

Coming Out in the Pentecostal Church w/ David Gallegos-Roybal

Candice Schutter: Hey everybody. Welcome to another episode of The Deeper Pulse on Patreon.

I am so excited today, because I have a guest who is a dear friend and who I've had a number of conversations with off the record throughout the 'cult'ure series. He's a friend of the pod. He's a friend of mine and many of yours out there. And I'm just super excited to welcome David to the podcast today.

Welcome David.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Hi Candice, it's good to be here.

Candice Schutter: Thank you so much for joining me.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: We've had a journey.

David Gallegos-Roybal: It's good to, we've definitely had a journey. And it was really awesome, I have to say, the way our paths crossed. And, you know, it was when we were all going [00:01:00] through, you know, different things that ultimately resulted in the creation of what you've done with the podcast. And it's done so much for myself and my husband, Mark, and a lot of people also. It's been a really integral part of the healing journey for a lot of us.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, yeah.

And you know, a big part of that journey was also a lot of the connections and conversations we had off the record with, you know, you and Mark.

And for those of you who haven't been on the journey a good long while, or are trying to make the connection here. Mark was on the podcast, episodes 60 and 61 of the 'cult'ure series, actually the most downloaded episodes to date, on The Deeper Pulse, was the conversation that I had with Mark. And David has been an ally standing next to Mark and all of us as we've been walking this journey for many, many months.

And we had a lot of really [00:02:00] wonderful and insightful conversations off the record. And we've stayed friends. And one of the blessings of the 'cult'ure series the relationships that have formed and been cultivated through that work. And one of the relationships I really value is with you and Mark, David.

And, um, it's fun for me to have an opportunity to sit down with you on the record and share, you know, a little bit about that journey that we've had together. But also for you to be able to share your story a lot of folks. And I've I've spoken to some friends who listened to the series and said that you were going to be on, and they were just really excited to hear from you and to hear your story.

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So, I'm, uh, thrilled to bring you into the conversation publicly.

Yeah.

So you and I have had many conversations and when we sat down to kind of, I always have a preliminary chat with guests before we press record and in our preliminary chat, we went a lot of places as [00:03:00] we often do. know, David and I could talk about a lot of different things. There's a lot of directions we could go.

So I guess my first question for you really is, what is your desire and sharing your story and why did you want to do it here today?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I think there's a couple of different answers to that. And I know it's going farther back, which you and I, and Tracy, and of course I've discussed with Mark, very extensively. And, um, you know, when you think about it, there's all these different parts to our lives, and different times in our lives that we experience different things that in many ways help shape us into who we are today.

So, you know, we, we've done a lot with after the Org. This is going back before the Org.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

David Gallegos-Roybal: And so a lot of it is actually not related to the Org. And that's very intentional, because that's not, that didn't define who I [00:04:00] was and who I am.

And there's a lot that goes into my upbringing that is, I feel, something to share that can be a message of positivity and triumph. And I mean, technically, we're right now, what, three days before the actual election, and we were just talking about that as well. But, you know, there's a lot of different things going on. And a lot of it is, is related to, um, politics. It's very political, uh, there's a lot of cultural aspects.

I mean, there are some news outlets that talk about people's experiences with sexuality and gender and how it relates to, to their lives. And, and that's really why I'm here, to talk about how that has, you know, affected my life from very early on. And to talk about also, you know, share it as, it's really an uplifting story for me. And that I hope it is for, you know, anyone out there who still has the [00:05:00] struggles, maybe people who have gone through things in their lives that were very difficult and very challenging. And that, if anybody, after this podcast, wants to talk to me further on a personal one-on-one level, I'm more than happy to do that.

Candice Schutter: So I want to go all the way back, like we said. Before the Org, before all of it.

Tell us what it was like for you as a child growing up, the environment that you grew up in and how going to shape your story.

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Take us all the way back.

David Gallegos-Roybal: I think it's, uh, I think that's the most important thing for people to recognize is what exists here in the Southwest and specifically New Mexico and Northern New Mexico, where I'm from, this is my home. This is where I was born and raised. And there's a lot of cultural dynamics at play. And there are also a lot of political and religious things to take into consideration. And most importantly, I think what [00:06:00] needs to happen for someone to embrace what exists here is to have, have a respect for what what the cultures are here. There's so much here historically, that you have so many different people from all different walks of life.

For me, for example, I mean, if we were to go into the technicality of it, I'm 25 percent Native American, 66 percent Hispanic. And that is to say, that there is a blend of many different cultures here. Native cultures, Hispanic cultures, and people who have moved here from other places and created a home for themselves here. And I don't want that to, I don't want that to be mistaken for me saying that I am a voice or I represent culture here. That would be wrong for me or anyone to do that. No one here can say, you know, I am going to be the voice of what culture is and the people here. No, it doesn't work that [00:07:00] way. But what needs to happen, I say, more is a deeper understanding and respect of what has existed here in recent times and going back many generations, hundreds and thousands of years.

The upbringing that I have comes from many historical cultures, and it's a blend. We're called the Mestizo people, that's mixed blood. And with that comes a lot of unrest. So, I mean, even back hundreds of years ago, and, and I, I don't want to go into a complete history lesson here, but there are people here who are, uh, what the term is referred to as the Hanisaro people. And that is more specifically described as detribalized natives. So people who are not able to claim, you know, status to any particular Pueblo or tribe, but due to many things, most of which was a [00:08:00] direct result of slavery of Native people hundreds of years ago. There's a whole history behind it.

I mean, on my mom's side, not great grandfather. My grandfather was born in 1899. And so, um, you know, I have, I have family here who have seen so many things over the last 120 years. From New Mexico, even becoming a state to World War I, World War II, being affected by the great flood of 1954, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, where I've had uncles serve in those wars. Um, it's, um, very diverse and it's important to put that all into context. And there's a lot of things that play with that.

I mean, I have to say, despite what is represented in some circles here in this vicinity is that it's not all a garden of Eden and it never has been a garden of [00:09:00] Eden. In terms of class, there's a lot of poverty here. And I've witnessed it and I've seen it and I've been around it my entire life. My upbringing has shaped and created who I am today.

So I lived and still live, you know, with culture and family that is very strong, very opinionated. And it can very easily, in the wrong context, be confused as toxic masculinity, but it's not. Uh, I'm talking about my family and what they had to suffer and endure. And it was about survival.

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The influence of these strong relatives, both men and women in my life saying, you have to stand up for yourself. You have to be strong. My grandmother who was raising the family and who they were always working. They were always tilling the land. And it was about hard work nonstop and about poverty at the same time and [00:10:00] getting through the depression and getting through wars and getting through famines and floods.

And so that was a very, very important part of my upbringing. And then to throw into the mix, what we've also been talking about, is also the religious aspect. So, a lot of my family is Catholic. And I don't agree with a lot of what Catholicism has created in terms of warfare and death here over, you know, hundreds of years. Even though in recent years, I mean, people had been living for the most part peacefully. And there was that part of my upbringing as well, being on the ranch and being in northern New Mexico and surrounded by different Pueblos and people and interacting with all of them, which is really, I mean, so many amazing memories.

And then this is the other part of the story is growing up in the [00:11:00] Pentecostal church. It was actually the chosen faith of my parents. And they, um, they grew up in the hippie generation, but they also found their faith in Pentecostal charismatic Christianity. So we're talking about like, you know, speaking in tongues slain in the spirit. This is, you know, hardcore stuff, you know, in the 80s and 90s, I saw revivals and stuff like that, where they would have traveling ministers. And, um, that is also equally an important part of my upbringing.

And I would say I have a pretty unique perspective on it, because coming out later on in my later teens as queer. And starting to identify as who I am since I was 12 years old, you know, those were things that were a really big struggle actually in my life. It was very difficult, uh, for [00:12:00] me to come terms with that.

And there are similarities between the Org and Christianity in terms of, you have to look up to somebody. Somebody has to be in charge. The person in charge is never wrong, of course. And if you dare to question, if you dare to question anything, just expect to very quickly find out who your friends really are.

Candice Schutter: So one of the things that really strikes me is the intersectionalities in your story. You've got the intersectionality of the culture that you lived in has its own ideas, I'm sure, about homosexuality. And then you've got the church. And you've got the class variables. And all these things sort of colliding to shape the experience that you have of coming to terms with this. And you'd made the choice to actually come out as a teen, which is an incredibly courageous choice.

What do you think gave you that courage? Is it your cultural inheritance of people telling you to stand up for who you are? Like, where do you think you [00:13:00] got the courage and what was it in you that made you know that was the right choice for you? Because as you've made very clear, that's not the right choice for everybody. And everybody has to come out in their own time in their own way.

And, and as you said to me, which I love, which I want you to talk about at some point, like you have to come out over and over and over again.

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But like, how did you do that, David?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I was very alone. I was very alone with all of it. I, um, and I'm not saying this as a judgment or a criticism to anyone. You know, everybody, you know. I, I, I believe for the most part, everybody's doing the best they can, the best they know how.

And so I knew that I, um, I knew that this was me. Not that I had this. Not, this is not, uh, this is not something you picked up at the, you know, at the mall or something. This is, this is who I am. And it was in conflict with a lot of things that had to do with my faith.

[00:14:00] And I guess I was either really strong or really naive. Here I am 17 years old. And I, I'm, I'm coming out to people. And it's like, yeah, it. Coming out is always happening because if you think about it in terms of sexuality, it's, straight is always the default.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Unless people see me and Mark together and even then we're at a store and people will be like, Hey, man, you guys brothers? Like, well, no, not exactly. But it's, it's, it's always a continual process.

But starting when I was 16, 17, starting to come out to the people I was closest to. And I simply couldn't just put on a sign and wear it around every single day saying I'm gay, you know? But it, eventually in the inner circles, it, it, it travels around and, and, and everybody eventually knows. And you know that that is what it is. [00:15:00]

But at the time, I still had my faith and I had this, you know, strong belief in God. And that, um, I felt that I could be gay and Christian at the same time.

And that's where I wonder, even I ask myself today if, if that was just me being naive. I don't know the answer to that. Because I did see people change toward me. And I wasn't, I wasn't bullied. I wasn't directly confronted. It was more of this like passive aggressive thing where, it's like I said earlier. You know, in situations like this, they show you who your real friends are. People who I associated with frequently, and all of a sudden, for some reason, they're too busy. Or, you know, going to the church youth group and seeing all the people I know that are around my age and, you know, after youth group, [00:16:00] you know, they would always get together. And they'd say, oh, let's meet at Village Inn, let's go have dinner. And great. And me seeing everybody caravan out of the parking lot and not getting the invite. Things like that, that are very hurtful. Because there's never given this direct explanation as to why, even though everybody knows why.

And bringing it back to today and experiencing that again in the Org and seeing what happened with Mark when he was turned on. And I did tell him. I said, at the very beginning when he told me he was leaving the practice, when he made the decision. And I said, don't apologize. You have to do this for yourself. And I told him, just like I found out many years before. I told him, I said, now you're going to find out who your real friends are.

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And that's very painful to see that. This concept of like, you know, being around people and thinking, okay, I've [00:17:00] got all these friends. These people know me. And they say, oh yeah, you know, we're here for you. We're here for you. We're, we're going to be neutral. We're going to stay neutral. We love and support you.

And then a week goes by a month, three months. And not hearing anything. The phone's not ringing. And yet seeing everybody in the circles that existed before still there. It's like, I'm not part of that equation anymore.

It's like, Mark said in his podcast. It's like, Oh, you just, just forgotten, just erased. Cause now in the day of social media, seeing like everybody like, you know, goes on. And then being on the sideline and being out of it, being completely out of it and, and it's like, wow, okay.

That was, I guess, that was a, that was a really difficult part for me when, when I was a teenager. And it actually gave me [00:18:00] the strength to support Mark for what he went through.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, I can see that.

David Gallegos-Roybal: And fortunately enough, when I was a teenager and going through this, this struggle, especially in the setting of what it was, the Pentecostal church, my lifesavers were my parents.

Candice Schutter: Beautiful. As it should be.

I see emotion rising. What, what feeling comes up when you say that?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I was, I was very lucky. I was very, very lucky. Um, my parents, when I sat down with them and I told them, I mean, I don't remember. It was 16 or 17. And when we had that conversation and I sat down with them and I told them, the first thing that they did was, they both came up to me and they gave me this group hug. And the first thing that they said, said they both said is that they loved me [00:19:00] and that I was still their Dave. And that nothing would ever change that. And that I was not any less of a person and they did not love me any less than before.

And that's such a miracle. And because not everybody my age would have been so fortunate. You know, I was, I was hanging out with some friends once. And, and like I say, most, if not everybody knew about me after a certain point. And, um, one of my friend's mothers told me one day, she said, you know, if my kids ever came to me and my husband and said that they were gay, they would be out on the street.

And I don't know if they meant that to make a point to me. I don't know what the point of that was. But, um, her kids were there when she said that, and they heard that too.

So I know there are a lot of people out there who have struggled. [00:20:00] And coming from the Christian faith may have been in a culture themselves to believe that there was

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something wrong with them. That they were under what, in the Pentecostal church used to be called demonic oppression.

As a teenager, the people who no longer associated with me or wouldn't talk to me, finding out that, you know, when I wasn't there that they were having prayer circles and praying for my healing. And it takes, it takes a lot of strength to step outside of that paradigm to say, no, wait a minute. Wait a minute. Let's take a look and see where the real oppression is.

Candice Schutter: What do you think it was about your parents that made them, like it inoculated them to a point where that, as it should be, their love for you was stronger than their indoctrination into that belief system. What do you think it was? Because it sounds like, I could tell by the emotion that you expressed when you were [00:21:00] sharing that, that they were coming from a sincere place when they said that to you.

How do you, why do you think it is that they were able to, and I'm asking this question because we're continually deconstructing dogma. And we're looking at like, how do we stay awake in the face of these indoctrinating ideologies that blind us?

And what do you think made it so that they, that their love for you was stronger than that?

David Gallegos-Roybal: My parents, um, and anyone who does listen to this podcast who know my parents know what I'm talking about is that they're the most, they're the most genuine people. They are so genuine. And they're very grounded in their faith. And that's wonderful. That's wonderful.

But at the same time, they're looking about their faith as practical. And they're never, never, never have been the type to judge. They're just so well meaning. They've always been my best friends. I mean, [00:22:00] growing up, I didn't have everything. There were times where there wasn't, there wasn't a whole lot of money. But my parents worked hard and they always provided food on the table and a roof over my head. And they did the best that they could. And they provided the best that they could in terms of being parents and showing, showing what they believe is God's love. And that's the difference.

Because when I was in my late teens, I actually did go to a psychotherapist, um, PhD, MD, like the real deal, to work through things of where's my life going? I'm at this, I'm at these crossroads. What are the tools I need? Where do I go from here? What happens?

This therapist was incredible, really, really incredible. He um, would sometimes put things in [00:23:00] biblical terms for me. You know, cause I talked to him about all the people who had vanished, all the people who had disappeared. But then the people who were still there, the people who were the real deal, like my parents. And he told me, he said, so, he said, from your upbringing, the Bible says that God's love is greater than anyone else's. God's love for you is greater.

And I said, yeah.

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And he said, so, if your parents embraced you and didn't reject you and said that they loved you always, do you think that God would love you any less?

And that was, that was an epiphany. That was an epiphany.

There were a lot of hard decisions to make, but I mean, nobody was going to put me back in the closet. I wasn't going to, you know, pray the gay [00:24:00] away or, you know, nothing, nothing like that. I had the support that I needed from a few close friends and family.

And so I went to college at UNM in Albuquerque, which was one of the most amazing things that I could have done. Because then I was able to broaden my horizons. And being in a city within a city where they had a student population of 30,000 students. All these organizations from queer transgender alliances, to all these different things that I could go and meet people with similar interests and different experiences. And just really, you know, seeing what I wanted for myself.

Even when I was little growing up in the church, wanting to have a home, to have a career, to have a family. And still believing that that was all possible, and maybe it was going to be different from the way I thought it was when I was 17, but, I [00:25:00] had to keep going.

Candice Schutter: So what was, what was like the biggest shift for you? I think of being plucked out. And, and here I might be projecting a little bit, because for me, it was like such a massive quickening and transformation, being plucked out of my sort of nuclear family reality and, and the culture that I grew up in and then being dropped into a, also a big university. And there were just so many, such an expansive opportunity to really shift and expand perception.

Did you have a quickening? And what was, what was the big thing for you?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I think it was a, I think it was a gradual change over time. It was definitely work. And I mean, going from a small town and a Christian church to a big city with a big university. I had to continue to forge my path. And going back to the time when, you know, I thought I could be, you know, I can be gay and Christian. And, you know, everybody will accept me.[00:26:00]

Um, I, I do believe that there are people out there, you know, who are my age or even today. You do have an ally and you can reach out and I will support in any way I can.

And yeah, there, there are many different reasons why maybe people choose not to come out. Because they're scared. Because they'll be shunned by their families. They'll be excommunicated from their churches. There are many, many different hardships that can be involved in that. Because it is scary. It is very scary. It's going through something and feeling completely alone. And changing that, that thought process, that paradigm of something that in the church is an unpardonable sin.

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First coming to terms with myself, with who I am, and respecting and cherishing who and what God created me to [00:27:00] be. And then doing the work. And finding people who will support you and who will be there for you and who will cheer you on.

But it's a continual process. Because even when I was 12 years old, I dreamt someday of being a scientist and that's what I am today.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

David Gallegos-Roybal: I did that for myself.

Having an incredible marriage. I did that for myself too. But it all comes down to understanding who I was and having, first of all, the faith to make that leap. But also to do the work. Because if the Bible also says faith without works is dead. So doing the work, doing the work for myself and knowing what I wanted. And continuing to work to get to where I am today, to have a loving husband, to have a loving family.

Candice Schutter: So speaking of faith, correct me if I'm saying this wrong, but [00:28:00] like, it was faith that carried you through. And it was faith, I'm going to say capital F faith that carried you through. And it was small-f faith, as it is defined by fallible humans with biases and ignorances and prejudices. What's your relationship to faith? What's that transformation been like?

Cause you talked about growing up Pentecostal. Then you came out and you said to yourself, I can be gay and I can be Christian. And you go to college and you have these experiences. And you had the faith to get you to this place where you have the life you have now. But how would you describe your journey of faith and how it's changed over time?

David Gallegos-Roybal: So I think it does change over time. It's um, and it's different for everybody. But it wasn't like, um, one day I was one thing and the next day I was something else. But it's looking back, looking back over time to the biblical principles that I was taught. Growing up with this faith that became the foundation [00:29:00] to ultimately being a part of who I am today. Um, it's, it's very important.

Again, I would never say anybody in the Christian faith is, is wrong. That would be unethical for me to do. Just as I feel as it's unethical for somebody to come and say that my lifestyle is wrong and that I need to repent.

I mean, at my grand, one of my grandmother's funerals, that was back in 2013, I had a relative who, uh, approached me. And I was with a prior partner. And, uh, it was, you know, known about me, and if anything else obvious, that the two of us were together. And she made it a point to tell me after my grandmother's funeral that, if I don't turn my life over to God, that I'm going to burn in the lake of fire. That's a, that's a relative that told me that.

And I shrug it off. You, you know, it's, um, it can either be insulting or it can be, uh, offensive. And, and it is. But, um, it doesn't, it doesn't [00:30:00] define me. Because these

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people who I hear, who I've heard stuff like this from, they don't, they don't pay the bills. They didn't get me to where I am today.

So looking back, I mean, so much has changed. And at the same time, so much is the same. But, you know, like, a few months ago, there's a family that I, that I've been close with for many, many years, of very rough lives, very, very difficult lives. Difficult situations. And my parents called me to say a friend of mine, uh, who was 35 years old this year, passed away, uh, just, just 35. And I was just, uh, I was, I was saddened by it. And I, um, had his cousin's number. And it called up his cousin. And he's, um, you know, he's a Norteño. And he's another one of those strong [00:31:00] personalities. And he's a couple of years older than me. And I asked him if he'd like to get together and catch up. So we got together at a restaurant.

And, um, yeah, the, the first thing he says when he walks in and sees me, he says, Oh, you're not, you're not all freaking scrummy anymore, bro. And we laughed. That was the icebreaker. That was the icebreaker. And it was just like old times.

And an interesting part of the conversation was, you know, this, this person knew who I was back when I was a late teens, early twenties. And so, we were talking, uh, we, we spent about four hours at lunch. And, and we were talking and catching up. And so we were talking about relationships. And I told him, I said, "well, actually, I'm married."

And he's like, "oh, bro, what's her name, bro?"

And I'm like, well, I said, "uh, actually his name is Mark." [00:32:00]

And the second I said that, there's this reaction, like I see this physical reaction. Like everything, walls go up instantaneously.

And the first question that he asked me, he says, well, what do your parents think about that? And I'm like, my parents, what am I, 12? You know, I'm, I'm an adult here. I make my own decisions. I, you know.

But I very respectfully answered the question. I said, "well, they were there at the wedding."

And when I, when I said that, he just immediately softened. And he said, "you know what? That's really cool, bro. Your parents, they're so, they're the best, bro."

And it just, it melted the whole thing.

And I guess that is also to say about like, it's a process of still coming out. Coming out whenever I get a new [00:33:00] job, you know, when I go into a new community, when I meet someone else's friends, it's, it's, it's always, it's always a process.

And I hope that for the people who do choose to honor who they are and who God created them to be that it continues to become easier in our society, despite all the political uprival

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that's going on. We don't know what's going to happen. Sometimes, sometimes it feels like one step forward, two steps back. We just don't know. But I'm hoping and seeing especially in younger generations, that there's more of a, more of this opening, this fluidity of, kids, younger people having uh, more resources available and more supportive families. And I hope that continues.

And I know it's different in different parts of our country. I know that people's belief systems. I [00:34:00] mean, here in New Mexico, there is a very conservative Catholic culture here that doesn't accept this. I know that. But I'm hoping to see that also with the younger generations that they continue to push this movement forward.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, absolutely.

Well, you know, I really feel, this is one of the areas where I feel really passionately in celebration of the internet. And I know that for these young generations that there's understandable concerns around, you know, kids being on social media and staring at their phones all the time, and all the things that are very legitimate concerns that I understand. But having worked in the foster system and advocated for a queer kid who was in a foster home that was fundamentalist Christian and not supportive. And this child was coming out in this environment and being one of the few allies that they had.

I will never forget the moment when they stood up to their foster parent. They told me [00:35:00] about it later. And their foster parent was throwing their religion around as an excuse, but it was just a bunch of bigoted statements.

And this kid says to the foster parent, "you are not being in support of me and my community." And the reason that was such a huge deal was because this kid had been isolated. This child had been completely isolated. And when they said "my community," they had no friends. It was because of the internet, David. It was because they had found that they belong to a community. That that existed, and there were people out there advocating for them and speaking to them.

And, and so I, I have a lot of hope when it comes to the good that the internet could do in terms of spreading this sense of connection and belonging. And I know there's a lot of unfortunate things that happen in terms of radicalization with the internet. But I think in terms of support for queer kids, it's a really important resource that.

You know, I remember when we talked about your story. And you [00:36:00] said, we were talking about like queerness and how did you even learn about queerness?

And you said like the Encyclopedia Britannica, is that right?

David Gallegos-Roybal: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, totally. I mean, it's like I had, I had like no resources. I mean, I couldn't go to the youth pastor and say, oh, hey, um, you know, just want to let you know I'm gay. So how can I be a better gay?

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I mean, I literally, like, for the younger generations who don't know what the Encyclopedia Britannica is, it's a, it's a volume of about 20 books that has every topic you can think of from A to Z. And that's how I started doing my research.

And that was the other thing in the church, there wasn't anybody to talk to. I told a close friend once. I came out. And this, I was a teenager. And I told this, this good friend. And that kind of ended our friendship because, uh, the [00:37:00] only thing that he told me was, "so what do you want from me?"

Candice Schutter: So you came out. And, and his response to you was, what do you want from me?

David Gallegos-Roybal: And so I said, "well, all I can ask for is that we continue a friendship."

But it's, even kids at the time, especially in the church, they didn't have any other way of, of, um, approaching it or, or knowledge of it. If that was their upbringing and who they were, of course not.

Candice Schutter: Right.

David Gallegos-Roybal: And so that was another thing more and more. I mean, there were not many coming and saying, yeah, I'll be there. I'll support you. Or if they did, I'd never hear from them again.

I mean, even when I was 12 years old and I got sent to, um, anybody in the Christian faith will know what I'm talking about. It's called True Love Waits. And it's where young teens in the Christian church are sent to groups to make a commitment to God, [00:38:00] to save themselves for their, uh, future spouse.

And so I'm in this, I'm in this group. And we're having Bible studies. And they're telling me and the other guys about, oh, well, you know, you need to stop lusting after other girls. I'm like, what, what's that? Like, you know, when you can't stop thinking about a girl. And I'm like, no.

As I started to like, later 13, 14, after doing my, my research in books and understanding the biology of all this stuff. And I'm like, putting two and two together here. And I'm like, oh. That's why, you know, things like that didn't really quite make any sense to me, that just, you know, saying that I need to, you know, pray to God to find the right girl to be with in my future and marry. And I'm like, that doesn't feel like the right path for me. [00:39:00] That doesn't feel like the right path. And just continuing that journey to, to keep discovering.

Cause I mean, I had lots of friends that were girls. I mean, and we, we really had great times. I mean, it was nice, you know. I was just like, I was just like one of the girls. And we had, we would just have fun.

Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Absolutely.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Girls night out.

Candice Schutter: Right on.

David Gallegos-Roybal: But there, you know, and in all seriousness, there were, and there have been, and there are people who are very supportive. Even, you know, when I was in college, I, I went through a few relationships that didn't, uh, didn't work out. And I had this, uh, really, uh, to me, this devastating breakup with this guy that, you know, I, it just didn't work out. And I was really heartbroken.

And I was just, I came back to Santa Fe to work at, uh, some jobs that I was on contract with here. And I had a family member who was a couple years older than me just call me up and she [00:40:00] said, hey, I wanted to see if you wanted to, uh, get together for dinner. And I said, sure. She's like, do you want to go see a movie? And I said, yeah.

And we went to eat at the arcade at the mall here in Santa Fe. And then we went to see, um, the Chronicles of Narnia. I remember she took me to see the Chronicles of Narnia. And it was, it was so awesome. Because she's such a nice person, so genuine, so caring. And she holds fast to her faith, even to this day. And I respect that.

But she saw that I was having a hard time. And she took me out, and she was talking to me about, you know, um, her experiences when she was in college and interactions that she had. And she was just so just loving and understanding. And so I appreciated, at that point in time, having people in my life who were supportive.

And now today, having people who are supportive. And [00:41:00] again, anyone who's listening who this might leave an impression on is there is life and life abundant. And it may seem impossible, but it is possible because I am living proof of that.

I have this incredible life. I have this incredible husband, Mark. He is so amazing and so loving and so caring. And we've got a home together here in Santa Fe. And we both got our occupations. And I am an environmental scientist. I achieved that goal, that dream that I had 25 years ago. And we've got our three cats and two dogs. We've got our, we've got our, our lovely little family here.

And it's, it's amazing and it's worth it. It's worth it.

Candice Schutter: I want to follow up on a couple of things you said related to support. One was the story you told of telling this longtime family [00:42:00] friend that you are married. And him, having this sort of visceral response, this sort of, conditioned response, if you will, to that information. And then asking about your parents and then softening.

I want to say, first of all, how well, just to celebrate your parents. And the fact that, that it's sad that we have to celebrate something like that, that should just be a given, that people's parents accept and love them exactly how they are. But unfortunately there's a lot of people

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who don't have experience. So I just want to celebrate your parents in that way. And say that they gave you that gift and that it can't be overstated how important it is to be people like your parents who show up and love and accept people. Because in that moment, that was the thing that disarmed him was when he asked like, what are your parents think about this? And you told him how they had loved and accepted you. And maybe it was because of their authority in his mind, maybe it was [00:43:00] because he admired them, but that went such a long way.

And so when we accept people for who they are and we advertise that acceptance, then it can impact people and their perceptions and how information like that lands.

And the reason I bring that up is because one of the things that came out of our earlier conversation was really landing in this place, and this is something that I've heard from you again and again, when I've talked with you and Mark and about sort of the fallout, not only from when you stepped away from the Org and much of your community disappeared on you. But also when the podcast came out and the people who sort of came forward to in support of Mark sharing his story, the thing that kept coming up in our conversations was like, support isn't a passive thing. Support isn't a thing, we just like wear a rainbow t shirt in June and oh, we support gay people, because you know, we like to wear rainbows one month a year. Support is an action. It's a very active thing. It's not [00:44:00] passive. And I feel like you really get this and it's something that you're passionate about.

Do you want to speak to that for a moment? Because it's come through in our conversations a lot.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Think what you said was absolutely perfect. It's absolutely perfect. Because, you know, it's not something that like. Again, if I can go back to what I was saying about people who, you know, people who say that, that they're there. Or they're neutral. Or who wear the Pride flag in June on a t shirt. People who use it for their own benefit, whatever that may be. And seeing organizations put people in boxes to meet their own criteria for what they think is going to make themselves successful instead of the person.

Candice Schutter: Yes. Yes.

David Gallegos-Roybal: It's like when I was asked by someone in the Org, during the whole DEI [00:45:00] movement that me and several other individuals who are minorities to be a part of this movement that was related to the Org. And this person was not from here and doesn't understand the culture here, say, I'm going to lead you in this group.

And I said, well, don't you have it backwards?

Candice Schutter: Right.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Don't you have that backwards? Um, if, if, if this is what you truly want it to be, why don't you let us lead it? Because I am a real person, and I won't be put into a little box. Not by an organization and not by the Christian church.

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And that's the part of understanding and knowing ourselves and when to stand up. And like I was raised to use my voice and to say, hold on, wait a minute, wait a minute. That's that's, that's not right.

I'm not going to be somebody's token or tool to make them successful. That's not what this is [00:46:00] about.

Candice Schutter: They call it like, being a disruptor. When I use the word disruptor, I mean that in a really positive sense, that's how it's used in activism, is like somebody who disrupts the norm. Because the norms, the status quo, the systems are just churning, churning, churning the same outcomes out in the same biases are rolling.

And then there's folks who step in. And they are like the record-scratch people, who challenge, you know, the notion of like, hey, don't you have this backwards? That's a disruptor energy. Like, I'm just going to very actively call out what's happening here and name it what it is. And that's kind of gotten you into some, I want to say trouble.

I'm going to say good trouble, like Carl Lewis talks about.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

David Gallegos-Roybal: I mean, it. And again, that's, this is how I was raised. I was raised to speak, to use my voice. Your voice is your power. It's important to speak up. And that's how I was raised.

When I see something that is disrespect to myself or to someone I love and care about, I'm absolutely going to say [00:47:00] something. And it's important to speak up. It's important. Um, even in sharing and like now, saying, this is who I am. This is who I am. And by doing that, of course, there may be anxiety or fear because you don't know how people are going to react. But, you know, whenever you speak your truth, there's always going to be someone who doesn't like it. That's that's a given. Not everybody is going to like it. And okay.

But you know, this is my life. This is my life. And I wouldn't, I wouldn't change a thing for the world.

Candice Schutter: I wouldn't change it either. I love that about you so much. I've loved that about you from the second I met you. And I trust people like you. If I know somebody is going to tell me what they really think and be authentic and be who they are, I can relax in the relationship more. Because I'm not spending [00:48:00] energy thinking, what are they thinking? What do they really think?

Because so many people hide what they're really feeling and thinking. And I think we spend an unreasonable amount of energy trying to figure it out. And like people who I know are just going to tell me, I can rest down in the relationship more.

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Yeah, you might say something that disrupts my, you know, mental frameworks. But I would rather know what you really think and have to challenge myself than wonder. So I think it's, it's, it's a gift. Even though sometimes, I'm sure, it's been a burden for you in terms of the responses you get.

David Gallegos-Roybal: It's, it's important. It's a very important part of who I am. And there are some people, I know, they don't like it. And that's, and that's okay. It has to be okay.

But this again, this is my life. And I want to live like this versus staying in a church where people say, we love and support you, but then you don't hear from them. Staying in the Org and hearing love and light, love [00:49:00] and light. This will all be overcome with love and light. And then never hearing from them. They don't pick up the phone to say hello how are you doing? The similarities are very striking.

And I mean, you know, you do have the ones who are, who are honest and who are sincere, like my parents. And people like my parents, you get what you get, you know where they're coming from. And my mom, she's the one that, she turns into a spitfire when, you know, she's, when she's on what she believes. And someone challenges her on that. And I think that's where I get that from.

But I mean, this doesn't have to be about taking sides. And I have to also give credit where credit is due, because there are people who I'm still in contact with from my youth, and who are my parents age, [00:50:00] and are still friends with me on social media. And message me and ask how I'm doing. People who have known me since I was in, in the womb. And I'm going to actually say her name, and I know she'd be okay with me saying this, is one of our teachers in our Dance Different, Edie.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

David Gallegos-Roybal: She's, I mean, she, I've known her my entire life. And she's so supportive. And we even danced yesterday. And she said, I want to hear the podcast. Did I miss it? And I said, no, there was a setback, but it's going to happen.

Having people like that who have been so supportive.

Now I do draw, I do draw lines. I have to set boundaries. There are people who are fully in the Org, who do support me and Mark. You know, I can't, I can't accept associating with somebody when I know they listened to Mark's podcast, and I see them in selfies with Mark's abuser.

I draw a line. I have to.

And it's, there [00:51:00] are people who are genuine and who actually do care about us and who do reach out to us and who do support us. And you know, that's, that's very refreshing. It's very, very refreshing.

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And it's been a, it's been an incredible journey. It hasn't been easy, but you know, it's all worth it. I mean, this is the whole process of life as we keep going. We keep going.

Candice Schutter: We do. We keep going. And I mean, I, I can't think of a better reminder for me today. Again, as David and I are recording this, it's two days before the United States general election. And, and there's a lot unknown. And I have a feeling when this drops, it's still going to be messy regardless of how it plays out. It's still going to be pretty messy. And we're going to probably be in all the feels. Um, both David and I, and many of you out there when you're listening to this.

And I think just these real reminders of what we're fighting for. [00:52:00] And, you know, even that language I've had to take back. You maybe never lost it because of, of your background. I don't know. You can speak to that. But like for me, when I was really steeped in the new age wellness stuff, it was like, we don't fight. We have to reframe it. It's not a fight. But I really do feel like we're fighting. And anybody who's been marginalized who's had to fight for their rights, understands that that framework is really important, that there's resistance that we have to push back against, again and again.

And, um, I think having you on the podcast right now is very timely in terms of the challenges to, um, so many groups of people. And specifically, if I look at you in the home life that you just described. Like it's on the chopping block in terms of if a certain individual were to get into the White House. Like, how are you, how are you doing? How are you doing with all of that as we move into the election?

David Gallegos-Roybal: It's so important. It's so important. Like I said earlier that, the culture that I exist in, that I grew up in, [00:53:00] that's a part of who I am, there are so many aspects to it. And politics is one of them.

Northern New Mexico is very, very political. And you know, I have a pretty unique perspective, I would say, on all this because I work in government. I'm a government scientist. I've been for the last 13 years. And my dad worked in government for 40 years. And I helped him with campaigns. And we went to small communities in northern New Mexico for the parades, and, you know, made trucks into floats and threw candy to the kids. And, and got to actually shake hands with and meet the people.

And when it comes to politics. I mean, again, it's one of those situations where not everybody's gonna like what you have to say. But for me, I posted last week on social media, I voted early, and that's all I said. And the people who are close to [00:54:00] me, like you Candice, you know who I voted for. But I have friends from, and family from all different walks of life. I have people in my life, both friends and family who are Democrat, who are Republican, who are Libertarian. All, all these different people in my life. And there are so many that I can actually sit down with and have these real conversations with. And say, this is who I support. This is who I'm voting for. This is why. And they'll say, this is why I'm voting for the other person. And they'll give me their reasoning behind it. And I can listen to that, and sometimes say, you know what, I never thought of it that way before.

But again, from my perspective, I have people from all different walks in my life. And so what I want ultimately at the end of the day, when this comes out, for me to be able to get

together with these, uh, you know, people I have close to me and say, wow, didn't see that coming. Or whatever the case may [00:55:00] be, whatever the case may be.

Candice Schutter: Do you struggle with, or how do you negotiate when you are speaking with somebody who has like maybe a more conservative bend. And you feel like they accept you, but then maybe they're voting for a candidate who is, going to potentially, according to Project 2025, dismantle your rights.

How do you navigate that? Like, how do you stay grounded and stay connected in that conversation?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I know that for the most part with, uh, people I have discussions with, I'm not going to change their mind of who they're voting for. Where I set a boundary again, where I draw a line. There are things that are again, where I have to put up that boundary and say, no, no. you know, when it comes to people who deliberately say things and do things that are hurtful to people directly. And [00:56:00] I'm right there when it happens, I'm not going to stand for it.

Candice Schutter: But that's different for you? Like a situation like that, where it's sort of a more overt expression, versus somebody who's maybe blindly following and doesn't really realize what's coming down the pike in terms of your rights. Like, those are two different situations, is kind of what I'm hearing? Is

David Gallegos-Roybal: I experienced both. I experienced both in that when it's when, when somebody does something directly because of their political belief systems, And yet, and I know that you've seen as well when, when you challenge what's being said or regurgitated from soundbites. When people are so worked up and they're fired up and they're going to, you know, speak their mind, but all you're hearing is the same thing that you heard on a news outlet.

When you break it down, their argument starts to fall apart. So once you've deconstructed the argument, which I have done with people in the kindest way. Like you do as well. You're very, [00:57:00] very good at it. And breaking it down till there's nothing for them to argue. It's like, there's no foundation. When you get down and there's no foundation. It's all a house of cards. And they'll continue to argue. It's like, I think there's nothing more you can do at that point, because you made your point.

Candice Schutter: I agree. I agree.

And I always think of, I mean, I go back to this. And people on the podcast are probably tired of hearing about Dr. Lalich's shelf. But I think about that shelf all the time, that metaphor of like, when we have conversations like that and somebody has like a really strong indoctrinating ideology, that in the moment it may seem like what we just said, didn't land, didn't penetrate, like nothing, nothing's changed. There's this little shelf in the back of their mind. We just put something on that shelf. And that shelf can get heavier and heavier and heavier. And they can have a breakthrough at a totally different moment. And they'll remember the conversation that you had, potentially. It's there, it's landed. It's just there. Maybe not going to [00:58:00] make a change in that exact moment.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Here's why it's important in the context of what we're talking about today, is that what I grew up with. What if, in a school that I went to that, if you were to talk about statistically, um, I could not have been the only gay one.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Yeah. Statistically, I could not have been the only gay one. And I am saying this with all due respect to anybody that listens to this who have known me from a point back in my life. Is that this is important politically because there are potentially, in theory, there are people who are out there like me who have not come to terms with that.

And I see in situations and [00:59:00] hear stories, you know, from credible news sources, people sharing their stories about how it took them a long time to come to terms with themselves and who they are. And sometimes people who are in that dilemma, they choose to double down. And you have people who are not living their conscience. Who are not voting their conscience. But by just hearing that message that there is, there is a better way. That I'm living proof. That, you know, this is possible to have a loving, normal, whatever normal means, have a relationship and be supported by family.

That people who have turned in the other direction to turn it into a thing of hatred, for whatever reason, [01:00:00] that, you know, hey, this, this can be a message of hope.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Like I said earlier, if there are people out there hearing this and they've got something in their life that they're struggling with, let this be a message of hope.

Candice Schutter: What gives you hope, David? Where do you source your hope?

David Gallegos-Roybal: I think it comes from a lot of different places. It comes from a lot of different places. It comes from waking up every day with a sense of purpose and knowing what I want for my life. Having people in my life who encourage that and are supporting me. The people like you, Candice, like Mark, like my parents, you give me hope. If I didn't have any of you, I would be in a completely different place. Which is why I say I'm one of the lucky ones. I found people like you. And like Mark. And I have my parents who are there cheering [01:01:00] me on. That gives me hope every single day.

Candice Schutter: Well, and I would say it's a reward for you being authentic. I mean, I think this kind of circles all the way back to the point of you wanting to share your story. Of like, we can't receive the love that's meant for us if we're not who we really are. It's not possible to really receive it. But to show up fully who you are and then receive the love and the support, it's a testament of your courage and your journey and your resiliency.

I mean, I think there's a real reason that resiliency and hope are often spoken about together, in connection. Like the journey that you've been on, and that you've taken and that you're willing to share so transparently with other people, inspires hope. And it gives it right back to you. It's sort of like this feedback loop where, you know, it's going back and forth.

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Because I could say the same about you and Mark in my life. Isn't that a beautiful thing that like true, authentic connection breeds hope. [01:02:00] I really think it does. Especially in times like this, when we're looking out at the outside world going, holy shit, it's hopeless.

It's like, no, it's not. Just go connect, go connect.

Yeah. I'm just so grateful for, for our connection. And that you've been willing to be so generous with your story today so that you can bring hope to others. Thank you.

David Gallegos-Roybal: Thank you for the opportunity. This has been good. And again, if you are out there and you feel alone, and, uh, maybe been on a track that you don't feel is right for who God created you to be, and you need support, uh, reach out to me directly. And Candice will put my contact info. Or if we're connected on social media or whatever the case may be, find a way to reach me. Because there, there is, uh, there is a life of, of true joy and [01:03:00] fulfillment and love when you honor yourself and love yourself. Because that's where it starts, that's where it starts, is honoring and loving yourself.

Because like RuPaul Charles said, "if you can't love yourself, how the hell are you going to love someone else? Can I get an amen?"

Candice Schutter: Amen!

David Gallegos-Roybal: Like I said earlier, to anyone listening who maybe knew me back when I was a teenager, or when I was in middle school, or when I was in college, whoever, whoever gets to hear this. There is a way. And it's going to be hard. It's not going to be easy, but there is life and there's life abundant when we choose to accept ourselves for who God created us to be. That's my faith. And that's my hope for anyone who's out there and who is struggling and looking for something more.

Candice Schutter: Beautiful.

[01:04:00] Oh, it wasn't that lovely. I'm so honored that David trusted me and you and all of us with his story. Huge thanks to he and Mark, who've been such a huge part of the 'cult'ure series and in support of the work that we do here on The Deeper Pulse and so many in our After The Org recovery group over on Facebook. So just want to send them lots of love and gratitude.

And also to you for tuning in and listening and for potentially sharing this podcast with anyone who you think the message might resonate.

I'm doing something a little different this time, making this Patreon release a public release. So if you're a Patreon subscriber, you can share the link to this episode with anyone, whether or not they are a part of this community or not, so please do so.

And I thank you so much for your support of the podcast. I'll be back on Patreon with another episode, likely a solo episode, in the next couple of weeks. And if you're seeing this elsewhere, you can continue to follow this work at [01:05:00] patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

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Thanks so much. See you soon.