he talked about finding someone outside of your immediate circle to be truthful with. If you've ever found yourself opening up to a complete stranger about something that you've never even told your closest friends or family, you know what I mean. There are actually studies on how people tend to tell a stranger (especially if they're sitting next to them on a plane) more secrets than they've ever told their partners.

The reason for this is because the people in our circle know us in a certain light. They have expectations of us, and they might not really be curious about us in the same way that a stranger might be. If people know you as the happy one or the funny one, for example, it's hard to talk to them when you're struggling. When you talk to someone who doesn't have a preconceived notion about who you are or how you should be, sometimes you can open up more. It's important to find somebody who's not going to judge you, perhaps even somebody who can relate, and then you might find it's easier to be truthful.

Number two: acknowledge that you have personal work to do. I like that Andy talked about how all of us have work to do on ourselves, even if we grew up in a fairly functional environment. But sometimes we think it's a badge of honor to say that we weren't affected by the tough things that we've been through, or we try to convince other people that we're in such a good place already that we don't need to work on ourselves.

Sometimes I hear people say things like, "I don't need to work on building mental strength. I'm already mentally strong." But building mental strength should be an ongoing process. Just like we need to work on our physical strength if we want to keep our muscles in good shape, we have to keep working on building mental strength. And no matter how strong we are already, there's always room for improvement. Acknowledging that you have work to do on yourself, whether you want to become more
patient or you want to communicate your needs better, is a sign of strength, not weakness.

**And number three: show up for someone.** I love that Andy wrote a song about his mom's best friend who showed up for him when he needed support. Sometimes it's tempting to step back from people who are going through a rough time. We convince ourselves that they need space, or we get so worried that we might say or do something that could make it worse, that we don't do anything. But you might just save someone's life by showing up for them. Being there for someone when they're at their lowest point isn't easy. And I think right now we're often too quick to cut people out of our lives if they don't call us back or if they stop spending time with us. But maybe they're just going through something hard.

And it's also easy to think about how perhaps people haven't shown up for you when you needed them in your life. You can't go back and change the past, but you can change how you show up for someone else. And if you're fortunate enough to have had someone who's been there for you when you needed them in your life, tell them how much you appreciate them. It's easy to take them for granted.

So those are three of Andy's strategies that I highly recommend. Find someone you can be truthful with, acknowledge that you have personal work to do, and show up for someone who needs you. To learn more about Andy or to hear his music, including his song “Saved My Life,” go to his website, andygrammer.com.

If you know someone who could benefit from hearing Andy's story, share this message with him. Simply sharing a link to this episode could help someone feel better and grow stronger.
Do you want free access to my online course? It's called “10 Mental Strength Exercises That Will Help You Reach Your Greatest Potential.” To get your free pass, all you have to do is leave us a review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify. Then, send us a screenshot of your review. Our email address is podcast@verywell.com. We’ll reply with your all-access pass to the course.

Thank you for hanging out with me today and for listening to The Verywell Mind Podcast! And as always, a big thank you to my show’s producer (whose sunglasses are either loved or hated by everyone who sees them), Nick Valentin.