

By [Hannah Jewell](#)

With Jacob Brogran

[Email](#)

This week “The Bachelorette” provided us with a timely reminder that life is pain.

Staring down a strict filming schedule that had already been derailed by Clare, producers had to use all the tricks of their trade to manufacture love under time pressure. And what better path to love than through a minefield of repressed trauma? And what better path to the minefield of repressed trauma than an art class?

As with last week’s discussion of race in America, these conversations are often very important. This week we heard about all types of dark histories, from eating disorders to awful childhoods. Tayshia at one point broke down, overcome by the men's vulnerability.

But by the end of the episode, all I could think was: We are all so unwell.

Let us have more [man-on-man pettiness](#). Let us have [fallen heroes](#). Let us have...[drama](#).

This should have been the only wedding of 2020. (ABC)

### **The hidden meanings of “showing up”**

I can’t be the only one who has noticed how often in this season we have heard the phrase, “you showed up.” Last night, as Ben stripped down on the art date (in this season’s fourth instance of [sudden nakedness](#)), he announced “this is me showing up for you.” Tayshia, who apparently liked what she saw, agreed that he had indeed “showed up” as she pinned a rose to his freshly clothed body.

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“Showing up” was of course a favorite phrase of Clare's, used to describe what she must do for her future lovers, and what they must do for her.

Indeed, when Dale proposed to Clare, the first thing Clare said to him as they embraced was: “Thank you so much for showing up.” He replied with, “Thank you.” It was an incredible moment of television I urge you to revisit, because we were all too stressed about the election to fully appreciate it at the time. (See minute 1:02:50 of [Episode 4](#).)

Clare showed up, Dale showed up, Chris Harrison showed up, and we all showed up to watch them show up.

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As with any phrase, the more it's said, the faster it loses its meaning.

This show does love to beat an expression to death. Recall Becca's "doing the damn thing". But "showing up" seems particularly fluid in its definition.

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I wanted to find out what this phrase could possibly mean, so I spoke to psychologist, relationship expert and fellow "Bachelorette" viewer [Lindsay Jernigan](#) to find out.

Three individuals who have shown up. (ABC)

**Hannah Jewell: So have you noticed when watching the show how much they say the words "show up"?**

**Lindsay Jernigan:** Yeah. Clare in particular says these words a lot. And I think it means a lot to her. I think those words mean, to whoever is using them, "relate to me in the way that meets my needs." And Clare and Tayshia actually have different relational needs, just like all of us have different relational needs. So I think specifically what those words mean differ in context and person to person.

**HJ: Tell us what you think it means to Clare.**

**LJ:** Okay, so Clare talks very openly about the loss of her father and the resulting fear that someone won't stick around for her, the fear of abandonment. And so for her, I think the words "show up" really mean, "make me feel safe and secure and certain that this connection is going to last and that you're not going to leave." And she even references wanting to feel safe and special and taken care of in a way that has a flavor of the kind of relationship she expresses that she had with her dad as a little girl. ... She seems to really want that, which is understandable given her history.

Her big fear was always of somebody not "showing up," meaning, "I'm going to be vulnerable, I'm going to be hanging in the wind, and this person is going to leave me there alone," which is a really sad thing to have to feel.

It comes out really intensely right before the proposal. She sort of has a bit of a panic, right? "Here I am at my most vulnerable. And what if he leaves me here?" And then he proposes and the first thing she says is, "Thank you for showing up." It's like that fear was finally addressed and she could feel like, "Okay, now I can believe that this is certain."

**HJ: What do you think the phrase "show up" means when Tayshia uses it?**

**LJ:** So she was talking more about wanting to see, like, an assertiveness from the men. She wanted them to be willing to be assertive in expressing their interest in her, and that they would

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take some risks and show some confidence in expressing that interest to her. ... She did mention feeling in the past like a second choice to people, and that that was a obviously a really uncomfortable feeling for her. So for her, the words “show up” mean, “show me that I am of interest to you. I am interesting enough to make you want to hop the fence, even though it's not your turn.”

So I think that's part of what she's getting at, and then I also think that she has a really strong presence about her, and she wants a match in that energy. She doesn't want to just bowl somebody over — that's boring and lonely, actually, if she's got this really strong presence and the other person doesn't. And so she doesn't want the sort of wallflower presence.

Another sighting of the Utah monolith. (ABC)

**HJ: Do you find it's common in your practice, and in your observations of this show, that people are just bad at giving deeper meaning or deeper descriptions to very complex feelings?**

**LJ:** There's definitely a range in people's comfort with and acuity with emotional language. And in the pace our lives tend to operate in, I think it's hard to slow down and find all the nuanced layers and the language to express it, and I don't know that the Bachelor franchise is a show that's really going for that kind of nuance. And so I think they leaned in to those words of Clare's. Chris prompts her with those words all the time, because they know it's sort of a fast way to get at something that has a lot of depth, but without taking the time to go into all of the depth and nuance.

Follow Jernigan on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#), where she shows up frequently.

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## Quote of the episode

(ABC)

Tayshia uttered this quote while hiding in a dark back room, surrounded by producers, and wiping away her tears after the Life is Pain Art Class date. My first response was to wonder, IS IT, TAYSHIA? Is THIS what dating real men is? Is it weeping in the darkness, overcome by the horrors of the world?

But then I remembered: We met Tayshia when she was dating Colton, who was 26 at the time, a virgin and deeply emotionally immature ... among his [other faults](#). Then on “Bachelor in Paradise” she dated [John Paul Jones](#), who was 24 and had the spirit of a poorly trained golden retriever puppy. Lovable, but not necessarily deep.

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Tayshia isn't pleased to be suffering, she's pleased to be dating men who have been alive for longer than 24 years, have real jobs, have had sex before and (for the most part) are more interested in *her* than in butting heads with each other.

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## Jacob's corner

*Each week, we hear from [Jacob Brogan](#), a cheeky woodland sprite. This week, he contemplates the anatomy of villainy.*

In the typology of **reality television villains**, there are at least three familiar types. First — and surely most common — are the **victims of bad editing**, those unfortunate souls whose occasional moments of annoyance or inebriation are edited into artificial portraits of consistent cruelty. Second come the **attention hounds**, competitors who, knowing they will never win, instead act up to maximize their screen time. Third and last are those who cause trouble because **they are convinced that they're in the right**, so sure of both their rectitude and charm that they never notice how unkind and unpleasant they actually are.

This season of “The Bachelorette” has offered us at least two examples of this final type, men who air their grievances while suggesting that they're simply speaking up for what's good and just. In the early episodes, [Yosef filled the role](#) when he scolded Clare for her supposedly bad behavior, always ostensibly doing so on behalf of the other men — or his daughter. But Bennett, too, has exhibited a strain of self-righteous bitterness that has been building all along, at least since the [Margaret Cho-emceed roast date](#), in which he went too hard on Dale for a little too long, even by the standards of the other men's antagonism.

Noah, being bad, but less bad than Bennett. (ABC)

He has only leaned more into this attitude [as the season has progressed](#), most notably in his **ongoing conflict with Noah**, which has found him repeatedly insisting that he's wholly unaware of the strife he seems to have actively cultivated. “I'm, you know, kind of equally perplexed as Tayshia,” Bennett says of the drama in which he has directly participated. Later, he declares of himself, “I've been a peacemaker all of my life,” despite having repeatedly insulted and belittled his opponent on camera. And like the peacemaker that he is, he compares his Tayshia-mandated showdown with Noah to “a little appetizer, a snack, if you will, before I am able to have a, you know, main course,” which is presumably meant to convey that he is a man of taste but instead leaves him sounding more like [Hannibal Lecter bragging about his dalliance with a census taker](#).

Ultimately, nothing captures Bennett's self-important slide into villainy better than his decision to bequeath a copy of “**On Emotional Intelligence**” to Noah. As a rule, those who lecture others about the importance of “emotional intelligence” are rarely exhibiting smarts of any kind. To this end, listen in as Bennett spins out confusingly contorted verbal constructions that pass themselves off as deft repartee. “I'm not trying to belittle you, I'm literally trying to love you

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up,” he tells Noah, who does his best to pretend that this sequence of words means something. “This, my friend, is where we start to folly,” Bennett adds soon after, apparently having convinced himself that “folly” is a verb.

As with so many Bachelor troublemakers before him, though, it’s not his garbled speech that does him in so much as his failure to see himself as he is. “I crush life under pressure,” he declares as he strides to meet his fate. This is surely true, so long as we accept that the life he’s shoving into the trash compactor is his own.

**That’s where we’ll leave you for now.**

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