**You Are a Survivor!**

**Intro:** Welcome to the Chalene Show. Chalene has helped thousands with her books, seminars and online academies. She’s the author of the New York Times best-selling book PUSH and a mother of two.

**Chalene Johnson**: Yo! What’s up? I’m so happy you’re here. Listen, I know I usually cut up a little bit. Try to keep things light and funny and sarcastic, but I need you to know that today’s show is – is pretty serious. It’s real and it’s a topic that affects way too many of us, way too many people who I love, way too many of my listeners and we just have got to remove the stigma and the shame if this cycle is ever going to end. And it will, it must, it has to.

If you can hear my voice today, you my friend are a survivor. Your track record is a hundred percent. You’ve survived everything that’s happened to you. Even the stuff that shouldn’t have happened to you as a child that was not your fault, you’ve survived it.

But today’s show isn’t just about surviving. It’s about being a champion, a warrior and reclaiming your greatness. Today, I’m speaking with Steve LePore. He’s the executive director of 1in6.org. One in six of the men you know are in fact survivors of sexual abuse. And it’s said that one in three women have been sexually abused in their lifetimes.

Yet in today’s show, we’re going to focus on the guys, the boys, the dudes, the dudes we love, so that we can better understand how to reach out, how to help them ask for help, how to understand how beautiful your life could be, how amazing you could feel if you could just free yourself from the secret, the shame that’s not yours to carry and where to start, where to go, how to get help, how to help somebody who you just suspect there’s something isn’t right. And maybe everyone else sees someone who’s short-tempered and angry and defensive.

But you see someone who’s in pain, someone who’s hurting and you love them enough to want to learn more yourself so that you can let someone know that no matter what’s happened, nothing is going to change the way you feel about them, that you love them unconditionally, that you will be there for them, that they can be themselves, that they can open up, that they can trust that you’re not going leave them or shame them or blame them. But instead, that you will walk with them through their journey or feeling, and maybe this message is for you. Maybe, just maybe, it’s you who needed to hear this message today.

My lifers, I love you. And to those of you who are survivors, this show is dedicated to you.

Steve, thank you so much for being on the show today.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, my pleasure.

**Chalene Johnson**: So the first thing I have to ask you is the name of your organization is 1in6 and I explained to our listeners just before we started what that number represents. But I want to ask you because you’re in it, how accurate do you think that number is?

**Steve LePore:** It’s probably not correct in that it’s greater, the actual number would be greater. But in terms of research, that’s the closest that we can get. And the reason I say that it’s probably not accurate is that the issue is highly under-reported for men. It’s probably under-reported for women and children as well, but for men, it’s a highly under-reported crime that’s been committed and issue in an individual’s life.

**Chalene Johnson:** So just that one in six, does that represent the number of reported x?

**Steve LePore:** Yes, as best as we can tell.

**Chalene Johnson**: Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh.

**Steve LePore:** Well, it’s 19 million adult men in the United States that suffer.

**Chalene Johnson:** That’s – that means like reported to an actual agency.

**Steve LePore:** Or to an individual who may have had the opportunity to be involved in the collection of data. So that doesn’t mean that there’s been one is six cases opened in terms of criminal activity that’s being investigated. This is just the best that we’ve got. There’s a whole page on our website that talks about the statistic and it cites the different studies that have been done. So reporting could have been in a study. It could have been reported to law enforcement, what have you. That’s the best we’ve got. It’s probably low.

**Chalene Johnson:** It’s got to be. I mean, it just got to be.

**Steve LePore:** No question.

**Chalene Johnson:** Especially with the community that you serve and this is a message everyone needs to hear. If you have men in your life, if you have children, if you have other people that you care about, this is a message for everyone to hear. And I just want to say before we go much further that we might talk about some things that stir up emotion in people and to just know that we’re going to talk about some pretty sensitive issues, so take care of yourself and we’re going to offer some resources at the end of this program. Please promise me that you’ll stay tuned and take advantage of those.

I want to start by saying that we have people listening who may themselves be survivors of childhood sexual abuse. And we have people listening who may be married to or in a relationship with someone who is a survivor. And there may be those listening who, they just aren’t ready yet to identify themselves as survivors.

So, I think this is a really important message. And even for those of us who are parents and want to just be aware. Because, you know, I watched an interview with you Steve and one of the things I heard you say is that it’s your mission to have survivors really come to grips with this earlier in their journey.

So what can you tell me about when on average – you know, let’s talk about men right now.

**Steve LePore:** Sure.

**Chalene Johnson**: When – at what age does the average man say, “This is something I have to deal with”?

**Steve LePore:** Late 30s to late 40s is the average, that’s the window. But let’s roll the tape back really quickly.

**Chalene Johnson:** Sure.

**Steve LePore:** I want to thank you for the sensitivity that you have to the issue in reminding your listeners that if there is something that’s stirred up, it could be personal, it could be tangential, it could be somebody that they know and care about, it’s very important to – but I’m grateful to you for your sensitivity to that. Because it’s not uncommon for someone to say they saw a TV show, they saw an advertisement or a public service announcement or they heard something on the radio and that was the beginning of their journey.

The average for a man is, as I say, late 30s to late 40s. And one of the underpinnings of our mission is to try and lower that age, so it would be great if men who were in their late teens to their mid to late 20s began to work on this. What we hypothesize and we think that we’re pretty close to being accurate and dead on is that the earlier that a man will work on this, the sooner that they can reclaim their lives, live a more healthy and complete life and – and mitigate a lot of the damage that can be done should a guy have this in their history and just not deal with it.

**Chalene Johnson**: Why do you think it takes so long? Why 30s and 40s?

**Steve LePore:** Well, I think there are a number of reasons. And in the work that we’ve done to try and understand better and then how to do awareness and engagement with younger men is, younger guys are just not thinking about anything other than, “Well, I got to get through school or I really need to start my career. I’m interested in a relationship.” And they don’t think that maybe what happened to them as a young person, as a boy could affect all of those things.

And then the other reality is the masculine code, the way that we as men are hardwired and the way that our culture speaks to and about men even as little boys. And I could ask you the question, you’ll answer it because it’s universal but what do we tell little boys?

**Chalene Johnson**: Be tough. Don’t cry.

**Steve LePore:** Be tough. Don’t cry.

**Chalene Johnson**: Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** If I asked that question a thousand times, I get hat answer a thousand times.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** So as a little boy is raised to say or to learn not to cry or to be tough, to pull yourselves up by your boot strings, well, by the time they’re 18, 19, 20 they have sort of bought into that. And what’s happened to them is difficult to process. It’s confusing to be sure. It’s hurtful. It’s painful. But boys don’t cry. Men don’t cry. And so, they enter young adulthood and adulthood sort of having bought that and processing it that way. And a lot of times guys wait until an event or until they have said, “Enough is enough. You know, I’ve moved from one job to the next too many times or I can’t maintain a relationship or I’m struggling with this issue or that issue.”

**Chalene Johnson:** And how often is that? You said it’s often when they are struggling with an event. How often is that addiction?

**Steve LePore:** Oh, there’s no question that addiction – great question. There’s – on your part, there’s no question that addiction of all kinds are fueled by what happened to a man as a child. Now, it’s not to say that every man that’s suffering with an addiction suffered childhood sexual abuse. But that is a key marker in the lives of men who are struggling. They’re trying to numb any number of things, including and in many cases beginning with having been abused sexually as a little boy.

**Chalene Johnson:** What other ways does this manifest itself in adult lives?

**Steve LePore:** Well, unhealthy ways is, you know, a guy could be a workaholic. A guy could take on dangerous activities in terms of their employment. And on occasion, and I don’t know if you want to go too far down this road, but on occasion, this issue could manifest itself in a man becoming violent towards other people.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** Now, there is a myth and the myth says that if you were abused, you will abuse. That is a myth. That’s not indeed true. The reality is that for most guys who were abused, they abhor what happened to them and would never ever consider perpetrating violence against another person. But that indeed is part of what a guy has to deal with. So they set themselves up to not want to think about, not want to talk about or deal with the issue and the way to numb it or hold it at bay is to engage in, you know, intense activities, activities that are unhealthy to be sure.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** And in some cases, activities that outwardly appear to be very healthy but still are holding them at bay in terms of dealing with the issues, the workaholic, you know, the president of the company. And that – obviously, not all presidents of companies suffer his but some have, perhaps many have.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah. You know, I’ve had this conversation and – and you and I have just met but, I mean, in my life I know a lot of professional athletes.

**Steve LePore:** Mm-hmm.

**Chalene Johnson:** And a lot of male professional athletes who have survived sexual abuse as a child.

**Steve LePore:** Indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** And because that happened as a kid, they were able to drown out and just pretend this never happened by just focusing like a drug on their sport.

**Steve LePore:** Absolutely.

**Chalene Johnson:** And that’s how they become the elite one percent of one percent of one percent because that became their addiction, how they could validate that I am worthy, I am – I’m not a throwaway person, maybe this didn’t happen. And I would be – gosh, I wish more professional athletes would just come forward and bring awareness to it.

**Steve LePore:** Well, what’s happening is professional athletes, celebrities of all different kinds are beginning to. So the dialogue that we’re having now is an opening to folks being willing to say, you know what, I think I want to talk about this.

So, one athlete who has been involved in our work who’s been public, he writes about it actually, is R.A. Dickey. R.A. Dickey is a Cy Young pitcher in the Major Leagues, pitched for the Mets for quite some time. Now, he’s up Canada pitching for the Blue Jays.

**Chalene Johnson**: Wow.

**Steve LePore:** And he finally said enough is enough. He wrote a book about it and he speaks publicly on it.

Now, the important thing is to understand that what happened to him doesn’t define him. He’s a world-class athlete. He is a Cy Young award winner. He’s a dad...

**Chalene Johnson**: Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** ...and a husband. And oh, by the way, he suffered childhood sexual abuse.

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Steve LePore:** But he was able to get his bearings and to say, “All right, I’m going to speak about this.” And I think more and more people are – are beginning to say, “You know what? I’m going to speak about this.” And then, our caution to anyone, whether they’re an athlete or whether they are, you know, a college student on campus trying to figure out how to juggle all of the school work that they have, be patient. Be thoughtful in the process as you begin to process. Have a safety-net in place. I would never suggest that someone start speaking their truth if you will until they’ve got things in place that are going to help them get through this. R.A. Dickey didn’t write a book just because he had some extra time.

**Chalene Johnson:** Well, let’s – let’s talk about that for a second, because one thing I’ve noticed is there is a resurgence of people feeling empowered by sharing their story.

**Steve LePore:** Yes.

**Chalene Johnson:** And especially in what I do, I mean, your story is what attracts people to you. It’s what motivates people or inspires them or it allows them to hear your story and see that you’re a real person and connect with you.

**Steve LePore:** Indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** I think the challenge or the...

**Steve LePore:** Caution.

**Chalene Johnson:** The caution, yes, would be that, I just don’t think you can tell or should you tell a story until you really processed it and – and that you have healed, at least to some extent, so that the story isn’t raw. The doesn’t, you know, leave people hanging with this, you know, feeling that you’re still dealing with it and you’re still in the middle of it. And so, I have to just say this because I’ve been at too many seminars and hosted seminars myself where someone will stand up, grab the mic and for the very first time in their whole life, they will share what happened to them, which is so incredibly brave.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah. Yep.

**Chalene Johnson:** But at the same time I’m just – is that the right place?

**Steve LePore:** Well, it’s incredibly brave but it’s potentially really dangerous. And so, what you want to do is honor the place that this person has come where they finally have said, “You know what, I’m ready to start talking about it.” But then to encourage them to understand all of the different options, all of the possibilities, what if you tell somebody publicly and they don’t believe you, how are you going to process that.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** What if you tell somebody publicly and you’re made fun of or you’re challenged? So what we always tell folks is that it’s very important to begin to reclaim your life by being able to tell your story but do so in a thoughtful way, in a very patient and paced way, do so with support in place. Are you in therapy? Are you in a support group? Have you taken care of yourself so that as you begin to go public – and it’s not zero to sixty, it’s zero to five, it’s zero to fifteen.

**Chalene Johnson:** Well, if we’ve got people listening to this point in our interview today, I want to be very, very specific. So let’s assume you’re listening and this has stirred up some really uncomfortable, unpleasant thoughts that you’ve been trying to push down for many, many years and you can feel it, you can feel it inside of you welling up.

**Steve LePore:** Yes.

**Chalene Johnson:** What do you tell them? What can they do today? What today can that person do? And then what can they do two days later and a week later?

**Steve LePore:** Yeah, you know, we want to honor those people who are having those feelings, who are beginning to have thoughts. We want to thank them for whatever it is that’s going on inside of them that’s saying, “You know what, I’m ready now. I need to talk. I need to think about this. I need to process this,” we want to honor that. We want encourage and caution them to be patient. What I would suggest is that male or female, they go to our website and nose around. There are three entry portals, one for individuals and primarily for men, it’s gender-based. Our work is for men or those that identify as being male, but we get a lot of info at emails back to us from women who said, “You know what, the content, the text on your website spoke to me and not as...”

**Chalene Johnson:** Universal.

**Steve LePore: “.**..a loved person, a person that loves a survivor but for somebody who indeed survived themselves.” So male or female, go to the website and spend whatever time it takes to begin to get comfortable with what the process might look for you. It’s different for all of us. And then, you know, there’s a library. You can check a book or two out if you’d like to read about it. There is a support line where you can go and it’s live, it’s chat based 24/7 and you can put your toe in the water that way and begin to talk to somebody about what you’re feeling, what you think might have happened.

You know, what we would say is that we believe you. We honor you. We’re grateful for you. Is there a way that we can help you? And again, I want to be very careful. Our work is with adult men. If it happens to be a woman who comes forward, we’ll find a way to point them in the direction of services that are suitable for what they’re dealing with. But what we always preach is patience and pace.

**Chalene Johnson**: Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** Andwe would never want to discourage someone on the other hand of saying, “Well, you’re not quite ready. So, you know, get back to this.” If they know they’re ready, if they know that they’re beginning have something percolate inside of them that says, “All right, enough is enough. I think this happened. I’d like to deal with this,” and so forth, then it’s important for them to begin to move in that direction.

**Chalene Johnson**: How useful have you found therapy to be for survivors?

**Steve LePore:** Incredibly useful, both individual therapy, group therapy, whatever a person can afford, can get themselves into, you know. And I’m keenly aware of that. I’m privileged I have the opportunity to be in therapy and to go to group. That’s not something that everybody has the privilege to do. But if you can find a way, I think it’s very, very important.

**Chalene Johnson:** I’m very privileged to have amazingly beautiful people in my life who have shared their stories with me and their journey of surviving and almost every one of them, both male and female without fail didn’t tell anyone, like you said, until they’re 30s and 40s.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** And therapy was such as an integral part of their recovery.

**Steve LePore:** Mm-hmm.

**Chalene Johnson:** And becoming who they were meant to be.

**Steve LePore:** Indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** And I can say that every single one of them has better relationships in people who really embrace them and love them and they’re just – they’re happier people because they don’t carry the secret with them anymore. So I just want people to know that, gosh, oh, I just – I love you so much and people will love you more even though it’s scary to think about. You just have to believe that, you know, that moment of vulnerability often brings us so much closeness in our most important relationships.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, indeed. We talk to so many guys whose lives are fear-based. And not that they’re fearful individuals in their employment or what have you but they – they’re afraid that if anybody knew what happened to them – and so – and we speak about this often publicly. It’s not uncommon for a guy to say, “Well, you know what, I got up every morning and I put on two support coats. I put on the support coat of fear and I put on the support coat of shame. And that’s what I wore through the day. That was the lens that I saw my life through.” And the idea is to take those off, to take off the coat or the jacket of fear and of shame, of guilt. And once that happened, you’re exactly right, they’re able to engage more deeply with their partners, with their children, with their employees and employers, their neighbors.

And it’s very frightening. It’s uncharted waters. It’s very, very difficult for men, especially, to say, “All right, well, you know what, I’m not really sure how to do this” or “I’m not certain what the roadmap ahead is going to look like.” And that’s why I say, “If we would just engage with men and say, “We believe you. We honor you. How may we help you? I’m willing to stand with you and be patient. I’m willing to be there when things don’t look the way you’d like for them to and when things do we’ll celebrate.” But it’s just to engage and to come alongside of a guy that we have found really works wonders. And sometimes that starts with therapy. Sometimes that starts in group.

**Chalene Johnson**: Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** And a lot of times what we know is that a guy will go to see a therapist for an issue, the presenting issue might not be that, “Oh, by the way, I think I might have been abused as a little boy.” It might be that.

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Steve LePore:** I’ve got a problem with alcohol or drugs. I’ve got a problem with a sex addiction. I’ve got a problem with not being able to hold a job or whatever it is. So it’s the presenting issue that’s one thing. But if you follow that trail back, it starts with having been abused as a little boy.

**Chalene Johnson:** So true. So true. And I assume it looks different for a man versus a woman as an adult. I mean, again, I can only go from my own personal experiences but of the men I know in my life who’ve shared with me this – this journey, seeing a transition from someone who was either really irritable and angry and quick to jump to defend themselves and super intense and almost like an addictive-type personality, you know, like you said, whether it’s work or sports or gambling or whatever. And then, with the women I’ve noticed, it tends to be a devaluing, like a quieter, like they just – instead of like snapping and defending themselves, they kind of let people trample all over them. I get tons of letters from people who – their – their addiction to food really...

**Steve LePore:** Yes.

**Chalene Johnson:** ...they’ve traced it back to.

**Steve LePore:** Indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** So how is it different for men and women who are survivors?

**Steve LePore:** Well, I mean, one of the things to remember is that there are many things that are the same but there are some things that are just so obviously different. And part of it is men just don’t talk a lot about this kind of stuff. So I’m willing to come over and hang out and have a beer with you if you drink beer and shoot pool and watch a game or whatever but I’m not going to talk to you about the fears that I’ve got or the pain I’m suffering or what have you. We often talk publicly about the way that men process. If you get guys in a group, unless they’re being moderated and unless the group is being facilitated, a lot of times they’ll talk about anything but the thing that’s the most important to them or they won’t talk at all.

**Chalene Johnson:** My husband ran into a friend of ours who we had heard he and his wife had separated and I – and they spent some time talking. And I said, so, you know, how are things between he and his wife, because I don’t know and we don’t talk about that kind of stuff.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** I’m like, “Oh, my god.”

**Steve LePore:** Perfect. The other reality is that pull aside any man that you know and talk to the last time that they were lost when they were driving from point A to point B and what did that guy do? Ninety-nine out of a hundred of them kept driving.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** Because they know that that exit is one more mile ahead.

**Chalene Johnson:** Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** As opposed to pulling over and saying, “I’m lost. I need directions.”

**Chalene Johnson:** What a great analogy.

**Steve LePore:** And that’s the reality of the world that many men live in. They feel lost but they’re not willing or not able to ask for direction or for help. So there’s a pretty quick difference right there.

**Chalene Johnson:** What would that conversation sound like if my partner is a lot of these things, he’s irritable, he’s distant, struggling with addiction, just – just struggling, and I suspect that there’s something deeper there? And I don’t know if it’s sexual abuse but I’m the partner and I suspect that there’s something deeper there, how do you start that conversation?

**Steve LePore:** Gosh, I tell you, it’s – that’s a question we get constantly. There will be a line of people that will line up to speak with us after we’ve given a presentation and it’s often the exact same question that you just posed. And I’m often careful to say that, everybody is different.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** And I don’t know the depth of a relationship that a wife might have with her husband or a parent with their child. So it really depends on how deep and how trusting and how open and honest that is. But I think it’s perfectly fine to just say, “Is there something that you would like to talk about? I love you dearly and I noticed that you’re more irritable or you’re drinking too much or you seem distant or you seem troubled or nervous or frightened,” or whatever the case might be.

But to create an environment where the guy feels safe and then to not expect a whole paragraph, maybe all you’re going to get is three words or a sentence.

**Chalene Johnson**: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Steve LePore:** But then stay open, stay available and then the next time that man wants to talk, maybe you’ll get the paragraph, maybe you’ll get two or three pages. And then all of a sudden when that level of trust is where it needs to be and it’s not to say that a man doesn’t necessarily trust those people that he’s intimate with but trust on this issue sometimes takes a lot of time.

I can tell you a story anecdotally where a young guy, late 20s, early 30s who I knew personally, married, **[GQ 0:24:54]**, good looks, beautiful child, he knew what I did for a living and he said all he could do was look at me and say, “I’m one in six.” That was it.

**Chalene Johnson**: Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** He could get out those words and nothing more. And I said, would you like to talk about it? And he said, “I really would.”

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** So we went to have lunch and we sat across the table from each other. And he could not string a sentence together.

**Chalene Johnson**: Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** He couldn’t.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** And I said, “You know what, would it help you if I told you my story?” And I couldn’t finish it before he started talking.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** But what he needed was a safe place where he understood he’s not going to be judged. I’m not going to tell him that he needs to finish up in a certain amount of time or that everything will be okay. It might not be. It might be difficult and tough for awhile. But what he needed was the opportunity to – in his own time, in his own words, tell his story. And in the very beginning all he could say was, “I’m one in six.”

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** And then he took the time that it needed for him to process it and he was able to tell his story and he was able to go on and get help and...

**Chalene Johnson:** How is he today?

**Steve LePore:** He’s terrific. It’s unbelievable. And you know what, it affects in his life and in so many other men’s lives, it affects so many different things, the way he is with his children, his wife. The way he was at work is different. It’s not to say that, you know, the curtain came up and everything is wonderful. But he knows now why things short circuited early on for him and now he’s able to say, “Okay, well, let me work on that.” That – you know, here’s the other reality, that what happened to men, 19 million of us in the US, happened to us. It does not define us or it doesn’t have to. And we are not what happened to us. You know, we run organizations. We are athletes. We sing in choirs. We surf. All of those things.

It’s really great to listen to Greg LeMond. He’s a world champion cyclist. He’s won the Tour de France three times. He sits on our board. He’s a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. But that’s...

**Chalene Johnson:** I didn’t know that. That’s so awesome

**Steve LePore:** It is. It is the truth but it’s so far down the list of his accomplishments.

**Chalene Johnson:** Right.

**Steve LePore:** It doesn’t define him. And when we first started talking to him, it was clear both on our part and on his part, he’s not the poster boy for men who were abused as children. He is a world champion cyclist. And he’s a dad. And he’s a husband. And oh by the way, he suffered childhood sexual abuse and has overcome it.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow. You know, I guess, the next thing I’d have to ask you, “Is there a wrong way to respond if somebody feels comfortable enough and...” Because, you know, it can come from left field. You just – you never know. I myself have had – then just almost caught off guard and surprised when someone shared those details with me. And I wondered, is there a wrong thing to say or a better way to respond I should say.

**Steve LePore:** Well, there is a wrong thing to say. What if somebody finally has got what it takes to begin to talk about it and they’re questioned.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore: “**Well, did that really happen? Are you sure?”

**Chalene Johnson:** Really? Somebody would do that?

**Steve LePore:** Oh, absolutely.

**Chalene Johnson:** Could I pinch their head off?

**Steve LePore:** Absolutely. Or get over it.

**Chalene Johnson:** Oooh.

**Steve LePore:** How many times have I heard that men were told and many times by their dads or by other adult male figures, “Ah, get over it. It’s no big deal. It’ll pass.” Are you kidding me?

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** And so, what happens is that guy recoils and it may be that he never comes back to say, “I need to begin to work on this.” So – and openness and honestness, a willingness to create a safe place to believe what that man has said, to not rush, to allow them to process it completely, to find help for them. You know, to not over promise or to say anything that you can’t deliver on.

**Chalene Johnson:** I want people to imagine, people who are listening right now and, you know, you tend to tune these things out when it’s painful. But I’m – I’m hoping that you’ve been listening in the background and you’ve tuned back in for a second because I want you to hear this. Steve, what’s possible? How – how could life be different on the other side of this after you get help?

**Steve LePore:** Oh, my goodness, I can’t tell you what’s possible is to live a full and complete and happy life. And happy doesn’t mean that your life doesn’t have difficulties or illness or other issues. But it allows you to come at your life with another perspective.

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** The lens through which you see life now is one of hopefulness, is one of great joy. And joy again isn’t void of difficult times or a job that you might lost or a relationship that’s broken. But it allows you to process your life and to live your life completely differently.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** And I can’t tell you there’s tens of thousands of men who have reclaimed their lives who are grateful for the opportunity. I heard the most amazing thing the other day. I was talking to a young fellow who’s producing a movie on his life. And he – we were talking. We’ve talked now for the better part of the year since he’s launched the effort. And in summary and in paraphrasing, he said, “I am so grateful for my life.”

**Chalene Johnson:** Mm-hmm.

**Steve LePore:** That includes what happened to him as a little boy.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow.

**Steve LePore:** Now, he wouldn’t wish it on his worst enemy but he is so grateful for his life.

**Chalene Johnson:** And I have a colleague who described for me what it was like before and after. And he said, it’s hard to explain but I was forever busy, constantly, ping-ponging all my life this thought of one incident, every single day, every single moment, every single, you know, waking moment. I was ping-ponging this idea out of my mind.

**Steve LePore:** Mm-hmm.

**Chalene Johnson:** So I couldn’t see colors. I couldn’t take in joy.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** He said it was a full-time job thinking about trying not to think about it.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah, holding it at bay.

**Chalene Johnson:** And worrying at any moment that he would be exposed.

**Steve LePore:** Yeah.

**Chalene Johnson:** That people would know. And so, I want to be clear on that as well. Getting help doesn’t necessarily mean that you’re going public. Is that correct?

**Steve LePore:** Oh, absolutely. I mean, the lion share of folks that are getting help are doing so privately within their own families, you know, through therapy or – the cool thing about our website and we, you know, thank goodness for those folks who’ve been involved with us from the very beginning, we pay a high, high dividend on anonymity, privacy, security, so we don’t track IP addresses. Everything is done in aggregate. So someone can come to our site and not have to register, not have to belong or join.

And so a lot of guys have said, “I’m so grateful for that because I wasn’t ready to talk to anybody about this but I was ready to begin to do work on it privately and on my own.” So absolutely. Most of these journeys begin privately in – in – you know, within ourselves. And then, you know, public doesn’t mean that an article is written or that they speak about it at their church or in front of their men’s group or what have you. It might just be that they’re now public about it with their partner.

**Chalene Johnson**: Sure. Yeah. Well, that feels, I think, safe. I hope people feel that if nothing else your message has been it’s – it’s so individual and you just make it work for them and this is a safe place to go.

Steve, I can’t thank you enough for the work that you do.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, my pleasure.

**Chalene Johnson**: You’re saving lives. You’re healing lives.

**Steve LePore:** Our pleasure indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** Is there a place where you take donations on the website?

**Steve LePore:** There is a little Donate button in the top right-hand corner of our website. In fact, there’s a banner on the very top that says, “Hey, thanks for helping us. Guys can get help here for free because of generous individuals like you.” So that would be awesome.

**Chalene Johnson:** Well, Steve, I’m going to donate – I’m going to donate $1,000.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, my word.

**Chalene Johnson:** And I am going to challenge my listeners...

**Steve LePore:** Wow!

**Chalene Johnson:** ...to do the same.

**Steve LePore:** I just got a serious chill. Oh, my goodness.

**Chalene Johnson:** It’s amazing work that you’re doing. I’m going to challenge my listeners to do that same. I’ll provide a link in the show notes.

**Steve LePore:** Oh.

**Chalene Johnson:** I’ll try to put it – maybe I can even put together one of those text links so you can go directly to the website.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, wow.

**Chalene Johnson:** Learn more. And at – at the end of this show I’m going to provide you with additional resources, male or female.

**Steve LePore:** Yes, indeed.

**Chalene Johnson:** Because you – just the greatness, you – there’s freedom available to you, a life that you can’t even imagine is waiting for you. You don’t have to carry this. But it does start with the courage to get help. And there’s help out there. So, Steve, thank you for what you do.

**Steve LePore:** Oh, our pleasure.

**Chalene Johnson:** Wow. I’ve had lots of people on this show who are millionaires or who’ve made tons of money and done really cools things and they’ve got celebrity and books and blah, blah, blah, but you know what, by my definition, someone like Steve is what I call a hero, an everyday hero. Someone who is just quietly making it possible for others to live the life that they deserve, to break free from a shame that doesn’t belong to you, it’s not yours to carry. It wasn’t your fault.

Children don’t have sexual desires. You have to understand that. And I then think the more we learn about this, the more we talk about it, the more we remove the stigma and just realize that there is no shame in this other than that which belongs to the perpetrator. But if you yourself are a survivor, you in my book are a flippin’ hero. Like I just – I can’t even describe how much admiration I have for people like Steve and people like Lewis Howes and others I’ve had on the show who have shared that they themselves are survivors. Like that is so freakin’ courageous and cool. And nothing make a person more real, more vulnerable, more likeable than being honest, being vulnerable and saying, “Yeah, this like wasn’t my fault and I’ve had to survive it and now I’m conquering it.”

Steve, you are the man! And what you’re doing at 1in6.org is God’s work.

If you yourself have been triggered by this episode, if it stirred up some kind of disturbance in you, if you felt like really upset or you’re having flashbacks or – or even those memories where you keep questioning like did this really happen? I don’t know if this happened. Or you know it happened, you just keep trying to push it down and tell yourself, “I don’t – I’m past it. It doesn’t affect me today. I’m over it,” if it brought up a disturbance in you, can I ask you to care enough about yourself and care enough about the people who are in your life to just look into this. Look into finding out, if there’s something more you could do to help process what happened, put it in its proper place.

Free yourself of the secret. That doesn’t mean like Steve said, you’ve got to write an article or call a news conference. No. it’s just about freeing yourself of this painful secret that keeps your brain so busy trying to compartmentalize it.

I made that donation, you know, I hadn’t thought about it. I didn’t do that as a publicity stunt. I did that because I honestly, truly believe this is God’s work. And these are children we’re talking about who had to suffer this. And then think about the fact that he said, people don’t even come to grips with this until they’re in their 30s and 40s, that’s just too many men, too many boys, too many dudes who are living a life still prisoners of their perpetrator. No more.

So, I want you to go to 1in6.org and make a donation. I’ve never done this before in the show. This is one of those areas – people just don’t donate to organizations like this. Americans are great. We’re so generous. We’ll donate to this cause and that cause and causes overseas, but it is so difficult for organizations like 1in6 to get people to donate because they’re afraid that the stigma is going to be attached to them because of the donation. And that’s why I did that publicly. I didn’t do that because I wanted to, you know, make anyone else feel like they had to make a contribution of that size or – and I don’t normally do those kind of things, the donations and the charitable work that Bret and I do. It’s meant to be in private. We don’t do that for publicity. But I did it today in the show because I want other people to do that too.

I also want you to go to my show notes because we’ve included links and resources for you to check out. If this has stirred something in you, please, please, don’t let it just sit inside, don’t push it down for another month, another year, another decade. Just do a little research. I promise you, this guy will become bluer. Your life becomes better. And you can free yourself of the secret.

Lifers, I love you. I love you so much. Nothing could ever change that. You are the bomb dot com.

Oh, and by the way, my apologies, oh, my gosh, for everyone who tried to go to our show notes and find my grocery list. What a nightmare that created. Nonetheless, it’s available to you and I made it really easy. Now you don’t even have to find it on my show notes. It’ll come directly to your phone. So, if you’ve already saved that number in your phone, you already know it, in case you haven’t, write this down, it’s the number that I always plan to use for the Chalene Show. It’s 949-565-4337. Again, 949-565-4337. And if you text the word “Groceries” plural, G-R-O – I should not be spelling this without writing it down. Are you like that? If you text the word “Groceries” to that number, then I’ll send you my Excel form shopping list, the list that I use for my family when we go grocery shopping.

Now, okay, disclaimer, I have two teenagers and there’s usually about five extra random teenagers around my home so don’t ya’ll. It’s just our grocery list. It’s pretty good. I’m pretty proud of it. But there are some things on there that you’re going to be like, “Oh, look at this. Chalene eats waffles,” or whatever. I have – I have a football player who have to keep weight on his bones. There’s a lot of food on there. Ya’ll, you get to customize it yourself. It’s just an Excel document but everything is listed so you’re going to see all the different categories. The reason why I put this out there is not so you can eat all the foods that I eat, but so that it can save you time every time you go grocery shopping.

So anyway, you’ll see it. Check it out. You can modify it for your own taste, likes and wherever it is you shop. That number again, 949-565-4337. My apologies for the confusion in giving that to you on our show notes. We got it all worked out now. And that’s all. Thanks for tuning in. I love you. I mean it. See you soon.

**[END OF RECORDING]**