

Lauren: Welcome to "52 Weeks of Hope," where you get to hear how to feel happy, balanced and worthwhile, how to make that lonely ache vanish and feel empowered, confident, and secure. I'm Lauren Abrams. And today we're talking to the fabulous LGBTQ+ attorney and advocate for humanity, Krishna Desai. Krishna works tirelessly helping in conflict resolution, discrimination, and many other spheres. Krishna is here today giving us so many tools to get through those tough spots in life that we don't always even realize we're in. Krishna's so honest and likable, you can't help but smile while you're listening to this episode today. Originally from Chicago, Krishna has a solid appreciation for deep-dish pizza, fresh-cut grass, and perennial underdogs. Welcome to "52 Weeks of Hope," Krishna.

Krishna: Thank you. It's nice to be here. Thanks for having me.

Lauren: Yeah. Now, before helping us understand gender binary language, I know you do a lot of teaching of that, which is actually how I got to know you in a sense, a lot of that. In 2010, you wrote a book for the LGBTQ+ identified youth of their constitutional rights as they navigate the foster care system, why foster kids in particular?

Krishna: You know it's a little bit of preparation, meeting luck. I needed a job my second summer after law school, and the American Bar Association had this excellent project they were working on, and it just was a natural fit. I knew the person who was in charge of the project, and it just kind of worked out, you know. So that's, kind of, how it ended up happening. But for foster youth, I could not have made it to where I am in my life without family foster care. I didn't go through the system or anything, but I was raised by a single parent. And there were times when my mom needed a little bit of help. And there was family available to step in and take care of that. Right after my dad died, I stayed with my grandma for a little bit while my mom kind of got things together. And you know, it made it so that I always knew I was protected and loved no matter what was happening in the world. And it's a big part of why I'm able to just exist in the world with a certain amount of joy and comfort.

And so I have a very soft place in my heart for folks who are going through that, both the parents and the kids. And I am a queer person. And so I know how difficult that can be. I've had to struggle with feeling like I didn't know what's gonna happen when I came out. When I did come out, it did not go well. I mean, my mom and I have a great relationship now. But there were a couple months where I wasn't really welcome in my home, which my mom conveniently

sometimes forgets. And she says, "Well I never said that." And it's, kind of, the source of jokes now. But at the time, it definitely was not.

And so for those two reasons, for me, that project felt like heart work. And it's a great opportunity to still be in law school and get to publish something that's actually going to go out in the world and help people. It's not just some note at the back of, like, some law journal. It's an actual document that can help real people facing a real problem that you faced in your life. I mean, come on. It was a dream I didn't even know I had that came true.

Lauren: Everybody ends up where they're supposed to. I firmly believe that. So...

Krishna: Yeah, that was the plan.

Lauren: Yeah. How old were you when your father died? And how old were you when you came out? There's two different questions.

Krishna: My father died a little after I turned 2. So yeah, I was very young.

Lauren: Young.

Krishna: And I came out...gosh, the summer before I turned 19. It was the summer after my freshman year. And so I was still living at home. I had gone to a community college for the first two years. And so I was living at home. And, you know, I think the way it happens for a lot of people, I just met somebody and it was like, "Oh, oh, I get it now. This is what everybody's talking about." And it was the weirdest thing because the first person I wanted to tell was my mom that I had met this woman and I was just so into her. And it was so everything. And I couldn't. And that didn't feel right. And so I came out to her.

And it was a tough time. It was a tough time for us. I think...the weird thing is that their relationship didn't even materialize. And so I came out to her, kind of, like, "Here's the thing to, kind of, know about me, I suppose." It doesn't mean anything because she's not really interested. But yeah, I came out and I still remember, she was like, "Well, you know, at least I know you'll never lie to me." I said, "What do you mean?" She was like, "Well, if there's ever anything to lie to me about, this was it. And I guess, at the very least, I raised an honest person." I was like, "Well, that's one way of looking at it. But yeah, I was young. I was 18.

Lauren: See, that's young?

Krishna: Yeah. Yeah. Well, you know, it didn't feel young at the time, right. And it's definitely today...this was 20 years ago almost? Yeah, it was almost 20 years ago. So I think so much has changed in the last 20 years. And it's been wonderful to see that happen. You know, I remember when Lawrence vs. Texas happened. And I'd been out for a couple years at that point. I remember going to the Pride Parade, and there was a float with the Supremes, and all this stuff, and it's different now. And of course, you know, the way it was in 2001, 2002 is very different from the way it was in the '80s. And so, it is exhilarating to hear kids coming out when they're...I have a friend, their daughter just let them know that she was trans. And she's 5, and they're supportive, and everyone's on board. And it's amazing. It's amazing to have been a 5-year-old, kind of, trans, non-binary kid not knowing anything about it. And then, in my late 30s, see a 5-year-old having similar feelings, but a completely different experience. Yeah.

Lauren: A few different things. Yeah. As my kids have grown up, they've told me about this one is now that one, I mean, it's just a natural part of their life growing up. So yeah that's why to me, I was like, "Oh, that sounds late, just...and it was just, you're gay, or you're straight. And that was it.

Krishna: Yep. Those were the options.

Lauren: No, other choices, as far as I knew, until I moved to Hollywood.

Krishna: Oh, well, that must have been an education fast.

Lauren: Yeah. But then again, you mentioned cases, and everybody on here may not be a lawyer. So...

Krishna: Oh, that's right.

Lauren: So if you wanna explain which case is being celebrated and...

Krishna: Oh, sure. In 2003, that was when the Supreme Court ruled that you couldn't criminalize queer activity. And up until then, in some states, it was okay. In other states, it wasn't okay. And it was, kind of, weaponized against queer folks, the enforcement of that, you know. And now, you know, 17 years later, it's kind of a funny thing. We get to say, like, "I did this before it was legal." But at the time I lived in Chicago and so it wasn't really a concern. But I think there were parts of the country where it was and after 2003, it wasn't.

Lauren: How did you learn how to navigate your own roadblocks? And what do you think have been your biggest roadblocks? Clearly, your mom would be the biggest heartache. But...

Krishna: Oh, yeah. And I think that feeling is mutual, unfortunately. You know, I will say this, it's hard to know what one's roadblocks are when you're going through it. You just think this is happening to me, and this is it, this is how life is gonna be forever. And then you navigate around it, and you realize, "Oh, this is what the other side looks like. For me, I was a victim of child sexual assault. And, for me, grappling with that has been, kind of, a lifelong challenge, I guess, It's one of those things that you really have to...it stays with you, as one can imagine. It stays with you. And it's not just the event. It's everything that happens surrounding it, that you also have to learn how to navigate, you have to learn how to navigate the PTSD, you have to learn how to navigate the anxiety, and doing all those things and everything that emanates from that. Managing everything that emanates from that, I think, was one of my biggest challenges.

Growing up in America in the '80s and '90s as a person of color was not pleasant. I definitely had a lot...and then this is, you know, I'm in Chicago, this is not the place where you consider...you know, I'm in the suburbs of Chicago. I'm not even in the city at that point. And it's not something that you think of as, "Oh, yeah, that's probably pretty bad." But it's a society we live in, and kids will bully kids for anything. And that happened to be the thing that I got bullied over. So connecting with other people and figuring out a way to say, "Okay, well, this person is probably safe, and you can connect with them or this person, you know, hang on a second. Let's see how this goes before we get any further." I think those were my two biggest challenges, and continue to be in some ways,

But in terms of navigating around them, I don't have any...I mean, I went to therapy as a young person, that really helped. It helped me figure out, if nothing else, that the problem wasn't me. You know, it wasn't...it was the world around me was impacting me in a certain way. But I was fine, I was gonna be okay. And I still remember that session, I still remember that childhood therapist I had was fantastic. And I wish that every teenager, regardless of what roadblock they're using, they're confronted with, any adult, any person, that was the most impactful thing I needed to hear. And I heard it, and I've kept it with me every day that tomorrow is always a new day, and everything that's happening isn't you, it's what's happening around you, you can still be yourself. So...

Lauren: That's huge.

Krishna: Oh, yeah. It saved my life, tell you that. And so that, really having that sense of self, having that self-confidence. And honestly, this is, kind of, what I was talking about before. Being raised by your grandparents, even for a short period of time, can be such a blessing because you now have these people who are just interested in loving up on you. It was obviously not everyone's experience. But for me, and I think for a lot of grandparents, like, they're so excited that you exist, that they'll leave it at that. And whereas with their kids, they might have been a little bit more critical, a little bit more managing than micromanaging them. With grandkids, it's like, "Are you happy? Great, because you're doing great." And my grandmother had six kids. And so I was kind of like the seventh shot that she had. And by then, I think she perfected her techniques.

And I went to school...I was in India at the time, my mom was in America, she had sent me to India for a little bit to be with my grandmother. And she would go to school with me. But I went to English school, I mean, she doesn't speak English. So she would go to school to come pick me up. And she would ask all the teachers what the homework was for the day and learn it really quickly so that when we got home, she could make sure I did my homework, and I did it correctly. And I think when you are surrounded by that kind of love, that kind of investment from another person, you just know, you know that you're worth it.

It gives you a sense of self-worth that nothing else can where it's like, no, you are worth going to school as a 60-year-old woman, learning a brand new language just to ensure that you're doing your work right. And so if somebody else is willing to go to those lengths for you, you're gonna get out of bed the next day. You may not get out of bed that day, but you'll do it for yourself the next day. You'll go, "Look, I deserve a better day than the one I had yesterday. And I'm here and I'm gonna make sure I have that good day today."

Lauren: Yeah, that's great. Yeah. I love that. I'm like, I didn't get a grandparent like that.

Krishna: Yeah, I mean, that's it. Yeah.

Lauren: That's pretty extreme. That's so great. And it's got to help you in your law practice, it helps you on the empathy level, all of these experiences just so much. I don't know if you do trial work, but well, nobody does right now. But even when

you were working with foster kids or doing anything in the foster care system, I don't know if you're doing anything now but...

Krishna: No. No, I'm not at all involved with foster youth, other than fantasizing that someday my partner and I will perhaps become foster parents, but I'm still working on her. I'm still working on her. She thinks it's too much heartbreak to have a kid come into your life and leave.

Lauren: Nah, it's the best. So have you ever had a dark period in your life? And then how did you overcome that? And what would you tell somebody going through that, you know, their own dark period, especially now, it may not be like...well, everyone's going through something in these times. That's for sure.

Krishna: Yeah. I've gone through a few dark periods in my life. You know, I had my first existential crisis when I was 11. And I really, I ended up at the top of a building thinking, "Well, I don't know, what is the point? Should I just jump? Like, what...? I don't know that I like this. I don't like it here. And this is very hard, and I don't care for it." It's much more dramatic as an 11-year-old. But in retrospect, it was kind of like, "All right, kid. I mean, I know it's hard, but you'll be okay." And I didn't, and I climbed back down those stairs and I went home. And I think the thing that has always gotten me through from then on has been a belief and a hope that tomorrow will be better, that tomorrow can be better. And I have been lucky enough that, eventually, tomorrow was better for me. And...

Lauren: I think...

Krishna: What's that?

Lauren: I think it always is.

Krishna: Yeah, it is.

Lauren: Yeah.

Krishna: It is. It's just hard to remember that in the moment. And so even when you don't remember it, to be able to, kind of, method act it. I did some high school theater and that was one of those things where you may not be a 47-year-old car salesman, but if you just fake it, you will look like one. And so even if you don't have hope that tomorrow will be better, if you just pretend that tomorrow will be better, proceed accordingly, it dulls the most...for me, at least, it dulled the most



self-destructive tendencies that I might have had. And it enabled me to care for myself to make sure that I made it to tomorrow, and the day after that, and the day after that, and the day after that.

Recently, I also just started buying dark period sweats. Years ago, probably six, seven years ago, I went through a terrible breakup and I was also studying for the California Bar simultaneously. If you can imagine, like, studying for the bar is the most isolating thing ever, and it's just rote, and it's boring, and it's arduous, every adjective you could think of that's terrible, that's what studying for the bar is. And going through a breakup, everybody knows how that goes. And I just said, "You know what, I'm gonna lean into it. I'm gonna buy myself new sweats because, obviously, I'm just going to be wearing sweatpants for..." this is pre-pandemic, obviously, but you know, I bought myself fresh sweats. I was like, "You know what, if you're gonna be sad, you're gonna do it in style, you're gonna be comfortable while you're doing it." Lean into it.

You wanna be sad, be sad, be as sad as humanly possible. And I did. And it only lasted about four weeks because once the bar exam's over, you're so elated that everything else just doesn't matter. And so that has been helpful is following my own compass of if this is how you feel then, this is how you feel, don't fight it. Just know that it's also just temporary. And try to strike the balance between those two things. And achieving it at times is really [inaudible 00:16:43] through those times.

Lauren: It is. They suck, and doing something, taking any kind of footwork, anything...

Krishna: Oh, yeah.

Lauren: I mean, yesterday was one of those days for me and I told you earlier, getting outside and taking a walk...I listened to one of my own podcasts, not mine. I listened to one that is aired on "52 Weeks of Hope." And after 25 minutes, 30 minutes, whatever it was, I felt better. It was just being outside. I think I'd been inside for too many days. I mean, we just sit, as lawyers, we sit, we work. I'm inside, I don't move. It's just...

Krishna: Yeah, I will say I have not had a particularly dark period since I got my dog 10 years ago. There is something about having to leave your house...because he's a 10-pound Yorkie poo. But he's got the energy of like, a lab, like, he wakes up every day excited that it's today. And he wants to go for a walk. And then he wants to play and then he wants to go for another walk. And I love him enough

that I at least take him for two or three. And just getting outside, no matter what, getting outside, realizing that there's still a sky above you, there's still trees, there's birds that will still sing no matter what happens, it's a lifesaver. It's a lifesaver.

Lauren: Yeah.

Krishna: The other thing that on a macro level was really useful for me was taking those feelings and turning them into something productive. So the first job I had out of college was AmeriCorps, like you mentioned, and I worked for a violence prevention agency doing child sexual assault prevention presentations. And it changed my life, it gave me...I mean, it paid nothing. And I lived in the Sierra Nevadas in Tahoe, which is not an inexpensive place to stay. But it gave me the ability to take my personal experience that was not a positive thing for me and turn it into something valuable for the world around me. Not that you have to do that with every experience. But it helped me not only process that trauma, make the world a little bit better so that I didn't have to sit around going, "Gosh, the world is a terrible place." I mean, yeah, I think there are parts of the world that are terrible. But there are people out there every day making it better. And you can be one of those people. And it makes it much easier to live in a world that has terrible parts to it if you can actively see and participate in mitigating those things.

Lauren: Set you up for how I got to see you where you were teaching about the non-binary language, which was so fabulous. And it started me in a whole investigation. I've now found...yesterday even on Facebook these, kind of, flashcards if you will, I got more of an education about...

Krishna: Oh, wow.

Lauren: ...through some. But I saw some more and I was like, "Don't ask me if I'm queer. Don't confuse gender and sexual orientation." And it was so simplified, which is what you did. You did such a great job with that.

Krishna: Thank you.

Lauren: But love, love, love for you to give a truncated version if you don't mind of just the difference. Because even telling my friend about you coming on and using the pronoun they/they're was different for me. The other trans people on and I didn't use the they/they're pronoun. So I think it gets confusing. If you don't mind.

Krishna: Yeah, no, I don't. I don't.



Lauren: It's so good and it's just so educational. And I was having a session with this group on Sunday on Zoom. Nobody had any idea yeah, and indicated people, their kids are not necessarily straight or anything, but that doesn't matter. And education is so needed. So I have posted this everywhere, by the way, I've been posting all over. I was really excited about interviewing you,...

Krishna: Oh, that's so kind.

Lauren: ...but you clearly started in your original giving back when you were in AmeriCorps. Now I know why you're so good at it because you started way back then.

Krishna: Yeah, I mean, it was...you know, and the AmeriCorps thing was actually a natural outgrowth, doing those presentations was a natural outgrowth of being on a speech team in college. And I was on a speech team in college because I literally wandered into the speech team room, and they had a comfortable couch, and I sat on it. And they're like, "Well, we're about to have a team meeting." And I was like, "Well, let's hear it." And so, it's interesting, we're like, "We'll just take you if you're just looking for a comfortable place to sit." But well, let's start here. As a lot of people know, there's sex that you're assigned at birth, the doctor takes a look at you and goes, "Mm, let's click this box over here." And that right then, right, there's a large number of individuals who are born intersex. In fact, being intersex is as common as being a redhead. And this is something we don't talk about. But somebody made a choice and decided you were born with this particular body, and therefore you are this particular thing.

As a society, we've constructed gender, right? If you're born in this particular body, then you have these particular traits. And we've created a binary, just like we say, well, there's only two sexes, now there's only two genders. And what we found over time, and I think a lot of societies have known since time immemorial is that it's just not that simple. There's a number of different sexes. And there's a number of different genders. And our language needs to catch up, specifically the English language, which is the language we all use currently needs to catch up to what has been true for people for millennia. And so where you have he and she, you also have they and Z and a number of different pronouns that people love to use. Personally, I use they/them because that's what fits best with my gender identity. I don't identify as a man, and I don't identify as a woman. I don't feel particularly exclusively masculine, I don't feel particularly exclusively feminine.

And creating space within not just our language but our imagination and our society for people who don't fit into the binary is difficult because I mean, as human beings, we are definitely taught, look, it's either paper or plastic. These are your options. It's either this or that. This or that. This or that. But we're obviously capable of making more than a binary stick choice. We're not computers, it's not all 01100 up here. And so that's what this allows people to do to be able to use non-binary pronouns to identify as non-binary, it means different things for different people. But creating that space means something to me just because it's my experience. But also, I think it allows people to be more comfortable in whatever skin they're in, to be able to name it and to own it.

Lauren: Yeah. And I think that's so great. And I don't know what caused 11-year-old you to feel the way you did, but the bullying and all of this of kids, I think the more education, the more information, the less of that, hopefully, kids will feel.

Krishna: Oh, sure. I mean, there's two aspects to that, right? There's educating people and this is, kind of, what I was hoping to do through that book with ABA. Knowing your rights, knowing not just your legal rights, I mean, that's important but nobody in the day-to-day is like, "Well, actually the Constitution says you can't bully me." And understanding that you're okay, you're different but that's okay. It's okay to be different, and as simplistic as that sounds, it is something that people need to learn because society and media and in the stew in which we all live often gives you the message that it's not okay. And so it's very important that there is a proactive effort to ensure that people feel okay in their skin.

And the other thing is to deal with bystander behavior. Because a lot of times people...and I do this a lot in my work, and my partner, who does consulting on this also does this a lot. She does bystander intervention trainings. Because sometimes you see it happening. And it's not your fight. No one's bothering you. And you don't wanna get involved. And you don't know if the other person wants you to get involved and, kind of, wanna mind your own business. But being able to intervene as a bystander, being able to stop and say, "Well hang on a second. This is inappropriate." That's also an education that is required. And it's something we expect of people that well, like, "How can all those people standby and watch it happen?" But nobody ever goes through it, not at school, not at home. There's never like, "When you see something happening, here's how you intervene." It's, "If you see something, say something." Well, to whom? There's nobody. You're on a bus right now, who are you gonna say something to?

Lauren: So wait, if somebody wants to know, how do they get bystander intervention training, where would they go to do that?

Krishna: Well, you could check in your own community, there's often nonprofits that offer that training. But you could also just reach out to us. I mean, we provide that training as well for workplaces and also for schools and things like that. It's one of the things I did as an AmeriCorps volunteer. Part of violence prevention is ensuring that...it's not like violence comes out of nowhere, there's usually an escalation period. And if you can de-escalate it in that moment, then you're good. I mean, you're not great. But for the moment, you're good. And so I do de-escalation trainings and I do bystander intervention trainings as well. I actually volunteer as a de-escalator at various actions around the Bay Area and around the country.

So usually, if there's a concern that counter-protesters are gonna get violent or something like this, I'll be there and, kind of, when somebody starts to get a little aggressive, I'll be like, "Hey, hey, hey, you don't have to do this this way." And I've been lucky enough that it's worked so far. I mean, I'm still here. That's true. I'm still here. There was one protest in Texas where there was this threat of armed protesters, and armed counter-protesters, and armed counter-counter-protesters. And that was the only time I was really scared for my safety. But other than that, it's mostly just words.

Lauren: Yeah. Are you trained in any form of self-protection? Martial arts? Or no?

Krishna: I mean, nope. No, no, no, definitely not. Definitely not. I took one self-defense course and that's about it.

Lauren: No, it's one of the things for I don't know how many decades, I was like, "I should do that." I mean, I always say...

Krishna: Oh, yeah, it's certainly on my list of things to do. A couple nights ago, my partner and I were, I guess, accosted, not physically assaulted but definitely the legal definition of assault, while walking our dog at like 6:00 in a residential neighborhood. And that was when I was like, "Well, gosh, I've been meaning to do this for a while, maybe I should look into it." But then the feeling fades and so does the motivation.

Lauren: Yeah. I understand. Are there any practices that you do on a regular basis to help you maintain a positive mindset or anything like that?

Krishan: Yes, yes, I have developed a fairly...I won't say that it's regular, as regular as I would like, but more regular than it's ever been before meditation practice. I find that that really helps me stay centered and grounded. I do like to get outside every day, I need that. I have ADHD and it definitely helps me focus if I start my day with fresh air and a little bit of physical activity. And then the other thing that I have made a priority, especially over the last year, is making sure I'm connecting with at least two or three people a week that are not...and I'm not talking about work and I'm not talking about all the, you know, stressors of life, but something exciting, something fun, something to look forward to.

And then the last thing is I just started this this year, I started making art again, and it's not good. It's terrible. It's terrible, rudimentary, childish, not very good at all art. But I don't know if you were artistic as a child, but I really liked drawing and painting and things like that. And when you're a kid, you do it and you're not like, "Well, this looks perfect." You're just proud that you put pen to paper and you had pen and paper, or you had your favorite markers out and that was what you did. And there wasn't this, like, idea of, like, being skillful. It was just joyful. And so I've started doing that now. I have a little watercolor set, and I try to make something and, like, it's not good at all. Even child me would have been like, "What are you doing? Like, can you can do anything well?" I don't care. It's fun. It's just fun to draw.

Lauren: I think that's fabulous. I have a friend, she's 80, she's really taking it up. And she's watching YouTube. I mean, she's just painting in her backyard all the time. And it's just so great.

Krishna: Yeah, it's fun. It's just you just do it to do it. And I think it's very Buddhist philosophy, this detachment from the end results of whatever it is you're doing. And the other thing for me, up until this year, was swimming, just getting that physical activity, just getting yourself the endorphins if your body isn't making them or if your environment is zapping them out of you. Knowing that, you know, there's a balance in there that you need to help yourself maintain has been really helpful.

Lauren: I'm such an advocate for meditation. I mean, I've read that even if you meditate regularly, you need less sleep, that it helps with the ADHD, that it's like...even if you didn't have ADHD, I've never been actually clinically told, but there isn't anybody who's close to me that won't say, "Oh, yeah, she has it." But yeah, COVID has made it a million times worse. I'll be working at something and somebody said, "Did you see this?" and then I'm off in that direction, then I'm here.

Like, click on this. So I'm definitely doing the three priorities in the morning that I have to get done. And I look at them and go, "Oh, yeah. Wait, what were the priorities?" And putting the phone away when I'm actually doing...writing a brief or stuff like that.

Krishna: Oh, yeah.

Lauren: Writing one of my blogs. Writing for me...not legal, not the legal writing, but writing for me is what art is for you. I love to write.

Krishna: Yeah, I think having something from what you don't make any money that it doesn't matter how you do it and just having that practice of like, this is something I do that brings me joy that I do for myself, and being able to do that, it's so key, I think, to mental health. And for me, it's also a good indicator. Like, when I'm not doing that, I know that something is up with me. And I gotta like...I have to convene a meeting of myself to figure out what's going on and what we're gonna do about it, or what we're not gonna do about that. Whatever it is, I think being checked in with yourself is really helpful. For me, the big turn around self-care and mental health happened about six, seven years ago when I moved to the Bay, which I think is probably, kind of, self-explanatory. It's a very hippie-dippie place where people are really dialed-in to what's going on for them. A pretty stark contrast with what's typically considered the mindset in the Midwest, which is where I'm from. And I read this...

Lauren: Where...?

Krishna: I'm from Chicago.

Lauren: Okay. What made you move to the Bay Area?

Krishna: I just wanted to, that was it. It was just, I had lived in Chicago, I lived in Arizona, I lived in Tucson, which is a great little city. I lived in D.C., which I loved but it's a company town. And if you don't wanna work in the government, or you're not particularly into the federal government, it's not a great place for you, but it's a fantastic place to hang out for a while. And I spent a month in L.A. and it wasn't the right fit for me. And so this was the place I'd always wanted to live. And I was like, "Well, I don't have a job. And I don't know anybody there and I don't have a place to live. But I do have \$1,000," and this terrible Honda Civic I was driving at the time. "I'm just gonna go and see what happens." And that's what I did.

I mean, of course, I had a law degree so I had something to fall back on. But I just came here and it worked. It felt right. It felt good. And it felt like this was the place I was supposed to be. There's a lot of displacement happening in the Bay right now. And so there's this sense of like, "Well, are you from here? Or did you move here?" And the way I always like to say it is, "Well, I'm not from here, but I got here as fast as I could," which is a framing that I borrowed from somebody else, but it really feels good to be in a place that fits.

Lauren: Wow, that's perfect. I love that. We all end up where we're supposed to.

Krishna: Yep.

Lauren: And we're supposed to I'm sure, too. It's never on our timetable, though.

Krishna: You know, yeah. Some of it is just, kind of, letting go and seeing what happens and following...you know, I remember when I was deciding where I was gonna move next, or what I was gonna do next, I was talking to a friend of mine and I said, "Well, all I wanna do is just be stable. I mean, I've lived in 7 different places in the last 10 years, like, this isn't working for me." And even as a kid, we had moved a lot when I was growing up, we did a couple of international moves. And so I just really wanted to be stable. That was it. Like, I just wanted to go somewhere, and be there and be willing to unpack all my boxes. I hadn't unpacked in, at that point, gosh, I was 30, so in 12 years. Since I left my mom's house, I hadn't unpacked all of my boxes. I would unpack what I needed but leave the other stuff, you know, packed up.

My friend said, "Well, you can't get stability by chasing stability, you have to understand that you're not gonna be stable until you're happy. Once you're happy, you won't wanna change everything else. So you have to do the thing that's gonna make you happy. And trust that once you do that, you'll figure out how to make everything else work. But the thing you can't make work is that feeling of being happy. If you're not happy somewhere, doesn't matter how great a job you have. It doesn't matter how great your friends are, it doesn't matter how great everything is. If you're not happy, you're not happy. And you can't negotiate that. I mean, to a certain extent you can, but you really can't talk yourself into being happy. You are or you're not, or you're on your way there. And for me moving to the Bay was being on my way there. It was taking a step in that direction. And I haven't moved since then. This is the longest I've ever lived anywhere.

Lauren: That's great. Yeah, always taking yourself with you expecting something else to fix it.



Krishna: Yeah, everywhere you go, there you are.

Lauren: Exactly. That's...

Krishna: That's what they say.

Lauren: That's the saying. Before we finish, is there any other message of hope that you wanna offer?

Lauren: Well, I'll just reiterate something I said before. Hope, to me, is the result...or has a symbiotic relationship with inspiration. To feel hopeful requires that you stay open to finding whatever it is that's gonna give you hope to get through that day. And for me, sometimes that's been a Jim Carey movie that had one profound line in it, it just, kind of, stuck for me that day, or a great TED Talk, or a person you ran into in a parking lot that gave you the spot that they were waiting for because they were just being nice.

Being open to that being, being kind to yourself, if you can do those two things, for me, I have found that that nurtures that hope, that hope is a practice that requires that you stay engaged with it. You have to tend to your hope. You have to feed your hope. It won't just be there anytime you need it unless you are consistently, as much as possible, refilling that. That's all I can say about that. That's what's gotten me this far. And hopefully, it will serve me in the future. If not, I know what podcast to turn to.

Lauren: Yeah, right. Yeah, definitely. You come here, part of this community too.

Krishna: Yeah, exactly. Exactly that.

Lauren: Thank you so much for being a guest today on "52 Weeks of Hope." I so enjoyed talking to you and getting to know you a little bit better.

Krishna: Thanks so much for having me. This was such a fantastic exercise. I really appreciate it.

Lauren: Yeah, I really, really loved it. I hope you enjoyed this week's episode and take with you Krishna Desai's messages of genuineness, tolerance, and purpose. She's such a good example of these and we can all use a bit of them or a lot in our daily lives.

Be sure to tune in next week when renowned dating coach Evan Marc Katz joins us for a super interesting candid conversation about dating and actually a bit about men. I was really looking forward to talking to Evan and the conversation did not disappoint. You'll love this one. Evan has been helping singles for years. He's written four books and he's been featured in hundreds of media outlets, including "Today," "The New York Times," and CNN. Since 2015, Evan's blog has over 30 million readers, he's super interesting to hear, you definitely wanna tune in next week. Until then, remember, please subscribe to this podcast, leave us a positive review, and send us feedback on our website, [52weeksofhope.com](http://52weeksofhope.com). I'm Lauren Abrams. Thanks for listening.