Corey Andrew Powell ([00:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hello everyone. I am Corey Andrew Powell, and this is another episode of Motivational Mondays. I'm really excited today to speak to this young lady, Kyleigh Leddy. She's a graduate of Boston University and is currently pursuing her MSW at Columbia University and Advanced Clinical Practice and Public Policy. Now, in 2019, she won the New York Times Modern Love College Essay Contest for a piece about her grieving her sister Kate. And she has an amazing new book out now, or it's coming out I believe soon, and it's called The Perfect Other. It's just a fascinating book. I'm happy she's here to talk about it. So I will bring her on now. Kylie, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

Kyleigh Leddy ([00:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hi. Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Corey Andrew Powell ([00:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, well we are excited you're here too. And first I wanna begin by saying thank you for sending me the book. And also you are so kind, a lovely handwritten note <laugh>. Like who does that in 2023? So you are the real deal, sister <laugh>.

Kyleigh Leddy ([00:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh my gosh, you're so funny. <laugh>. I'm glad it got to you. I was kind of nervous, so I'm I'm very comforted you have it <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([01:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, no, I got it. And I was like, I researched too, just in case I didn't get it in time. And so I got it kind of late. Um, but I'm almost finished, so I mean, I make like three chapters, three chapters left, so I got you here today. So.

Kyleigh Leddy ([01:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You're a fast reader, <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([01:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I am. Well, you know, it's, we spoke a little bit off camera about, it's a subject, uh, that is dear to me as well. And so what I wanna just do is set up a little bit of the, the book and then have you sort of give you a summary of it. But I love that your book opens up beautifully about, uh, a little girl who begs and hopes for, uh, a little sister and you say she will this little girl willed you into existence, which I just thought was so, you know, poetic and beautiful, uh, how you, how you phrase that. And then of course she gets her little sister, you and life is seemingly going wonderfully with all the promise you'd expect for two daughters. And then things take a difficult turn for your sister. So to begin, can you summarize the story that you share in, in your book, the Perfect Other, and also explain the meaning behind that title, that choice to call it that?

Kyleigh Leddy ([02:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, definitely. And, and thank you again for those kind words. I really appreciate it. And also just knowing that, you know, you like that sentence and that spoke to you, it means a lot. So the book really focuses on my relationship with my sister, who was six years my senior. So that opening scene right there is her as a little kid, I think she's like six years old, maybe five years old. And she would stop and every time they, my parents would drive by a church, she would be like, stop the car. I wanna go in. And then she'd go into the church and like, sit down and try to like pray for a little sister <laugh> <laugh>. So I always say like, you know, not only was she like begging my parents, she was literally willing me into existence. And I, I think, um, for me, like that's just like, I recently wrote a New York Times article kind of about sibling loss too.

Kyleigh Leddy ([02:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And just, I think it's kind of under spoken about in some ways because these are people who, like, they form you in a sense. You grew up with somebody and they shape every aspect of who you are. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So I really wanted to include that. But yeah, going back to kind of just the overview of the book in general, it's really about our relationship. You know, her struggles with mental health, her eventual diagnosis of severe mental illness with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and then kind of the other side of that. Just, you know, how to recover from that and going through grief and loss kind of at a, at a pretty young age and kind of managing that and figuring out a way to do something productive with it.

Corey Andrew Powell ([03:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. Well I was wondering too about that because when you, well when I was reading it, it felt like there were some moments where you maybe your family you're still grieving with or grappling with the idea that you missed signs of things that maybe behavioral things that were just dismissed as the angst or amusing of a teenager, which, you know, we can be all, we were all pretty much re rambunctious to a degree as teens, but it feels like you sometimes are grappling with it. We missed things that were showing us that there was more, uh, there. But I do wonder, writing this book, did it help you cathartically maybe move beyond that sort of sense of guilt? Uh, because you know, you, you, no one can blame anyone sometimes for these situations. They just happen. So were you able to get past that? Did the book help or not?

Kyleigh Leddy ([04:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, definitely. I think I have a line in the book and I'm probably paraphrasing myself here, <laugh>, I dunno if this is even right, but I say something like, grief is the cousin of regret. And just like I think when you lose somebody, it's so natural to start thinking about everything you could have done differently. And when you lose someone to suicide, especially the way I did, I think that's just, it's the most natural thing in the world to look back and see all the signs you missed and what we could done differently and like how this happened. So in some ways I think of the book as like an investigative piece, cuz I'm going back almost like it's a mystery and trying to unravel what went wrong and like all these factors that go into these really complex mental health issues. In terms of being cathartic though, I, I really do think it was when I was writing it, people would say that to me.

Kyleigh Leddy ([05:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like I'd have like friends and family say like, oh this must be so cathartic for you. And I would get really upset because I'd be like, it's so hard. Yeah, yeah. It's like, sure. It's the worst time in my life. Like actually writing it was harder than living through it in a lot of ways for me. Just cause I think when you're trying to survive, you're just on this like default survival mode versus when you're trying to make sense of something retroactively. Mm-hmm. You have to use a higher processing cognitive abilities and you know, actually going through and like looking at everything was, it was so hard and, and I think it was like grieving again. Hmm. So writing it was like the worst thing in the world. Then it came out and now it's been like incredibly cathartic and I feel like it's like closing a chapter on it. I feel so much more healed. I feel so much more at peace with the story. And also just knowing that people now are like getting to know my sister and her story's helping people. I mean, that's the kinda legacy I know she would've wanted. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So that means a lot to me.

Corey Andrew Powell ([05:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes. That's important too, because your sister, you know, she begins as this vibrant, vivacious beautiful is the term that she's always described as pretty, very pretty. And is that her on the cover ghosted in the image on the front cover?

Kyleigh Leddy ([06:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, that's one of her modeling photos. Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([06:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I mean I literally thought that was Karolína Kurková, the like supermodel <laugh>. So she definitely was yeah, a good looking, a good looking woman. But I just think that sometimes maybe society traps women in that moniker mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And I do wonder as I read about her, if she sometimes initially rebelled to be the bad girl because it was the antithesis of what was expected of her. Have you ever thought on that at all?

Kyleigh Leddy ([06:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I mean, I think that's a good point for sure. There's a part of her that was so angelic looking like she had just like, like the most beautiful, like cutest little face <laugh>. I feel like that people expectations of that. I think in a lot of ways it also shielded her from kind of how bad things were getting because she could still model, like she was modeling full-time when like she, people would see her and they would attract attention and, and almost like a lot of the behavior she was exhibiting maybe were looked past because she didn't present that way.

Corey Andrew Powell ([07:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah. Well that plays into like sort of like the stereotype that pretty girls get away with a lot of stuff. Yeah. And it's true. Like, I mean, she did mean society <laugh>. Yeah. I mean, but I think society in general, I mean that's a, that's a thing. We, we, we see it all the time where it's sort of like quote unquote the beautiful people. People are willing to look past a lot of things and maybe that's to the detriment of the person because the person actually needed someone maybe to, to step in. In fact, there's a point in your book too that I love where you, um, it was a, it was a pretty funny almost pro-feminist statement where you were saying how, you know, you refer to your own sister all the time as pretty, pretty, pretty as the main moniker that you would address her as, but there was like, she could have been, you could have given her some kudos for how well she packed the luggage in the back of the <laugh>, the family, you know, the family trunk when she went on vacations. Like, like the nuances like that. I think maybe people don't realize people might just want a little pat in the back for simple things. You never know in life. It's really strange.

Kyleigh Leddy ([08:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, absolutely. And that's like a pretty early scene I think I describe when we're pretty young and I'm like, this little sister just idolizing her and in some ways like objectifying her by doing that because I'm, I'm talking about her beauty and like the things that, you know, I look up to or that I wanna be like, or like her fashion style or this and that. And she was that person. But at the same time she's like, she kind of calls back at me and she's like, you know, I, I'm more than that. And, and I think like that's kind of me holding myself accountable as much as possible in the book of like, my perspective is inherently flawed in a lot of ways because I'm glorifying her as a little sister. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And like, I think for me too, like I, I really wanted to get other people's perspectives in the book too.

Kyleigh Leddy ([08:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like her high school friends, I talked to some people who knew her during that time in a way that I couldn't have known her, you know, or in like the stories they would tell me about her and like all these other qualities. And I think in the act of writing a book about somebody who's passed and trying to capture them, it's, it's so challenging. And I just, I wanted people to like really like get to know her and like have her legacy live on. That was such a big part of my impulse for writing it and, but also knowing inherently that that's gonna be flawed and I, and I can't capture her. And that always kind of, you know, it's always me a failing of some sort.

Corey Andrew Powell ([09:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, what I think is really fascinating too is the, the titling of the book The Perfect Other, um, you know, it's, to me there's almost like a dichotomy there where, I don't know if it's necessarily just her you're referring to there, it's almost like there's two of you being re referenced in that. But I would love for you to share like, what did you mean behind that title? The perfect other?

Kyleigh Leddy ([09:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I just realized I missed that second half of your question, <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([09:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh no, that's, that's ok. Look, that's why I'm here.

Kyleigh Leddy ([09:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It's an amazing question, <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([09:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

No worries, no worries.

Kyleigh Leddy ([09:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Keep me on track. Yeah, no, that title I think it's really important to me because like you said, it's the dichotomy of she's this perfect figure in some ways. Like I'm glorifying her in all these different ca like, you know, character traits she has, you know, she's hilarious, she's funny, she's smart, she's beautiful, she is like very popular, well-liked person. At the same time she's othered by the sense that she has this really misunderstood disease that she's struggling with and this brain-based disorder that people don't understand. I don't, I really don't think people understand it, like to this day very well. But at the same time too, like the other half of that is that she's the perfect other version of me. Like there's like, we're two sisters in that sense. There's two halves. And that, you know, for somebody to be, have all these like privileges that she had, I mean, she's white, she's like middle class resources beautiful.

Kyleigh Leddy ([10:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like she's just all these things that ha she had like, kind of like in her favor, like, like, you know, a family who wanted to get her help, the resources to get her help resources Yeah. That we could call the police and we weren't worried about her safety as much. Like, I mean those, those were huge. I mean that's, that's like kind of <laugh> like the point of the book in my opinion is like, look at all these things that were stacked in our favor and we still couldn't save her. So what happens to everyone else who doesn't have those privileges?

Corey Andrew Powell ([11:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes. Yes. I'm so happy you brought that up because my follow up was referencing the part in your book where you mentioned that you say we had all these resources, you mentioned the awareness of the privilege you had, which I thank you for that because it's not a bad thing when people of color ask people who are not people of color just to understand that there's already a built-in, um, system in place that favors them. So it's less difficult for them in many situations. So thank you for that acknowledgement. But you mentioned marginalized groups, people of color, the LGBTQ, like people who don't have a lot of money, like what happens when they have these issues that you all had in your family with limited resources, if any at all. Yeah, terrifying.

Kyleigh Leddy ([11:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It's, it is, it's so terrifying. I think it's a lot of the issues we have in our society stem from people not getting mental health treatment or not having like the resources to actually, you know, like just try to like, I don't know, just take care of themselves. I've worked in homeless shelters, I've worked in group homes and I've, um, I've just seen people struggling with like, pretty similar symptoms that my sister struggled with mm-hmm. <affirmative> and having no support systems. Yeah. And I know I, that's probably why I wanted to get my MSW at Columbia was just so I can like zoom out more mm-hmm. <affirmative> because, you know, I look at my sister and, and we, if we weren't there to get her an apartment so she could live by herself cuz she couldn't live with her roommates. Yeah, yeah. Like she tried and she.

Corey Andrew Powell ([12:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

There were quite a few residents there. Yeah, yeah.

Kyleigh Leddy ([12:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like if we, like my parents were able to like, get her a rent in an apartment. Like that's <laugh>, that's huge. Or like to get to treatment homes or go to the hospital systems or like, everything that we try to do to help her. Like people that's, that's, I mean, that amount of money we invested in that, I mean, for us it was a struggle. Like we talked about my college tuition or like what we gonna do with like, you know, supporting our family and we had the resources. So it's just, it's unbelievable how I think prevalent, this is a society and the lack of systems we have to support people because my sister would've been homeless, I think. No. Like if she didn't have, you know, our support mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. She couldn't hold a job down and I think she would've been, she a lot of, you know, conflict with law enforcement officers where she's, you know, so in the middle of psychosis that she's threatening them. Mm-hmm. Or like spitting their face like Right.

Corey Andrew Powell ([13:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah.

Kyleigh Leddy ([13:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

What if she wasn't a pretty white woman, like <laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell ([13:20](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Listen, you.

Kyleigh Leddy ([13:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It's so true.

Corey Andrew Powell ([13:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Absolutely sister, you are. Yeah. I mean, that's it. You're really, I mean, if at that level you had it that extreme, you're right. People who don't have those, those attributes happening for them, there's almost like no hope for them for sustenance. Like they would've never laughed at that long in most cases. And, um, I think for me, uh, I mentioned to you off camera that I have a family member who also has, um, dealt with schizophrenia for a long time, wonderful person when they're on their meds and they are consistently doing that, which is wonderful. So I haven't had incidents in a while, uh, long time, but I know those episodes and they can be really terrifying. And we had the resources as well, thank goodness, to make sure the hospital bills were taken care of and, and all that. But I do think there should be some outreach though, um, especially in places like New York City and Philadelphia where you were living for a long time. We see the mentally, um, incapacitated people on the streets with no help at all. So hopefully, I don't know, things will get better. Fingers crossed. Do you see it getting better in your line of work at all? Or any efforts being made to sort of at least acknowledge that and we need to do better in society?

Kyleigh Leddy ([14:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I see the mental health conversation increasing drastically. And I mean, even in front of the past six years from I guess, oh my gosh, eight years now mm-hmm. <affirmative>, so my sister passed to modern day. I mean, I think we're talking about it more, but a lot of times we talk about like mental health in terms of kind of like your mental wellness. So like we all struggle with like self-care and this and that. Stress really stress. Right? Yeah. And on top of, on the book, in terms of me, like, that's totally a very important part of the conversation, but like severe mental illnesses where someone's experiencing like the psychosis, brain based Yeah. Delusion, psychosis and like, I don't know if we're talking about as much. I think for me, like that's why I wanna put this book out there as like, I, I kind of feel like people going through it in this moment are probably just like in this survival state again.

Kyleigh Leddy ([15:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Like we were, where they can't really maybe go out and say like, my sister has this, my daughter has this. Like, they're just trying to keep everyone safe and, and well, and on medication and, you know, so I think for me right now, like the fact that my sister is gone, unfortunately, it's kind of like we have no one left to protect. So I just felt we had this obligation to speak up and just say something hoping that by, the more we talk about it, the more we can actually invest in the resources to address the problem. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([15:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And I think with that too, the examples you gave of people who aren't really talking about it, yes. There's a degree where they are just so inundated with it that they can't, they don't have the, the bandwidth. But there's also the stigma, right? There's also the fear. And what I love about your book too is it humanizes someone who had this issue because you also show that your sister was a beautiful person. She, she had dreams. I love the, I don't, I hate giving books away, you know, stuff. But, but there's, I have to reference a part where, you know, it's one of the most harrowing parts in the book where she goes missing and you go to the apartment with your mom and you get the laptop and, but you know, there's notes your sister was writing where she was trying to get better or she had an idea of who she wanted to be if she could just control this thing. She was aware. And I thought that was really a, a humanizing way to present her. She wasn't just someone out there beyond reach. She, she just knew she had a mental incapacitation and she was hoping to try to, to grasp it, but it just overcame her ultimately. Is that a proper assessment, you think?

Kyleigh Leddy ([16:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's spot on. And I think that's the hardest part about losing someone to something like this is that like I, she would, you know, kind of go away and then she'd come back again and then she'd be my sister and she'd want a hug and she would like, you know, and she, oh, Kate's back. And then it'd be the second later like, she's now gone again. And it's just, it's so hard. And I, and I also think there's a part in the book I talk about too, which I don't think I knew about in the moment because a lot, a lot of the problems with me writing this book too is I was so young with all these events were happening, so.

Corey Andrew Powell ([17:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So recall is trying to Yeah, yeah.

Kyleigh Leddy ([17:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That plus the trauma, the memory, it's like, ugh, it's a mess. So I talked to my mom a lot about, you know, going through these memories and looking through records and piecing 'em together and she told me that, you know, Kate really wanted to be a spokesperson for this. Like, they, they would have these conversations one-on-one together where Kate would say like, yeah, like, I wanna like spread awareness. I wanna do this and I, and I wanna help people. And then she just, she just couldn't do it. She couldn't manage herself day to day. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So I think like part of the, what was special about me writing this book was that I felt like we were kind of like doing that together a little bit. And I could in some ways like help her fulfill that dream.

Corey Andrew Powell ([17:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Well, even why, again, with the title, it's funny, when people think of a a memoir, they think that it's a memoir about self. And this is a very unique one because it's a memoir about my sister. And when I read it, it, it feels like you are so consciously and beautifully giving her that presence and giving her life as a fully dimensional character. Not just a woman who committed suicide who was sick. Right? I mean, there's this vibrant, textured story you tell about this person. And that is why I think it's gonna resonate with people who are going probably in their own family dynamics. They're gonna say, Hey, that's my cousin, that's my aunt, that's my uncle, that's my mother or father. I recognize all that. So that to me is the powerful part.

Kyleigh Leddy ([18:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, thank you.

Corey Andrew Powell ([18:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, you're telling a story. You're welcome. Now I also wanna talk to you about something clinical where you draw parallels between concussions, head injuries mm-hmm. <affirmative> potentially impacting mental incapacitation, especially in people who already are predisposed to things. So share a little bit about your thoughts on that. Cuz your sister had, I mean, a couple injuries I think, but one was really bad. I think you detailed, she falls off of like a step or something and has a concussion.

Kyleigh Leddy ([19:11](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah. She had a few just like, you know, concussions here and there when she was younger, in her teenage years, a lot of them were result of her partying, <laugh> being reckless.

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:20](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Maybe falling or something. Yeah, yeah.

Kyleigh Leddy ([19:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Sneaking out of our house and like falling off fell chairs, like mm-hmm. <affirmative>, so some of those, but they were less, you know, traumatic. But she had one when she was, I think she was 18 or 19, and she was a freshman in college and she was at Drexel University in downtown Philadelphia mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And she was on a stoop of a brownstone. And

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, they they're really up there, those brownstones.

Kyleigh Leddy ([19:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, exactly. And I think the way I've been told is that a man she was friends with, like, gave her a hug and he was like heavier than her and she just toppled over. Hmm. And she ended up cracking her head in the concrete. So from there, I mean, it was like she was put in a medically induced coma. She was taken to the hospital. Um, she was like in intensive care for a while. I don't think she came to for like three days. And then when she did, the doctor told my mom and I that she's not gonna be the same. And she wakes up like there's, this is gonna have an effect. It's a traumatic brain injury. She has like staples back of her head. She had bleeding in her brain, but he didn't tell us like, obviously what that meant because he didn't know. Cause you can't predict these things. Right.

Corey Andrew Powell ([20:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You don't, he can't predict to what degree the person has been altered.

Kyleigh Leddy ([20:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right, exactly. And I think for us, there's a part of us that we're like, she's struggling right now. Like, she's like, we don't diagnosis this, but she's acting out and she's acting irrational and she has mood swings. Like maybe this is <laugh>. It won't be so bad, if she has some like, you know, sense knocked into her.

Corey Andrew Powell ([20:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right. Right. Well, is that the, but also in the book, is that the moment where like, you know, you're, you were like being conscious with your mom, like not to upset her not to like and the first thing she says to you is like, your hair looks a mess or something <laugh>. And you were like, boy, you don't look so great yourself. And, and that brief moment, it was like you had your sister back kind of, um, yeah. Yeah. That was pretty funny.

Kyleigh Leddy ([21:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It was totally the sister dynamic of like, I hadn't washed my hair in a few days because I was at the freaking hospital <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([21:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Exactly .

Kyleigh Leddy ([21:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

For her. Right. And she wakes up and she's like, Ugh, your hair looks so greasy. And I'm like, came here <laugh>. I've been like crying, worried about you.

Corey Andrew Powell ([21:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That's funny.

Kyleigh Leddy ([21:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

But yeah, it's like, I think when we looked at kind of like the records, I looked at the records, the hospital records and everything else after the fact, it got really worse. And, and I think within a month she was kicked out of school and like shed back home and she was like really struggling. So at the moment we couldn't see anything like that. I was just too close to the picture. But zooming out, I mean, I don't know what effect that had. I don't know, like, you know, that's the age range where like schizophrenia typically develops anyway, so it's just hard to draw conclusions. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> definitely didn't help. Yeah. And I, and I think like traumatic brain injuries are another part that a mental health conversation that isn't really talked about enough. And I mean, I think like, even like when I was working in a homeless shelter, I remember the statistic that like, I think it was 25% of people experiencing homelessness had traumatic brain injury. Hmm. So it's like, I mean, yeah. Like these things are, it's a huge problem. And I don't know if we've like really caught up with the science or how to deal with this yet.

Corey Andrew Powell ([22:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well the connection though, that people can identify with who, who, who might be listening or watching this is the conversation that's that's around the NFL all the time where they, you know, there are, it could be coincidence, but there's some bad incidents occurring with NFL players who have documented head traumas because of all the years of playing the hits they've taken. And so, you know, there very well could be that correlation. And I think, you know, when you put things in sports terms, people tend to take them more <laugh>, more seriously, maybe.

Kyleigh Leddy ([22:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

There's a New York Times article that I talked about in the book, and I think the title is roughly 111 NFL players Brains were Analyzed and 110 had CTE. Wow. So, and, and, and that's something you can only diagnose with, um, once someone's passed away and you have access to the brain. So, I mean, we don't know what's happening in real time and, and it's, it's, it's scary and I think it's very relevant.

Corey Andrew Powell ([23:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative> no, absolutely. Because it could be, you know, something that we're clearly overlooking and not seeing about this that could help us understand it better. I do wonder as well, your mom, uh, is such a, an amazing presence in this whole process. You referenced her in the book, obviously a lot, and your father too. What did your family think about you wanting to write this book? Was that a conversation you had to have first with them and like, are we gonna do this and if we do it, how are we gonna do it?

Kyleigh Leddy ([23:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, so the way the book came about was a little like unorthodox too. I think I was a senior in college and I'd always dreamed, like my college admission essay <laugh> is me being like, I wanna study English and psychology and write a book about this to like spread awareness. But I was thinking like I would go to the PhD route or like, I, I always thought too, like no one actually gets a book published. It's an impossible dream. Like I've just been told time, time again, it's impossible to make it as a writer. So I went to college and I really kind of put the writing aside and I was studying clinical psychology, doing a thesis. I was accepted to Columbia's master's program and then I was in a writing class for fun. And this professor told me that there was a New York Times contest that was accepting college submissions. So I had an essay wrote for that class, and the teacher bless her, <laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell ([24:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>, they know they know. Did you talk all the time? Yeah. That's wonderful. That's wonderful.

Kyleigh Leddy ([24:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Um, she was, she told me to submit essay had written for class to the contest. I had like never submitted anything before. Really. I, I'd won like one essay contest in high school and like wrote one short story under a fake name <laugh> in college. And so I, I just admitted it just totally on a, you know, whim. And I ended up winning the contest, which was like a 0.01% odds. I found out that I won on my sister's birthday week <laugh>. So that was a little like, ooh. And, and after that, the pub, it came out my senior week of college, my, like last week for graduation. It just changed my life overnight. I had agents reach out to me. I just kind of got together, my gosh, all these documents I had. And like, I remember it was like, we had like senior week where we're like going on like boat cruises and stuff and like all these parties planned and I'm like sending off like emails to agents in the corner. <laugh>. Like, it was like nuts.

Corey Andrew Powell ([25:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I love it. I love it. Don't sacrifice. Don't sacrifice the party though. Right. But still take care of your business, right? Yeah. Can do both. Yeah, you can. Amazing

Kyleigh Leddy ([25:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

But, so, I ended up like kind of getting that book deal that fall with Harper Collins and, and it became this conversation. My parents were like, it was thrusts upon us. We didn't have time to really think in a sense mm-hmm. <affirmative> like it was, this is being published in the New York Times in a couple weeks.

Corey Andrew Powell ([25:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You have to move fast with this kind of stuff. Yeah.

Kyleigh Leddy ([25:45](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. And, and it's, and the New York Times has a lot of eyes on it. I think that column has like 800,000 readers. Like, it's gonna be this story that we've kept so private and we've been so sensitive about even within our small circles like family and friends. I mean now it's coming out to this big audience. So it was really scary for us, but I just, and my, my mom and my family, they were so great about me doing this. I think we were all nervous, but at the same time I just felt this huge compulsion that I've never felt in my life before where I was just so sure of it where I was like, I have to write this book. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I have to get this story out there. I I have this platform now given to me. Like what am I gonna do with it? Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I, and I wanna tell people about this and I, and I really wanna help people not feel alone. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So there was never a moment that I felt like we shouldn't do it. But in between there's a lot of fear and, you know. Yeah. Even still now, I mean it's odd being I'm 26 now. When I was 2020 I wrote the book. It's odd just having this like really personal story out there. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and people can Google you. And I think we're still grappling with what that means. <laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell ([26:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you for that. And we appreciate what you do and I personally appreciate the story as I mentioned. Cause I have a personal connection to it myself. And so we are happy you were here today. Kyleigh Leddy, author of The Perfect Other. Now this is, is it out yet or is it coming out soon?

Kyleigh Leddy ([27:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yes, it's out now.

Corey Andrew Powell ([27:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It is out now. Okay. So guys, please make sure you check out this book. It's wonderful. And thank you for being here today on Motivational Mondays.

Kyleigh Leddy ([27:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you Corey. It's been a pleasure.

Corey Andrew Powell ([27:12](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/cVKgIvBkYjuof_FTWmWzxR4512RYs5OVL7IpWCz6-XNwxIwwnC4UijGxxflBPgHieMPaKv8nXpcy_c8sOn3zSc-gsWI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by The National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.