



## Best Coast Is Truly Feeling Okay For the First Time

By **Murjani Rawls** - Feb 18, 2020

The first lyrics from “For The First Time” say, “*Trying really hard. I’m trying harder than I ever have before.*” I played the self-titled track from Best Coast’s third album, *California Nights* repeatedly. It sounded like the perfect personification of the care-free feeling of the Golden State and almost a getaway. I also noticed something else. When singer-songwriter Bethany Cosentino described the album, she stated, “*We related to the idea that things may look or sound fun and upbeat, but they may not actually always be that way.*” Songs like ‘Heaven Sent’ and ‘Feeling Ok’ felt like they almost had a heaviness to them.

Flash forward to the video for ‘For The First Time,’ where Cosentino and bandmate, guitarist/multi-instrumentalist Bobb Bruno are having fun within the simple things like being in a photo booth or having a party with a group of friends. Those are the moments that are usually going to mean the most. You can hear that there’s been a weight lifted off of Cosentino’s shoulder as she’s exploring a new stage of self-love and acceptance.

*Always Tomorrow*, the band’s fourth album and first in almost five years is not necessarily disregarding all the bad things. It’s taking those experiences, repurposing them, and learning

how to exist in a new space of contentment. Cosentino and Bruno came together and made a record that shows the growth that ten years being a band would entail. This is the story of someone making the greatest use of their second chance.

With interviewing anyone in the music world, you're thankful that artists are able to confide and entrust you with telling their stories. As we talked about *Always Tomorrow* and this new place of freedom, I was genuinely happy for Cosentino and who she's become. You want to see people conquer their demons, and with our talk, you can see that she's building a great foundation – brick by brick.

**In November 2017, you decided to get sober and you just passed two years. Congratulations on that! I remember listening to *California Nights* and feeling like something was ending for you. *Always Tomorrow* sounds like a breath of fresh air. The start of something brand new. I wanted to ask this question in two parts; how has the process of writing and making music changed for you since your sobriety? Also, how has Best Coast as a band growth since this record?**

That's really interesting what you said. I didn't think about that. 'Feeling Okay' is a perfect example. I wrote a song about how I felt like I had sort of reached the place in my life where things felt okay. It's also so interesting that I used the word okay. I remember doing a lot of press around it and saying that exact sentiment. I didn't say feeling good or feeling great. I just said okay because I had reached a point where I was like, "okay, whatever." My brain had just become very "shoulder shrug." I walked through life a lot, just like, "sure whatever." I didn't feel good or bad. I just felt very kind of in the middle.

Now, I feel very content was just life in general. I feel like I've really grown into this place of acceptance. It's really helped me a lot as an artist. Especially just as somebody who's in the spotlight. It's helped me really realize that I'm good as long as I'm taking care of myself. I can't control so much of the stuff around me that gives me anxiety and makes me stressed out. I think for me as an artist and writing songs, it's given me a sense of new purpose. At the end of the day, all I can do is speak my truth and try to create something that will help somebody else, hopefully.

That's what I've aimed to do with this record. Just to share my story and experiences, and to hope that people can listen to the record and take away that, "Wow, okay, this girl has really worked hard. She's gone through a lot of stuff and is very open with us about what she's gone

through. Maybe I can change to as long as I'm willing to do the work." There are a lot of songs on the record that talk about still dealing with feelings of hopelessness, insecurity, and feeling like I'm a fraud. Feeling all of these things that I think as humans we deal with. It's also about coming to terms with those things and realizing that as long as I acknowledge and accept them, I can let them go and move on with my day.

It's become a learning journey for me. The human brain is a hamster wheel and all I can try to get off of it for a second and just keep going on. Before I felt like, "Okay, this is just what it's like forever. There's no getting off the ride." Now, I'm realizing that all I can do is control my reaction to things, you know? It's a record about acceptance in a way because that's really what we're all kind of like doing in life. Learning how to just accept the moment for what it is and to realize that we can't control 90% of the things that freak us out. That's really what we have to focus on. I don't know. I've become very much of a person who just very much believes in letting shit go. That was not my MO prior.

**You mentioned in the behind the scenes video for 'Everything Has Changed' that this isn't just as sobriety record. It's about life as well. With the way that you sang songs like "Feeling Okay," there was a weight to them. You sound a lot lighter on Always Tomorrow. There's a lyric in 'For the First Time' that says: "*I changed the colors of the bedsheets/Now they are a pretty pale pink.*" Just small changes like that. Do you feel lighter letting things go?**

Absolutely. I've done a lot of work on myself and it's really become a lot easier for me to handle life. I think I used to just feel so weighed down by my own bullshit. Now, I'm learning that if you acknowledge feelings, you just accept them for what they are. You just realize, "okay, I can't control anything other than the way I react to this." When I'm stuck in traffic and I'm pissed off because I'm going to be late to show up to a meeting or a show or whatever it is, I'm like, "whatever, dude, I'm powerless over this situation."

All I can do is just be like, "cool. I'm stuck in traffic. That sucks. I should have left the house earlier." I'm going to get there and I'm just going to apologize for being 15 minutes late. My life now feels a lot easier because I've learned some of these tools. I can exist without feeling this impending doom that I used to feel.

I'm not here to tell you as it happened overnight. I think this record hopefully will inspire people to think change is possible. You just really work for it because it doesn't come naturally. It doesn't happen overnight. It's hard and it sucks, but it's possible.

**You mentioned that you felt like you being a fraud and I wanted to touch on 'Graceless Kids'. There's a lyric saying "*I don't want to be what they want me to be/I guess I said that years ago.*" With the old Bethany that flipped off Lollapalooza, that means something different. You have this revelation that maybe fans need to hear you in a better place. How does the rebel spirit of Bethany back then meet with the Bethany you've become?**

There's a classic George Costanza quote from Seinfeld where he said, "it's not a lie if you believe it." I put on such a front in the beginning because in my mind I felt like if I said fuck you and flipped you and said, I don't give a shit what you think about me, it would help me actually not care. In reality, I cared so much. I read the reviews. I read comments. It used to tear me apart inside because I was like, "how could these people say these things about me? They don't know me." I would get out there and act like I don't give a shit what you think about me. "Leave all the shitty comments you want. I don't read them, I don't care!" Behind the scenes, I was like crying saying, "I can't believe the people said these things."

I needed to experience that because I needed to learn my own boundaries, too. We put songs out of this record and announced the tour. I don't read anything because I know that if I do and something that I don't like or feel like it's an attack towards me, I know what it'll do. I know that it will make me upset and doubt myself. I've learned that I don't need to be the person that people expect me. I don't even need to play the game, I can literally put my music out and let it speak for itself. Part of the lesson was I didn't know who I was. I've learned over the last few years that I am Bethany Constantino. I am a person and I exist outside of this band.

I'm learning who I am within the context of my career. I am just a normal girl who goes to the grocery store, likes to walk my dog, and watches TV at home. I can separate the two things. I can't exactly tell you how because it just kind of happens through all the work that I've been doing on myself. The person that I used to be was imperative in becoming the person that I am today. I don't look at it and think, "oh god, I'm so embarrassed." It's like, it's fine. I was doing what I knew how at the time. I'm grateful for that because it got me to where I am today.

I very much believe in everything happened for a reason. I don't look at the young girl on stage flipping off the wall like, "what a little brat." Those were coping skills at the time. I'm glad that I don't need to do that anymore. Now, I can go out and do interviews and step up on stage and not feel like I have to put up this front. What you think of me is none of my fucking business, you know? I'm very grateful for all the things that I had to go through to get to this place. In the past, I used to say that because I thought if I said it enough, I would actually believe it.

Now I truly am like, it doesn't matter what people say. I don't care if you don't like the new song. I don't care if you wish we sounded more like the first record. I don't care because I'm happy with where I'm at and the art that I'm creating. And that's really what matters at the end of the day.

**'Everything Has Changed' was born out of this creative paralysis you had. The lyrics themselves were manifesting this better life that you didn't see at the time. Do you feel closer to it?**

**Unfortunately, the song was born from a bad time, but I felt like it set the tone for the new record and journey for you.**

It's very interesting. When people hear that song, they would probably imagine I wrote that after I got sober. I was still drinking when I wrote that song. I think at that time, I had maybe decided, "oh, whiskey makes me angry, so I shouldn't drink whiskey." I was still really in a dark place. I think that subtle things in my life had changed. I'd moved to this new house and my location had changed. I think in a way that inspired the idea behind 'Everything Has Changed.'

I sing those lyrics now I get to actually feel the way that this song describes. When I wrote it, I didn't. That was another thing about *California Nights*. There were a lot of lyrics and a lot of things that I was talking about in press, interviews, and even on stage where I was lying. I was just saying things because again, I felt like if I said it enough, it would actually happen. I used to sing a lot of songs about like, "Oh, I changed and I'd let go." It was all bullshit. I didn't actually feel that way to actually be able to sing a song that talks about how everything is changed.

Another example is "For The First Time." I feel free. It feels good to be able to sing those words and actually believe them. It was really emotional for me because I don't think people realize how hard this job is. It's really fucking hard. It's really hard to be in the spotlight and to have criticism thrown at you in so many different ways and angles. If you're a person that doesn't feel

like you have a lot of stability, it's very easy to teeter-totter and to think "well, that's true and they're right."

I'm very proud of myself and I'm proud of the work that I've done. I look in the mirror and see myself now and I say, "okay, you've been through a lot. You came out on the other side and I'm proud of you." It sounds so fucking cheesy, but it's really cool to have developed this relationship with myself where I feel very like authentic to who I think I am. It was just hidden underneath all of this other stuff that I needed to like dig my way out of.

**'True' sees you describing a love that you don't want to necessarily tell the world about yet. It might be too good to be true, however, it's you accepting that love can be amazing. On 'Seeing Red, you mention that you're tired of writing about the same unhealthy things. 'For The First Time,' you say, "I used to think that I would die without you. No offense to you. I'm doing fine too." I like that.**

**Throughout the album, there's a full-circle moment of you releasing past experiences and walking into a love you've wanted. This is whether it be from self or another person. How does it feel to accept love working from this healthy place you've gotten yourself to?**

When I listened back to a lot of my older songs, I hear myself coming from a place where it was unhealthy. It was like codependency in a lot of ways. When I heard it, I was like, "Whoa, I didn't realize how intense it really was." I've gotten to this place where I just realized that relationships are hard. With being in the public eye, navigating relationships becomes very difficult.

Some of the songs on this record are coming from a place of empowerment. Where it's accepting some of your unhealthy habits things that you're doing and just coming to terms with them. Saying, "okay, I just need to try to do it differently." To me, that feels very empowering. I hope that people can feel that same sort of empowerment with their own relationships their own things that they've had to go through.

A song like 'True' is just really about experiencing love and a type of kindness you've never necessarily been exposed to before. With that, just trying to adjust to it. I almost wrote 'True' as a sequel to 'Our Deal.' That's kind of why it has that same sort of doo-wop kind of sound. I think 'Our Deal' was very much about trying to control this relationship and being like, "why can't I figure this out? I guess this is what it is." 'True' is the counterpart to that where it's really about the way a person makes you feel. It's a person makes you feel good, comforted, healthy, and

happy. I think that that's really ultimately the most important thing. 'True' is the big sister, grown-up version of 'Our Deal.'

**This album has a lot of guitars, but you both also experimented with things like synths and programming. There's a very Fleetwood Mac quality to it which. How have you both musically grown from your first record to now?**

Always Tomorrow is very guitar-centric. It's a pretty rock record. There's a shitload of guitars. There's a lot of stuff going on. We also utilized a lot of keyboards on it. There are some songs that have drum programming and stuff that we've never done before. We've been doing this for 10 years and we each record, I think we take a risk and we try something different. I think with this record it was like, we haven't put a record out in five years. We've also been a band now for a decade, so we might as well try something different. Try to elevate ourselves in this way. I think that's kind of what we did on this record. We took some risks. We accepted that we're not in control of what the public thinks about it. We just know that we like it and we're happy with the chances that we took.

### **Murjani Rawls**

*<http://mjrawls.com>*

Journalist, Self-published author of five books, podcast host of The War Report and The Final Cut, and photographer since 2014, Murjani "MJ" Rawls has been stretching his capabilities of his creativity and passions, Rawls has as a portfolio spanning through many mediums including music, television, movies, and more. Operating out of the New York area, Rawls has photographed over 200+ artists spanning many genres, written over 700 articles ranging displaying his passionate aspirations to keep evolving as his years in media continue.

