

Candice Schutter: 0:12

Hello and welcome to another episode of The Deeper Pulse. Before we dive in, just a quick heads up that following today's episode, I'll be taking a short break from the main feed of this pod, just for a little breathing room, and to prepare for what's coming up next in the 'cult'ure series rollout. Now, even though I won't be here for the month of February, I will be over on Patreon dropping new episodes in the Deconstructing Dogma series, which is really a counterpart to this 'cult'ure series. So, if that is of interest to you, I hope that you'll consider joining us over there. But first I have another refreshingly, honest conversation to share with you.

It's pretty much almost never that I meet a coaching colleague that's willing to critically examine the culty nature of our industry. And let me tell you, I've been feeling pretty lonely around this topic for a very, very long time. Not only lonely, but really pretty confused before I found the language of the cultiverse.

If you've been listening to this series, you already know that educating myself around cult dynamics has been a real game changer in my life. I've spoken to this on a personal level quite a bit throughout the series. But also, it's changed things for me professionally as both a writer and a coach.

From the get-go, so very much of how I was trained to run my business, it just didn't sit right with me. But I did what I've always done. I looked around me for social proof, and since it didn't seem to bother anyone else, I just sort of shrugged my shoulders and carried on doing all the things just because. I'd been taught that that's what works.

Now, in case you haven't heard me say it before, the term 'life coach' has always made me feel a little cringey. So why in the hell have I been using some variation of this term to describe my work for 17 years?

Well, because coaching was and is the catch all phrase for helpers who do their thing without regulation or oversight. And while that might sound irresponsible, for me as a cult survivor, that was exactly what felt just right about it.

It all started in early 2006 when I was desperately trying to break free from the New Age Wellness Cult, where I had worked in the Inner Circle for almost three years. Circle back to episode 33 to hear that story. Now, fortunately for me, at the time, I was not alone in my desire to separate from all the mind fuckery that was going on in that organization.

And so four of my work colleagues and I created a sort of women's circle support group. We didn't have any language around our culty experiences, so we avoided that topic altogether. Focusing instead on how each one of us would step away and what might come next. The five of us would gather in my small apartment once a week, and we'd spend two to three hours focusing on just one of us. Each woman would have her turn in the spotlight. The rest of us would listen to her frustrations and desires, then take turns reflecting her strengths back to her, scribbling her grandest visions and all of her best qualities onto a large whiteboard.

After a couple of months, many tears and lots of laughter, each one of us walked away feeling just a little bit more validated and in some small way better equipped to vision ourselves into the future. We all quit the Org in close succession, and each of us stepped into something sort of newish. Beauty school. Collaborative leadership standup comedy. Nature as art.

Now my great takeaway from the group was that I really loved facilitating it, organizing the flow of each session, zooming in on a singular human, listening deep and sifting through all the cult conditioning to reveal authentic desires.

Back in college, I'd worked closely with Rick Snyder, a pioneer in positive psychology, hope, and human agency. And something about what we were doing in that circle reminded me why his work had appealed to me. I knew back then that I, in some way wanted to apply what I had learned in the research lab to real life, but I'd never been quite sure how to do it. I'd applied to grad school in the past. I'd been accepted once, but had never gone. Mostly because I was already drowning in student loan debt and also because the focus of the programs was always so clinical, and I knew deep down that I really wasn't meant to be a psychotherapist.

After I left the Org, I learned about this option of coaching, so I looked into a variety of training certifications. I even sat down in some interviews with a handful of coaching mentors and instructors, and honestly, I wasn't really all that impressed. Most of them tried to sell me on their learn-to-be-a-coach programs, which consisted of a series of trainings where I'd be taught to regurgitate their formulaic methodology, a methodology that felt antithetical to the self-directed agency that I was hoping to inspire.

And also, right out of not just one but two culty organizations, the last thing I wanted was to join another freaking movement. Especially one with a figurehead at the top. I wasn't interested in buying into someone else's personal coaching philosophy and the culty language that so often accompanied it. Basically, I was looking for a training program that, as far as I could tell, just didn't exist.

Looking back, I'm not so sure that this was discernment so much as hypervigilance. I was pretty gun shy about communities and trainings in general, and I still had no real understanding of what I'd actually been through. And add to that, I was still very much punchdrunk on new age dogma and magical thinking. I was still in a deluded trance, still part of a culty movement. I just couldn't really see it at the time.

And so, armed with my good intentions, I gathered up the best bits from somatic education I'd received, and I started doing one-on-one personal training sessions, which in time evolved into face-to-face conversations. I leaned into my psych degree, attended metaphysical workshops on the law of attraction, and devoured books on humanistic psychotherapy. Feeling both terrified and uncertain, I placed a tiny ad in the corner of my email newsletter. Life coaching, \$50 an hour, and then I prayed and hoped for the best.

Slowly but surely, I began building a coaching practice. 90 to 95% of my clients came from my dance fitness classes. And it sort of worked. Because I had earned their trust somatically first. And because their beliefs were so similar to my own, I was able to provide some of what they were after. Deep listening. Personal validation. And high vibe encouragement.

As a lifelong empath and people pleaser, I was likable and easy to talk to, and the years I'd spent in the world of cult fitness had taught me how to deliver release valve experiences. And when all else failed, magical thinking was the catch-all formula. Simple solutions were easy to offer if I leaned into new age dogma. And since so many of my clients were like me, eager to believe, they were willing to pay for the deluded promises that we made to one another.

Are you cringing yet? Good. Because that's really the point.

Now, relative to other coaches out there, I was radically transparent with my clients. I shared openly about my challenges and offered examples from my own personal life. But even so, I wasn't honest with them about the fact that the tools I was peddling weren't really working for me either. I found it difficult to admit to myself, let alone out loud to them, that I too was struggling, feeling lonely and hungry for connection, that I struggled from week to week to make ends meet, which is why I secretly waited tables on the side, working and wishing for a magic bullet remedy for my own anxiety and depression.

Even though I was doing my best to model authenticity, the real me was still hidden from view, perfectly poised and package wrapped behind the superficial gauzy glow of love and light. See episode 40 for way more on that.

In time, I learned that it was incredibly difficult to make real money as a coach, you know, the kind that you can actually live on, without jacking up your prices or creating a cult-like dependency model. But all of this aside, I was determined to do it differently. So I enrolled in a high dollar training program that was like most of the programs out there. It focused on how to make money, not so much on client success.

The purveyors of this product were serving tens of thousands of individuals. And knowing nothing about my actual skillset, it was hammered into me that there was no room for self-doubt. Your discomfort is simply a lack of self-confidence. Invest in yourself! Raise your rates! Own your worth! We'll teach you how to create a sales funnel that works while you sleep. You go, girl!

They taught me that if I wanted to be at the top of my game, it wasn't so much about the quality of the work I was doing, it was all about quantity. Success meant proving that I was capitalist cult crushing it, evidenced by a massive email list, over the top testimonials, and a clickbait website sales funnel that led to loads of cash in the bank. Cha-ching! I'm changing lives. Woot woot!

And here's where I just wanna say that I don't think it's any sort of accident that pretty much all the coaches that are constantly boasting online about how they're rolling in the dough, they're pretty much always coaches who coach other coaches on how to make money. Said another way, the highfalutin money makers in the coaching world are preying upon folks who are just trying to do everyday work with real people. And when they apply business boss babe formulas, it simply doesn't math out the same.

From 2012 to 2014, I used all of the coercive sales tactics that I'd been taught, built multiple websites to house my online programs, and by 2017, I'd finally proven my online worth. I still wasn't making very much money, but thanks to a new relationship, I was able to finally quit my job waiting tables and I started coaching full time. I still refused to contract my clients; instead, I encourage them to come and go as they pleased, so I never really made all that much money doing the work that I loved. But damn, I was starting to look good on paper.

By the spring of 2019, I just couldn't do it anymore. I still felt like an imposter; never, ever while doing the work, but pretty much always whenever I was promoting it.

And I think it's because the placard outside of my door, life coach, it implies that I somehow am uniquely qualified to do the impossible, effectively guide others through the uncertain terrain of everyday human existence. And even when I played with titles like Clarity or Communication Consultant, I was just so damned tired of peddling a promise.

Why do we need a promise? Well, that my friend is the million dollar question, quite literally. Because capitalism. And because culture is culty in the sense that when people are paying for a result, they only want to bet on a sure thing.

All of that to say the culture of coaching is highly problematic. It's an industry that relies on a celebrity persona, peddles whitewashed supremacist belief systems, and offers magic bullet promises through coercive and predatory sales practices.

So why am I still a coach? I've been asking myself that question for a few years now. And the answer is because the work that I do is something that I genuinely love. And I've found ways to be in relationship with the small pool of clients that I serve without making promises or offering clickbait solutions. Now I just support them individually to find personal language, so they can ask better questions of themselves. So that they can come to terms with the fact that there really is no such thing as a one size fits all approach to self-development.

I'm honestly not sure how much longer I'll continue doing work as a coach, but I can tell you with damn near certainty that I will never, ever again actively promote myself in that capacity. Because I honestly have no clue how to market a coaching practice without it being all kinds of culty.

These are the questions that I've been grappling with for a good long while. I shared a little bit about it in my September interview with Dr. Janja Lalich. That's episode 38 in case you missed it. And she remembered our conversation. A couple of months later, she sent me a link to a podcast interview featuring Kathleen. When I clicked the link, the podcast host Sarah Steele, described Kathleen as "a rare breed, a wellness coach who is cynical about wellness in the coaching industry." I knew right away that I had to dive in. Midway through the content, I pressed pause and sent Kathleen a private Insta DM because damn, do I need people like her in my life.

I've dropped Kathleen's bio into the show notes, but I wanna really let her words, her humility, and her grace speak for itself.

I really hope you enjoy this conversation as much as I did.

Good morning, Kathleen.

Kathleen Oh: 14:09

Good morning, Candice. It's so good to be here.

Candice Schutter: 14:12

It's so good to have you. I am just so grateful that Janja, Janja Lalich connected us. Actually, she sent me a link to a podcast that you were on, and of course I reached out to you in the middle of listening to it. That's how, how much resonance I felt with your words. It was just such a thrill for me to hear someone who's actually been in and is involved in the coaching and wellness industry, say so many things that I've been feeling. Put language around experiences that I was having. And I haven't had an opportunity, quite frankly, to sit down with a colleague in the coaching industry to talk about some of this stuff. So I just felt like I need to become fast friends with Kathleen. And,

and reach out to her. And it was just such a thrill because you have experience doing podcasts and having conversations like this. So thank you so much for showing up here today.

Kathleen Oh: 15:06

Yeah. Thank you and also, even if I have had these conversations, it still feels new and a little bit scary, to be, you know, owning some of this. The work and the problems in the coaching industry as part of my work. So, you know, I hope that anyone listening, you know, with a tender heart and with some grace within themselves and with us, because we're in the midst of exploration. And, I remember like full, full body sweats, you know, thinking about what needed to happen, like, I just was on full trigger defense mode because I knew what was happening was true, and I was a part of it. So, I, I just thank you for this conversation. And also if anyone's listening to just give yourself some space to hear and listen to the parts of it that may be hard.

Candice Schutter: 16:06

Yeah. Thank you for saying that. For the listeners in terms of how it lands, and also for us having that grace for ourselves, right? Like I feel a hundred percent similarly that, that I'm just in the thick of it, and I'm waking up to certain blind spots and well aware that others are still operating at full tilt. And that's why I feel having conversations like this publicly is so important. It's just demonstrating that reckoning and being in it together.

Kathleen Oh: 16:37

Yeah. So much. And also, I think a lot of people are kind of in shock about this divisiveness of thoughts and leadership and direction. And this, I hope isn't that. It's an invitation.

Candice Schutter: 16:52

Yes, yes. People who have been listening to the series know how important it's for me to have that nuance. I mean, the podcast is called The Deeper Pulse for a reason. It's not about superficial black and white, you know, binary responses to things. It's about having these more nuanced discussions. So I'm really excited to dive in with you. And where I'd love to start would be just with your story, if you could just give us an overview, since most of my listeners haven't met you before, if you could just tell us about you and any part of your story that feels relevant to where we're gonna go today.

Kathleen Oh: 17:28

Yes. Um, I'm a coach and it's interesting you, in your last sentence you mentioned binary, and the nuance of our lives. I was raised in a high control family. I was born into intergenerational abuse and experienced childhood trauma. So the nuance and the binary, what you're talking about, in those circumstances, in those situations, um, my survival, it had to be black and white. There was no middles. Middle is not safe. So in my, ways of coping really with dysfunctional relationships, I really learned how to become somebody who could survive. And some of those skills actually are incredible, and I'm grateful for knowing, you know, the root in which I learned them. I'm, you know, it's unfortunate, but I was able to really be quite skilled at knowing how to take care of myself. And so in an early marriage, became a parent, and still really carried what I thought I carried, a better version of myself into my relationships and my marriage and my parenting. Um, but really I just sort of changed the language. I became more radical. I became somebody who wanted to seek alternatives. I was never one for authority because the authority that raised me was not trustworthy. So I really, my love language was lies. And so I brought all of that into my life as a, as a spouse, as a parent, and into my professional life. So what I thought I was undoing, I was just recreating in a new form. Which, you know, had somebody told me, I probably wouldn't have believed. Because, um, coming out of those types of situations and only knowing how to survive meant that I really just wanted to do better but literally did not know how. So, I went into social work.

Candice Schutter: 19:34

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 19:35

I, this is, you know, I felt that it was a really admirable career to help people like me. But again, even though I went to school, even though I learned the, you know, psychology behind social work and care and the systems that, that help people, I really hadn't thought that I was the person that needed the most help in those situations. So I really put all my effort into helping others, which ultimately was built on a broken foundation. So through the years, I ultimately burnt out and didn't do a good job as a spouse and a mother. And had to really question like why was ending up in similar situations, repeating patterns, with like, friendships as well as professional relationships. And, so I concluded that it was me. Still radicalized with my thinking, then just upgraded myself into another way of thinking, which was through energy psychology and through positive psychology. And just, again, not sort of working with a foundation that brought me into those places, but just changing out the language and sort of leveling up who I was without really breaking down how I got to be who I was. So I think, you know, it's not a unique story, my story. Um, but it's definitely very humbling to get to a place where, you know, the reason I'm in this scenario where I have caused harm or I have been in high control groups or been part of high control environments. It like goes all the way back to the, the very beginning.

Candice Schutter: 21:23

Mm-hmm. So the groups that you were involved in, would you be willing to share a little bit about the types of groups that, when you say high control groups, so that the listeners kind of have a sense what that looked like in your experience?

Kathleen Oh: 21:38

Yeah, it's funny because we were all, I would say kind of like love and light. It doesn't look like high control. Um, so it's like, oh, what do you mean? We just all want love and peace. That's not, you know. But those systems were controlled with judgment with, you know, a certain dogma that, that in order to be this person you had to eat a certain way and practice a certain type of, you know, structured, not religion, spirituality. Um, and also, you know, the, the choices of food and, healthcare and like all of those things, even though it wasn't like a cult, it was a community of very, very strong, opinionated people that were doing things that felt at the time really important. We've, I felt that this was an important thing to do for myself and for my family. But the rules, like everything, you know, one simple example, like imagining that I would ever give my children formula was like unheard. It was like, it was like poisoning my children. So of course I didn't, but I even put my children at risk and my youngest especially was in a, um, failure to thrive situation, very underweight. And I was determined to breastfeed her. And I did. You know, that's not that was built on something that was beyond what I should have done, you know. The nuance and not having those experiences of nuance where there can be this or that and not only one way. So, for about 25 years was the high control. And a lot of it truly was in my own mind. Um, and it's kind of a bit awkward to say, well, I wasn't ever in a cult. I was just in every, you know, every cult there was, like, you know, yoga, breath work. Like, which one, which one wasn't? But, you know, there was never a time where it was in, uh, leadership other than the courses and the training that I did take to become a coach. They were questionable. Um, what the ethics were about that. Yeah. So,

Candice Schutter: 24:03

I appreciate you speaking so eloquently to this premise that I came to when I started my own cult recovery, I didn't recognize myself in a lot of cult dynamic education. There was all this emphasis on, it's all about the narcissistic leader. And my experience, my culty experience is many culty experiences have been in the dynamic of culty culture, of a culture itself that's dogmatic. And yeah, sometimes there's a leader involved. And often, more often, it's about that ideology that gets internalized and that we become our own sort of, our own sort of cult master in a way internally. And so you just expressed it so beautifully, and I know that I'm not the only person who's gonna feel validated by that and why this series has resonated with so many people. I get one or two

messages a day with somebody telling me a story. And nine times outta 10, there's not a narcissistic sociopath at the helm. It's these ideological frameworks that we internalize. And I think that we were steeped in the same love and light world and, um, in many ways, I'm still pulling myself out of it in terms of the way that I, um, monitor my own expression. And I was trained to do that and to have conversations with people where we can say the irreverent things that we were never allowed to say, right. This is part of the healing, is doing this out loud. So.

Kathleen Oh: 25:31

Yeah, I am so happy to hear that you hear from people. I, when I really, the community that I was a part of it was many people because we were friends. It was a friendship circle. But, I had parts of my professional life that, you know, like any good boundaryless person had people in both worlds. I had people that participated in my coaching practice as well as the studio work that I did with breath work, as well as, Uh, psychedelics. And then there was the community of friends. And, um, some of them were in both worlds. So, when I left, when we, I didn't leave voluntarily. We were exiled from the community. The only solace I had, the only conversations I had, were the conversations that I had in my imagination with podcast hosts that were having these conversations. Like that's how I found Janja. That's how, you know, these conversations led me to healing, to recovery, to understanding, to compassion, to forgiveness. um, so if this is something that resonates with people, there are resources and there are places to go. Because at the time it was like an entirely different world. I felt like I was, you know, on a street corner of a city that I'd never imagined being with absolutely no roadmap. So I'm really, really grateful that you are here and the people that are listening are, you know, possibly getting some direction and places to go because it's a really lonely place.

Candice Schutter: 27:06

Mm-hmm. It is. Yeah. I wanna share, sort of leading into this, this nuanced discussion that we're gonna have I'd like to read if I have your permission to read from your substack?

Kathleen Oh: 27:21

Oh yeah.

Candice Schutter: 27:21

Okay. Beautiful. It's a quote that really demonstrates the humility with which you're approaching this and the commonality in our experience. So. "It is hard to admit, but I am someone that caused undue influence in my work. I have perpetuated lies and misinformation and unknowingly used manipulative and coercive tactics in my desire to help create a more peaceful and promising world. I used to believe it was simple. The powerful mind could change it all. I had a well-meaning plan for all those suffering, swimming in the ocean of pain. All we had to do was be a big enough believer where everyone wins. A believer in immense love and radical healing. We could just hit, reset and start over from a new place. Linking arms on a new earth. Newly elevated, expanded with high vibration, consciousness raising heroes all connected through bliss. We thought we were special and somehow we knew better." Whew. Ding ding, fricking ding. Gotta say.

Kathleen Oh: 28:27

Yeah.

Candice Schutter: 28:28

Any thoughts you wanna share on that?

Kathleen Oh: 28:32

Yeah. Thank you for reading that. It's also really nice to hear. Um, it really was quite appalling to me that what I was perpetuating was harm. And lies and misinformation. I, you know, would like to say every day through my past, most days, I feel I'm a good person. I don't intentionally harm people. I'm not a, you know, I'm not a road rager or doing any of those things. I, I have been definitely I worked through, but like that belief, the dogma behind the belief, really what drove me to believe that is the fact that I came from something so different and so impossibly, it felt,

anyways, like insurmountable pain. So this idea that there's this other way that if you could just be a believer in the magic and the bliss and beyond our, you know, our earthly chains. And it's, you know, it doesn't fall far from Christian, you know, heaven and hell. It's, it's this idea that if you are a good citizen, then you will be rewarded. The problem there was, in the coaching and in my work as a professional, I really thought I knew better. I thought that people came to me because I had done the thing to be a more positive, more loving person, so therefore I can show them how to be a more loving, kind, good person. And that doesn't sound that bad, except that, that was my agenda. That was what I was taught. I was taught that I knew the way and I could help them find their way based on my beliefs. And that is, that is coercion, that is unkind. I can't ever assume that I know better for somebody, ever. That is not, that is not fair. And having been taught that as a coach, like, yes, I can help people. I can give you know, my wisdom, but it's not my agenda that they are doing those things, it's theirs.

Candice Schutter: 31:09

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 31:09

And so even if the outcome is good for everyone, like this blissful world is for everyone. It's not just for me. But me believing that people are capable of doing that, want to do that, they want the same thing, and the really, the very dangerous part of that belief is that when it doesn't work out, the reverse of that is my intention was good, so therefore there must be something wrong with them.

Candice Schutter: 31:41

right, yeah.

Kathleen Oh: 31:43

And to have been taught that, and to have believed that, and to perpetuate that. And I, I think people hopefully maybe not be hearing this for the first time, but like, that's dangerous. That is, you know, leadership that is broken and not working from a neutrality or from quality. It's working from supremacy and from superiority and from a sense of earned authority. I don't, I'm not exactly sure, but I don't want that. I don't want that. I don't wanna be told, you know, my way is somebody else's. Even though, you know, in many circumstances I paid for that too. I paid to be told, you know, the way.

Candice Schutter: 32:36

Yeah. Yeah. That it's so impossible to untangle capitalism and white supremacy and the patriarchy from all of this in terms of how it's created these structures externally, but internally in terms of how we relate to one another, how we guide, how we lead. And even when we have quote unquote good intentions, this idea of supremacy shows up. And I think this piece around, like sussing out, like what's belief and how is it being projected onto the people we serve in ways that beyond like the superficial ways that we think about it. Like, oh, I don't talk about my Catholicism, for example. I'm not Catholic, but just as an example. But in these more subtle ways. And, and especially the, in this world of magical thinking where the law of attraction and things of that nature are so accepted as gospel. This idea that if the client isn't getting the outcome based on the tools of magical thinking that we're offering, then there's a deficit in the client. Somehow they're, their vibes aren't right. Because we've got our vibes aligned. And, and that that's all based on this false premise of magical thinking, right? It's not actually a science. But when you've internalized like I did, it felt like that's how I would apply it. Right. And I believed it. And, and that's, I think what's just so I'm marveling at even in this conversation is just how, how do we move forward? And this is part of my next question to you is like I read that beautiful quote, you just shared and elaborated more on it. When you wake up and you realize, wow, like I was sort of in a trance in this regard and operating in a way that was really out of integrity with my values, my deepest values, now I'm waking up to that. Like how did, what does that look like for you and how have you navigated

continuing to do the work that you do? Did it change your approach? Like, tell us a little bit about what that transition's been like.

Kathleen Oh: 34:38

Yeah, that's a good question. Um, immediately after realizing, and I think I have to acknowledge that there were parts of my work that were definitely, I was undoing my patterns. I was undoing my influence. I was undoing how I was participating in systems. You know, like these were years of sort of acknowledging. And I saw it in my clients at first. I thought, okay, so these people are actually achieving high levels of success, and there's something missing. Like, I, you know, I was, a lot of times I'm on my path too, like I'm building my career and I'm building what I believe success looks like. And when I see others that get to a certain marker or a point in their lives, and the emptiness and the unsatisfactory results of those, those experiences are quite dreadful. Um, so I, I did start noticing that, probably within the last, you know, eight years. I thought, yeah, this is an interesting thing. You know, it doesn't matter that they're men or that we're women, we're all building ourselves on these systems and these structures. And when the structure fell, it was like, oh fuck. Like this is actually,

Candice Schutter: 35:57

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 35:58

this isn't, this is a lie. This isn't true. This isn't like, everything here should be lining up in this way. And it's not like, it's not the chef's kiss. You don't get that. Um, so I was pretty aware of those things, but there were many things that I was blind to. I was blind to being anti-racist. I was blind to being white supremacist. I was blind to white privilege, and entitlement things that I, again, assume because I'm a good person and I'm nice, I get a free pass from. Um, so that came later. But thankfully I did have some awareness around systems of oppression and understanding, that there was already some, you know, inaccuracies in what we achieve and when we achieve it and how that looks. So I feel like when I got the big whammy, the big wake up, I had already understood, oh, like there's not just one system, there's many. And depending on how I show up in the world is depending on the things that I am participating in. So again, you know, with the gentleness of the ears of a listener, like understanding that I wasn't racist, but I was definitely not practicing anti-racist work. I wasn't using my entitlement to offer anything to anyone other than, you know, when people came to me. I believed I was doing my best with understanding diversity and racism and cultures. But like, I wasn't proactive. I was in something that I thought actually, if I understood what that meant, I probably wouldn't have participated in the ways that I did. But, when I understood how to change it and how to be proactive and to be anti-racist and like, it scared me. Which is also, unfortunately, a product of white supremacy, which is like this perfectionism, this idea that it must be right and it, it must be a certain way and like, it is messy and there isn't a way. And to be in a system of colonialism where we're also cut off from our emotions and then understanding, okay, these experiences are real and they're really, really, really scary. And I don't know what to do with these feelings because it's not intellect, it's emotion. And now understanding that I've been cut off from that whatever system, you know, pick one, whatever system I was bred into, and also, I can take responsibility for. But you know, this is centuries and this is, you know, it's baked into the cake. It's been like this for a very long time. So, I had to take a step back and understand like, yes, I'm participating in this. Is this my fault? Am I, you know, this terrible person? And did I know better? Like, all of those questions were really, really scary, because my experience of black and white thinking, no middle, and no nuance is that it is right or wrong. It has to be. Somebody has to be blamed. Somebody has to take responsibility. This is somebody's fault. And to really just sit with the awareness around that and, you know, not immediately know the answer and not be told how to undo this. Like, I think so many people are like, oh, I'm participating in this thing. Fix it. It's like such a knee jerk reaction. And also, again, in

these systems, like that's how we're taught. We just, we have some way of making it somebody else's fault or fixing it with some magical thinking or magic pill. So that was pretty scary. Um, and I have to say, in the beginning it was very impulsive. It took me like, buying courses and buying books and listening to audiobooks and listening to podcasts kind of in this urgency state of really wanting it to be over. And realizing like, hey, this is actually a lifetime. This is not, you know, for the next six weeks and a \$600 course. This is the life that, where I'm waking up to and taking responsibility for.

Candice Schutter: 40:26

That really lands for me and it makes me think about the journey I've been on the last many months creating this series and those moments when that urgency kicks in. And there was a moment where I took a two, it was actually right after the episode with Janja where that urgency was kind of taking over and I, I took a two month break because I needed to rest down and just integrate what I had learned thus far and not be in this sort of urgent need to get it right. And really what I've been learning, and I'm wondering if this resonates with you, is a lot of it's been about reorienting myself regarding certain emotions that I taught myself that I wasn't allowed to feel. Emotions like fear. Emotions like shame, anger, outrage, disgust, all the quote unquote negative emotions, which it's one of my least favorite terms by the way. Those emotions that I just, I didn't allow myself to feel, which really was what was part of what was contributing and creating this divided self where I had sort of this cult persona and then there was me. That was me at home with, you know, a box of mac and cheese. Like allowing myself to actually feel those feelings and to be in the discomfort of learning. And what I hear you saying is that's part of the human experience and we need to, to develop a relationship with that if we're gonna change things. Like, what are your thoughts around that?

Kathleen Oh: 41:50

Yeah, I wanna close my eyes and cover my ears and say, la la la, la la. Um, and why do, why do we have to talk about discomfort? Um, yeah. I'm getting more comfortable with it. Urgency, definitely I learned this idea of urgency is really built on many systems. If it's capitalism, white supremacy, colonialism. There are so many ways that we just have to act. Because we can't sit in that discomfort. And if we do sit in that discomfort, we might acknowledge that there's a problem. So the urgency, like the need to just like, get there, fix it, um, so that I just wanted to point out was new. I was like, what? Like there's no, you know, being in survival mode for most of my life, I didn't understand that things didn't have to get done immediately and the consequence was actually healthier if you sat with something and took time and let it integrate and let it be, um, let it have a life within itself without, you know, killing it or, or making it, like better. Letting it be. What doesn't kill you, make you stronger kind of thing. Um, so that feeling was very new.

Candice Schutter: 43:21

What in your mind is the difference between therapy and coaching?

Kathleen Oh: 43:26

So there are some technical differences. I believe the primary difference is the training. And what people do get, the education that they get based on, you know, a coaching certificate and who's the leadership in that. Um, you know, the coaching industry is not regulated, so the people that are teaching coaching, historically, they don't have a background in coaching because there isn't one.

Candice Schutter: 43:52

Right.

Kathleen Oh: 43:53

So usually that's developed out of their own beliefs or their experiences. So I think it's important to understand if somebody is a coach, what qualifies them to be a coach. And also, if they're qualified to be a coach, who is their coach that's coaching them. I think it's really important to look at the lineage of education. And also there is no, there's no body of coaching. There's many people

that are teaching it based on, um, some educational parameters, but not many. So I think it's important, and maybe this kind of comes into the red flags of coaching, is how much did they pay to become a coach? And how long did it take them to become a coach? And who was training them to become a coach? And how were the trainers trained to become coaches? What you will probably see is a very, very interesting family tree of not a lot of depth or lineage. So that's part of the difference. With therapy, there's a formal education. There's a regulatory body. Most people are trained in accredited institutes or universities. So that's an important distinction. And, for me, my background is social work. And then the certifications that allowed me to become a coach, had I had the opportunity, I would have probably had a higher education and fewer certifications, but I didn't have those opportunities. And if somebody, if you're hiring a coach and somebody's not clear about their education or how they became a coach or are offering their credentials, I think that that's problematic. Most people that are therapists have their credentials and their information listed. Whereas coaches, if they don't, I think it's an important question to ask. And for me, I knew that the education that I had and the work that I had done in the early days was based on it, on, new age spirituality, um, under the umbrella of energy psychology. It wasn't a studied field, and I was questioning it. I was only, I think, so at this point, I started my practice in 2007, and by 2010 I was getting a little bit like curious about why things weren't the way they were supposed to be based on my training.

Candice Schutter: 46:23

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 46:23

And I wasn't always getting the results. I wasn't, you know, it wasn't always effective. So I looked around and wanted evidence-based coaching, things that were actually working, and that led me to positive psychology and solution focused coaching. So I felt good about that because these were ways that I could educate myself. That each of those programs were year long programs. They were certification programs with continuing ed universities. And so I felt really like I had been able to do something that felt more like formal in my coaching. and as well as just personal development and being able to fill the gaps, my educational gaps with other learning, I then went into internal family systems and I became an internal family systems informed practitioner. So like, it has been an evolution and I'm not ashamed to admit my education and the things in the places where I received learning. In the early parts of my career, I would've, you know, kind of just mumbled about, Hmm, you know, these are the things, you know, because I didn't really know. I like, I, you know, the Ontario, blah, blah, blah institute. Like, maybe it's, you know, maybe it's a good place to be educated or not. Like, I don't know. And I did participate often in those early parts of my career, I did participate in training and educating in those unfounded practices.

Candice Schutter: 48:03

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 48:04

And thankfully I think when I got into the inner circles of those systems of learning, I realized it wasn't like, it wasn't healthy. To be training that or to be using it as a tool in, in my coaching.

Candice Schutter: 48:20

Mm-hmm. Well, this leads beautifully into let's just kind of move through some red flags in the coaching industry. One of the things that comes to mind based on what you just said is scope of practice, and really understanding even with training where that line is and how it gets crossed in terms of coaching and offering perhaps therapeutic approaches to things. Actually think, what came to mind immediately is NXIVM and the scope of practice in terms of like an EM, for example, an exploration of meaning exercise and how it's sort of this therapeutic practice that's being done in this large scale. And in a lot of instances, my experience in witnessing the coaching industry and being in it is a lot of these techniques are borrowed from, you know, popular psychology or

cognitive behavior therapy or whatever, and they're implemented in a capitalist structure and they try to make it like this formulaic, systematized thing. And I think a lot of coaches are guilty of this as well. Like not properly trained in a technique that is something that a trained therapist needs to be doing one-on-one with somebody, but then they're sort of trying to replicate it and apply it across the board to all their clients and not understanding scope of practice. Uh, what are your thoughts on that in terms of scope of practice?

Kathleen Oh: 49:41

Yeah, that's a good, uh, that's a good question again. Um, because most coaching, from my experience, scope of practice isn't really taught. It's like if you can be a coach and you have the skills to you know, change somebody's mindset and make it their problem to solve, because that is how the coaching industry sees it. Then it doesn't, it's sort of, it takes the onus off the coach. It puts it onto the client. And therefore the coach, regardless of the outcome, doesn't have to take responsibility. I do think that the whole idea of trauma-informed is dangerous, to say that somebody's trauma inform, I would like to know based on what? And I think that trauma is definitely something that people need to have experience with. And I do identify as trauma informed. I have also worked in trauma and been educated in a way that allows me to say that. Um, it's not because it's my own trauma. In some cases it is. And thankfully, and unfortunately, I was deeply harmed by a person practicing as a coach that wasn't trauma informed in a system that they were not trained in. It was kind of like, oh, I saw this on tv, let's try it. And like I was, my internal system was disassembled in a very, very, very dangerous way. And for me, had I not had the support that I needed at the time, a good therapist, a mastermind program that I was, um, working with as a person that was trained in a doctor in psychology, like there were many systems that helped me out of that. But in the moment, had I not had the people outside of that experience, I may have had to be hospitalized because of what had happened on literally on a 10 minute phone call with an untrained coach. And, so I have experience. And because of that experience, I became a trained professional in that system because I never, ever, ever would have wanted that to be anybody else. I didn't want it to be me, but I learned from that. And so I know that's a really important thing to really make sure that whatever people are saying, you know, anybody can say anything. My husband mentioned the other day, 70% of people think they're a good driver. They just wouldn't, they would identify as a good driver.

Candice Schutter: 52:47

Right, right.

Kathleen Oh: 52:49

you know? And if you say, are you a good driver? I'm gonna say, yes. I am a good driver. Like but based on what? And so the coaching industry, people that are practicing as coaches and myself included, I have to be accountable. There are people I'm accountable to. There are people that will call me out. There are places where I can go to when I need support. Not only personally, but professionally. And I also know what I don't know. If I have a client that brings something to me, and I know that I'm not capable of handling it, I will say for their sake and for mine, it's not something I know how to deal with. And I'm okay with that. I, I think it's good for everyone. I do have a full practice. I continue to practice as a coach. You know, some of my clients I've been with more than a decade. Those clients have, you know, grown and worked with this transition. And I've been honest about it and they've, you know, we've all sort of acknowledged that maybe there could have been things that we could have done better in the past. And also, I built a reputation with those people that I will always call myself out if I need to. So whether that means the cost of our coaching relationship or not, it's an important place to be. And I don't see my clients as a source of, you know, my next vacation or my next expensive item. I want it to be a sustainable job and career that allows me to continue to do a good job and, I sense this will lead into pricing.

Candice Schutter: 54:41

Yeah, you sense correctly.

Kathleen Oh: 54:44

I wonder. Um, so that, you know, again, I have to be able to do this work and sustain myself doing this work. And financially that requires my, you know, income to match my ability to work. I don't want to inflate my prices. And I also know that at a certain time in my life, in, earlier on in my career, when my prices were like affordable, I could not actually be the best version of myself as a coach because the only thing I was concerned about was paying the bills. And also, um, who was my next client.

Candice Schutter: 55:26

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 55:27

So I am in a, a position where I can work with fewer clients, and I do have a full roster. And I'm able to work with the people that are, you know, being honest with themselves and being honest with me and want the work to help them be better. Like how, however, that, however that looks. So it's good to know what their prices are right up front, so you know what you're getting into. And also what they're getting for that price. And how long has this person been doing this work in order to, you know, my last year my husband received a 3% salary increase. You know, like what is a normal range of people, what they are paying and what they can afford and what, you know, I'm not going to double my price cuz I want to spend less time working. I want to be able to have people afford my work and work for what I'm earning to do the job that I feel really, really proud of. And that people feel that they are getting the quality of that work. And based on what I'm doing, it's working.

Candice Schutter: 56:40

Well, and it sounds like your emphasis is on that one-on-one support. And one of the things that became really distasteful to me when I was really steeped in the industry and myself, you know, in all transparency, the training that I was investing in the most was the business training around my coaching empire that I was building. Which is really how the coaching industry, like, that's what's sort of shoved down your throat is like, take this training from this coach who can tell you how to build your coaching business into, you know, six figures in a year. You know, just all this just noise in terms of when we're really, you know, the real motivation for me was always serving people and finding better ways to serve people. And yet at the same time when I felt that financial urgency, which is a hundred percent why I always have had a side gig when I coach. Always, because I, I knew what happens to me when my nervous system is hijacked and how it compromises my ability to serve. And so when I was in the thick of that though, and I was taking those programs, you can get around this whole, like what you're speaking about in terms of the incremental salary increase and what's reasonable for a person to be charging. Well, you can sort of get around that if you create these programs where you have these tiers and you move through people through this sales funnel process where they're sort of coming in at this low price point and then you love bomb the shit out of them and give them some value, and then you ask them for the next thing and you're dangling, you're continually dangling a more expensive carrot on a stick the whole way. And peop, and it works. I was trained in sales pages that work like a key in a door, I tell you what. And it just all felt really icky to me. I stepped away from from every bit of it, after capitalizing on it for about a year or two. And I just have a lot of respect for the integrity you're bringing to like what you're really doing in terms of the service that you're providing as a coach, and that it isn't about building some sort of business empire. So, do you have any thoughts about the way that that bait and switch sales funnel things operates? It's particularly it's sort of triggering to me because it's something that I've done in the past, but really sort of what pisses me off when I see it happening is the love bombing, like the, like coming at someone with just this ooey, gooey promise. And I have bitten that line so many times that, you know, the XOs and the hearts and the everything and

come and I'll be, you know, I'll be your mama basically. Like it's just so dysfunctional and I have a lot of thoughts around it obviously. I wanna hear what you think.

Kathleen Oh: 59:19

Oh, this is a good question. I have also had those I, you know, I would've liked to have been your mama. Um, I, I wanted that so badly. Um, but I failed. I was one of the, you know, the unlucky ones. And as many people, you know, may not admit, how many people get sucked into those funnels and are told you're the next whatever person that's going to be six or seven figure uh, internet fame. I wanted that pretty badly. In 2015, I built this machine. It was an online program. And I built it on a system that I paid, I don't know, 10, \$25,000 for, I think the system was like 5,000, and then you upgraded to the inner circle and it was another 5,000. And then you're like one-on-one coaching, which is another, you know, like everything I wanted came at the cost of, you know, another couple thousand dollars. So at the end of the year, from 2017, the best and worst year of my life, I had spent over a hundred thousand dollars on building to basically be like my online ATM. And my best friend and I were like parallel building these systems. She was doing the DIY version, and I had the fancy team. Because I could afford it, and which made me feel fabulous, and I was already winning. Like I was literally at top of the mountain before I even took my first step. So she built her system on the exact same premise, you know, the funnel, the this, the that, and I did it as well. But I had all the tech work done by a really expensive team. All the graphics, all the content, all the, like, the backend, like it was really elaborate and hers was really scrappy. And mine failed badly, not only because I was selling a really shitty product, because I just wanted to make the most out of what I had. And it, I, I'm not even gonna tell you what it was because I'm embarrassed. It was a coaching program that, you know, was a sure win because it was a vulnerable group of people. They were, of course, they would want what I had and I had the way and all that. And not only was it just a, a really very greedy way of making a lot of money for me, I was in it to win it. Like I just wanted the money. And what happened was I paid a lot of money to people who also wanted a lot of money, but actually they weren't doing the job. They were a scam.

Candice Schutter: 1:02:11

Oh shit.

Kathleen Oh: 1:02:12

Yeah.

Candice Schutter: 1:02:13

Oh.

Kathleen Oh: 1:02:14

And so I was, you know, I got scammed while trying to scam people.

Candice Schutter: 1:02:18

Wow.

Kathleen Oh: 1:02:21

Which interestingly, I obviously didn't know it was a scam, but it started in January, it ended, ended in December, and I was, it was literally lights out overnight. And, I continued to throw money at this thing because I wanted it so badly. Whereas my friend was building and building and building exactly the same thing on her terms, and she was like actually becoming successful. She became a seven figure business in, you know, three to four years of opening and operating the way she did. And we were both using coercive tactics. We were using language to manipulate people. We were using pain points. We were using the things that we were taught. Um, the internet guru that I learned from said, we have to be a hope merchant. We have to sell hope. Like what the fuck are people buying hope for? Like, you know.

Candice Schutter: 1:03:17

Red flag, right?

Kathleen Oh: 1:03:19

Right. I apologize for using that language.

Candice Schutter: 1:03:22

You do not need to on this. All the language is welcome here.

Kathleen Oh: 1:03:27

Okay. But thankfully, what I learned from that year is that I was somebody who was very susceptible to these promises. I was targeted. I was, these are predatory marketing. Like I said, lies are my love language. Like, I will, you know, be the best friend to a perpetrator in minutes if they're giving me something. You know, that's who I was. And I was smart enough to know, because I was told even with the a hundred thousand dollars price tag, that the entire reason why it failed was because of my mindset. And I 100% knew that it was more than that, and that there was something going on that I couldn't see. And I didn't know what it was, and it took many years to actually undo a lot of those systems that I had got myself caught into. And the reason why I didn't know it, is because it's all I knew.

Candice Schutter: 1:04:34

Yes. Yes.

Kathleen Oh: 1:04:36

That's all I knew.

Candice Schutter: 1:04:37

Mm-hmm. And as a consumer, that's also true, right? It's like, it's true both as the purveyor, the coach, the person who's marketing themselves, and these are the models that are available. This is what we're taught to do. This is how we do it. And then also as consumers, I feel that we are likewise conditioned to respond to these things because that's how sales works. I mean, it's, it's mind boggling to me now standing where I stand, what I perceived as acceptable on both fronts. Like as a coach and as a consumer. And I, same as you, super susceptible to the, like, I keep stay away from sales pages like they're the plague. Cuz I know they're gonna reel me in. Like, still to this day. And, and still also really susceptible to charismatic individuals who carry themselves with great authority. Like it's my Achilles and I have to be super mindful of how I, it's like the lens of my eyes changes and my ears shift in terms of how I'm hearing them and what I'm seeing based on the amount of authority that they come forward with. So like all of these things I think, not only as coaches who are perpetuating these dynamics, but also as consumers, I think this conversation is so important for us. Well, for me to help myself to wake up to the dynamics and how they're operating and when I'm taking the bait. And for the listeners out there, you know, when they're thinking about doing anything, this is the norm. This is how like predatory sales tactics, like you just said so beautifully, that's the norm in terms of how we get people. And pushing pain points. All the things you listed, which thank you for, for laying them out so plainly. They're actually a lot of the red flags we were gonna touch upon, right? Just and, and as you say them, that's the interesting thing. I think most folks are gonna know exactly what you're talking about, even if they've never you know, been diving deep into unraveling all of this because we know what it feels like when we're being preyed upon, even if we take the bait.

Kathleen Oh: 1:06:34

Yeah. I'm not sure. It, like, I'll just question that whether we know. For me, it was so normal, it was like the air I breathed to be told that I wasn't enough and I needed to spend, you know, X number of dollars to be more, or to find the next thing that was going to make me feel more. Um, that as a person who believed that, I didn't have any other. I didn't have other references to know that I'm okay. Like I never had the, okay, I don't have the framework to know that I'm okay. So anybody that is going to, except for myself, which now I've learned is actually enough. Like I don't need somebody to tell me that I am worthy. I also don't need somebody to tell me that I'm broken. But if somebody does tell me that I'm broken, I have had most often my experience is to believe them.

Candice Schutter: 1:07:39

Yeah.

Kathleen Oh: 1:07:40

Even after, you know, 25 years of therapy and all of the things that I've done. And the interesting thing too, back to the coaching. If we just like look at the word coach with the athletic lens. From, you know, somebody's first attempt at a sport to the Olympics. Whoever that is, that is promising the Olympics, if that's what the goal is, is full of shit. Like they're not, that's not, they cannot. And from that moment that that person be, you know, became that athlete, by the time they won the gold medal did not happen in one year. Six figures typically cannot happen. Like whatever that promise land is. And if it does, like for my friend, she was in a really great position for her, for her work. I think her, her business became a seven figure business in her fourth year. She had multiple seven figure years and then the wheels fell off. Like everyone, the poking holes in language, poking holes in these marketing. And she actually voluntarily took the wheels off. Like she said, this is not okay. I am doing something that isn't okay. And even when she was doing it, because had my system worked, I would've felt great because I was working. With that person within myself that didn't feel value. And so I was building it on this system that told me I would get value. And when she was building her system, she was building it like we were working with the same brokenness. My brokenness led me to broke. And her brokenness letter to rich. But like we had, you know, I feel it's okay to, she's been very public about this, that it's okay to say like she did it in a way that was not okay and, and it worked and now she's figuring out a new way. And, you know, one of the things with cultic belief systems, or the marketing, the online world, the coaching world, like, we have not been taught that changing our mind is safe. We've been shown that you do this thing and you keep doing this thing and you have to do this thing. And, you know, I don't know people many, you know, there's a lot of them up top that are continuing in the coaching world, are doing what they're doing because it's working. And it's working based on really, really very questionable practices. So asking those people to give up their million dollar salaries or uh, you know, one of those coaches had, recently put out in a recession, you know, how to recession proof your business. And at the same time was saying, this is how they built a \$70 million business. Like yeah, they built a \$70 million business.

Candice Schutter: 1:11:06

Wow.

Kathleen Oh: 1:11:06

On people who are desperately trying to save themselves from losing everything. And like, bless that person if they can go to bed at night thinking that they, you know, took somebody's last \$3,000 and hope that it works out. Because that person, I absolutely know that person was trained by the same person that I was trained to sell hope.

Candice Schutter: 1:11:34

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 1:11:34

And so if that person can put themselves to bed at night with their 70 million business and selling people hope, then that's what they're gonna continue to do and not ask the questions. So,

Candice Schutter: 1:11:46

Mm-hmm. Which circles us back to that discomfort and having that, that ability to really examine our motivations and what's really going on. And I think it really points to how I was taught to think, to think slash not think, in terms of demonizing the ego. And that, you know, what I have witnessed and know to be true about myself is that when I attempt to reject some part of myself that the shadow looms larger. And, and the dysfunction comes in with, with greater force. And I think this happens a lot in the world of coaching, particularly new age coaching and wellness. And that there's this sense of rejecting these parts of self that then are operating in the background with that much more vigor and purpose. And that there's a real sense of, I had my blinders on in terms

of like when you spoke to, I really can very much relate to this not feeling like I'm enough, sourcing that from childhood, always taking the bait around here's the next thing that's gonna make you good and make you enough. And then feeling like, well, that's not what I'm doing. Like if I look at what's happening unconsciously or if I bring awareness to the fact that I have wounds, for example, which is like a bad buzzword in a lot of, uh, yoga communities that I've been involved in. Like, oh, wounds, ah. Like when we're running from our wounds, the way that that shows up is often as dysfunction, that we then inflict on others. What are your thoughts around that and this whole idea of the ego being the enemy and anything there jumping out at you?

Kathleen Oh: 1:13:25

I have thought, oh, you know, you need to just not be coming from your ego. Because that's dangerous. And I'm very friendly with my ego, because I now know, like who I am is because of that regardless. And it isn't something that I need to overcome or vanish. And I'll come back to that exact ego word, but I realized that my condition in relationships and my unworthiness and the things that I often would not ever admit out loud, and or even to myself are, you know, that whole experience of getting involved, the getting sucked into the machine of online business, like there's so much shame there. And, there's so much like it, it is embarrassing to admit that I am a coach that really messed up badly in this way. And what I have understood in these last probably three years that how I operate in the world comes through my experiences. And the easiest way to identify what this is for me, without sounding like I'm a label is complex PTSD. And having that experience in my life, like I said earlier, it taught me how to survive and also taught me who I am in my dysfunction, because that was how I survived. I had to do, like, I had to do that. And thank God for my ego, because that is what gave me my personhood to be protecting in my life, even if it wasn't under the greatest circumstances.

Candice Schutter: 1:15:25

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 1:15:27

So that's who I am. And if this is my ego and I can identify that these are the ways that I operate, and I acknowledge my patterns, then I can work with that. But if I'm like, oh, this is something that I need to banish and overcome, then I'm always gonna be just walking around with this thing that I can't actually own or take responsibility for or acknowledge. And that problem becomes somebody else's problem. And it's mine. I will keep this, it's mine. I earned it. And I understand what it is. Like if I didn't let myself bring it into the light and you know, be really honest with myself, I would only be half of myself. I would be myself in this other part that I can't deal with. And me not being able to deal with that part is not actually fair that I put it out. I put myself out in the world and expect other people to deal with that when I'm not willing to do it.

Candice Schutter: 1:16:32

right. Beautifully articulated. Yeah. So are there any other red flags in terms of the coaching industry that you really wanna name before we wrap up our conversation today? I know there's a lot of them, and if there's one that's, that you have a burning desire to speak to.

Kathleen Oh: 1:16:51

So a big, big issue other than the trauma-informed red flag. If people are not upfront. If they're defensive about anything that they're offering, I question that. It's, I, you know, if, if anybody asks me a question that I can't answer, I'll say I can't answer it. But if I become defensive about it, it feels really problematic. And also the idea of ethics is very, very questionable. If somebody is selling ethics, that makes me really uncomfortable. You know, Nancy Salzman stood at front of the teaching classroom in the second season of The Vow with a t-shirt, written ethics on it. Like it's a buzzword. It's hot. It's saleable. It's what people want because they don't want the discomfort. There are programs that are selling ethical coaching. It makes me want to cry because if somebody is selling you ethics, is that ethical?

Candice Schutter: 1:18:09

Yeah.

Kathleen Oh: 1:18:10

Like what are you doing? It's like, I am selling you my belief.

Candice Schutter: 1:18:16

Mm-hmm.

Kathleen Oh: 1:18:18

Would you buy it? And it's not fair. I want you to understand your ethics based on your work and your values and respect and honesty and all of those things that as good people, we practice. But we practice because we're holding ourselves accountable and being responsible. I don't want to be in anybody's presence if they're telling me they're ethical. And not showing me what that means. Self-assigned ethics. Like it's like I'm a good driver. I don't know.

Candice Schutter: 1:18:58

Right. Yeah.

Kathleen Oh: 1:19:00

I would like to say there are people in front of me that will tell me. If I need to be better at something. And I have put those people in place, I have people that are smarter than me. I have people that look different than me. I have teachers that are in a completely different field that are willing to say, this is how we see it, and these are our questions about it. So maybe you could do it this way. Because I don't know everything. I don't want to know everything. And I have, like, Janja is an incredible mentor and I am fortunate to have been her student. And the teaching that's coming out of The Lalich Center is has, you know, in the past when she was teaching on a different platform that literally changed my approach to my work and myself in knowing what somebody who has been in an industry for decades, who is the top of the top in terms of these experiences and is willing to share them. Those are the people I trust and those are the people that I want to hear from and learn from. And you know, having the ability to work with teachers like Gerette Buglion. She has been a great mentor to me in my writing. My best friend, Tarzan Kay, who is also deconstructing and unlearning and teaching what she knows because what she used to teach was, questionable. Now she's, you know, correcting course and being honest about it. You know, my husband, you know, he and I, I think, are smart and capable and we challenge each other. And I want that in a relationship. I don't want somebody who's going to agree with me. I would like to have different conversations and be safe in those conversations. And I don't wanna, you know, pad my pockets with people that are just gonna placate me and tell me that I'm wonderful. I don't want that. It helps me grow when I have these conversations and in a way to be in the world and to see the world that's different than my own view. So I want to point people to good resources. Maggie Patterson on Instagram. She's coming out hot in 2023 with uh, some of her red flags around coaching around the online business.

Candice Schutter: 1:21:35

Well, we will definitely, you rattled off so many great resources and so I'll make sure to link to all of those individuals in the show notes and you can help me line up the details. Um, how can people stay connected to you who wanna learn more about you and your

Kathleen Oh: 1:21:51

Well, the best place to find me is on sub because I have a very unfriendly history with Instagram. So, ohmyheart.substack.com is my weekly newsletter. I talk about these things there. I also am a safe drug use advocate. So I talk about psychedelics and safe drug use. I also talk about recovery from the cult and intergenerational trauma. I talk a lot about my recovery through my writing. I want to be a writer. I don't know what that looks like, but I I, I, I am dabbling. But I also have my main website, which is coachkathleenoh.com. And, Instagram is @therealcoachoh but I am most interesting on substack.

Candice Schutter: 1:22:54

Okay

Kathleen Oh: 1:22:54

And on my Spotify playlists. My Spotify name is DJ K Oh.

Candice Schutter: 1:23:02

Oh, okay.

Kathleen Oh: 1:23:04

And like, I have this weird fascination. I have like 153 playlists.

Candice Schutter: 1:23:09

Oh my gosh, I'm so going there. I'm so excited.

Kathleen Oh: 1:23:13

Thank you.

Candice Schutter: 1:23:14

Yeah, I'm, I'm definitely gonna dig into that. And I love, I love that, uh, we're wrapping on that note cuz you know, after sitting down and talking through all this, like going outside and moving and listening to your music feels just right. So thank you so much Kathleen, for agreeing to do this. It's so valuable everything that you've offered here and I've learned a lot today. And you've given me a lot of language that I've been seeking, so I just appreciate your time so much.

Kathleen Oh: 1:23:40

Well, I appreciate being here and I was so flattered when you're, I'm halfway through. I need to talk to you. We need to be friends, Um, and you know, I, I'm a bit reluctant. I'm reserved because again, I've had to rebuild trust within myself and know that I am ready and also that this is not, I'm not at the end. And I'm barely through the beginning of something that has been really, really, really hard and so worth it. You know, when I realized I had to, um, change, I really just wanted to run away from it. Or just keep doing the same thing like all those other people. But, it has been the best decision. I know at the end of the day, the work that I do is valuable and important and it makes a difference. And in the past, I would've said the same thing and felt like I meant it. But now I know, I do know. I can be honest with myself and I hope that people will give themselves permission to just explore this. Because I know the anxiety that comes with uncertainty and disconnection and this isn't that.

Candice Schutter: 1:25:05

Well, you're setting a beautiful example, and walking this path with humility is a big part of it. And you just, in sharing what you just shared just gave me a real gift of validation. It's bringing tears to my eyes. I did run away, I closed my business doors, and I literally left the country and traveled abroad for four months. I was like, I can't, I can't do this. I can't face this and I sort of opted out for quite a while, and then facing all of this in the last. Year or so has been really, really challenging. And so to hear you say what you just said is just really deeply meaningful to me. So thank you for being an example and being courageous and being in the messy middle with me. You know? Yeah. Thank you.

Kathleen Oh: 1:25:48

Let's link arms.

Candice Schutter: 1:25:50

do Let's do it.

Kathleen Oh: 1:25:51

And stick in the mud.

Candice Schutter: 1:25:52

Just wade on through.

Kathleen Oh: 1:25:54

Sit in the mud and just link arms and look at each other and say, what the hell? Why are we here?

Candice Schutter: 1:25:58

Exactly. Yeah.

Kathleen Oh: 1:26:00

The best place to be right. It's okay.

Candice Schutter: 1:26:03

Yep. It's honest. It's honest. Yeah. Thank you.

Kathleen Oh: 1:26:07

Thank you, Candice.

Candice Schutter: 1:26:19

I loved this conversation and I hope you did too. And that you took time to jot down some of the resources that Kathleen so generously offered us. There's so much more to her and her work. So if you wanna learn more about Kathleen, follow the links provided in the show notes.

I'll be back with you on March 1st to pick back up with the 'cult'ure series. I'm super excited for where we'll be heading next. To give you a quick preview, I'll be sitting down with the founders of the #igotout movement. I'll be sharing a heartfelt and bittersweet conversation with a survivor of the troubled teen industry. And circling back to an earlier episode with an inspiring story of healing and recovery as it relates to intergenerational cult trauma.

All of that and more to come.

In the meantime, throughout the month of February, Tracy and I will be dropping bonus episodes over on Patreon. So if you haven't checked it out yet, we hope to see you there. That's patreon.com/thedeepulse.

And if you have a story you'd like to share or a private message you'd like to send me, you can reach me at thedeepulse.com/share.

Thanks for tuning in. Take care of you and yours. And I'll see you in a few weeks.

Caio.