

Candice Schutter: [00:00:00] Welcome back to The Deeper Pulse and the 'cult'ure series. Today my guest and I are wrapping up part four of our ongoing conversation. Tracy and I sit down to share what it's like to be on the other side of the last three episodes, with a discussion inspired by an unprecedented amount of feedback.

Following an early episode of the culture series, a listener writes:

"I am awestruck by these stories that resonate so deeply within my own heart and soul. I knew deep down very early on in my Org journey, that something was quite amiss at the top and among the ranks of this otherwise incredible healing modality. So interesting are all of these nuances and dynamics. I am feeling validated, empowered, and [00:01:00] inspired as I listen."

A former colleague writes to Tracy and I and shares:

"It has been a real pleasure to receive your podcast as you recount this history that I was very much intertwined with. I'm here unpacking while you unpack... cleaning out my psychic basement and completely enjoying your share. It's expanding my perspective in particular ways that have felt heavy and weighted down by shame. So thank you both from the bottom of my lighter heart.

And I'll share one last snippet from a recent message from another former colleague by the name of Jill Pagano:

"Hearing your story has helped me step into a much more empowered space where I feel like I can begin to celebrate leaving instead of feeling like I failed."

Tracy and I have each received dozens of messages, just like these and not all of them are former Org affiliates. [00:02:00] Since this series launched just a few short weeks ago, I have received a number of DMs from listeners. Folks who have walked away from fundamentalist churches, toxic marriages, misogynistic yoga lineages, and culty business practices just to name a few. Apparently Tracy, myself and former Org members aren't the only ones who are struggling to make sense of the ways in which our human relationships so often go sideways.

Now, as I previously noted, we recorded the last three episodes of the podcast in early March, nearly six months ago. It is because of this and the number of messages that we've received from you, the listeners, we thought it might be helpful for us to sit down together and talk about what it feels like to be on the other side of all this public sharing.

And as we recorded this episode, it became immediately apparent to me that I had loads more to say on the other side of all the research and all the sharing. Speaking the [00:03:00] truth out loud has been tremendously clarifying and it has made me more brave. So in this episode, I get pretty fired up about new age wellness culture, and I share a few of my opinions openly for the very first time.

And true to form, Tracy holds space with her typical grace and equanimity, sharing a few ahas of her own and realizing how she's actively living into her own deeply heartfelt vision in real time.

So let's not waste another second. Here's part four of my conversation with Tracy Stamper.

Tracy Stamper: Hi,

Candice Schutter: Hi, I had all the tech challenges this morning.

Tracy Stamper: And it's not even a Monday.

Candice Schutter: I don't know what's happening. I'm glad I made it though.

Tracy Stamper: I'm glad you made it.

Candice Schutter: How are you feeling on this day?

Tracy Stamper: I'm not exactly certain. I [00:04:00] think good. The last few weeks have been so weird that I don't really know for sure. Does that resonate with you?

Candice Schutter: Yeah, definitely. It's been quite a ride. Which is really why we're here. I mean, it's pretty crazy to put something out into the world that we like sort of a process that we had out loud six months ago. Um, knowing that we were planning to do it tentatively. It's a whole other thing to have actually shared it. And I just really felt like we should get back together so that we can check back in, since it was so long ago that we recorded that content and

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: I'd like to touch base on a lot of things, and I want the listeners to be able to hear from you in real time, like where are you at now?

Like that was almost six months ago when we recorded that content.

And, uh, How are you feeling about having shared all that you shared and then the edited version going out into the world and [00:05:00] getting feedback from people and just all of that. Like how are you in your being?

Tracy Stamper: um. A lot of ways. Feeling all the things, I believe. I am definitely feeling a sense of relief. That, that story that was so problematic for me finally lives outside of my body. That's huge.

That was

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: four and a half years in the making. And

Candice Schutter: Try 16.

Tracy Stamper: No, I do not want to try it anymore. No. No, thank you.

Candice Schutter: That's great. Just to say that I can, that I resonate and did you find, for me, I really found that having the opportunity to tell the story and walk that line that I thought was impossible to walk.

I mean, I really felt like it was impossible to walk the [00:06:00] line of how do I tell the truth, feel like I'm in my integrity, that I'm saying all the things that are important that I need to say in order to liberate myself and, sort of step out of the codependency of guarding the family secrets, as you say, and also not be mudslinging and not be hurtful in the way that I do it.

And that to me was the most challenging thing. I mean, I had gotten to a point where I was, I didn't feel a charge around the story. I've been ready to tell it for a really long time. I just had no fucking clue how to do it.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: And so to actually have just done the best that I feel like I can to walk that line and to walk it with you, that's been huge for me.

Do you, does that resonate?

Tracy Stamper: Yes. And, as you were talking, speaking to this, it, it really occurred to me that when you and I specifically say that we have been struggling to figure out how to get the story out, how to [00:07:00] share it in a way that is walking the line. That is saying a lot, because we are both writers. We,

Candice Schutter: that's true.

Tracy Stamper: We have spent an inordinate amount of our lifetimes exploring story and how to share. And what is my story versus what

Candice Schutter: That's true.

Tracy Stamper: someone else's story? And I've read a books on the topic. I am certain that you have listened to

Candice Schutter: Same.

Tracy Stamper: podcasts on the topic and for the two of us who have on a professional level explored, how do we share stories. In educational settings we've explored, how do we share stories and still for the two of us to feel so stilted or unsure or so much trepidation, that in and of itself says a lot to me.

Candice Schutter: So on that note is. Do you feel different on the other side of sharing [00:08:00] this publicly? Does it still feel as awkward? Like what impact has the actual, okay, it's on the outside of me, I figured out how to do it. It may not have been perfect. And I did it. Do you feel liberated in any way? I don't want to put words in your mouth, so I'm sort of struggling with the question. What's different now that it's on the outside in terms of how you feel about your story and sharing it?

Tracy Stamper: It could not be more different. I just felt myself take a huge breath and that breathing room has not been there for a long time. Uh, I do notice that there was part of me that was thinking, oh, once I tell my story, I'm good. I'm golden. I'm done.

And while there is much relief, there's this like really, really deep well of sadness that I was surprised by.

It's so [00:09:00] intense to be sharing stories that involve loved ones. And there is not a single person involved in any of the stories that I've shared that I do not wish the very best for.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Certainly I would never want anything that I say or do or share to hurt anyone else ever. and I sense that it's inevitable that my sharing my story will hurt some people. It just will. Whew, that's a lot.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, it makes me wonder, well, first I'll say I can really relate to that sentiment and those mixed feelings and we've been speaking about a sort of specific story with specific people. And the reason that we do that as we talked about in the beginning is that the more specific we are actually, the more general things become [00:10:00] in terms of people finding how they're applicable to their own lives and their own expression. I guess I'm wanting to look at the bigger picture in terms of ... it's important to me that none of us get stuck on this idea that the feelings that Tracy and I are having are specifically around things that these people in this organization need to be accountable for. Because that's not how our psychology works.

And I want it to be known that Tracy and I both get that. And we got really specific. Because this is a specific story that we've learned a ton from, and that we wanted to share with all of you so that we can all learn from it and take the general message into other arenas. And we can recreate culture in a healthier way.

And so I guess I'm curious, I'd like us to talk for just a bit about how are these themes present in other areas of our lives? And what have we learned from that experience there that [00:11:00] we are now applying or that we can apply to our relationships moving forward, all of our relationships and, you know, holding ourselves accountable for what we brought to the dynamic that made it sorta cult-y, right?

And just having ownership around our story isn't just about, like I told the story about these people, they did this thing and shame on them. Like no, having ownership over a story is telling the story as we experienced it from our perspective saying this is how it felt when these dynamics were present.

I do think there's accountability necessary for this, that and the other. And also, I was a player in that dynamic and how can I be more awake and aware as I'm moving into the rest of my life? And as I'm showing up in, even in my own family, so what do you feel like you have gleaned from this experience of putting the story from the inside on the outside? What have you learned about yourself and culture in general and how to navigate it differently than you, than you did in this particular [00:12:00] instance?

Tracy Stamper: One of the first things that comes up for me is the word tools as part of our specific path we tools that we utilized both while we were practicing the practice. And then also just as part of our self development, part of how we speak about ourselves, how we speak to the world, how we interact in the world. And there was so much growth that I personally witnessed in myself when I first learned the tools and started putting them into practice. And it is those very tools that can end up as weapons against self.

So for me, what I would really like to carry forward, what I will carry forward is that there can always be a mindfulness learning that I can have this...

this Tracy [00:13:00] sitting in this chair right now has a whole lot of hindsight. And that's something that I really heard you speak to in episode 36. We've done a lot, a lot, a lot of work to get to this point. For myself I know I've got a lot, a lot, a lot more work to get to future points, and I want to celebrate how far I have come. And I also, sure as hell, want to take this Tracy in this chair with the hindsight, by the hand into all future group settings.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, definitely.

That's something that I really struggled with and I still struggle with sometimes when I have a new learning or an embodiment of something. Those of you who listen to the podcast regularly know that one of my personal mantras is never always. And if you must know, it really came from this learning where I would learn something and it would be a tool in my [00:14:00] toolbox and would be really helpful. And then either within myself or outside of me, that tool would be applied in a moment where it really wasn't appropriate or the right tool for the occasion. And yet these broad strokes that get painted in would happen and the tool would actually have the opposite effect that it's intended to have.

I feel like I'm speaking really abstractly. So I feel like an example would be useful. In the Org, one of our tools was actually a tool that was borrowed from another teacher that was brought into our practice. And we were very much encouraged to not take things personally.

Now in our interpersonal relationships, this can be such a valuable tool, right? We are able to listen with much more presence and mindfulness when we're not taking things personally. When we're in a conflict situation, for example.

And what can happen. And what did happen is that the tool of 'don't take things personally' became weaponized when an individual didn't [00:15:00] want to be accountable for their actions.

So I remember a few years ago, this was sort of a remnant of this, my charge around this taking things personally, I saw a meme on Facebook and it said: people say they want the truth, but most people can't handle it.

And I remember when I read it, I felt my fire rise up because I feel like this is a great example where like we talked about in the last episode, thought terminating cliches, where don't take things personally, it becomes a way of offloading responsibility. So if somebody is, if somebody is communicating in a really harsh and cruel manner, this thing that was once a tool, becomes a weapon out onto this person and say, well, you're just taking things personally, when their feelings are hurt. Or how I've seen it show up at this sort of it's morphed version in self-help circles is, if you're upset about something, it's just a projection, it's something you should look at.

Now, those things are both useful as well. And it's the concept of near enemies that I've [00:16:00] talked about like that when something is used and it appears as though it's being used in a positive way to support and help us, but it's in fact, a way of deflecting and offloading responsibility.

And there's just so many examples of that. And it's not even just about other people using these, misusing these tools toward us. It's about the way we misuse them toward ourselves. That's the most difficult. Because ultimately, if somebody's doing that to me, if I don't believe them, it's not going to sting the same way.

This process has really helped me to understand and see, like I'm real proud of myself that I've been courageous and that I've shared these stories and all that. And it feels really amazing. And all the feedback has been beautiful, which I want to talk about in a moment. And also it's become really clear to me how susceptible I am to the influence, not of everybody, not of the average Joe, not of some guy on Facebook, but I'm super susceptible to the influence of people I love, admire, and [00:17:00] respect. It is so easy for me to lose myself in that.

And so if somebody has a human moment and they misuse a tool toward me and I love, care, and respect for them, it's on me. Sure. To not take that on and to not let it penetrate, but that's way easier said than done, right?

So it's like, it's both and it's not one or the other. I have to do my work. And also we need to be really conscious of how we treat each other. And that we know, I should speak for myself. I can feel it when somebody is offloading their shit on me. It's like a freaking alarm going on inside of me. It's really my biggest trigger when I reflect that to someone and then they gaslight me and say that it's oh, it's just you. It's just you.

And it's triggering to me because on some level, I believe that I'm like, oh my God, what if they're right, because I've done all this work. I kind of over-corrected. I'm like, it's just me. It's my work. It's my responsibility. It's my personal power. It's like, I kind of went a little [00:18:00] overboard with it to a degree where I don't always hold people accountable. And I'm, creating this project has been for me taking that back and being like, I get to name how things felt wrong and be in that tension.

It creates a lot of tension because it's not something that women typically do in our culture. Or they do it and they get a lot of pushback. So I'm feeling that tension and I'm staying really strong in it and doing my best to continually look at what's mine to own and self reflect and not just make that the thing that I always do.

And everyone else just gets off the hook. That's, I'm just like, I'm fucking done with that. Like I'm done with that.

Tracy Stamper: It's exhausting.

Candice Schutter: It is. And I do get really tense and reactive, and this is what I'm working on, when that tension is there and I feel like the other person isn't meeting me and accepting responsibility. I totally get activated. And sometimes I bolt and sometimes I attack, but in the way that I attack, which isn't like ferocious, it's more [00:19:00] like with words and lawyering and language and trying to control the situation. So, um, I dunno if anyone out there knows anything about that, but, uh, it's kind of my go-to. Tracy's raising her hand.

So, well, that's the thing when you're, the beauty of having language as one of your tools. Well, I mean, that just really illustrates the point, doesn't it? Right? It's like, that's why I'm saying I do this too. Like my greatest tool is words and I abuse the shit out of them when I feel scared. When I'm afraid and I want to not have to look at my shit.

I will word all over you. You will be in an avalanche of words. And it's, it's a tool that becomes then a weapon in a way. It's more a shield in that instance that I'm hiding behind. So that can be true. And also the other person can have some work to do.

And that that's kind of where I'm at is like holding the tension of it's not all on them and it's not all on [00:20:00] me. How do we create a culture where everyone's doing their best to be accountable to what they're bringing? How do we create that? I don't, I don't know yet. But I know that by looking at what hasn't been working, it's going to help us figure it out.

Tracy Stamper: Right.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: May I share with you a vision.

Candice Schutter: Please.

Tracy Stamper: You, my dear, shared such a gorgeous vision of standing arm and arm, shoulder to shoulder when things start to get a little bit prickly or when things start to go sideways, how can we react in a different way for a different outcome?

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: When I listened to that part of the podcast. When you [00:21:00] shared that vision, I started sobbing. I started sobbing. It was so beautiful to me and I had a vision. And again, I'm going to speak specifically to the Org because that is what I know. So your words took me back into a circle with trainers because that's the circle that I was in. And I revisited one of the times that we were in a setting when... when a bear entered the room, right?

Candice Schutter: That was episode 34, Dancing On Eggshells, was the opener to that episode. When I about

Tracy Stamper: 34. Poking the bear.

Candice Schutter: 34, yep, I talked about poking the bear.

So you were in a group setting with all the trainers and the bear got poked.

Tracy Stamper: The bear got poked.

And if I, with hindsight, could [00:22:00] rewrite a situation that I was actually in.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: What happened was that the bear got poked. Folks in the circle, We started bracing ourselves for bearish behavior and in the circle, one of the trainers very, very subtly, just start to make a very small motion.

Candice Schutter: Like a heartbeat?

Tracy Stamper: Like a heartbeat. Other people around the circle, saw the signal and started joining in because they had all discussed beforehand about how to stand shoulder to shoulder and arm and arm when necessary.

So in my mind, I just saw this gorgeous expression of how do we stand together? How do we stand [00:23:00] together for the good of all? What if we're empowered to reflect back to the bear, how appreciated they are, how respected they are, how enough they are, and how they don't need to go to this other place because all that they're fighting for is already there.

This person at the head of any organization, if they have folks who have signed up who are doing the work, they've already won people over through whatever their brilliance, their mastery, their unique perspective. What if the rest of the people in the circle could somehow

just find a sign so that there could be courage to stand up to the bear in a way that doesn't leave any one person with their neck out.

Because in that situation, I [00:24:00] remember a situation where the bear came out and I, I felt scared and angry, and I knew that this was not okay at this point, but I'm in a room of, you know, 30, 40 people, and you just don't do anything. You just don't say anything. What if there were some way where we could all say something together? So not one person has their neck on the line.

Candice Schutter: Well, how I think it would have to work just knowing human nature and even just facilitating dance for years and seeing how over and over and over again, I've seen this like, all it takes is one person. So in the practice that we taught, there was a lot of sounding to bring more integrity to the movement, to power our limbs. We know the way that emotion feeds movement and muscle and all that. So we would use sound.

And one of the things that I learned early on was that all it takes is one voice. If one student will break that wall and begin making sound, then the [00:25:00] rest of the class feels less inhibited.

And so it would be glorious if everyone just stepped forward at the same time and not everybody's wired for that. So I see, like in the vision that you've created, I, I think it's beautiful, whether it's the heartbeat, hand-clapping whatever it is. Like the reminder to self-regulate is key because when a bear is baring teeth it's teeth, um, the first thing to go is the nervous system offline.

Like the sympathetic nervous system kicks in. We go into fight, flight, fawn, or freeze, which are the two that are often forgotten, which I think happened way more in the intense environments that we were in. There was a lot less fight and flight. There was way more fawning and freezing.

And if you're not familiar freezing is what it sounds like, right? We just freeze. We dissociate we're like there, but not there. There's a lot of dissociation going on. And as I'm hearing from, you know, the people who are reaching out to us and hearing that a lot of folks have that [00:26:00] experience. And fawning, which doesn't get spoken about enough, which is so key to these 'cultural dynamics.

It's essentially when we feel threatened, what can we do that will please, appease, and comply to get that bear to cool back down, right? Fawning is an, and I think there's a really thin line between what you're describing, where you're saying to the bear, you know, you're okay. You're already appreciated. You're loved and all that. Unfortunately, if you're dealing with an individual who has a really wounded ego, that can actually almost come out like fawning. So it's tricky though, because I see what you're doing. You want to affirm the thing that they're fighting for. We don't act like assholes, unless there's a need that is unconscious to us that we're not getting met. So I see what you're after there. And I think that could be a part of it.

And you know, the voice that speaks up, it's going to get attacked because that's the pattern. Then the other voices chime in, you know what you just said, really [00:27:00] didn't feel good to me either.

And then someone else says it didn't feel good to me either. And yeah, I don't think that had the impact you were going for, or whatever that person's truth is. Like, what is it that people are feeling and they're unwilling to say? And if like one domino falls and knocks over another one, it wouldn't be hard for them to all go together, but it takes making that commitment to each other and saying like, we're going to walk the talk. We're more devoted to what we say we're doing here than we are to this person.

And that's a tough thing for, for us, myself included, to wake up to when we're in it sometimes, especially when we have an attachment bond to the person that's behaving in a specific way. So I was just listening to a podcast today with, uh, Glennon and Amanda and Abby's podcast, We Can Do Hard Things. They were having a conversation on boundaries and the woman who was speaking was saying that sometimes when it comes to expressing boundary, we need to speak like a kindergartener. And this was like [00:28:00] exactly something that I needed to hear, because I use all the words, if you haven't noticed. And she said to just simply say, that felt mean, or ouch, or I don't want to, or I don't like that.

And to just speak really plainly, and again, this is one of the, I think troubles with when we get super steeped in personal growth, we have so much language to describe what's happening, we start to psychoanalyze the shit out of it and process it instead of just naming our experience and then leaving people to respond and name theirs in kind.

And it's like, there's a simplicity that if we could take all that embodied awareness and mindfulness and just be in that with each other and just name our experience together like, we could get to the bottom of things really quickly.

But this requires that everyone's willing to participate in that. So I think a lot of the reason [00:29:00] why people don't speak up in situation like you just described is because if I do that and if we all did that, we have a sense that the person is still not going to stop or they're not going to get it.

So then what are we left with? What is our option? To walk away? Oh, shit. That's when we start to get flooded again. Cause we're like, like don't want to leave. And so how do we come together to express boundary together without it becoming this like binary thing?

Like, either we stay and it up, or we speak up and have to leave. Where's that middle ground, right?

Tracy Stamper: To me, the middle ground is a trust that I am arm in arm with others. That if we had all agreed on, just a signal, like a distress signal. If we had all agreed that if we heard someone use this distress signal, that we would all come in together. If I knew that there were strength in numbers, [00:30:00] would I have the courage?

Candice Schutter: Right.

Tracy Stamper: That requires having these conversations.

Candice Schutter: It does.

Tracy Stamper: We weren't having the conversations when we're in. Do we have to get out to

Candice Schutter: Have the awareness.

Tracy Stamper: right?

Candice Schutter: I don't know the answer to that. Although, hearing from folks and talking with you, we have a lot more awareness when we're in than we give ourselves credit for.

Tracy Stamper: true.

Candice Schutter: When you spoke about distress signals, I thought we're already giving distress signals. We may not have agreed ahead of time, but I know when I look across the room and I see someone leaving their body.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: I think dissociation is the one that's most key and maybe would be worth just talking about for a moment. Like, what does that look like when somebody is dissociating? Now it's different on everyone, so this is a very general description. But I realized in the last episode I [00:31:00] talked about the Jonestown video that I watched in college and the woman who was seated on the floor, who was listening to Jim Jones speak. And she had the like doe-eyed expression. And that expression has always been so fascinating to me. And I only just realized recently that these extreme groups are just amplified, turned up to level 9, 10 things that we all experience at a lower grade. So when we look at these examples of folks who are like way in, and it's a really common thing to see someone in this sort of glassy-eyed vacant, hollow looking space, and it just recently occurred to me the thing that I've been like, what is that?

I was like, oh, they're dissociated so consistently that, that's just what it looks like. Like they're not fully there. They're not fully present. Like I can think of instances where I looked around the training space and saw people in that place. I can think of [00:32:00] instances when I was in a work meeting at the inner circle and I would go into that place. And I would get a look from a coworker. I could see a flash of concern on their face, and then they would go back to attending to the meeting cause that's what they were there to do, right?

And I would have that flash of concern when I would see the person in this training space. And then I would think oh-do-do-do-do hypervigilant, gotta be paying attention to the lesson. And that's that, that hyper individualism that we have in our culture.

You know, if I'm being perfectly honest, my ego wasn't strong enough to hold the tension of that. And so what it would do, it would do what any wounded ego does. Is it would project and it would say, not consciously, but I would have this sense of like superiority, like, look, I can stand in this fire. And I feel it too, I feel the tension, but I can be strong and I can stay in my body and I can stay present. That's the hierarchy at work, right? Like, oh, like I'm, I'm constantly evaluating where am I on this [00:33:00] hierarchy? And so when somebody's

struggling, I would feel empathy, but instead of focusing on the empathy and instead of focusing on like, hey, is something off here that's maybe harmful and that's why this person seems to keep exiting their body.

I would reorient myself again, again, back to we're being tested here and I'm passing. And that was like, as far as my thinking would go about it. And then when, and this has been a little bit of a challenge for me to know that the person I spoke of that I called Raul in my storytelling, as I spoke about in my story, he and I bonded and he became a mentor to me. And I do remember witnessing him engaging in power-over dynamics. And I blocked a lot of it out. Most of it didn't come in my direction because I had somehow gotten into the fold there. And as I hear stories from folks, I'm like, I had sort of put it out of my mind, how often he would [00:34:00] flex his need for control. And how hurtful it was to so many people that I never had the nerve to stand for. Not because I was like struggling with, should I stand for it or not? Sadly, I wasn't even there. I was just in a place of survival.

So when you say like, do we have to leave to wake up to this? I don't know. It's hard for me to say. I was dealing with some old trauma stuff. So I, my triggers were such that I had to leave in order to learn the rest of the lesson. But if I had been able to do that work and stay, then maybe I would have gotten to the point where I had the courage. It's just sticking around. I almost feel like as soon as we wake up to the fact that, wow, this is really dysfunctional. There is no sticking around like, sort of like. So it's this, it's this fine line. Like if there just happens to be some overlap between that moment, when you really wake up and you realize I need to get the hell out of here and there's some shit going down, are we courageous enough? And that becomes the tricky thing of like, we don't have to [00:35:00] stick around and teach our teachers how to treat us.

That's like the big takeaway for me is why would we? I mean, I get that it would be wonderful if we all stood in the circle and we were a united front as this person had there, but this person isn't treating us properly consistently. Again, I'll allow for their humanity. And when I offer reflection, they're not interested in it. So why, and I think this is so key, especially for folks in the Org is like everything that you've learned and embodied belongs to you. There is a three-letter word that does not belong to you. That's it. That's it. Everything else is yours. You have earned it. You've paid for it, in so many ways. It's in your body. It's in your heart, your mind, your soul. It belongs to you and you can use it. And so if you leave, you are not losing all of that.

That's why I call it indoctrination. Oh, [00:36:00] it's such a strong word. It's like, it's indoctrinating because the belief that it doesn't belong to you is a lie.

And one of the things that, Robert J Lifton, who's back in the day cult researcher, one of the pioneers, his eight criteria, things that contribute to mind control. And one of them is creating a sacred science. Taking tools and combining them into a language and pitching it as though it's a sacred science. And the only way to have access to that sacred science is through the founder, the creator, the top of the hierarchy. It's the only way it pours down through the center. And the only way you can gain access to the sacred science is to stay connected to that, and I am calling bullshit on that. It's not true.

And whether you think of the Org as a mystical energy or not, that's not even what I'm talking about, because the thing is it's not a mystical energy, if when you leave, it leaves you. I'm sorry, but that isn't anything that I would call divine and that [00:37:00] can't belong to somebody.

And if you don't frame it that way, which I happen to not, even more so it's just knowledge that you've embodied. And you get to use it outside of that space as much as you want. And you don't have to, again, aside from the three letter word, you don't have to give credit. Especially given that in this particular instance, a lot of those teachings were taken from a lot of different other places. So if you really wanted to dig around, you could give credit to the original source, right? Like this whole idea of 'the source' is part of what keeps people stuck. And they think that they are not going to have a livelihood. They're not going to have this, that, and the other if they leave because it all belongs to this one Fountainhead.

And I happened to not believe that that's true.

So I totally went on a tangent there, but all that to say, I think we stay in the circle and think we have to figure out a way to stand up. Even though this dysfunctional energy isn't going to meet us in this process because we have to stay. Why?[00:38:00]

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Why do we have to stay? Or, I've heard from quite a few people who, because they never entered the inner circle have been able to remain associated with the Org, have been able to do the practice and be engaged in the work and they're hanging out on the fringe and it's working for them. And I think that's beautiful too. I'm not saying it's this binary thing, stay or leave.

When folks are able to separate the work from all this dysfunction and able to find a way to have this autonomy in the way that they're doing the practice. And so I think it's really beautiful and I've literally enjoyed hearing from people who have been able to ride that line. I mean, it's very different. They're very different stories. There's no right ending to the story. It's just, they're just very different.

And I think they maybe have perhaps a better handle than I did on this whole sacred science thing and the source and all that stuff.

Like I, really bought into that narrative, on a certain level, to the point that when the [00:39:00] humanness was hurtful to me, I couldn't separate it from the work. And I think some people are able to do that better than others. And that's where I say, like I said, Our histories play into this. You know, how we are when it comes to influence the kind of parents we had, like there's a million different factors that makes some of us more prone to getting ensnared in that kind of enmeshment. And I was definitely, I was definitely one of those. Um, so it's just been great to hear from people who are able to just ride that line in a way that works for them.

Tracy Stamper: Absolutely that. And it's so interesting too, for myself to look back and to see different junctures of my path. Part of me knew that taking the step of entering into that inner circle, things were going to change.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: For many reasons, I was very hesitant to enter the inner circle. I remember after I got the [00:40:00] invitation into the inner circle and I was debating what to do with it, whether I said yes or no. And part of me knew that if I said, yes, I was going all in. Part of me knew that it would be a lot safer, more comfortable, easy breezy to continue on as a teacher. I had enough awareness to know that that built in distance was very helpful for me. Yet, I went in anyway.

Candice Schutter: Yeah,

Tracy Stamper: Flew too close to the sun. Got burned.

Candice Schutter: yeah.

Tracy Stamper: And the word that when you were talking about how some folks might have been more equipped to not get so swept up in the sacred science of it all. [00:41:00] The word that came to me is intoxicating. That stuff is intoxicating. Like that's what I love. That's what I want. So the same thing that drew me in was the same thing that I was kind of bristling against. It's so complex.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. You know, it's, it's impossible for me to speak well, uh, objective about anything particularly this,

Tracy Stamper: There's that.

Candice Schutter: There's just the fact that I'm a human and not an Android. Um,

Tracy Stamper: And I'm very grateful for that.

Candice Schutter: You talked about that intoxication. I am very, I think it used to be kind of a hypervigilant self-protective thing and it's since evolved into a discernment and sometimes those two overlap, around like dogma and spiritual speak and anything that sounds a little bit to me like a sacred science. [00:42:00] I'm wary of it because of what I've learned about cult dynamics.

The thing that gets overlooked so often when it comes to this kind of speech is that it's landing in every heart differently. There's what you mean when you say these sort of simplistic spiritual teachings, that to you may feel genuinely like something that you've grown into, that is an embodied understanding and the way it lands on each individual is different depending on the psychology that they're bringing to it.

And there's something about the oversimplification of things that happens in spiritual talk that I have a real problem with, especially when it's delivered in a matter of fact way.

I think the best example of this is toxic positivity, and the way that people practice reframing things in a way that is more affirming. And yet when that affirmation is offered in an inopportune moment, towards someone who is suffering, [00:43:00] it actually becomes harmful and hurtful. And it diminishes their experience very much like the experience that you had with Marissa when she spoke about you creating drama, when you're in the middle of like, not even in the middle of, excuse me, at the very beginning of grieving the loss of a parent.

And, and so it's, I don't even know what to call myself when it comes to my spirituality anymore. I'm not an atheist. I don't even like to say I'm spiritual, not religious anymore. Cause that's loaded for me. Um, I feel like my belief is in the fact that I don't know. Is that agnostic? Maybe, I don't know. I don't really care what the label is.

The reason I mentioned that though is that when I begin to turn myself toward a spiritual community, this happens so quickly for me, like I get saturated in this language that is sort of bypass unnecessarily simple. And that's why I say I can't speak objectively about it because I have such a sensitivity to it that [00:44:00] I think sometimes people have the greatest intention, then they say something and I'm like, eh. Yeah, I can't get behind that. It's too binary for me. It's too black and white. It's too light is good and dark is bad and that's that. And, end of story. Love over fear. Like these sort of simple sound bites to me are meaningless. I just feel like they're just like placebos in my mouth. I'm like doing it for me.

Tracy Stamper: At best.

Candice Schutter: At best. Meaningless at best. It's like, they're not doing anything for me. And I'm not saying that they're not useful because they did help me at a certain point and they help a lot of people.

So let me be clear about that. It's just this place that I'm at. I think that's why I talk about the soul more because it's so individual and it's so unique and the language that works for one person is going to be so different than the language that works for another person. And who am I to say, which is better.

The sacred science becomes this catch-all, here's the answer to every problem you have. And I don't believe that exists.

Tracy Stamper: [00:45:00] I agree.

Candice Schutter: And that my idea of God, which even that word I struggle with my idea of God is something that I can't know, conceive, name, or understand. So when you tell me you do, it's an immediate red flag for me. And your reality may be, yes, I can because I believe, and that's great, but don't put that shit on me.

Tracy Stamper: It's not going to fit.

Candice Schutter: It's not mine. It's not my experience. And I guess I want to say to folks who have that experience, like if it doesn't apply to everyone, is it really what you think it is?

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: I'm not here to try to take down anybody's religious framework at all, it just, I want more empathy and understanding and less culty finger pointing and saying like, well, clearly you just don't get it. Instead of just being curious and saying maybe I don't have all the answers and maybe my group isn't better than your group.

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Candice Schutter: As everyone can probably guess by now have a really hard [00:46:00] time being in spiritual community and that, and that's something that I've been both working on, struggling with, and also just liberating myself around. It's not something that I necessarily need to have in my life if it's not serving me.

And, uh, I guess I just want to say that's okay too.

Tracy Stamper: It's so fascinating to just witness the healing journey. And what does that healing journey have room for at this point in time? For example, after I left the Org, I went ahead and I got certified to teach another movement form, and I just didn't do it. Like I came home and I taught my required six classes to get my certification. then, so that was four years ago, like four years, two months ago, since then. I think I've been in zero classes. I don't want to be in a class setting. [00:47:00] I just do not want to step into teacher student in a room. I can't do it right now. I'm certain I could force myself to do it.

Candice Schutter: Sure.

Tracy Stamper: But I do not...

Candice Schutter: You don't want to. Kindergarten.

Tracy Stamper: ... any interest.. Exactly.

Candice Schutter: I don't wanna.

Tracy Stamper: I don't want to. And it's just so interesting because I fancy myself a lifelong learner. That's something from the time I was very young. I was all... I love learning. And here I am at this juncture where I don't want to step foot in a classroom. Really interesting.

Candice Schutter: Well, let's look at that for a second. If you wanted to learn about horticulture, would you go take a class at the community college on plants?

Tracy Stamper: Interesting. Okay. Let me [00:48:00] revisit. I have been in the classroom since left teaching. It was a writing class, so it felt just completely, completely different. So

where does that come from? That feeling of don't want to, that is relegated I'm realizing now that we're talking to movement classes and self-development classes like a meditation class. Like I just would just don't have no in stepping... Am I meditating? Every day. Do I want to step into a classroom? No.

Candice Schutter: Well, that's what's interesting to me and there's going to be a future episode where I really kind of go into this with a guest that's coming up in a few weeks around the commerce of self-help in some of the issues that I have around it. Just around like capitalism and how it's created certain kinds of spaces when it comes to self-development. And how, when I went back to school, when I back to grad school and I [00:49:00] did do it online because it was during the pandemic, but let's say that I was going to a university and walking into the actual classroom where the professor was.

Now this is not to say that these dynamics cannot occur in an academic setting, that they can, they happen all the time. And for me, I'm less likely to lose myself in an academic space because nobody's telling me what my feelings mean. No one's helping me to decode my somatic impressions. The thing that's really, really tricky and why it is such a huge responsibility to hold space for self development, is that it's really about the self. And when you're guiding someone back to themselves, you have to be so careful that you're not imprinting your beliefs, your perceptions, your spiritual frameworks onto that person. And I think that it's easier for us to get lost there ' cause, we're all struggling with the human condition and what do my emotions mean? And what does it mean when my body is like this? Then [00:50:00] how do I like of my childhood history? Like, let's unpack it.

And you know, what I think of as an extreme example of this is the work of Teal Swan. If you're not familiar with Teal Swan, she's a spiritual teacher that has a huge online following and has been recently talked a lot about on the Conspirituality podcast, which is superb, I highly recommended. I think I've mentioned it before. Sarah and Nippy have talked about it on A Little Bit Culty, and there's a documentary on one of the channels. I'm not remembering which one now. Might be Hulu. It's called The Deep End, and it's a four-part series. And the spiritual teacher allowed this person to come in and film her over, I think it was three years. And the thing that's important to note here is that her work is that she helps people to process their emotional experiences and she claims to have psychic abilities and claims to be able to see and know things that other people can't see and know. So she's telling people about their own experiences.

She also has a history of, according to her, traumatic abuse in her past, which is [00:51:00] probably true in part. And she also worked with a therapist who many years before during the satanic panic was working with clients. And there was a whole thing that was happening where basically people were being unfortunately misled in therapy sessions to create fabricated memories of certain kinds of rituals and traumas. And it's of course, very possible they had actual trauma, but it would like spin into these other stories.

Teal was a client of this woman who got in trouble for doing this. And so she brings this history of her trauma, which is super-intense. She's, she's very much a truth teller. She's, she has a lot of skills. And of course, a lot of the things she teaches are useful. She says a lot of things against the systems that we haven't set up in this country that I agree with.

And she's also telling people about their experience. She's helping them to name their experience, and she's very confident in doing it. And then she has retreats where people do that for each other. They're "channeling" entities from the [00:52:00] other person's past. And they're filling in the gaps that people have in their own memories with things that may or may not be true.

And I think it's just such a great example of what can happen when a person has a sense of spiritual authority over another person. I just, I think it's very shaky ground.

Tracy Stamper: Very shaky ground.

Candice Schutter: And how can that person, no matter how well-intended and wonderful and gifted, they actually are as a facilitator. How can they possibly know anything about someone else's experience, really?

And I catch, I think back on the way that I coached back in the day and how much leading and guiding I did. And I cringe at it now. I'm like, Ooh, and not that I was guiding people toward memories and stuff like that, nothing like that. But I would use my frameworks, right? And be like, I got my tools. Like I had almost too many ideas about how life worked, and I would insert them here and I would insert them there. And, [00:53:00] you know, people would jump on board and they'd be like, yeah, sure, that's it. And then, you know, we could both walk away feeling like we had done some good work, but did we? I don't know.

Like, did we get to the heart of what's really going on for them? Did I ask enough questions? Did I sit in silence enough? And I feel this working with my current therapist, she's like the queen of, I'm not going to lead one second of this. She just sits and she'll wait until I answer the question I just asked.

She might ask me another question to help me get a little closer, but she doesn't ever fill in that space to a point that's uncomfortable for me. Cause I'm so used to. Yeah, like I'm used to somebody having spiritual authority, and she happens to be somebody who's been in spaces like we've been in and has come out of them. And I think has learned what not to do. And it's been really helpful to me. And it's uncomfortable though cause we want to go to somebody and be like, tell me. Tell me the answer. Tell me how it works. I want to know. And when we go into an [00:54:00] academic space, somebody can answer those questions. It's more objective, I guess I should say. Not always, but in many cases it's more objective. But when you're dealing with subjective soulular truths of a person, nobody has the answer. The real support is in helping to guide you to find your own answers.

And I don't feel like a lot of dogma does that for me. I mean, there's a lot of lip service around it. Lots of lip service around it, but is it really happening that way? Or am I falling under the spell of the hierarchy? So, so I'm like you, I'll go take a class in certain kinds of spaces, but in other spaces I get cringy.

I enter and again, I take responsibility. I lose myself in the teaching. I'm like, is this what I think? This must be right. And then I start applying it to everything in my life. And then I get really frustrated because it doesn't actually apply to this and it doesn't actually apply to that.

And then I get in this dissident thing, and then I have to leave. It's happened more than once since I left the Org.

So I understand the part of you that's hesitant. [00:55:00] All that to say it's been many years for me and I've gone in and out. I'm still struggling with that. Like how do, how do I do that?

And, and I think the fact that things are commodified and that people have to make money being an authority over us is the problem.

If the spiritual teacher was paid to teach no matter what, and it didn't matter how many people signed up and it didn't matter if they had a following or how many followers they had on Instagram, none of that mattered. They could show up with more integrity. But I think a lot of the hustle and a lot of the smoke and mirrors is because they have to sell you something because they have to pay their bills, like the rest of us, right? So it's like we commodify personal growth, then it gets culty fast because you literally have to create a cult following.

Yeah. It's capitalism.

Tracy Stamper: To the capitalistic.

You introduced me to a term at some point during this process, spiritual hustle.

Candice Schutter: Oh yeah. I don't know where I've heard it before, but I didn't invent it, but yeah, it's a thing.

Tracy Stamper: it's a thing. And it's so [00:56:00] was so jarring to hear that. 'cause those words don't go together in my head, which speaks to why I was struggling in the Org to make those numbers. And there's something that just was incongruous about for me, what felt like trying to sell spirituality.

Candice Schutter: Trying to sell spirituality. Thank you for just saying it plainly like that. Like that is problematic. Because your followers are customers, and that is different. And the word follower I even have issue with, but let's just say that that's okay right now. They're customers and the product in many cases... and this is why I stepped away from trying to become a big name coach or anything like it.

The product is you.

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Candice Schutter: And again, I'm not judging folks. [00:57:00] Like, it's fine. If your brand is you, and I get that, and like I've been there. And if you don't want to create a cult dynamic, a lot of responsibility to navigate that in a way where that doesn't happen. If your product is you. It's really tricky to not misrepresent yourself. It's really tricky to express yourself in a way that isn't trying to coerce in some way. And let's remember, there's such a thing as soft

power coercion. Coercion doesn't always look like this hard, got a knife to your throat kind of thing. It can be very love bomb and sweet and sugary.

And it's just so tricky to show up authentically because if you show up authentically, some people are going to leave because you're a person and you're not going to resonate with everyone. But if you're a brand to me, it's impossible. That's why I was like, I can't do it.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: It feels impossible to me. And it's really, really important to me, which it may not be to other people, but it's so important to me that I never create a cult dynamic around me. It's really important to me because of the way that people lose power [00:58:00] in that and just how dysfunctional and icky it can be. So I don't envy people who choose to walk that path. I think it's really tricky and sticky and with all due respect, I say, no, thank you.

Tracy Stamper: Right.

Candice Schutter: I'm just not built for it. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: And so much as we're talking about all of this, I keep going back to when we're talking about movement practices or personal growth practices, where the product is self. Anytime, we are speaking to addressing, healing, helping, whatever the body that is some serious ground calling for responsibility. Whenever we are involved in an embodiment practice, because that goes [00:59:00] so deep. It goes into our cells, into the fibers of our being that has to be approached with so much integrity. It just has to. That the room for fallout is just too vast.

Candice Schutter: And the integrity and training

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Candice Schutter: It's. I mean, I see this, when I look back on my path as a teacher and how much I've learned in recent years to become trauma informed as a coach, about the nervous system and, and not just, hey, I know how the nervous system works. I know what it looks like when someone's triggered. But if you're not trained and this is the thing that is probably one of the biggest criticisms around what they call large group awareness trainings is that in these environments, people are deliberately being activated around certain things, whether it's through physical movement, whether it's through intense eye gazing, whether it's [01:00:00] through all sorts of exercises that are, perhaps very legitimate exercises that come from the realm of psychology. If they're being applied by people who don't actually have training to apply them, they may not know how to understand and recognize signals when somebody is having a traumatic response. Because we talked about right, fight, flight, fawn, freeze. It can look so many different ways.

You've got a room full of 50 people and what you've got one, two facilitators, maybe if you're lucky somebody supporting. And are any of those people trauma-informed. Are any of them

trained to deal with when somebody's having a response that may not look over the top, but something's a little off there. And not only can I recognize it, but can I apply something other than the teachings to this?

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Candice Schutter: Instead of being like, oh, like we have all the answers to the whole universe. No, you don't. You don't. There might be something that's needed here that extends outside of your realm of expertise.

And that's where we, as facilitators have to set our ego aside and understand what our blind spots [01:01:00] are. say, I either need to go get this training, or I need to bring someone in who has this training. If I'm going to hold this kind of environment. Like the environment I described that Teal Swan holds. Actually, I've heard that she has, because of recent criticism says that she is now bringing therapists into her retreat experiences. I don't know if these therapists are already in the fold of her, you know, it's like, you never know the context of that. But that's good. It's a step in the right direction, right?

Bringing in people who have the ability to navigate the fallout of the experiences that people are having and recognize it. No matter how much integrity we have, I think that's key, but it goes even a step beyond that. It's a start.

But part of integrity is knowing what we don't know.

So I'm a hundred percent agreeing with you. I'm just saying like, if you are responsible for people's wellbeing and you want to hold a space of self-development, you got to fill in those blind spots, or you at least have to name them and say, this may be activating and I don't have in [01:02:00] place somebody here to help you, if it becomes that. So make your choice consciously. Maybe they choose to go somewhere else. And that's when again, the consumer model becomes problematic. It's just such a mess.

Tracy Stamper: It's so interesting to be having this conversation and to travel back in time to when I was a brand new trainer before I had actually started training something that kept coming up for me over and over and over again is I don't feel equipped from a perspective of being trauma informed to safely handle what I know could happen from the depth of the work that I was doing. The way that that showed up for me was in the very beginning I remember in the circle, I just kept raising my hand and I kept saying, you know, what if someone comes in with such an intense history of abuse, that they are [01:03:00] triggered. I'm in a training. I have, I don't know, let's say nine other trainees that are all paying by the way. There's that capitalism,

Candice Schutter: Quite a, quite a bit of money, too.

Tracy Stamper: Quite a bit of money, and I need to be delivering for them, what they paid for. How do I create that space that has room for that person who I might be pushing just through the work, I might inadvertently be pushing beyond their edge.

I remember very early in the, process talking about do we want to have a therapist at all trainings? Do we want to have one therapist who would be on-call so if something happens, I at least have the resource to say, Hey, here's a resource for you. Because I [01:04:00] knew I had not been trained.

It's so interesting now to look back at that, the way that I was perceiving of that, you've heard me say this before, I didn't yet have the personal power.

Candice Schutter: To do all the things.

Tracy Stamper: To do all the things perfectly. To know all the things that I should about things I hadn't studied.

Candice Schutter: That's part of the problem with the sacred science too, because it's almost like there's this sense that I should be able to channel the ability to deal with any situation. I mean, in some instances I think, you know, we can ground ourselves and more wisdom can come through and we can be more present, yada, yada, yada.

But like, you don't know what you don't know, and if you've never walked a road, particularly if you don't have personal experience with trauma, you don't even know how it functions really. Blind spots are blind spots and they're real. And yeah. So I get it. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: And that was a very real, I [01:05:00] was looking at it through the lens of, do I have the personal power to take on this responsibility? The lens that I'm looking through now is part of me knew that the work I was being expected to do was beyond my capacity. And I am not saying that I was not a phenomenal trainer. I was pretty damn good. But I was taking people, potentially taking people places that could be more dangerous than I felt comfortable handling myself. I never felt comfortable in that. That was a red flag for me. That was a red flag that I did not acknowledge as a red flag because I was still looking at it through the lens of personal power.

Candice Schutter: Well, and that's how trauma was dealt with in the environment by our mentors. If somebody was had a trauma response,

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Shut that shit [01:06:00] down. Just shut it down. Just. There's no room for that here, because they were looking at it from the lens of personal power. I can't speak to them. I don't know what their motive was. I have a sense that they didn't mean to be like, we don't care about trauma here. I don't think it was that. I think it was that that's how they framed it in their own hearts and minds. And really, to me, what it comes down to is it's not that I think, because think there is such a thing as a hyper correction around some of this stuff where, you know, it's like you see this in, a lot of millennial and gen Z communities.

And like, they're over-correcting on purpose cause we've screwed certain things up. And so they go a little overboard sometimes with like hypersensitivity and taking care of everyone's

needs and don't offend anyone and like it's a little over the top and it's a welcome overcorrection because we haven't been doing that, right?

So I'm not saying that we err on the side of let's flip the narrative instead of walking on eggshells around the leader. The leader is walking on eggshells around the followers. That's not,

Tracy Stamper: Wow, interesting.

Candice Schutter: ... what I'm suggesting. I'm saying, know [01:07:00] your scope of practice.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: And own what it is and own what it isn't and make that known, so that people aren't walking in thinking that you're their guru, therapist, dance teacher, all of these things in one.

And your identity is tied to pretending to be that like, let's just let everybody off the hook here.

We were teaching a movement practice and it was for body awareness and it wasn't for all the other stuff that we over time began to lump onto it.

And it became sort of this end all be all sacred science thing. It's that's not, it wasn't everything. It was just one thing, a useful thing that, because the scope of practice got too big for its britches, began to cause harm.

Tracy Stamper: yeah.

Candice Schutter: And so that's all I'm saying. Let's just own our scope of practice. Me as a coach, I have to know what my scope of practice is and what it's not, and refer people accordingly. And pay [01:08:00] close attention when they develop the unconscious expectation that I'm going to be able to fill in those spaces. And notice when I feel a part of my own ego rise up and want to do it so badly because, oh my gosh, they think that I might be able to. I'll just wing it.

Tracy Stamper: Right. And hope for the best.

Candice Schutter: Hope for the best. And it's like, I'm sure there's still, sometimes I do it. And then I do my best to like, it's It's a constant state of discernment around how we're engaging when we're in a space of leadership. It's a responsibility.

I want to ask you about the feedback that we've been getting on this series. I know that we've both been receiving a lot of messages and which has been really wonderful.

And in some cases hearing from people that I haven't connected with in, you know, over a [01:09:00] decade. That's been fun. And just hearing from listeners who really feel a sense of resonance hearing our stories.

What's that been like for you? What types of messages are you receiving and how has that been for you? I'm especially curious to hear from you on this because of how it went last time.

Tracy Stamper: You mean, not so smoothly.

Candice Schutter: Right? How, uh, what has it been like for you to receive positive, encouraging, I mean, I don't want to speak for you, tell me a little bit about the messages you've been receiving and what it's felt like to receive them, particularly given how it went last time.

Tracy Stamper: Um, It's been intense. It's been affirming, validating, sad. It's been a lot of things. The one message that I [01:10:00] keep seeing over and over is I thought I was alone in this

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Over and over and over again. I thought there was something wrong with me. I don't know. I couldn't figure out why I couldn't do this better or feel better or come out better. I've heard from a few folks who knew really, really, really well, very close friends of mine, who I had lost touch with over the years. And one of them who I just have such amazing fond memories of from different trainings that we would see each other again. And we stayed in touch and then we entered the trainer training at the same time. And we went through that together.

She wrote me after hearing my story. And she shared her own story of having been harmed, having felt hurt. That's what I want to say. Having [01:11:00] felt hurt by a dynamic, by an interaction. And what she shared with me is that she had not told anyone for years. I was the first person that she had told. She had kept all of that in for years. That made me so profoundly sad to know that this woman who I adore was dealing with such a profound hurt, that it has changed the way that she's walking through the world. And I didn't even know. Likewise I've been profoundly hurt. I've been walking through the world. She really didn't know what I was going through. The message that I keep getting is I didn't tell anyone. I didn't know what to do with my story. I'm so glad that someone's finally talking about this because, and a lot of people are having [01:12:00] stories come back to them and I'm not talking about things that they had necessarily repressed or suppressed. Just it's opening, it's opening a can of worms that I've had memories come back and like, oh wow, no wonder I let go of that one. That's really hard to fit into the package. Where do I put this story that, wow. I did see something 12 years ago and I stayed in that same place. It's just been really fascinating to see.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: that so many of us have been walking parallel paths in silence.

Candice Schutter: Parallel paths in silence.

And how much, and how often is this happening in so much of our daily lives? Right? This is like one space, one container. And you know, I'll say one of the great blessings of working as a coach where people share their private experiences with me is that I get to [01:13:00] see how much that's just the state of being human.

Like we are all, all of the time walking parallel paths while being silent. And thinking the whole time that our experience is an anomaly of sorts.

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Candice Schutter: Internalizing that there must be something I'm doing wrong or some way that I'm not enough or something that's off about me that's making it such that I'm having this experience.

Meanwhile, your neighbor two doors down is having a really similar experience and the person who has completely different political beliefs, that's living in a state across the country, in a house that's the exact opposite of yours is having the same parallel experience. There's something about, this is why I'm so passionate about sharing stories is some people, I've heard the criticism, like it's been 99% really positive feedback on this series and more of a question around like, why [01:14:00] unearth and tell stories about things that have happened so long ago? Like, what's the point of that?

What is the point of this? And for me, it's because of what you just said. I mean, I think you just spoke to it so beautifully, to let the people who are walking next to us know, Hey, this thing you're being silent about this is something that I struggle with too. And this is something that I have trouble putting words around too.

And that we are getting, like you said, there's something sad about the feedback in a way. It's like, I'm not excited that people are writing to me saying, yeah, me too. Like, that's the thing the message has been coming through the most for me in the messages has been, I knew something felt off here. This never felt right. I always felt a little bit unsettled here. That intuitive emotional intelligence that people had, them naming it and saying like that was there from the beginning or pretty early on, or it's still there.

And I'm not thrilled that people are saying, Hey, yeah, I suffered too. That's nothing to be excited about. It's more for people to feel validated in their experience, whether they were part of the Org or not. To just know that they're not alone. For [01:15:00] people to just know that they're not alone. That's what we all need most is just to know that we're not alone. And that somebody who we may have never even met might hold the key to liberating us just by sharing honestly, and openly about their experience.

It's a beautiful thing.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: It's been pretty incredible walking this road with you over the last six months, and I just want to say that I cannot possibly thank you enough for your courage and your willingness to be so transparent in the sharing of your story and to walk really into the crucible with me.

It's tremendous. You said that what really jumped out at you was that image of people linking arms and standing together as the bear gets poked. And that's what you did. I mean, you don't have to envision that you just co-created that. We did that. That's exactly [01:16:00] what we did, and that's exactly what's happening as people show up and bravely say that they want to be part of a community of folks who are unpacking some of this and learning from it. And you did that by being brave enough to show up with your story. So your vision is a reality, my dear.

Tracy Stamper: Well, to quote someone I admire so much, courage is contagious.

Candice Schutter: Courage is contagious and it's also, I think what gets lost a lot is that it's a vehicle for joy. It's just been so joyful doing this with you. And yeah, we've been nervous. And there've been all these anxious moments. And yet when we come together in our bravery, there is a levity and a release and, uh, it's not this like, struggle, like, oh, look how strong we are.

It's, that's how it feels when we do it on our own.

Tracy Stamper: yeah.

Candice Schutter: But But when we do it [01:17:00] together, it becomes this return to ironically what was really at the core of the practice that we were teaching, which was this word joy.

Tracy Stamper: Right.

Candice Schutter: It's like coming together to be brave is actually a really joyous, I think there's something about, it's like a pressure release valve. You have like one right next to you. So it's like, we've taken turns being anxious. Um, we're not carrying it all on our own and, and we have to laugh in order to get through it and to push through it and to have somebody to laugh with is just just a profound gift. So,

Tracy Stamper: Life-giving. Sanity saving.

Candice Schutter: Yes,

Tracy Stamper: All of the above.

Candice Schutter: And and fun as my friend would say.

Tracy Stamper: And fun!

Candice Schutter: And it's fun.

Tracy Stamper: I got to share it was zero percent fun before you came along. This journey of recovery has been [01:18:00] zero, zero percent fun.

Candice Schutter: Okay. Now I get to go have therapy. As if, I've got to turn the air conditioner up. It's hot in here.

Tracy Stamper: Okay. I was wondering if it's, because I immediately go to, to sweat when I get anxious.

Candice Schutter: Let's just show, even though they can't see what it looks like to be brave and joyous together. And now Tracy and I are lifting up our arms and showing you the huge sweat pit stains. Now not fair. Your shirt is light colored, so we can't see it.

But mine is like a little puddles. I got little oceans underneath my armpits.

Tracy Stamper: I do too.

Candice Schutter: Super sexy.

You

They're just invisible. Okay. Smart lady.

Tracy Stamper: There, uh, oh, no, that was, that was luck. I didn't think about it, but I will know for next time.

Candice Schutter: Well Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Because I do start sweating every time we go into this topic.

Candice Schutter: Luckily, this is a podcast and not, a Facebook live where people would be [01:19:00] staring at my armpits the whole time, unable to focus on my words. Like, is she really sweating that profusely? Bless her heart.

Tracy Stamper: Wow, they are really brave. Look how scared they are.

Candice Schutter: Exactly.

Tracy Stamper: Wow, they are walking through the fire.

Candice Schutter: Apparently literally, based on the amount of sweat that's going on.

Tracy Stamper: I'm laughing. I'm 100%

Candice Schutter: it's

Tracy Stamper: Laughing.

Candice Schutter: A hundred percent laughing. I like that. That's awesome.

Oh, that's so good.

Well, I think that's a good note to wrap on, don't you?

Tracy Stamper: Sounds good.

Candice Schutter: Thank you. Thank you again.

Tracy Stamper: Thank you again and again.

Candice Schutter: I love you. Big, big, big.

Tracy Stamper: Love you, darling.

Candice Schutter: Wow. I think you'll agree that Tracy is something pretty special.

Tracy's courage is of [01:20:00] the ,rare variety, full of kindness, love, and wholehearted truth. I'm gonna miss sitting with her, and I have a feeling you'll see her again on future episodes of the podcast.

Back in episode 35, we announced that we were creating a private Facebook group for former members of the Org. Since then this safe and supportive container continues to grow as individuals witness one another and share their stories. It's been so helpful to have a space where we can offer one another resources and speak openly about our parallel experiences. Coming together with transparency has been deeply healing for so many of us.

Upon entering one member wrote:

"In these conversations I hope we can find our way back to what we loved and why we loved doing it together. Because that was and continues to be very life giving for me."

Yes. Life giving.

Isn't that why we reach for one another in the first place? Why we create groups and [01:21:00] communities. To bear witness. To affirm one another. To give life to truths that live inside of us. And yet, as we have learned here, standing shoulder to shoulder can be tricky business, which is why conversations like these are so damn important.

Now the original plan for the series was that it would roll right into next week, but due to unforeseeable circumstances, there's been a slight shift to the rollout schedule. If you've been following the podcast for a while, you know that I'm all about trusting those natural rhythms. So my plan is to step back for the next couple of weeks. I'm gonna do some traveling and I'm gonna wrap up production on a very exciting lineup of new episodes.

The 'cult'ure series will pick up right where it left off on September 21st with an interview with Dr. Janja Lalich. Janja Lalich is a very special guest, a Professor Emerita of Sociology and an international authority on cults and coercion. You may have seen her featured in [01:22:00] documentaries like Heaven's Gate, Cults & Extreme Beliefs, Seduced: Inside the NXIVM Cult, and many other docu-series features you can find on a variety of streaming services. Janja leads online psychoeducation courses for trauma survivors, families, and mental health professionals.

I have more than one of her books, and my copy of her most popular, Take Back Your Life, is heavily earmarked and highlighted in preparation for this series.

And I gotta tell you, when I launched the first episode of this series, I tagged Janja in an Instagram post, and I nearly fell outta my chair when she wrote to me and offered to be a guest on my small potatoes podcast. Janja is an avid educator and that's just how she rolls, so I am thrilled she's gonna be here with us. I cannot wait to share our conversation with you. It will contextualize the stories that we've shared thus far, and it will lay an informed foundation for episodes to come, including more stories and conversations about the commerce of self-help, soft [01:23:00] power coercion, MLM recruitment, and cult of one relationship dynamics.

It's gonna be a helluva fall season, so I'm gonna get well rested and I'll see you in three weeks time. Until then circle back to any episodes you missed, share them with your friends, and consider rating the podcast on your favorite streaming platform.

If you'd like to send Tracy or myself a message, or if you'd like to request an invite to our online Facebook community, you can reach us at [thedeeperpulse.com/share](https://www.thedeeperpulse.com/share).

All right. I think that's it for now. Thank you so much for tuning in, and I'll see you on September 21st.

Caio. [01:24:00]