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Lily Cornell Silver: Hi everyone, I'm Lily Cornell Silver and welcome to Mind Wide Open, my mental health-focused interview series. Today, I am talking to an old friend, Jack Osborne, and we are talking about our similar family structures and what mental health looked like for us growing up in the entertainment industry, his experience with sobriety, and how COVID has touched his and his family's lives. Thank you so much for watching and I hope you enjoy.

Hi, Jack.

Jack: Hi, Lily.

Lily: It's so great to see you. It's been like-

Jack: Likewise.

Lily: -a million years, I think.

Jack: Yes, it has been, yes. You were a very small humanoid, I think, when I last saw you.

Lily: So, there are a lot of things that can cause kids to grow up faster than they normally would and something that has definitely been my experience has been growing up being born into the public eye or growing up in the entertainment industry. I'm curious if that's something that you experienced, if you feel like that made you grow up a little bit faster.

Jack: Absolutely. It was funny talking about relating to my upbringing. I was thinking about this just before doing it. Our lives kind of mirror each other. Your mother is a strong music manager, my mom is a strong music manager. Your father musician, my father musician, so it's funny. There's very few people in the world, I think, that have a family setup as similar to mine. It's kind of interesting.

Lily: It's always nice to talk to somebody who has a similar--because definitely, it's a weird thing, and it's so unique.

Jack: Yes, I think it does force you to grow up quickly, but I think a large part of that was my parent's willingness to be okay with that. They were okay with me going out on the road with my dad for months on end, and missing school. They were okay with me doing things I probably shouldn't have been doing at a young age. It's something that I've had to over the years, there's been bouts of my life where I've resented that, where I felt like I didn't have the childhood that I think I should have, but then again, it's that like, "Well, but I had the childhood I had, and that was the



experience I had and I feel that what I gained from it was far greater than what I lost."

Lily: Right. I've fluctuated between resenting growing up in a music industry family. It's definitely, it's a little bit different. I didn't have a reality show or anything like that, but still, there were times where I was like, "I didn't ask for this. I don't want this," and then other times looking back on it now, especially that I'm older, and it's not maybe as emotionally overwhelming that I'm like, "I really appreciate the uniqueness of that experience and the worldliness and how much I learned from that." So it's a both/and.

Jack: Yes, it's probably having kids. I often go like, "Am I going to do things the exact same way as my parents? Did they have it right?" It's something that you constantly, I think when you have kids, this is the time when you reflect on your upbringing the most because you can only base your parenting off of what you experienced as a kid.

Lily: I'm curious too about your upbringing in the entertainment industry and in the public eye and how that relates or related when you were growing up to mental health because it's something for me, and obviously since my dad's passing, my mental health and the mental health of my family is something that's under the microscope and something that's it's public. That there's not really a way to escape the publicity of my mental health and my trauma and what I've struggled with. I can imagine it might be similar for you as well.

Jack: I went through a real rough patch, from the moment that when we did *The Osbournes* to when I was about-- We only did the show for like three years, but during that three years, I was not in a good place and it's because human beings are not designed to be famous.

I'm sorry, and I'm sure you can relate, growing up with a rockstar father, you see that fame is torturous.

Lily: Oh, absolutely.

Jack: As a child, all of a sudden it's like, on this hugely successful show which happened very accidentally and it's not like we were like, "Let's go out and we're going to go do this thing." It just happened, and I really lost my way. I struggled a lot with depression even before the show, as a teenager and then once the show kicked off, I fell into drugs and alcohol. It was pretty, pretty aggressive.

I often joke that I picked up a good healthy Oxycontin habit and I ended up in rehab at 17. I've been sober ever since, but it took a lot of self-work to try and knock back a three year experience.

Lily: I'm thankful that you pointed out that aspect of fame, because when you're in the public eye and you're able to, or your family is able to do what they love and be successful at it. There is so much privilege that comes with that, but there's also so



much that people don't see in terms of reality of what it is to be famous and what it is to be a public figure. That's why I think mental health is such a thing that's talked about in the entertainment industry is because everybody's struggling with it in some way, shape or form.

Jack: 100%. Mental health issues is the great equalizer. It's that you could be the queen of England, or you could be a homeless guy living under a bridge in LA and you're both dealing with the same, whether it's a chemical imbalance or some traumatic brain, some mental health issue and it's going to affect you the same way.

And it's really interesting, having been sober for as long as I have, I'm constantly on this quest of fit, it's not cliché, Tom, but it's like progress, not perfection. It's like, "How do I continuously progress through whatever the universe is going to throw at me?" A few years ago, I stumbled across this book and I highly recommend it to you, your listeners. It's a very short book, but it's written by a guy named Sebastian Young Junger and it's called *Tribe*.

It's essentially about PTSD but he has essentially correlated mental health and tribal structure. It's fascinating. He talks a lot about how having community and having rules to live by and having moments in life where there's rite of passage, how it's essential to mental health. If you look at it as a society, we've only been out of a tribal structure for maybe 200 years and we're not designed to live in single family homes in cities of millions of people. We didn't evolve that way. We're really--

Lily: In a society that puts so much emphasis on the individual as well, and individual scene and individual success. Back to what you were saying about the queen of England versus homeless man analogy, mental health is absolutely the great equalizer, but at the same time, accessibility to mental health care is so disproportionate. and so--

Jack: 100%

Lily: I'm curious, just on the theme of community, do you feel like your experience in rehab was beneficial for your mental health or was there negative portions there?

Jack: 100%. I think for me, it gave me the opportunity to be a 17-year-old at a time where I was forced to be an adult. It gave me a sense of community. I met a bunch of young guys with a similar age, all going through the same thing. It gave me a conscious contact with a spiritual, some kind of higher power spirituality and that I found very grounding.

I was very fortunate to where I've never questioned my decision and I've never questioned the process. I think having worked with a lot of people in recovery, sometimes people get stuck at that and I always just accepted like, "No, this is what I need to do to feel whole."

Lily: Since being sober, do you still struggle with depression? If so, how do you deal with that in a different way?



Jack: I will have bouts and I got diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2012. MS is as unique to the individual that has it as their fingerprint. I could be sat in a room of people, all who got diagnosed the same week as I did, and we all have completely different symptoms from it. But the most common symptom with MS is depression.

And so I get these weird bouts of it. For me, going through divorce, I was horribly depressed then. I find I feel better when I'm in nature struggling, if that makes sense.

Lily: [laughs] Than at home struggling?

Jack: Well, yes. I've been teaching this to my kids. I think struggle is actually really healthy for mental health, especially if-- Well, I should say struggling with a goal at the end, I think a lot of kids get depressed at school because they're struggling through school, but they don't see the light at the end of the tunnel because they're like, "What's the point in learning the geometry? I'm not going to be an architect."

For me, I have to have struggle to create purpose. When I hit these bouts of depression, I'm like, 'All right, cool. I'm going to go surf, just get out in the water.' Surfing is a struggle at the end of the day, and all the best surfers struggle with great style and class. You're trying to tame a power greater than yourself. You're trying to use the ocean as like this, "All right, I'm going to try and take what could be very destructive and giant wave and I'm going to utilize it to my benefit."

For me, it's spending a lot of time outdoors and doing as many positive things as possible that elicit that adrenaline spike which changes the way I feel.

Lily: In a healthy way.

Jack: Exactly.

Lily: Absolutely. On my dad's side of the family too, actually I have my grandpa and one of my aunts is diagnosed with MS as well. That's something that I've seen the impact of, and my aunt has a similar experience when her MS flares, that bit comes with depression.

Jack: There's been times where it's just like, I'm at home crying, no one's there, I'm just like crying. It's like, "What is it?" Like, "I went to bed fine." I have to surround myself with my tribe and with the people that give me good vibes, as cliché as that sounds but it's true. I need my people.

Lily: When I first started this mental health series, there were a lot of people that were concerned about me and how much I was sharing and how open I was being about my mental health because they would be like, "Oh, a lot of the stuff you're sharing is really personal." Like, "Is that scary? Are you having a hard time with that?" Honestly, something about growing up in the public eye, I was just like, "Fuck it." [laughs]



I will always talk about anything when it comes to my mental health. For me, I think that was definitely born from having my biggest trauma be a really, really public scenario and not really having any privacy around that. I'm curious if that's something that you've experienced growing up in the public eye. If you almost felt like it was easier to talk about your mental health because you were born without privacy around that, anyway.

Jack: When I went into treatment, it was like the height of the show. It was highly publicized when I was getting sober and I chose to just embrace it and own it. I was like, "You know, it is what it is." So I've always been pretty comfortable about talking about mental health. My mom famously says the media has such an effect on society and she used to say, "It's cooler to be a junkie than it is to be overweight," because of the way the media looks at you, and it all comes down to the optics of certain issues.

Lily: I'm curious, something that I like to address a lot in the series is the stigma around male mental health and male emotion and if you ever experienced that. Having a more difficult time, feeling like you couldn't be open about it because you identify as a male, or if that wasn't something you really experienced?

Jack: You know, it's funny. I often will question my-- I'm not the most emotional person. If you're around me, you're not going to experience the full emotional spectrum from me. It's like a running joke I have with my girlfriend where it's just like, if I want to talk about feelings, she's like, "Oh my God, there's feelings. They're in there somewhere." I've cried in meetings, I've cried in therapy. I've cried in front of my kids.

I'm not afraid to elicit vulnerability when it comes to dealing with things, whether it is a mental health issue or just feeling what I'm feeling. But I have a lot of resilience to get to the point in which it is needing a release. I'll tell you what, with my kids, there's no shortage of emotion having three girls in the house. There's a lot of crying over. I'm like, "Okay, that's fine. You can cry over only having one purple sock today and not having two purple socks."

My one daughter has been wearing the same pair of underwear now for six months. We have to wash them every night. She'll only wear the pink LOL doll underwear. That's it. It's a nightmare.

Lily: [laughs] But giving her permission to cry about that and permission to feel about that, that's huge. That's emotionally intelligent parenting.

Jack: I will do the, okay explain to me why you're crying. I'm okay with it. You just have to tell me why.

Lily: I talked about this a lot in my series and talked about it with my mom a lot is how lucky I feel to have grown up with a mom that raised her kids like you are raising yours. It's talking about feelings and not telling me, "Don't cry, don't cry." Emotions were encouraged, but also the logic behind emotions were encouraged. If you're



crying, because you just feel like you need to cry, then say that and communicate that.

So I super appreciate that. Something that I know you guys your family has struggled with as of very recently as well is COVID. How has that impacted your mental health with it touching your family so closely?

Jack: It's weird. COVID first, my kids got COVID over the summer. That was pretty-- Fortunately, COVID doesn't rock kids like it does adults so it wasn't terrible but knowing my mom got it, there was a high risk my dad could have got it. It was weird, but I'm not a panicker. I'm kind of one of those people where I panic when it's needed. I was like, "Okay, she's doing the right thing. "

I was trying to be as supportive as you can but when someone's sick, your instinct is to go to their aid. It's like, "Well, I can't go help my mom, because I've got kids here and I can't. You just can't do that."

Lily: That seems to be the really isolating piece of it that so many people are struggling with is that you can't go to each other. You can't be by each other's sides.

Jack: Yes. It's tough. One of my oldest oldest friends, he took his life in end of April. He was just dealing with a lot of mental health issues, and then the lockdown rolled in, and I think it just crippled him. That was pretty tough. He was literally one of my oldest friends in LA. We were kids together, we got sober together. It's firsthand seeing that. It's painful.

It was a really tough thing to have to walk through. My friend had two kids and no one would step up to clean his place out and me and another friend did. In the last year, I think I've lost seven or eight people to either overdoses or suicide.

Lily: Wow. I'm so sorry to hear that.

Jack: It sucks. It's been really odd. A very good friend of mine runs this beautiful organization and I definitely want to just give him a shout out just because it goes hand in hand. I think it's The Grief Recovery Institute and that whole everything is how to process grief, how to go through all the phases of it. It's a beautiful thing. I am not the best at processing grief. I just-

Lily: Being present through it is one of the most difficult things imaginable.

Jack: Yes. I put up a wall and I just try and forget it. Traumas and I'm one of those people that I tend to forget pain.

Lily: I've found hope in that, I've seen so many different mental health organizations and mental health-oriented programs flourishing and coming to the frontlines in this because it's, I think now more than ever, humanity is being put in a position where it's like, okay, we can't ignore mental health anymore. We cannot ignore mental



health. We've gotten pretty far pretending mental health isn't something that needs to be prioritized, but we're at a point now where there's no getting around it.

What is something that is giving you hope right now?

Jack: I think ultimately, my biggest hope is my kids. Because it comes down to **[unintelligible 00:21:20]** service. If I don't do what I have to do, for me, they suffer. If I don't do what I have to do for them, they suffer. It's a lot of work, but it's so rewarding. It's also a pain in the arse sometimes. What are you hopeful for?

Lily: No one's ever asked me that question back. [laughs] That's so funny. I end every interview with that question and no one's ever asked me that question back, and I've never even thought about it. Honestly, something that I'm hopeful for is what we were just talking about is, I'm seeing this shift towards mental health as a real topic of conversation and not only be like, "Oh my god, we need to take care of our mental health, like, self-care."

Now, it's actually like, these are the things that are happening. I'm seeing more movement towards tangible change. And my generation, as we were just saying, gives me so much hope and younger generations give me so much hope because, at least in my circles, mental health is something we talk about constantly. When I'm with my friends, we do a check-in with everybody like, "What's something that's challenging for you right now?"

How's your mental health holding up? What's something that is positive for you right now?" Those dialogues, and those conversations, and that movement towards tangible change, is the most hopeful thing to me. Well, thank you so much for being here, Jack. It has been such a joy to connect with you after all this time. As we said, people who can relate to our specific experience can be few and far between, so it's so great to connect.

Jack: Exactly, yes. You and I, we come from a small tribe.

Lily: But it's a tribe nonetheless.

Jack: Exactly.

Lily: [laughs] Cool. Thank you.

Jack: Thank you and safe travels. Happy holidays. Happy New Year, and yes.

Lily: Thank you.

[music]

[00:23:39] [END OF AUDIO]