

Welcome to journey on. I'm D.J. Burr, the host and executive producer. I'm a licensed psychotherapist, behavioral addictions specialist, and best-selling author of, "I Just Wanted Love, Recovery of a Codependent Sex and Love addict," available on Amazon, audible, and iTunes. This podcast is for male survivors of sexual abuse and assault who want to experience a life worth living beyond a tragic past. I'm a survivor just like you and I know the complexity of healing from trauma and I also know the joy that comes from the healing process. Here are our stories and share your own. You are not alone! You two can breathe deep and journey on.

I encourage you to visit the journey on website at www.journeyonpod.com. There you will find a link to sign up for my recovery journey newsletter, learn about my day weekend recovery events for male survivors and my online recovery coaching services for male survivors.

If you have questions, concerns or comments or would like to be on the show, email me at journeyonpodccast@gmail.com. Journey on his own social media. Tweet us @journeyonpod. Find us on Instagram and Facebook at [journeyonpodcast](https://www.facebook.com/journeyonpodcast).

The month of April is national sexual assault awareness month, sponsored by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. This year, the SAAM Campaign is engaging voices. The focus will be on involving coaches, faith leaders and bystanders by preventing sexual assault. Many groups such as salt and he is same problem with them. With this year's post cards, the NSVRC hope to help these voices talk about preventing sexual assault. You can download the toolkits and postcards as well as other support tools at www.nsvrc.org/saam/getinvolved.

Look out for our social media post this month using the hashtag #SAAM and the hashtag #journeyon as we celebrate national sexual assault awareness month. I'll be looking for your posts with the same hashtags as well. You never know I might reach out to you as well and want to hear your story.

On this week's episode, I'm talking with Patrick Dati. Patrick is a national speaker on the topics of child abuse and assault, bullying and LGBTQI rights. Patrick is the author of, "I AM ME, Survivor of Child Abuse and Bullying Speaks Out," which is now available on Amazon as a paperback and Kindle download. I have this book and it is a page turner! Please pick up this book and read Patrick story.

[Patrick Dati](#) is also known as also known as the first survivor of the prolific serial killer [John Wayne Gacy](#). Patrick wills share his survivor's story with us today and tell us how he managed to put his life back together after such a heinous assault which shattered his childhood innocence and plunged him into the depths of dysfunction. Patrick Dati is truly a survivor and I'm grateful he reached out to me. Take a listen.

D.J. Welcome to the show.

Patrick, can you tell our audience who you are?

Patrick My name is Patrick Dati and I'm an author, advocate, and I speak out to help victims nationally who have been abused, bullied and have nowhere else to turn.

D.J. I imagine that that's a challenging position to be in as an advocate of people who have been abused. Can you tell our audience kind of how you got started?

Patrick Sure. You know what's interesting? I grew up in an Italian, Catholic family on the northwest side of Chicago. My father was an Italian immigrant and we were the family. There were five of us. I was the youngest of five. We were this picture-perfect family. Everything was supposed to be perfect. My parents were wonderful people but they knew a lot of what was going on in the household and out of reasons of not wanting to expose the family so our relatives wouldn't realize was going on. It was kind of like this secret and there's so much we can talk about and we will but that's kind of the beginning of it all.

D.J. So would you say part of your work is to make sure that the secrets are exposed?

Patrick Really, right now I'm working on and it's a major project is coming up with curriculum, education curriculum is based on abuse and the signs that parents should know. I want to push that curriculum out to the teachers, school superintendents, parents. It's so important. It's still untouched.

D.J. It sounds really important

Patrick One of my best friends, she is a professor at the University of Florida. Her major goal is - her name is [Dorothy Espelage](#). Dorothy's major goal is to get grants and once she gets her grants, she goes and speaks to places who will let her speak about anti-bullying. It's amazing because a lot of schools and don't want her because when she goes into these wealthy communities like [Named Community] in major cities, they feel like "My kids are bullies... I don't want them to be labeled as bullies!" You know what I mean?

D.J. I totally understand that. I was bullied as a kid, too. I know you speak a lot about bullying because it happened in your family of origin. I've been reading your book. Can you tell us the name of your book and where we could find a copy of your book? Then we'll just dive into the story that probably inspired it.

Patrick My book is called, "[I Am Me, Survivor of Bullying and Child Abuse Speaks Out.](#)" My book can be found on my website which is www.Patrickdati.com. It's also available on Amazon. That's a great start.

2017 is going to be an amazing year for me. I'm doing some wonderful stuff. I have some great speaking engagements that I'm doing. I'm a little bit different than most speakers. I have a couple of different platforms. My platforms are related to anti-bullying, child abuse prevention and domestic violence and LGBT issues. I know that some of broad, but the reason I do that is because those are things that are important to my life.

D.J. And those are the things that you've been impacted by.

Well here on journey on, we're talking to people who have survived childhood sexual abuse. I started this podcast because I am a survivor as well. I wanted to bring on survivors of childhood sexual abuse or sexual assault, even as an adult. For people to

hear our stories and to share their own because sometimes we feel like we're in isolation. I know the year's story starts at a very young age. How old were you when you were assaulted?

Patrick 9 years old. What my story impacted, not just nationally - internationally... Is that I'm the first victim that got away from the serial killer John Wayne Gacy. If a lot of people don't know who he is, he's a monster. He killed and buried 33 boys under his home.

What was interesting for me after I learned and became an adult, I was the first victim they got away from him. He tried to abduct me from a department store here in Chicago called [Name of Department Store]. Had he succeeded, I would be dead right now. I would have been the first one. It was 1973 and before, before he started his rampage of killing, he had been, I believe in Iowa. He was working some odd jobs. He was molesting boys but he wasn't killing them. He came back to Chicago and he started a construction company and that's where it all began.

D.J., the weirdest thing about it all, my best friend that I grew up with who we've been best friends since kindergarten, I did notice at the time and neither did he, Gacy lived on the next block. My best friend's father was a Chicago police officer at the time.

D.J. Wow! So, this man was in the neighborhood where you probably frequented.

Patrick Dressed up as a clown. He would do neighborhood things. He, he was known to be... Roslyn Carter had a picture with him. Mayor Daley, our Mayor here in Chicago who is deceased, was connected with him. This story does not go away. They believe that he is connected with the Chicago Mafia, or was. So, it's interesting because I get contacted by people all the time here in Chicago. As you see from my website, all of Chicago media, including WGN, ABC NEWS, NBC NEWS, FOX - because this story won't go away.

D.J. Yah! How could it? I mean this man... I imagine is well known throughout the world as being one of the most prolific serial killers... And you are a victim who survived.

So, you're nine years old and based on what I know from your book, you, your brother, and I believe one other person went to the department store? Can you say what happened? How did you come into contact with Gacy?

Patrick Sure. It was a January, winter day. We went to my cousin's house to just hang out. We were nine-year-old kids. We were going to have a snowball fight and just do what typical kids do. After about a half an hour we got cold and my cousin lives literally at half a block from [the department store] which is similar to a Zayers if your audience is not familiar. They had a candy store area and we all pull together our change and bought some candy. We sat in the hallway of the stairwell of the department store. You know, as kids, we were all joking around and we decided to play hide and go seek.

In Chicago, you have to be creative when you live in the city - you have to have fun your own ways. Anyway, I was the seeker. They all went out and hid. After starting to look for them, I needed to use the restroom. When I went up to the restroom and went into the stall, took my jacket off... I heard this person next to me, in the stall next to me. He got up. I heard a lock.

I'll tell you right now, that lock of that door never, ever exits my mind. I hear it every day.

I got up, put my jacket on, washed my hands and as I started to exit the bathroom, he was standing there, in front of the door. No one else was in there. He took out a knife, he held it next to my neck. He said, "You're gonna follow me to my car and you're going to do exactly what I say." At that point, you know, my parents had told me about stranger danger or whatever. At that point, I felt like he was gonna kill me. I don't care. I'm not going to leave with them because if I leave with them he is going to kill me.

At that point, I screamed and I started to have a set.

He locked the bathroom door. Ripped my clothes off and proceeded to rape me.

D.J. I just can't imagine how terrified you must have been.

Patrick Well... I was nine years old. When he was finished, I had totally forgot that my brother and my cousins were there. I mean, that was the last thing in my mind. My immediate thought at that point was putting on my clothes and running home. Which I did.

It was a Saturday or Sunday I don't remember. It was a weekend. My parents were out shopping. I ran up to my bedroom and I got into my closet and I cried. I was, at that point, my life as a child, he stole everything from me.

D.J. When you say that he stole everything from you, your childhood, can you say what that really means for you?

Patrick Yeah, my life changed. I was a straight A student. I flunked the third grade after that. I isolated myself from my friends and my family.

I don't know if you're aware of this from traumatic issues like this, I had a condition which was obsessive-compulsive disorder. I would pray several times a day. My life changed. I was not... I tell people now and I said in my book, I lost my childhood. I lost who I was. It's sad because I have amazing 20-year-old daughter who is love of my life. I provided her with everything in this sense of not just financial things, but love and care. Because of my book and because of my publicity, she obviously knows everything about me. It's not been easy for her.

D.J. I imagine it's probably been quite odd seeing your dad on the news talking about something that happened to him when he was nine years old. Maybe knowing that her peers are seeing those news interviews and you going on book tours and things like that. Yeah. Her childhood has been impacted too.

Patrick When the book 1st came out and I was doing all of my interviews both internationally and nationally, she was still in high school the time. Obviously, she has my last name and kids would ask. "I saw this man on the news last night and his name is Patrick Dati, do you know him?" She would say, "That's my father."

They were like, "Oh my God! His story is amazing!"

To her credit, when they asked about me, she said my father does amazing work and he is a website and if you want to know anything about it you can go there and research it, but it's not for me to tell.

D.J. Was that something you had encouraged her to say or she just came up with that on her own?

Patrick Not at all. She did on her own.

D.J. Sounds very mature.

Patrick Very much so.

D.J. When did you know? When did you come to realize that the man that raped you in that stall at that department store was John Wayne Gacy?

Patrick As a may have indicated earlier, my best friend since we were five years old and we're still best friends, his father was a Chicago police officer in the 16th district in Chicago. We had no idea, myself or my friend or his family. Gacy lived on the next block from where they lived. That day, he was arrested which was in December. It was a Thursday and we had gotten out of school, my friend had invited me to his house to play pool in his basement. We were hanging out.

Within about a half an hour, we started hearing all of these sirens and commotion. And then, when we went upstairs to his main floor of his house, we looked out and the police were surrounding the whole neighborhood. The media, the news who are out there. At this point we still didn't know what was going on. We wanted to find out. My best friend's father called his mom at the house and said don't let the kids out, there's something going out and I'll tell you about it later.

We did go outside. His mom turn on the news and we were watching what was going on.

As soon as Gacy's mug shot came on the screen, I knew that was him. I ran to their bathroom. I began to throw up. I was crying.

When I came out I begged my friend's mom to take me home. She was like, "Patrick, I can't! The media has blocked the driveway." That was my first thought of attempting suicide.

D.J. You said it was your first thought of attempting suicide?

Patrick Mmm hmm. [Agreeing]

Which I did about a week later. The thought of, at that point, 33 young men were killed and buried under a house after he was arrested came forward and for me knowing that I was the first victim they got away. Had I come forward, maybe they wouldn't have died.

D.J. So you felt guilty?

Patrick Mmm hmm. [Agreeing] yes.

D.J. What other feelings did you have?

Patrick At that time? You know, as a teenager, I had felt that I was gay and thought I was although I didn't know what it was. Once I felt those feelings, I pushed them aside because growing up in the household I did, it was acceptable. So, I hid.

I hid deeply.

Married to women. As I mentioned, I have a 20-year-old daughter who's the love of my life. I did what my family expected me to do.

D.J. So I take it that, when you saw that Gacy was a man who molested you and you became sick and want to go home, you did not tell your family what it happened.

Patrick No. Statistics show that 80 to 85% of men and boys never come forward about their abuse out of shame. I was one of those statistics.

D.J. I'm familiar. So, you held on, you held onto that secret. And for most people who hold onto that secret, they experience a lot of pain, sometimes depression, anxiety and I heard you mentioned that you mentioned OCD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, which is an anxiety disorder. And some people turn to drugs and alcohol. Is that a part of your story too?

Patrick it was. It was. But, to be successful with my advocacy work, I needed to control all of that.

D.J. At some point you came forward and told you truth. When did you decide? How did you decide?

Patrick It was 2011. Before I came forward. My psychiatrist had recommended that I write a diary to therapeutically release what I'd gone through. So, I done that already. My father died in 2010. Around February 2011, my mother had my brothers and sisters over to the house to talk about my father's will. My brother who bullied and abused me most of my life was there. He's an alcoholic. He's a cocaine addict.

I was supposed to bring some wine for dinner. When I walked in, I had forgotten it. He asked where it was. I explained that I was running late and he... imagine my mother's kitchen, my family sitting at the table and he called me an 'F-ing Faggot... And that he hated me my entire life... Something that he'd said before but never in front of my family and I looked at them and they all kind of put their head down, not literally, but, but turned their head around.

Again, it was their way of not exposing an issue that was very important because they didn't want to admit that it was going on in our household.

At that point, he said he was going to kill me. He picked up a knife and he chased me out of my mother's house for a block.

I got away.

The call my best friend. My best friend picked me up. I went to the police department, filed a restraining order. That's what changed my life. I actually wrote my brother a letter and thanked him.

Had he not done that, I would not be here in the sense of telling the story to you or to the public.

D.J. So filing a restraining order against your brother change your life?

Patrick No. My brother threatening to kill me change my life.

D.J. So his threat to kill you change your life and what happened next? What you mean by that? A change in life...

Patrick I started my advocacy work. Social media became a huge part of my life, telling my story, reaching out to people that would allow me to tell my story but on a very big basis.

In 2011, the US Department of Health and human services was selecting their six trauma victims and survivors for 2012. I wrote a letter to them, and I was selected.

They flew me to D.C. they interviewed me for about an hour and a half and with my agreement, they took that video footage and used it in 2012 as education based material to children and their parents about abuse and the signs that they should recognize.

So that was the beginning.

D.J. At that point, your story is inspiring others or at least educating others.

Patrick Yah. I mean, when I returned from D.C., every Chicago television station picked me up. I was on ABC news, NBC news, Fox, WGN and it just elevated me. I had no PR firm, nothing at that point. My book wasn't even out. But people wanted to know my story.

D.J. You told everything?

Patrick Mmm hmm. [Affirming]

Like I am with you now.

D.J. That must've been freeing for you.

Patrick Of course. You know, the biggest thing for me that come out of doing all of this and his wife doing what I'm doing, early on in my advocacy work, probably, right after I did my work with the US Department of Health and Human Services, there was a mother, her name is Dawn. She lives in upstate New York. Where very good friends now. She didn't even know about me at this point. She started to research her son, Hunter, was becoming isolated, grades were similar to mine, you know dropping. Not communicating. He was 11 at the time.

Don did some research on the Internet and came along my website. She read what I had written on the website. Immediately, like the next day she researched a psychiatrist and found one and sent Hunter to a psychiatrist.

After about like three sessions, Hunter had disclosed that he was being molested by his father on his visits. That was so incredible for Dawn and Hunter to get him help although about two weeks later, I don't know if you're familiar with Denise Brown, Nicole Brown Simpson's sister. She's a domestic violence advocate. I was a guest on her radio show in New York. I had posted on social media that I was going to be on her show. Don knew it. During the show, telling my story like I am now, Denise had mentioned that we're gonna take some calls from callers that want to ask you questions. I said that's awesome! Don was the first caller.

She said, "**Patrick** it's me. You do is you call." She put Hunter on the phone and he said, "Mr. Dati, you save my life." I said, "How's that." He said, "if my mother didn't get me the help that I needed, I was going to commit suicide the next week. That changed my life forever."

D.J. That's why I think it's important for us to share stories.

Patrick Correct.

D.J. if someone out there would be able to relate, even if it's just one person, we could help that person get the help they need.

What kind of advice could you offer to our listeners who have struggled with their own truth? Maybe they were molested as a child or assaulted as an adult? What advice can you offer?

Patrick Well, where I'm heading right now, it's all about education. We lack it. We lack it in our school systems. We lack it in the home. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because parents don't want to admit that their child could possibly be molested. Bullying, I mean, I never talk politics, never, never, never, never.

With this new administration coming up, it's going to be a huge issue. With regards to bullying. With regards to aggressive abuse. Now is the time to support those issues and to make a difference.

So, the advice I'd give people would be, more education. Parents need to be researching on the Internet that has so much information.

You know talking to the children, I have a 20-year-old daughter. Because of my experience, I've had many conversations with her in regard to, this is not okay, this is okay. Unfortunately, for me, we have a high crime rate here in Chicago and nationally, but you don't have as many stories of these crazy serial killers back in the day. At least we know of. It changed my life. I will never be the same person. I'm not dwelling the aspect of the anger and the hurt that it caused me. Right now, what I'm focused on is how can I help another child. How can I help a parent understand and those are my goals?

I also, and I've talked about this, I'm developing educational curriculum, to help enhance school systems, school superintendents, school principals, teachers, parents on this stuff. But it's so obvious, but they take for granted.

D.J. It's wonderful that you're able to provide that education and you are a resource. You are a resource to people who need it. You're a voice to a lot of people who are unable to speak about their abuse and we need more people like you. I'm inspired by folks like you who can tell their stories. It's help me tell my story. There've been people who I've interacted with who've inspired me to tell my story, and that's why we have this podcast today. So, if we can all get together and tell her stories, who knows we can do.

Patrick Right!

D.J. Before we close, I wonder if you have any words that you could impart to our listeners.

Patrick Definitely! You know I'm not pitching myself but I think a lot of people would learn a lot about me and my experience from my website which is www.Patrickdati.com. My book is on Amazon. Definitely a must read. Especially for victims and or family members who have been in situations like you and I. I'm always a resource. I'm not clinically able to give people advice, although, I'm an ear for them to listen.

D.J. that's what we need. We need more people to listen. So, thank you for offering that. You are a listener. Yes, like you said, you're not clinically trained, but you're a survivor. I have been reading your book and I am deeply entrenched in your book and it's just very moving. You just capture the essence of the era of you grown-up and in dealing with, you really capture that.

Patrick **D.J.** , it's like my publishers told me. You know what, there's too much here. You should focus on one aspect. At that point, they wanted me to focus on John Wayne Gacy. And I was like no. No! That's not my story. That's a part of my story but that's not my story. If people want to learn about what I've gone through, then they need to know everything.

D.J. that's true! That's true! I recommend to our listeners to pick up **Patrick's** book, it's on Amazon and you will be engrossed in a book. I tell you, it's a page turner. Definitely pick it up! Check out **Patrick's** website.

Patrick, I want to thank you for being on the show. You're an inspiration and I'm so grateful that you and I have been able to connect and hopefully we can do some more work together. Anything that I could do to help support you, just let me know. I just want to thank you again for really being vulnerable and authentic today because I know will help others.

Patrick I agree. Thank you so much! I appreciate the work you're doing. Thanks.

Journey On is looking to hear from you. If you're interested in sharing your experience, strength and hope, email us at journeyonpodcast@Gmail.com for details.

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Until next time, breath deep [inhales] [exhales] and Journey On.