

Candice Schutter: 0:13

Hello and welcome back to The Deeper Pulse and the 'cult'ure series. Today we're gonna dig into part two of my conversation with the co-founders of the #igotout movement. If you missed last week's episode, I highly recommend that you circle back we're gonna be picking up right where we left off.

The stories and opinions shared here are based on personal experience and are not intended to malign any group, individual, or organization. This episode may be triggering to cult survivors or anyone who has experience in high demand groups or emotionally coercive relationships. Please listen with care.

Okay, before we dive back into the rest of my conversation with Lisa and Gerette, I wanna speak for just a moment on this issue of survivorship.

In the new age wellness world where I spent nearly two decades, it was considered very low vibe to focus on your wounds." To say things like "that was wrong what happened to me." Naming negative emotions or telling stories about the past was often seen as complaining. And I felt genuinely discouraged from expressing so-called negative emotions. Things like sorrow, resentment, and outrage.

Because the core of the teaching was that, well, if I'm just a spiritual being who is having a human experience, then my pain itself is just a transitory inconvenience. And taking the high road means transcending it, paying it no mind.

Every consequence that I experienced in life was supposedly as the universe had perfectly intended it. Therefore, there was no such thing as a victim or a perpetrator. And this whole idea of being a survivor of something was just a short-sighted misunderstanding. I'm just missing the big picture, playing the victim card or getting mired in the drama.

The point is never point fingers and do the inner work to become free from internal resistance.

It took a lot of courage for me to join a community of survivors when I've long been taught that survivorship itself is shameful. And I guess I'm naming it here because I find it rather interesting and convenient for those in power, the way that victim shaming keeps us from sharing our stories with one another. This in and of itself is systemic cult conditioning at work.

If we teach people to retreat into shame and silence when they feel hurt, scared and vulnerable. If we convince them to suck it up, look on the bright side, and never ever be a victim no matter what. It sure as hell is way easier to control them.

And a bit of a side note here, one of the things that pisses me off the most about all of this in the wellness world is just how many good and helpful tools and practices have been co-opted, commercialized, and weaponized by marketers, gurus, and online influencers. It's honestly something I'm still grieving to this day, just how much

medicine has been laced with manipulation. So much of what I loved partaking in now leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

It is such a mindfuck to critique something that at one time transformed my life for the better. Someone recently asked me if I have concerns around creating an anti-cult cult. And to be perfectly honest with you, I've been obsessing about this question endlessly and long before I launched the 'cult'ure series. Fear of losing myself in leadership, of creating something culty or even remotely cult adjacent, this is what's kept me from building a viable business, publishing more than one book, and from stepping both feet into social activism. I'm so terrified of perpetuating the harm that I've experienced that it kept me paralyzed for years.

But here's what I'm starting to now see. There is really no way for us to reimagine and recreate something different without deconstructing our experiences. I know that I'm gonna make many mistakes along the way, that I'm gonna have way more questions than answers.

But when I meet people like Lisa and Gerette, I realize in these conversations that we have to do our awkward learning out loud and together in plain sight because silence in the face of these systemic issues is the cult-like complacency that we're working to change.

And I likewise have to catch myself when I'm asked direct questions because my learned tendency when challenged is to fawn. It's taking practice for me to continually assert myself in the face of difficult questions.

You know, I don't have any idea how to do any of this different, but I know for sure that it's possible. As I've said so many times, ad nauseum, these dynamics live inside of us, and it's human nature for us to attach and bind ourselves to one another. And so it stands to reason that in communities of recovery, we will face the very same challenges as anywhere else.

And in fact in some upcoming episodes, you're gonna be hearing from some survivors who've experienced cult dynamics while in healing and recovery spaces.

Which really underscores the point of all of this.

It's not about this cult, that cult. Wellness versus anti wellness, none of that.

Harm and helpfulness are never mutually exclusive. They often walk arm in arm, hand in hand. We can't do any of this differently unless we're willing to talk about how we've fucked it up, have honest and humble conversations about the ways that we've been victimized and the way that we ourselves have perpetuated these dynamics.

Which is why this conversation has been so meaningful to me. Because while it might take some courage to step forward with an answer, it takes far more bravery to step forward while smack dab in the middle of the question.

Dehumanization is at the heart of cult dynamics, and shame is the tool that is most often used to silence and control. When we create spaces where people who are overlooked feel safe to share their stories, when we invite them to be human, we are not creating anti cult cults. We're restoring balance in a broken system. We are defying a social narrative that has long insisted that the people who most deserve grace are those at the top.

Of course there will be those who attach their identity to pushing against something, and I honestly feel like developmentally and emotionally, there's a time and a place for that. But in most cases, when survivors speak out and perpetrators feel victimized by the truth that's revealed, it's all together different. It's tempting to draw a false equivalency.

Survivor's stories must be centered and amplified, not as a replacement for power over dynamics, but because these stories contain clues that will help us to piece together something altogether different.

In today's conversation, we speak about some of this. About how a lineage of cultish influence has shaped modern day wellness. About creativity, what is it really, and how does critical thinking and deconstruction help us to move forward. We talk trigger warnings and how to ease oneself into the cult recovery movement, one step at a time.

Once again, it's a lively and informed discussion, and I'm so thrilled to be able to share it with you.

So let's pick up right where we left off last week when Gerette was speaking about exiting a therapy-based cult that she was a part of for 18 years, and the relief that she feels on the other side of it.

Gerette Buglion: 8:33

That was the biggest relief for me in getting out of my 18 year odyssey. It's like, oh, I just get to be human.

Candice Schutter: 8:42

Same.

Gerette Buglion: 8:45

Yehaw. What fun, you know. Ah. Oh.

Candice Schutter: 8:48

Yes, yes.

Lisa: 8:50

Have authentic connection and conversation.

Gerette Buglion: 8:54

I don't have to recruit anybody. I don't have to convince everybody I speak to that I have this special thing that I think will help you too. You know? I just get to be real.

Candice Schutter: 9:08

Uhhuh. Which includes having a sense of confusion and discomfort. And I think about, um, one of the things that really resonated with me in reading your book, Gerette, was when you were speaking about, you know, your, your leader was the authority as it works in these environments, and it seemed to me, and, and I don't wanna put words in

your mouth, so tell me if this sounds right. It seemed to me that you would have a human experience and then it would be reframed as a pathology that you needed to heal when it was just you having you a human experience.

Gerette Buglion: 9:46

Absolutely, you got it.

Candice Schutter: 9:47

Does that sound right?

Gerette Buglion: 9:49

Is that familiar to you, my dear?

Candice Schutter: 9:52

Yeah, It's so familiar, which is why I was able to.

Gerette Buglion: 9:56

Yes.

Candice Schutter: 9:58

state it so clearly, very familiar. And this and this idea of issues, having issues that we need to work on, pathology, whatever you wanna call it, and that there's this sense of being unfinished and not enough.

Lisa: 10:08

Ever. Never, never finished. Ever.

Candice Schutter: 10:13

Mm-hmm.

Lisa: 10:14

Layers the onion. Always peeling. Always peeling. Never a core. That's a huge red flag, you wanna talk about red flags? And you've done great job in this series talking the red flags. But this idea that you can never graduate, never go beyond, always, you know, renewing commitments. That's a kind of goes, I wanna pick up a thread with the Gu Maharaji stuff just because it's on my radar. You know, entering into the recovery space on Instagram, I'm seeing a couple accounts that are exposing Gu Maharaji, who was my first guru that I actually was initiated into as child. And, um, they're doing all this work to expose him because he's still working and still, rebranded as Prem Rawat. And I'm like seeing this stuff that is so familiar to me. And when you have these influences that have been running a thread through your whole life and seeing these cult leaders still in operation, it amazing to hear Yamuna's story about the Hare Krishnas. They're still at work.

Candice Schutter: 11:51

Mm-hmm.

Lisa: 11:52

right?

Candice Schutter: 11:53

Yeah.

Lisa: 11:54

I guess what the main thing is, I wanted to give a shout out to the people that are doing this, cuz they're alone as far as I can tell. I've done some searching with hashtags and things like that to see if anybody else is talking about this particular guru. But when you look at what we're trying to do with igotout, it's not about calling out specific people, right. And I will tell you right now in my phase of finding my voice and speaking out is I'm feeling a call to name them. To name these influences that have woven their way

into the cultiverse. That people who are actually influential now, they're standing on the backs of, of these other people, gurus.

Candice Schutter: 12:56

Yes.

Lisa: 12:57

who have been doing this thing, right. A Little Bit Culty did, maybe last year or something about Bentinho.

Gerette Buglion: 13:04

Mm-hmm.

Lisa: 13:07

what's his name? Bentinho Massaro, I think. And that guy is able to do what doing because he's regurgitating the same crap that all these other guys did. So this, this idea, this exploration into is the wellness industry a cult? Which, you know, I so appreciate taking that question. You know, it's one that Laura Tucker of Free Your Inner Guru, she was exploring for a while and she's shifted her attention to, other things. So I feel like this thread that you're exploring on this podcast right now with the series, it's, it's a deeply rooted fungus.

Gerette Buglion: 14:00

I wouldn't call it a we need, like a fungus is such a good thing. Let's call it a poison.

Lisa: 14:09

no, no. I'm I'm watching the this show The Last of Us.

Candice Schutter: 14:12

Oh right, that's like where there's like where there's a pandemic with a fungus or something. I haven't watched it, but I heard, Right. like, all right. Well, you know what's interesting about what you're saying, and I, I even feel a little bit nervous talking about it, and this is the moment I suppose. I feel that you really gave language to a concern that I have around the wellness culture and the way that when we focus our attention so much on the personality of the teacher and whether or not they're a narcissist or not, or do they have the characteristics of a cult leader, we miss what you just described. We miss that. Like I know of teachers that I have respect for, that I've actually learned from, that when they say certain things, they don't understand what they're really saying, because they don't understand the history that proceeds them and the message they're actually sending and where it's actually leading people because they don't have this awareness around what cult dynamics really are. Not cult personalities. And so they think that they're, I don't know if they think that they're immune. I don't know what they think, but there's this sense that I get that, well, I'm not that kind of person, therefore what I'm doing isn't problematic.

Lisa: 15:44

Yes.

Candice Schutter: 15:45

I have like a hu I mean, you feel my energy. I get really charged around this because it's, it's difficult for me because some of the people that I'm close to, I have this dissonance around where I'm like, Ugh, ooof, like, when you know what I know. And not to say that I'm smarter than, but however, I'm educated around these dynamics in ways that I wasn't. And I look at things that I did and said, and I was standing on the backs of some of those people you're speaking of and regurgitating things that are very problematic, and you don't really see that until you understand these dynamics. So I appreciate you naming that so much. It gives me permission to to say what I just said. I wasn't sure how

to articulate it. Right. I wasn't sure how to name that and say like, I love you and what you're doing problem, which is what I've been attempting to say to folks, but I wasn't sure how to frame it. And you gave me some language around that.

Lisa: 16:39

Hmm.

Gerette Buglion: 16:40

What your, what you're identifying there, Candice. I think is perhaps the touchiest of the touchy subjects in the, in the wellness and, and really the, I would also include this in the realm of spiritual leaders of any kind. And it, what, what's coming up for me, like I can feel, even though we're all on, you know, Zoom here, I can feel the energy kind of crackling through the wave lines here because it touches on one of, one of my most important topics in the cultiverse world, which is we can't really look at cult dynamics and, and the impact of cultic involvement without also really dealing with what is healthy leadership? And how can we create accountability within, within our own selves. And, and I'm speaking to myself right now because I do know that I am a vulnerable human being because, well, a) because you know, I did write a book, and b) I facilitate these classes, the Writing To Reckon classes, and c) I am a leader in the igotout.org movement. Like, like I have this, I have a leadership role. And I think that, you know, that whenever, whenever we are speaking, whenever we are standing in any way with a level of, of authority, of knowing something, if we can find the ways to keep returning to an openness, to authentic accountability and openness to exploring how what we say is taken by other people. Like I can say something, you know, out of my own experience, and it can land in another person very differently. You know, and when, like what you're talking about is actually bringing in lineage here into the conversation, which I think is huge. So when we've got a history that's actually maybe not even known. Like what you were describing with Carlos Castaneda not even knowing that, you know, that work was brought into different environments related to your group. We have to have a level of humility that when we are in a leadership role to be able to reality check. To use Steve Hassen's term that I don't know if he originated it or not, but to reality check and say, how did that land with you? So that people can have the opportunity to say, to bring their curiosity. And not let their curiosity be something that they're shamed for, or something that is dismissed, or it's, it's not okay. But to actually have curiosity and creativity be the foundation of whatever authentic relationship we're in as a leader.

Lisa: 20:33

Right. And that also can come about as we deconstruct this idea of hierarchy and followers and student-teacher relationships and, you know, to, to really appreciate and acknowledge individual perspectives and strengths rather than defer. To compliment and reflect and fill in gaps and, you know, that I think is the leadership model I wanna work with. Cuz I don't fucking have the answers. I'm just fucking figuring it out with everyone else.

Gerette Buglion: 21:24

Truth is, we all are.

Lisa: 21:26

And I so appreciate you saying. Yeah, we all are. And but saying that about how, what I might say, because of my position with igotout, could land on somebody else. I've already that. It sucks. You know, when I turn, trigger somebody by something that I say. And, you know, I think that comes from a projection of authority, which I don't want, or,

you know, that's the antithesis of what we're trying to do with the movement is not have, you know that I don't wanna carry that weight. I don't wanna carry that responsibility. I want to do my best at what I'm trying to accomplish, but I can't hold the right answer for everyone. If that makes sense.

Candice Schutter: 22:23

And we don't get to decide what, like despite our good intentions, impact matters more.

Lisa: 22:32

Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: 22:33

We don't get to decide how it should have landed, if somebody experiences something a certain way. And so many of us come from these groups where it's all about taking responsibility and there are no victims. And so it's like there's this sense of, oh, you're just triggered. That's your work to do. It's not my responsibility. And, and that's, we have to kind of override all of that indoctrination too, and really understand that it's not about good intentions. They're sort of irrelevant in a way. Like, when you really get down to the nitty gritty of the work. So that's all wanted to add.

Lisa: 23:05

No, but that, that's the other side of the coin. Uh, you know, and that I've had that experience of, of sharing somebody's story, say on social media and, you know, not giving people a heads up that this shit's triggering, and having people freak out like, you should have given a warning because now I'm sitting in this feeling and I wasn't ready for this. Right.

Candice Schutter: 23:37

Yeah.

Lisa: 23:37

And, you know, there's a certain responsibility that igotout has to give people a heads up like that. And, it's the person's responsibility who's entering into this space to make sure that they're resilient enough and have the support that they need to enter it. Because we're, we're dancing on edges. We're talking about stuff that, that is sometimes hard to deal with, you know. you

Gerette Buglion: 24:11

Yeah. And there is a level of, Candice, I think you used the phrase earlier in our conversation, um, emotional maturity. You know, that we do, we do have to have a level of, um, strength and capacity to be able to, to be humble enough to be a real leader in this space because there's gonna be, you know, there is a lot that comes at us no matter what. And I think that part of, part of where igotout, I think the, for me, the foundation stone of igotout is in by continually keeping the focus back on our individual stories. And that when, when we can land ourselves in uncovering our own individual stories and finding ways to express our individual stories, that becomes the education, that becomes the salve on the wounds.

Candice Schutter: 25:26

Yeah.

Gerette Buglion: 25:26

And holy shit, you know, I, I actually woke up this morning remembering a dream for the first time in about six months. And anyone who has read my book knows that the cultic group I was involved in was all about dreams. And in the dream that I had this morning, um, and I don't need anybody to interpret this for me. Thank you very much.

Because actually I'm like right here with it. In the dream, I was driving a car with several others. In the group that I was a part of, me being in the driver's seat would be, oh, you're in control. And I would be totally criticized and ridiculed for that. So, um, that's a very bad thing. That's so, that would keep me in that cycle of dependence on my ex-teacher to overcome that need to be in control, being in the driver's seat. Fuck that. Um, so in the dream, I'm driving and the power goes out in the car. Like, you know, when the alternator goes, have you ever been in a car where everything just starts to shut down? And, and I see it happening. I actually like, I'm really like, I know what's happening. And, and then I see that, oh, there's this little pull off right here. And I'm with my friends and we're going to, uh, some cool event. And so it's like, oh, there's the spot. So I just ease into the spot. When I get to that spot, I see, oh look, there's the path that goes to the place that we were headed to. So this is like perfect. And we get to have a walk to go there instead of like driving up, you know? So it's like all perfect. And then, you know how dreams are, it shifts. And we're at this space that is this environment, like a both indoor and an outdoor space where everybody is engaged in a creative project. So this creativity is just like oozing out of this space. Some people are collaborating. Some people are doing individual projects. And it was so cool. And, for me, it's so clear that this dream came out of yesterday having conversations with two incredibly dynamic creative people. Um, in this case it happened to be men. I'm mostly around women, so it was especially refreshing to hear the creativity of, to hear male creativity. And, you know, or non-binary creativity actually. For me, that's the excitement, you know, that there's, the spectrum of possibility is so vast. And that when we are able to find our voice through whatever expression we want, whatever resonates for us, that this is, like I said earlier, the foundation of iGotOut is supporting people in that way. And it's really what connected me, that's when I fell in love with Lisa, you know, back in October of 2020. You know, was feeling Lisa, your spark, your deep, deep lived experience and knowing around creativity and how essential it is to this movement. That was serious, some serious glue. Super glue.

Lisa: 29:22

Yeah. Yeah. Well, that was, that's, uh, when creativity isn't allowed to express, that's the thing that keeps us controllable. I love that dream. And it's, I'm drawn to bring in Geoffrey Wallis's quote in this little segue right here. Geoffrey Wallis is, um, he worked with us as a collaborator for a while, but, uh, he wrote a book during the time that we were interacting. It's called *A Voice From Inside*. And this quote, I just come back to it again and again and again because these words speak to what we're missing out on in high control environments and high control spaces. He says, "when a thought is repressed based on the thinker's assumption that its presence and awareness is symptomatic of their inherent sinfulness or disapproval by God" or anybody that has authority over you]. When, so I'm just gonna take that piece. When a thought is coming up and you push it down because you don't think it's gonna be approved of, right? Okay. "Entire architectures of thought remain unmanifested in consciousness. So do any subsequent architectures derived from them ad infinitum. This presents an astounding opportunity cost when multiplied by the billions of human minds held captive by religious or any other kind of belief systems, and is restricted from reaching their creative potential."

Candice Schutter: 31:34

Hmm.

Lisa: 31:35

I mean, is that not the answer?

Gerette Buglion: 31:38

Right.

Lisa: 31:40

It's like a two by four to the head. Like, that's where we are today in humankind. Where we are today.

Gerette Buglion: 31:51

Hmm. Like that, that quote for me. If we really contemplate the devastation that occurs when entire, as, as, uh, Geoffrey Wallis says, um, architectural structures and complexity, like the, the beauty of the brilliant mind. The, the beauty of the human capacity to ask questions and make connections, when that is being suppressed think about how much energy that is, what's being suppressed. And, and in my mind, I think of the igotout movement as blowing the lid off that suppression and saying, let your stories rip. Let your questions rip. Let your thoughts, as wacky as they may appear, if you think it bring it forward. Let's see what can happen. And I have a gazillion thoughts that go nowhere. And so what. You know, I now am free to just have my thoughts and let them play. Let them evaporate. Let them, let them actually become expressed in, you know, in I, I mean I have the extraordinary privilege of being able to let some of them be expressed, and it just blows me away. But think about everyone can do that. Like that's what we get to do here is just bring the questions and the stories forward.

Lisa: 33:39

Yeah. Yeah.

Candice Schutter: 33:40

Well, I think it really speaks to the need to culturally redefine creativity. Because even as you were speaking about creativity. I love this quote cause I feel like it does that, like has sort of been compartmentalized and defined in this really sort of superficial, non granular way. And, and, like I think about the organization that I was involved in, like we were encouraged to express our creativity. And I'm putting it quotes. We were movement facilitators and we were, you know, receiving wisdom from the body, the mind, the emotions, the spirit, and we're infusing it into our class. It was all about creative movement and encouraging that in people. Yet, critical thinking was shut down. Which is inherently an essential part of creativity in the way that we can define it, right? Like what creativity really is. And our ability to question and dismantle things. Like our ability to be destructive in terms of the way we think is what is creative potential. And I think we have to reclaim that and redefine that. And I think back to the piece around the yogic lineages and seeing those problematic threads and having been in a yoga community where I was taught that I was overly intellectual, that I overthought everything.

Gerette Buglion: 34:59

Right.

Candice Schutter: 34:59

That's a function of my creativity, my generative, what I bring that's generative to the world. Yet it wouldn't have been seen through the lens of creativity. So I just wanna name that, cause I love this quote cause it really does, I love it for a lot of reasons. I'm gonna have to circle back to it. I just love that it really underscores what creativity really is and that it's, it's complexity is a part of it. It's not this simple like paint by numbers or making something pretty. I guess it just always, I was sort of taught to think

of it as like a superficial. Like making something pretty. You're creative. Ding. You know, love and light.

Gerette Buglion: 35:37

I love that you.

Lisa: 35:39

Right.

Candice Schutter: 35:40

Right?

Gerette Buglion: 35:40

Yeah. Candice, I love that you identified your intellect and your, like, like what you brought forward in your group, which was criticized and shunned and shut down. But that that is a core part, an essential part of the creative process. And, and we all have different levels of that.

Candice Schutter: 36:08

Yes.

Gerette Buglion: 36:08

You know, some, like, some of us are more movement oriented, some more auditory, some more visuals, some more, you know, whatever it is. And, and the way that you just named that in your experience just really touched me. I just want you to know that, like I could really feel the, um, the, I guess the impact of that. And I think what a travesty that, that was squashed and judged and criticized. And what an extraordinary, um, you know, gift it is. I think that to the world today that through the deeper pulse you are bringing that quality, that unique Candice-ness forward, you know, into the world. It's such a beautiful contribution.

Candice Schutter: 37:01

Thank you. Well, and that that quote really underscores why it's so important for each of us to do that.

Lisa: 37:08

There's a, a great model that was brought to my attention, again by Laura Tucker, of this idea of coming to a project with whatever our capacity is.

Gerette Buglion: 37:23

Hmm.

Lisa: 37:23

With no hierarchical, you know. No, no, this is better than that, or more important. Um, Seth Godin did a project called The Carbon Almanac. He started this project in November of '21, and of course, Seth Godin has a reach. She has a, you know, he's known. He reached out to his subscribers and said, this thing, this Carbon Almanac thing, this is something that I wanna do and I wanna do it with everybody who wants to do it with me. And from that first initial invitation, November of '21, his people produced a product that was published, and I received my copy in July of '22. So like.

Gerette Buglion: 38:19

Lightning speed. Lightning speed for a book, right?

Lisa: 38:23

Lightning speed as far as putting together a book. And he, his methodology is something that, you know, I've wanted to figure out if it's something that could work for igotout. But the idea of it was basically, here we are in this space, he used a platform called Discourse. And, you know, we're gonna gather people to do all this specific jobs and you just pick up your threads at whatever floats your boat. You know, step into this

space. We're doing editing over here. Here's the space where we're doing drawings for this page. Or you know, if you're a layout person, come over and play with all of this. And, there was no, um, you might do some work in one space and come back, you know, because it's the connection of the people working on it was global. So one person could do some work in America and then have it shifted and morphed by somebody in India. Right? So whatever your contribution is, you're just putting it out there and letting it go and letting someone else's creativity build on your own. And I mean, it, that model, however, that can work in the igotout space. That's good stuff. So that's kind of one of the things. We need to talk about how I got is shifting, and when we started igotout.org, it was about defining the hashtag and promoting the hashtag movement. And we connected with a lot of the big wigs in the cultiverse and have, you know, the support of people like Steve Hassen, who's, you know, forefront of cult recovery and education. Janja Laich is one of our collaborators. Of course, Sarah Edmondson has been with us from the very beginning because she was kind of, who kept my spark going when I reached out to her after watching The Vow, before I met Gerette. So, you know, there's, and Rachel Bernstein. And so we've got all of these people that are connected to igotout. And amazingly the hashtag has grown legs of its own. It's being used, people are picking it up beyond what I can influence or Gerette can influence. So it's, it's happening. One of the things that I realized recently though, is that what, and this is the thread to the book that I was gonna mention, The Chaos Machine. Max Fisher, Chaos Machine. You know, in the very beginning of this thing, it's like, we're gonna go viral. We're gonna get like as big as Me Too. That was the vision, right?

Gerette Buglion: 41:34

We just thought it would happen overnight. And we were like, ready for it to happen over night. And we were, we were just, we were newbies. We were neophytes. We didn't know what goes into a movement.

Candice Schutter: 41:46

Well, and you sort of never know, what that's gonna happen to though. Like, you just never know.

Lisa: 41:52

Yes, and this book, The Chaos Machine, basically lays out how, it's very deep, but how algorithms, who created the algorithms, how the algorithms work, what kind of content can go viral. And I listened to this book and after listening to it, it was like, you know what? I don't want, igotout to go viral that way. Because what has the chance of being amplified more by the platform algorithms is clickbaity. You know, sensational, controversial stuff. And that's not the direction that we want igotout to go because then we miss, we miss the movement. We miss the people that it needs to help.

Gerette Buglion: 42:51

huh?

Lisa: 42:52

I've, the relationships. Exactly. So like my shift in wanting igotout to be everywhere has really, it's changed where I recognize that people are having these kinds of conversations and asking the kinds of questions that we've been asking today, that you've been asking through the series. It's happening all over the place. The movement is living and breathing. It just might not have always #igotout. got So that was a huge letting go for me to not have to carry, you know, these lofty goals of this is what we're going to create. Right? And because of the connections that we've made in the cultiverse and really the lack of a lot of resources. Like, when I got out in 2016, I

couldn't find, my husband actually was doing the looking at the time, couldn't find the things that would've helped me. And you know, so what we're looking at right now with igotout.org is making this transition to being an organization, a nonprofit organization that can actually do the work in the world that, people are expecting of igotout. It's just me and Gerette and you know, that's who it's been doing the work of igotout for the last two and a half years. And we have a wonderful collection of people, of collaborators that are moving the concept of the hashtag movement out into the cultiverse. Right. So Gerette is actually leading the charge as we speak into this process of becoming a nonprofit entity that could do the work that people are expecting of it. And that's, that's the fun pregnant place that we are playing in now.

Gerette Buglion: 45:11

Indeed. It's, it's, in a way it's the work that people already think that we're doing, but, but we can't because it's just us. And I have to say, Lisa, it was really exciting to hear you say that about that new awareness of perspective about the, like, not, in a way not wanting #igotout to go viral in the way that it kind of becomes clickbaity. That feels really affirming to me and really powerful, um, powerful in the positive meaning of power, rather than the hindering controlling quality of power. Um, but, it makes me want to, like, it inspires me to continue to lean more into the kind of organic growth of igotout.org as an entity. And you know, we, we had very early on when we had our very first meeting where Steve Hassen and Mark Laxer, who was already mentioned, and Lisa and Lisa's husband and I were all in that meeting. And Sarah Edmondson was part of that because she was the spark that got Lisa connected to, Steve and Mark Laxer and I. And from those early meetings, I was really gung ho to create a nonprofit organization. Because I had actually experienced being in a variety of different organizations where power infiltrated in very unhealthy ways. Not only in the cult, but in other environments as well. So for me, it was really important to provide some sort of structure. I was scared that igotout would devolve if we didn't have some sort of a structure. And I really have to credit Lisa's husband for being the one who was like, Gerette, let's slow this down a little bit. We don't need to create a nonprofit yet. And, that was a very important voice in the decision to trust that igotout was going to develop organically and I think develop some authentic legs, you know. Some real legs, you know, the kind that can actually hold you up and not just appear to be legs. Um, and I feel like that has actually, that's what we're experiencing now. So it is two and a half years later. We're at the right point. We have a fiscal sponsor. We are in the process of becoming our own nonprofit entity and organization. And, and we get to do this, uh, with an amazing amount of support. We actually have two incredibly gorgeous and very skilled, consultants in the nonprofit world who right now are offering us support pro, pro bono. Thank you very much. I would like to include them in the show notes if they want to be, because it's very, very helpful to have great experience and support.

Candice Schutter: 48:48

Absolutely.

Lisa: 48:50

To come back to what you were saying about the early formation and pumping the brakes on providing that, framework for igotout, one of the things that I think has been also really critical, and we kind of touched on this earlier, but igotout is not meant to promote any individual that's part of igotout. You know, we might share things as a resource, but it's not, igotout is not the publicity arm or a way for other people who are involved to get more visibility. It's really about the individual cult survivors that igotout

is providing service for. To always bring it back to those people that that's, we wanna represent. And that's something, as I've curated our kind of online presence, that I am always working to reflect people that don't have as much of a platform for their voice. Also, a really important part of this is to underscore the importance of anonymous activism. Um, you know, so in the, in the beginning of creating this platform, one of my ways that I started to kind of weave this web of connection was to actually search for hashtags that were, um, not igotout, but like, #cultsurvivor, #exjw, #cult. So I follow all of these hashtags and you can do that on Instagram. Instagram's mostly where igotout lives because I can't stand TikTok, and I really don't like that format of talking head material content. Twitter is good, but it's so short. So Instagram is really, Instagram, Facebook has really lent itself to the sharing of stories because of the way that the platform works. You know, I wanna say for somebody who's just exiting a group and who may have experienced a lot of trauma. Talking about it is not the first step. You can't talk about it because oftentimes what you experienced is, you know, so egregious, you can't put language to it, right? Or you don't have words. So first thing I did was follow some hashtags and start connecting with people when they're telling their story, when they have found the words to tell their story. And, you know, then I get my language reading other people's content. And listening to podcasts like this one and reading the books that, you know, we've mentioned and others. Then as you start to get a little bit more confidence, you might comment on somebody's post and validate their effort of putting words to what you are resonating with, right?

Candice Schutter: 52:30

Mm-hmm.

Lisa: 52:31

So somebody who's entering into the space, this is kind of a prescription for how to start kind of getting in here.

Gerette Buglion: 52:39

How to contribute in a meaningful way. I mean, we're, what you're talking about, Lisa is getting involved. But you're also talking about something that is incredibly, it's a foundation stone of igotout is that kind of like, reading is action. You know, reading is taking in information. You know, making comment, the power of somebody like even, you know, putting a heart or a, you know, a ti a little comment or a lengthy comment. It's, it's hugely important.

Lisa: 53:17

Right.

Candice Schutter: 53:18

Or even I would add, a private message. I have a lot of people reaching out to me privately that aren't comfortable commenting on posts or even clicking a like button yet they know that I'm a safe space and, and also my colleague Tracy, who was on the podcast, she gets lots of messages, too. So that's another way, if it feels better to comment privately if you don't wanna be visible yet. So,

Lisa: 53:42

Totally. That's, that's really good to bring in. I know on Facebook and Instagram, you can set up, anonymous handles. So that's something that people can do.

Candice Schutter: 53:56

yeah.

Lisa: 53:57

And once you set up your own account with an anonymous handle, and this is if you don't wanna publicly interact, you can then share posts to stories or with a repost app you can start to, like, build a framework for you to speak to. And I will tell you, as a person who has experienced trauma and has offered little bits and pieces of my story, the worst thing that you can do is pour your heart out in a post and have it be received by crickets. And to not have anybody see you. One of the influences that we have really taken a lot from was the troubled teen industry movement, Breaking Code Silence. And I, I love that you're gonna, I heard on the last episode you're gonna be bringing some of that in. Um, one of the things that the creators of that movement were just gorgeous with, was using the hashtag #iseeyousurvivor. That hashtag really encapsulates that gesture of I see you. You know, I hear you. I know what you've, what you've been experiencing it.

Gerette Buglion: 55:32

It's beautiful.

Lisa: 55:34

To me it's kind of a avatar, you know. I see you.

Candice Schutter: 55:40

I see you. Uhhuh. Yeah.

Lisa: 55:42

Yeah. Sharing posts. And then when, and if you're ready, you can share your story. It doesn't, it, this is a progression. There's all of these things that we can do to start becoming literate with the space. To be able to, you know, capture. And I love, Gerette, that you pulled in that part about creativity, because also it could be imagery. It can be a song, it can be all of these things. And igotout welcomes all of it. I get people sending me images. I get people sending stories. And songs. This is very exciting development that we'll get talking to in just a minute.

Candice Schutter: 56:25

Oh, cool.

Lisa: 56:26

But yeah, that's the purpose of the social media is to give people a platform where as we build this community, we get more people that get to see each other. And it's been an interesting thing to watch, you know, people being active with other people's posts and how that validation builds on itself. It's been a really beautiful thing. And I, I welcome your listeners to, to go back, scroll backwards in that feed and look at all of those stories and, and resources that are there because I'm, you know, my goal in this whole thing was just to reflect, reflect, reflect. Cuz we're all figuring this stuff out.

Candice Schutter: 57:17

Yeah. I recently went to the igotout hashtag and that's a place where I found a lot of folks to follow. To shift my feed, you know, to really just be continually fed with different perspectives and stories and people who are educating. And which I would add as far as, you know, since we already spoke about it in terms of creativity, sort of tangential, but connected to this you, Lisa, recommended to me a podcast series is called Cover Story. And, covers, you can help me to summarize it. Um, it's so new to me that I'm like.

Lisa: 57:51

Yeah. Cover Story was put out by a woman who was harmed in a shamanic circle.

Gerette Buglion: 58:00

It's all about psychedelics and.

Candice Schutter: 58:03

Psychedelics. Yeah.

Lisa: 58:04

Right. And the vulnerable states that are induced by the appropriation of psychedelic, um, ritual.

Candice Schutter: 58:13

I've only listened to about three episodes, but there was a moment when, I believe her name is Lily. When she says it just really, it was one of those moments where I had to press pause and just let it land cause it really described my experience so well. She said, I'm paraphrasing, one of the ways I survived this was I put my brain on it. And that just landed for me. So one of the ways that we can show up creatively is through learning things and, and sharing things that are educating, you know, we're sort of pollinating in terms of education. Um, and so when I went to the igotout hashtag I found not only stories, I also found resources. And so I sort of packed my feed with this sort of, and it's like our feed really shapes our psychology, you know, just like our community in the real world does. And so, I just really wanted to just name that and encourage people to do something similar to just really find people you resonate with and follow them and, and then you can be a part of the movement in terms of how you're engaging.

Gerette Buglion: 59:23

Hmm.

Candice Schutter: 59:25

And what you're seeing.

Lisa: 59:25

Yeah. And read The Chaos Machine. It'll blow your mind. It'll blow your mind. It's, uh.

Candice Schutter: 59:34

I will.

Lisa: 59:35

I, I, I welcome anyone to read that book. I would love to have a discussion. You know, a group about it. Because I mean, when we talk about our echo chambers, which are created by what we engage in, in social media and how that's directed by forces other than what we actually control. Um, you know, this is a really important thing as we're moving through this online space. To understand how the machine works.

Gerette Buglion: 1:00:20

Ooh. It feels like we just identified a, um, like a book for maybe the newly forming board of igotout to read. I mean, it feels really important what you're saying. It's awesome.

Candice Schutter: 1:00:33

So people can share their stories on their own feed using the hashtag. Are there other ways that they can be a part of the movement in terms of sharing their stories?

Gerette Buglion: 1:00:43

Oh, yes. There's lots of ways and sharing it on your own feed is beautiful. That's a wonderful, wonderful thing. And just simply using #igotout, the hashtag becomes the unifier in that way. You can also, on the igotout.org website, you can go to Submit Your Story if you, there's a page right now, it's actually called Empowerment, which, um, I think we're going to change that, but right now that's what it's called. And if you go on that page, it kind of gives you a whole bunch of information about how you can write a story, gives you some different ideas on how to approach it. Some important things to keep in mind, like, you know, is there a potential negative impact of you telling your

story? Will, is there the potential for you to be harmed or someone you love to be harmed inadvertently? So it is very important that people take these questions seriously before telling their story. Even before telling their story on your own feed as well. So really think about it. It, it's very important. And, there's a button on that page, on actually every page of the website that you can submit your story. And that there's a link there that kind of walks you through the process where you can actually choose your own, if there's an image that resonates for you, you can include that and you can attach your story. It's actually a Google form that you can, you know, get your information in there and submit that. And it can take a little while. It can take anywhere from, you know, a week or so to, to several months to actually have your story land on the feed. And what I mean by that is that means that we, really Lisa, has processed the story.

Lisa: 1:02:52

Hopefully that'll change.

Gerette Buglion: 1:02:54

Exactly. That's a big, that's big part of what we're needing is for that change, to free Lisa up for the other really important work that she has before her. Um, but then your story will actually appear on the stories page of the website, and it can be shared on Instagram, on Twitter, on Facebook, um, and you get to choose in that form, the submission form, where you want it to go, whether or not your name is included, what your pseudonym is if you're using a pseudonym. All of that is kind of laid out in that form. And I'll just mention briefly too, that for people who would like a little extra support for writing their statement there is the class that we've mentioned a couple times already called Writing to Reckon. And about once a month, I offer a free class for people who want to write their igotout statement. And you can find that on the calendar, which is at the bottom of the homepage of the website. And you can click on that link, sign up to be in a group of anywhere from a couple of people to a maximum of seven or eight people. So it's a small group where you can get a little bit of support and have a writing prompt to write your story, to kind of get you started. And I'll say many people write their whole statement just in that hour and a half class. And everybody leaves with at least something that they can carry forward and, uh, complete it in their own way. And if you take the class, that doesn't mean that you have to submit it right away. Every step of the way you get to decide. Yeah, you, you get to decide when and how to share your statement. There are zero requirements on how to do it, what it looks like. Um, again, creativity and your finding your expression is the most important thing.

Lisa: 1:05:07

And I wanna add, our experiences as cult survivors often span years, if not decades, and we can make one statement that's a broad brushstroke and that is certainly like unpoping the cork. But there's a whole lot that will come up that needs expression and you can do it however you want, or not at all. It's, it's a journey. It is a journey. And one of the things that I will tell you from publishing all of these stories is that oftentimes it's really the specificity and the little nuggets that speak volumes. The details. And it's really interesting. I also wanna take a moment to promote Gerette's other work. She not only teaches the free igotout class that we offer once a month through igotout, but Gerette supports writers in her ongoing classes. And I have found the space to be really welcoming and helpful for me to start digging out the specific stories and to do that in an environment of support. The writing prompts that are

offered in her classes often take my writing into directions that I would never have imagined. So, you know, finding a community of writing if that's your medium is, can't encourage people enough to do that.

Gerette Buglion: 1:06:57

Thank you. Lisa, would you be willing to share something about this upcoming event that's on the calendar and is going to happen? Let's let the world know.

Lisa: 1:07:11

You know, in the creation of I Got Out, it's been mostly all online. And you know, certainly a lot of the work that we've done is sprung from the isolation of the pandemic and what all, what that's happened for all of us. And so with the pandemic finally kind of winding down, we are doing an in-person event that is, uh, happening in partnership with Tears of Eden in St. Louis. Tears of Eden is hosting what they're calling a retreat con. In other words, a conference that has the feeling of a retreat for survivors of religious abuse. And, um, what she was wanting. Her name's Katherine Spearing, who heads up Tears of Eden and the Uncertain podcast. They were already thinking of doing like a cocktail hour and we were talking and I was like, well, what if we took this idea that I kind of had niggling and made it part of the retreat con? And we would host a story slam and people can, um, come and see this public event of cult survivors sharing their stories. So we're working on the lineup. Probably by the time this airs we'll have a good idea of who all is gonna be that's in our orbit that will be coming to perform their moth hour. If you're familiar with The Moth stand-up storytelling, there's a possibility crossing our fingers that we might be able to have, uh, these people that reached out to us who are working on a musical. With the working title of #igotout, they reached out to us as a quartet of people that got out of the same cult who are using this project in conjunction with their university to talk about how creative expression can help heal cultic involvement. And so these four beautiful human beings have sent us some of their work and they're working on this performance. And hopefully they can be the grand finale. Which would be just like, stunning.

Candice Schutter: 1:09:42

yeah.

Lisa: 1:09:43

So that's happening.

Gerette Buglion: 1:09:47

On October 21st in St. Louis, from 5-10pm at the, what's the name of the venue?

Lisa: 1:09:58

The Improv Shop. Yeah. So it's a, it's a night clubby type environment, comedy club stage performance sort of thing. We're also looking at doing a silent auction in conjunction with that so we could potentially be showing cult survivor art and having people bid on the art. And ideally this timing will line up to be basically the igotout.org nonprofit launch party. So we'll have all kinds of ways for people to get involved and help us get this baby off the ground. Not that we're, we're already kind of flying, but

Gerette Buglion: 1:10:41

Yeah. the new format.

Lisa: 1:10:44

Yeah.

Candice Schutter: 1:10:45

Well, of course, anything that I can do to help promote as more details are revealed. I'm happy to share, and especially how they can become a part of helping to support the

funding for the nonprofit. That's a big part of what has to happen in order to really make things.

Gerette Buglion: 1:11:01

Absolutely.

Candice Schutter: 1:11:02

You know, get the grooves in the ground. So I will definitely keep everyone posted on developments around this cuz the work that you're doing is so profound. It's been a tremendous benefit to me, and I'm thrilled that more of the listeners out there are gonna be exposed to igotout stories. And, and being a part of this larger community has been a balm to my soul. So I can't thank you both enough for all that you do and all that you invest into this work in the different ways that you do it. And that you allow it to have a life of its own, and its own expression and really you're walking the talk in that way and that just moves me beyond beyond, so thank you.

Gerette Buglion: 1:11:43

What an honor to be with you today. Thank you so much, Candice. Thank you.

Lisa: 1:11:49

And thanks for getting it. That, it's very validating to see that, um, you know, that, that that you get it.

Candice Schutter: 1:11:58

yeah. I got out and I get it. Hashtag, hashtag.

Gerette Buglion: 1:12:04

I got out and I get it. That's it. I get it.

Candice Schutter: 1:12:10

Yes. Oh, I just, I've totally fallen in love with you two. And there's so much here. And your generosity with your time today is just such a gift to all of us. So thank you so much.

Gerette Buglion: 1:12:21

Thank you, Candice.

Candice Schutter: 1:12:34

I wanna offer my heartfelt gratitude to Lisa and Gerette for bringing so much of themselves to this conversation and to the cult recovery community in general. If you'd like to learn more about the I Got Out movement visit igotout.org and follow the hashtag #igotout on your favorite social media platforms. IGotOut welcomes your support on social media and also on their website where you can make a donation, inquire about volunteer opportunities, or pre-register to attend the Story slam event in October. And if you're a cult survivor who would like support in writing your own igotout statement, consider exploring Gerette's free monthly Writing To Reckon events. I highly recommend the experience whether you choose to share your story publicly or not. And if you're interested, you can find the link in the show notes. Okay, folks, I'll be back next week with another courageous guest, and until then, I wanna thank everyone who's joined the growing community over on Patreon. It is really patrons of the podcast that make this work possible. So I'll keep rolling out bonus episodes over on Patreon, and if you're interested in learning more, head over to patreon.com/thedeeperpulse. Thanks so much for tuning in, and I'll see you next week. Caio.