Jameela Jamil worried people wouldn’t believe her when she came out as queer

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Jameela Jamil has opened up about her mental health journey – and revealed that she almost never came out as queer due to deeply internalised shame.

The actor and television presenter told Alan Cumming and Christopher Sweeney on the *Homo Sapiens* podcast that she struggled with mental health issues for her entire life when she hit “the epicentre of it all”, aged 26.

Jamil had a nervous breakdown, and two years later, she decided to go to therapy in an effort to piece her mental health back together.

“I had that sort of classic, stupid British shame around getting therapy or going on medication, etc, I had all of the stigmas,” Jamil said.

Despite this, she pushed herself to see a therapist, and she slowly began to work through years of trauma.

“I made loads of massive changes in my life,” Jamil explained. “I kind of went on what I describe as a f**k s**t detox, where I just got rid of all the f**k s**t from my life, people and things and schedules that were making me worse, and started confronting my trauma.

“But I did it without help, and I didn’t start to get help until about two months before I left for Los Angeles,” she said.

The star, best known for her iconic role in *The Good Place*, said therapy is “hugely helpful”, but that it “also brings a lot up to the surface”.

Relocating to Los Angeles gave Jamil the clean slate she needed to work through her trauma and to identify where her pain was coming from.

“I was able to recover so much quicker here than I would have somewhere else where I might have been more distracted,” she said.

I was going to never say anything, and then I chose truly the most inappropriate moment possible to do it.

Jamil also said that being famous in the UK, where she worked as a high-profile television presenter, ended up throwing fuel on the fire, pushing her mental health into even darker corners.

She said she endured “harassment” from paparazzi, which made her “agoraphobic, suicidal and depressed”. Jamil said she was portrayed in the press at the time as being a “happy party girl”, but she was “dying” on the inside.

Jameela Jamil worried people wouldn’t believe her when she came out

Jamil went on to open up about her decision to come out publicly as queer on 5 February, 2020 after she faced biting backlash when she was cast as a host and a judge on HBO’s vogueing show *Legendary*.

In response to the backlash, Jamil came out publicly as queer, and later explained that she is bisexual, or possibly pansexual.
Speaking on the *Homo Sapiens* podcast, Jamil said she “didn’t say anything” about her sexuality for a long time because of her South Asian background. She also feared that people would think she was coming out to be “trendy”.

“I was going to never say anything, and then I chose truly the most inappropriate moment possible to do it,” she said.

Reflecting on the backlash, Jameela Jamil said: “I think people were just like, ‘Why would you even care, you don’t care about this community at all, you’re just doing this for fame, etc.’

“I wanted to explain that the reason I’m doing this is because my love for ballroom and representation, and for just honouring this community, comes from the fact that I’ve been a silent member of this community, a secret member of this community, for my whole life, and I’ve looked to them and looked towards them and been inspired by them and wanted to join them in a more open way outside of just my private circle, but felt too afraid to because of my background, because of being South Asian,” she said.

“I was just telling the truth. I just shouldn’t have done it then, because it looked like I was trying to deflect, whereas I wasn’t, I was just trying to explain. I wasn’t trying to make the conversation now about my sexuality.”

Despite the criticism she faced, Jamil said she is “thrilled” *Legendary* was made and she said it was a “huge success”.

https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/01/14/jameela-jamil-mental-health-coming-out-queer-bisexual-sexuality-shame/