

Candice Schutter: [00:00:00] Welcome back to The Deeper Pulse and the continuation of the 'cult'ure series.

Because everyone deserves a safe space in which to share their stories and because sadly, there are just so damn many of them. The Deeper Pulse bonus episodes continue to roll out over on Patreon. Last week, we heard from Fiona Winter who joined us from Wales to share about her four decades of teaching and training fitness in the UK. Fiona was affiliated with the Org for years until just recently when she chose to cancel her teaching contract. In Deconstructing Dogma, episode 28, she shares with Tracy and I how she's been learning to lead her classes more ethically, incorporating considerations around consent and inspiring greater personal agency. [00:01:00] Fiona also shares how the podcast content, and her active engagement in the After The Org community, has helped her to discover new insights when it comes to professional integrity.

You can access it and all the extras at patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

And once again, before we dive into today's content, just another quick reminder that the stories and opinions shared here are based on personal experiences and are not intended to malign any individual group or organization.

Content warning. For anyone who's spent time in large group awareness trainings, and especially for Org teachers and trainers, in this episode and the next, my guests and I will share details about our personal experiences in Org training environments. Which will include reference to power over abuse, subtle and overt forms of coercion, body [00:02:00] shaming, and performative trauma therapy. The content may be triggering for some. Please be advised before listening.

Almost exactly one year ago on July 27th, 2022, that's when I dropped the first 'cult'ure series episode. And at the time, I would've never guessed the series would still be going strong one year later.

As I've said before, this work has taken on a life of its own. Because it turns out that many of you out there can relate to the stories that my guests and I have been sharing. They're illustrative of dynamics that happen every damn where.

And I have to say that when Tracy Stamper and I first began sharing about our personal and professional experiences with the company we now refer to as 'the Org', we honestly had no idea just how many stories like ours there were out there. I mean, we knew that there were too many to be sure, but even [00:03:00] so, the response to Org related content has definitely surpassed all of our expectations. And this, despite the fact that we've been using aliases throughout the sharing of every single one of these stories.

Now, I promised myself from the get go that I wouldn't let this become a series about a singular company. And I plan to keep that promise. So we will be venturing elsewhere again in the weeks to come.

But first this week and next, I'm rolling out another Org related two-parter. And it's important to once again reiterate that these episodes aren't an attempt to center or cancel Org leadership. It's true. I am growing more and more disgusted and outraged by the behavior of certain individuals, and accountability is long overdue.

But this series, it's not about them. It's about all of us. It's about the deep healing that happens when we gather [00:04:00] together and share about our experiences *as we experienced them*. It's about reminding one another that all that shit that went down, it may have been normalized at the time, but it wasn't and it still isn't okay.

Despite the ways we've been gaslit, we were never quote unquote crazy, spiritually unfinished, or more or less than anyone else. We trusted people who promised to help us. And it's not our fault that they let us astray.

And as Lucy Page so eloquently reminded us in a recent Patreon drop, it's not our job to protect people who've hurt us. That's right. The purpose of this series is to safeguard one another, by sharing openly and honestly about spaces that have been known to cause harm.

As you're gonna hear in the lead in to this week's episode, it was originally intended as a Patreon bonus, but [00:05:00] halfway through recording this conversation, it became clear as day that it needed to land right here on the main feed. And in a way it's a bittersweet follow-up to Mark Frossard's two-part story featured in the last two episodes. His brave public share is most certainly a turning point in this series, at least as it relates to reaching current and former Org affiliates. ATO, our private After The Org recovery group on Facebook, is experiencing another major growth spurt. And more and more people are tuning in over on Patreon, many of whom are joining anonymously, which is itself quite telling. And all are welcome.

Back in August of last year, even as she was still somewhat raw and reeling from it all, in episode #34, Tracy Stamper spoke about her experience as an Org trainer and about how, after investing a decade and a half in the practice, she was heartlessly fired, [00:06:00] right on the heels of the death of her father.

She gave us a brave peek inside of Org trainer culture. And when I say brave, I mean it. A few years earlier, she'd been publicly shamed for a rather cryptic post on Facebook that she made announcing, eight months out, that she left the practice feeling disappointed and heartbroken. Her post immediately turned into a flying monkey shit show, and she also received a number of private direct messages.

And apparently this is still very much a thing. In recent weeks, I've heard from multiple current and former Org teachers about how in the months since the podcast release, they've reacted to some vague critiques of the company online. Again, posts that aren't even naming the practice. Only to receive private messages and even phone calls from loyalists who gaslight, shame, and in some cases even insist that they remove the offending click.

It's pretty ugly stuff.[00:07:00]

And so yeah, it's no wonder people tread so lightly when they first enter our private recovery space. Is this really a space where it's safe to be honest? To name the hurt that I've experienced? To find comfort in shared experience? Well, it's a work in progress and all I can say is we're doing our damndest to make it so.

I was just talking with a former Org trainer yesterday. I think it's been a couple of years since she left the company, and she's been following the podcast very closely. She was wishing aloud for a shortcut through this painful healing process. And who could blame her? This isn't easy work.

But honestly the shortcuts that so many of us have helped to bake into modern day wellness culture, it's really these time savers that cost us so much when it comes to authenticity and personal integrity.

The truth is I can't tell her or any of you how to do any of this. But [00:08:00] what I can do is share a story that will hopefully remind her she isn't alone in her pain. That her many sacrifices have not gone unnoticed. And that she was always enough and just right exactly the way she is.

But before I introduce you to today's guest, I wanna share a bit more about the Org in ways that are going to give context to today's story.

Similar to cult fitness trends like yoga, Zumba, pilates, Org classes are taught all over the world. I personally led classes at quite literally countless venues in my years with the practice. Gyms, dance studios, outdoor street festivals, high-end health clubs, teen empowerment conventions, corporate retreats. I even did a stint at a children's bereavement camp three years running.

Tens of thousands, or who knows how many, students around the world participate in Org classes and benefit from the work. And for about four [00:09:00] decades now, the Org has been an industry recognized mind-body fitness brand. In fact, just a few weeks ago, Marissa, Mickey, and others presented a series of workshops at the IDEA Convention in Las Vegas. And this has been happening for years. Nothing new here.

All of that to say, the public facing optics of the Org, they're pretty standard. Attend the first level of training, pay your dues, and off you go. You're licensed to lead classes, no questions asked. And for most students and for many teachers, this is where their relationship with the practice begins and ends.

Which explains why there's so much confusion.

A friend of mine who's been endlessly supportive of the podcast and this series, she recently texted me to check in. And at one point she wrote, "it seems odd that a 'dance class' could lead to so much harm and drama."

[00:10:00] Yeah, it is odd, isn't it? But I'm gonna tell you what I told her because it's essential to understanding all of this. While there are most certainly exceptions, these everyday classes,

this isn't where the harm is happening. So I wanna take a moment to really lay out for you the bare bones of the Org fitness and training hierarchy.

Now, when I was with the Org, there were only four belt levels, white, blue, brown, and black. And you should know that any similarity to martial arts programming starts and ends there.

Level one at the Org is also known as the white belt, and its entry level programming, a requirement for all aspiring teachers.

While some students do attend the Level one training for personal development purposes, everyone who completes the seven day protocol is given the option to license as a teacher at the end of the training week. Which essentially just means signing a contract, [00:11:00] you know, the kind that virtually no one reads, and paying a monthly or annual fee to gain access to music and choreography, as well as the permission to use the Org name.

While some of the curriculum in level one is a bit troubling and you can see Patreon for more on that, for the most part, the training focuses on simple anatomy, music, and basic choreography. And it's worth noting that as far as I know, there are still no teaching practicums or final assessments for any of the Org belt levels. In order to progress, you pay the required training fee, which is usually around \$1,500 and you complete the week long training. I'm not sure how it is now, but it used to be an unwritten rule that you had to wait at least a year between levels of advancement.

Back in the day, the belts were purely symbolic. All you got at the end of each training week was a very fancy dinner and a graduation certificate.

But since then, the belts have become literal. [00:12:00] Now each trainee receives a long stretch of colored fabric that's about four inches wide and seven or eight feet long. It is generally wrapped around the belly repeatedly before being tied off at the waist. The tail of its ends swinging downward as trainees dance in closing celebration.

And belt levels matter. A lot. They're commonly referenced in everyday conversations at the Org.

So and so is a blue belt from San Diego.

Oh yeah, I've met her. She's the black belt from Australia, right?

Hey, what belt level is she, do you know?

This is normalized banter among diehard Org participants, and the answers to such questions are given considerable weight. All of this, despite the fact that someone's belt level, in actuality, reveals very little about them. Other than how much time and money they've presumably invested in the practice. And I say presumably, because not everyone pays for the training they receive. But more on that [00:13:00] later.

Looking back, I really think all this belt talk banter really just helped each of us to know our place in the social hierarchy. It was a signal to us who had greater knowledge, access to the teachings, and in some cases, proximity to power.

I spoke with a former trainer a while back who was kind enough to show me, via Zoom, her vast collection of belts. Which of course included the prerequisite white, blue, brown and black. But *her* black belt included some add-on stripes that she'd earned by attending the first and second degree trainings.

And if you watched season one of *The Vow*, you may recall some colored sashes. The ones that the NXIVM proctors and coaches wore as they moved along what they referred to as 'the stripe path.' It had a very similar look and feel.

But this dear trainer friend of mine, she wasn't done showing and telling. She also had, and, and I hope I'm remembering this correctly, a green, [00:14:00] orange, and red belt. So seven belts in total, each one evidencing another stage of advancement.

All of this is textbook cult curriculum capitalism. Levels are added on indefinitely. It's a continual money grab that keeps people in the fold.

For years, Marissa and Raul, the Org's founders, were the only ones who were teaching training intensiveness.

And then at some point, kind of early on, they invited roughly a dozen or so black belt teachers to become first level white belt trainers. These select few, who are now known within the larger Org community as first generation trainers, we're permitted to train new recruits. And we're also at one time promised commissions for signing on new teachers to license with the practice. Teachers who Marissa and Raul hoped would eventually progress through the more advanced belt levels that for a very long time only they were [00:15:00] permitted to facilitate.

Now at first glance, this proposition sounds a little MLMish and maybe more than a little sketchy, but it also seems like a maybe okay-ish business opportunity, right?

Well, as it turns out, not really. Most of these 1st G trainers found it very difficult to fill their trainings.

Back in 2002, when my former partner and I were trying to seed the Org practice in Orange County, I recall Seth, the Org CEO, sending us an entire box of VHS tapes, DVDs, I can't remember, but essentially it featured a new release routine that had been produced to move the Org practice into the mainstream. We'd just started teaching at a very high-end health club in Newport Beach. And Seth's suggestion was that I pitch to club management that they play this video on a loop at the front desk in the hopes that we might sell a few copies, but mostly with the [00:16:00] intention of driving people into our classes.

I loved this routine. My black belt mentor in Boulder had taught it when I was first starting out in the practice. two years prior. I had since learned the choreography, and I sometimes taught it in my classes.

That said, this recording, it didn't at all strike me as a viable promo hook. Quite honestly, I felt a little embarrassed showing it to people. And at the time I couldn't really articulate why. Only that it seemed, well, I guess it felt kind of culty.

Looking back, there are many reasons it felt this way, but a huge part of it was how Marissa and Raul were continually centered in virtually all of the Org's marketing and training manuals, which gave everything a guru centric and often overtly mystical woo vibe. But of course at the time, the fact that none of this appealed to mainstream [00:17:00] audiences was kind of a source of pride within the organization. I mean, obviously the Org was just simply too cutting edge to be understood by all the Normies out there. They just didn't get it. But they would if we could just get them in the damn door.

Now looking back, I'm not at all surprised that people weren't flooding into our classes. Despite Seth's well-rehearsed and hugely hyperbolic sales pitch, the same one he probably still offers to whoever he decides is the next new rising star of the season, the Org is never going to be the next big thing.

Nevertheless, in 2011, a few months after Raul requested a buyout and left the practice for good, Marissa and Seth decided it was time to go for their biggest money grab yet. Now I can't possibly know for sure, but I feel pretty confident venturing an educated guess that the decision to add four to five *dozen* new Org trainers was not in response to an ever [00:18:00] increasing need for trainers. In fact, I'm willing to guess that the existing first generation trainers would've probably had no problem keeping up with things. These are gifted facilitators who were more than willing to travel. Generous humans who were already working overtime and very often for free, trying their damndest to generate a demand that simply wasn't there.

I think it was 2011, and I was maybe three or four years out when I received my trainer invite in the mail. It surprised me. Raul had stepped away the year before, and I hadn't exactly left on the best of terms with Marissa and Seth so, needless to say, I was a bit stunned to suddenly be receiving a piece of mail from HQ.

While I no longer received snail mail, I had unsubscribed from the Org's company email list 3, 4, 5 times before I was finally removed. It was a bit triggering to say the least. And so I'd been pretty relieved when after [00:19:00] many attempts my unsubscribe finally took.

And fortunately, time does heal some wounds because in January of this year, in the middle of a 'cult'ure series critique of the company, I was once again resubscribed to an Org mailing list without my consent. I mean, this was just recently, y'all. Like what the actual fuck? Know your audience. And also, is that even legal?

But I digress. Back to 2011, and that large envelope I found in my mailbox. Feeling shaky, I ripped open this giant mailing envelope to discover what can only be described as a whole mess of elegance. Gauzy fabric, tissue paper, and Tracy, and I wanna say red ribbon, maybe?

Anyway, inside of all this noise was a piece of ornately decorated card stock. A juzzed-up flyer that looked kind of like a wedding invitation. And in large fancy script, it said [00:20:00] something to the effect of, congratulations, you've been chosen! Along with an invitation to attend an event:

Courting Your Destiny.

Is this a divine decree or a next level business opportunity?

At any rate, I have to say despite their grandiosity, their approach had a very clever aim, which was to convey the invitation's central message. You have been honored with an invite to become an Org trainer. To explore next level investment in self and in saving the whole goddamn world.

Yowsas.

If I hadn't already flown so close to the sun and got burned, it's highly likely, oh, okay, it's pretty much fucking guaranteed that I would've attended this event.

I instead declined the invitation even as some still indoctrinated part of me grieved the loss. I was still struggling to [00:21:00] say goodbye to a community, a crystal clear purpose, and the opportunity to stand at the tippy top of an ever expanding bottom swelling pyramid.

But I knew too much. Working at HQ, I'd seen the hustle of 1st G trainers firsthand. I knew they made very little money and that most of them struggled to fill their trainings. I'd even heard credible rumors that some were not being paid the commissions they'd been promised.

Courting Your Destiny was a three day event. It was technically free, but of course, anyone who wasn't local had to spring for their own airfare and accommodations. Folks I've talked to estimate there were probably about 80 or so people in attendance at this initial love bombing event. All of which were wine and dined. Wooed with Seth's lofty promises of abundance. And lavished with Marissa's praise. And then at the very end of it all, I'm told that they circled up and were [00:22:00] essentially asked her most favorite question. Are you in or are you out?

Tracy spoke about her experiences at this event back in episode 34. And she was one of about 50 or so who opted in, who paid \$5,300 upfront and said yes to the honor of becoming a second generation trainer.

Fun fact. Based on current trainer listings on the Org's website, and this is assuming that they're up to date, of those original 50 plus recruits only 12 still work for the Org in that capacity.

Now, of course, it's impossible for me to know for sure why many of those trainers have since walked away. But based on the conversations that I've had with some of them, most of these people too got burned. You'll learn more soon enough. But for now, let's just say disillusionment and dead end promises are common themes.

And wouldn't you know it In 2019, the Org put out [00:23:00] another call for a whole new cohort of third generation trainers. This, despite having already broken contracts with dozens of people that they, in many cases, financially exploited and then cast aside. These individuals paid, in money, sweat, and tears, for a certification that was later stripped away from them without cause or explanation.

And Shannon Geltner is one of them.

She knows this story all too well because she was part of the 2G trainer faculty at the Org. And just like her friend Tracy, she was fired callously and without warning.

Her purpose in being here today is to share the whole truth about what it was really like for her working as a second generation trainer for the Org. She's here to offer up her articulate, heart strong voice of reason. And she's specifically hoping to reach these new 3G recruits who have recently, or are still considering signing [00:24:00] on as trainers.

Shannon offers up the real deal reality check that she wishes someone had provided her, as it would've not only saved her a ton of money, but also the trauma of being deceived and then discarded.

This conversation is a two-parter because there's just so much to share. And Tracy is an essential voice in this conversation, so she joins me once again. She and Shannon have a history and a healing path in common.

Alright, as a reward for sitting through one of the longest lead-ins yet, here's part one of our conversation with Shannon Geltner.

START OF INTERVIEW

Hey everybody. Welcome back to Patreon. Another episode of Deconstructing Dogma. We are here with Shannon.

We're so thrilled to have her here with us today. And we, we've [00:25:00] actually, the three of us, been sitting here without recording for, I don't know, about 20 minutes now. And the discussion got so juicy. I interrupted both of the ladies and I said, we have to press record. We've gotta do this so that everyone else can hear.

So we are really happy to be here with you today. And to welcome Shannon who's joining us. And, we're gonna start with what we were just talking about. We're just gonna kind of pick up on the thread that the three of us were just on, which is really around asking Shannon the question, like, how do you feel being here with us today? And where it was going was something that was, we were finding a lot of common ground in. And so I'm wondering, Shannon, if you could share with us. Welcome first of all.

Shannon Geltner: Thank you.

Candice Schutter: And you could share with us how you're feeling being here with us today.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. I was sharing with both of you that I was feeling a little anxious and a little nervous about talking out loud about something that, to me was very personal at the time. Leaving the [00:26:00] Org and all of the things that led up to that.

Um, it's also that whole nervousness of kind of, of, of talking in the sense that I'm also going against the learning or the training that I practiced for so many years. That's one of the things that's, in my opinion, has been a bit of an overarching theme through your podcast. Um, just that, that ability to speak out loud about an experience that happened to me or, that I was involved in. And, um, just that nervousness of putting myself out there and, and talking about it.

Um, yeah. So that's what we were discussing in that before we, we came on. For sure. Just, it's, it's a lot.

Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: It's a lot. And Candice, does that sound familiar to you?

Candice Schutter: And I was sharing with the gals that I was just working on, kind of a big week as we're recording this. This is kind of a big week in the podcast. And I was just [00:27:00] working on intro content and just grappling like big time with this feeling, this, it's like a, a wave that that just rises every so often. And it's just this feeling of like, what am I doing? Who do I think I am? And am I just causing a bunch of trouble here? And is this mm, is this even necessary?

Just all of that self-doubt and all of those feelings. And inevitably, whenever something like that services, I get like a message from somebody from After the Org or somebody who's been listening to the podcast and it's, um, really validating.

And I was saying to Shannon and Tracy, like, this project would not, especially specifically related to the Org and speaking about the Org and holding space for those stories. There's no way I would be able, have been able to sustain this for almost a year without all of you. And like, I literally mean all of you.

[00:28:00] Um, Tracy, and I've talked many times about how, if it was just me saying these things or if it was just she and I with our sour grapes over on the sly.

Shannon Geltner: Sour grapes.

Candice Schutter: All the things that it would not, it would not have the impact. It would not have the reach. It would not, and it's the fact that so many people just keep coming together and saying, yeah, me too, me too.

It's like the Me Too Movement, just in our own version of it, right? Like coming forward and being like, you're not the only one. And you have been gaslit. And you have been silenced. And I felt that too. Like it's so validating.

And it doesn't take away the indoctrination that's operating inside that says, don't do it!

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. It, yeah, that, that's huge. It's huge. That whole thing of. Who am I? Why do I think what I have to say is important? Um, speaking with Impeccability about my situation.

But this is also, this is where I always go back to, but my experience was my experience, and there's [00:29:00] validity in that. It's not just, oh, I had this and I'm, you know, talking about somebody that's not here. Like we were saying, you know, it's really very personal in the sense that I know what I lived through and what I experienced. And that's why, say for example, when I first listened to your initial podcast with Tracy, how I was just so overcome with emotion in the whole, I'm not alone.

This is not just something that happened to me. It's something that other people are experiencing as well. And that was very, um, validating. I hate to say. You know, oh good, there's somebody else, right? But it was also very eyeopening

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And that's where the breakdown in the conditioning starts, started for me, is realizing that.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: I'm not alone and I can speak. And maybe [00:30:00] if I told my story or talked about it, maybe I'd help somebody. I'd keep them from getting entangled as well.

Candice Schutter: Yes. Mm-hmm.

I love when we initially spoke, Shannon, you said. I wrote it down verbatim cuz I was moved by it. You said "I want to help. And how can I help if I'm not showing all the way up?"

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. Yeah. That goes back to when we were discussing, when they announced the new group of trainers coming out on Facebook I believe is where I saw it. How I was shocked, considering how many of us had fallen by the wayside. Or been kicked out or been dragged, or whatever you wanna call it.

And then I was also ragy, like mad. Really, really angry that they were doing that. And then I was really [00:31:00] concerned about all the people that I didn't know that were stepping in.

That's the mom in me. I'm very concerned. Do they have any idea what they're getting into? Do they know?

Um, it's almost impossible to step into this organization with eyes wide open. It is impossible. You will always learn something on the backside that you were not expecting, in my opinion.

So I was worried about all those people. And then the whole thing about should I post? Should I react? Should I say anything?

I think that's when I said that. Is if I can't help anybody, if I stay silent. I'm just sitting over here seething and private and quiet. And I'm not helping anyone.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Make better choices, I guess. And

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: I know that we all, you know, are on our own path and we all see our own, the [00:32:00] value in the Org in different ways. I understand that. And it's not up to me to make those decisions for anybody.

But me personally, I would've loved to have the information, um, when I made the decision to step into be a trainer. I would've loved to have that information. Had a little bit more insight into what's behind the curtain.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: So, showing up now, it is just, it's just about not being quiet anymore.

And talking about it can be difficult. For me personally, there's so much emotion wrapped into it. So much self-doubt. So much frustration with how it all kind of fell out. Um, and my therapist would say, frustration is just anger, Shannon. It's just anger. You know, don't call it frustration when it's really anger. I'm like, okay, okay.

Um, so that's, that's kind of, I think where that, that came up, Candice, honestly. Maybe [00:33:00] that was kind of a long-winded response to that. But that's what I recall it being about that initial, they're seriously asking for more people to come be trainers? They had amazing talent in the group, what were we next generation? Was it, were we we're next generation?

Candice Schutter: You were second.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah. Second.

Shannon Geltner: There was amazing talent in that group.

Um, but one by one, we, we're culled from that group. And then now they're going out and casting the net again.

And I mean, I can be really, um, I, I, I think it, my personal thing is, is I know that it's more money driven than anything. Cuz that's very much a, a driver for the Org. Um, so I remember thinking that.

But it was also just that whole investment in these people, these, I'm thinking like innocent lambs not knowing what they're getting into.

And of course I'm only basing it off my experience.

Maybe you can [00:34:00] speak to that, Tracy. Maybe you

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, Very much for hours and hours and hours.

Tracy Stamper: Truly echoing everything you say. And for me. So Shannon, I'm trying to remember when we met.

Shannon Geltner: It was in Portland at FAB, the first one. It was the first time I ever went to Portland. I went by myself. I didn't go with a group of people or any friends. I was like, I'm gonna go and find out what this is all about. And I met you.

I met you probably, I think it was the first day I was there. And fast friends, like.

Tracy Stamper: Fast Friends.

Shannon Geltner: Fortunate to have met you. Um, I was a white belt. So I was still kind of early on in my practice. And uh, I just remember having that feeling of, I feel like I belong. You know, I felt like the way that you kind of took me under your wing and talked to me and, you know, you took me to lunch and I just felt like, oh, okay, this is someone who [00:35:00] I can really relate to. There's, there's a comradery there. Which I really loved. And lacked in my own personal life. So I wanted that. That was part of the draw to the Org for me personally, was the friendships. And the, the amazing people that I came in contact with over, you know, my 14 years. Just the caliber of people. It was, it was just a blessing.

I still think of it as a blessing, the people that I met.

Candice Schutter: For sure.

Shannon Geltner: Um, so yeah.

Tracy Stamper: And how amazing to, for a long time, that was the most painful part for me, was feeling like I had lost that community of amazing, gifted, bright, compassionate, talented people. And here we are.

Candice Schutter: Right?

Tracy Stamper: Coming together on the other side in a different way.

Shannon Geltner: Together again. Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, that I would agree. I definitely would concur with that. The [00:36:00] leaving was painful in the loss of my friends that I had built relationships over the years with.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah, I remember reconnecting with you. And you were pivotal. I shared this with you before. You didn't know it at the time, but you were so pivotal to me. I reached out several years after everything that went down, and you and I had a very brief Facebook messenger exchange. And you gave me the hope that yeah, you can, you can keep going. There will be a next chapter, Tracy.

And, I didn't realize, I had no idea what had happened to you. I always wondered why you were gone. And to see that you had moved on and found something else to pour your passion into. And you know, both professionally and personally, [00:37:00] I looked at you as someone who was moving on, and I couldn't figure out how to do that.

So you were a shining light for me. And I don't know that I've ever expressed the full extent of that. But thank you. Really, really needed.

Shannon Geltner: Thank you. I, I, yeah. I mean, when I talked to you, it's like we were doing the exact same things on our own little islands. Going through the same things and experiencing the same emotions and feelings, but not talking about it. And that's, that, that's, in a way, looking back now, it seems so strange to me that we, we did that, consciously. We're not talking to anyone.

And then once again, it goes back to the conditioning of the training and the conditioning of the lifestyle. That's why we. It was always about the Org, less about us personally.

Candice Schutter: [00:38:00] Right.

Tracy Stamper: Ding, ding, ding.

Candice Schutter: One of the things that I wrote down when we spoke the first time, which we did actually the first time, speak again to like, why we don't speak.

And, and we are gonna get into Shannon's story, everyone out there. Don't, don't worry. You're gonna get a sense. You're like, what happened to Shannon? You'll get to hear.

But this is like the foundation of being able to share about it. So, you know, kind of hanging on to this note for a minute.

Um, we spoke about part of the conditioning was like, I'm not speaking up, because I don't wanna influence anyone negatively. Everyone needs to make their own choices. It's not my business to impart my experience on someone because that might cloud their ability to make a clear choice of their own. Like that's kind of how it was framed for us.

And I was just recently reading, um, I just started it. I'm reading like five books at a time at all times. So who knows if I'll finish it. But, um, Sapiens, this book Sapiens. Yuval [00:39:00] Harari is the author's name. And it's about like the history of humankind basically. And there's this section, this little tiny section that really jumped out at me around this.

And it basically, he's talking about something called like the gossip theory

and how when human language was developed, like, gossip is the thing that enabled tribes to stay safe, to understand where there was risk. Like the fact that we talk about other people.

You know, of course there's a toxic version of gossip. We all know what that is. But the majority of what happens that was shut out at the Org is just the thing that we do in order to communicate. Like this person, Hey, look out for this. Hey, I have this experience over here. That when we're taught like, oh, I should filter out all of my personal experience so that that person can make a choice on their own.

They're flying blind.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: They're flying blind. And like, I, I just really feel like [00:40:00] so much of this, the therapy and having a podcast.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Is like, it's okay for me to take up space. It's okay for me to talk about my experience, even if it involves other people. And I'm not defining who that person is. I'm just telling you, this is how it was for me with that person. And then there's a chorus around me being like, me too. Me too. Me too. Me too. Me too. Me too. Me too, me too.

I think it's okay to make a judgment, which is another thing we're never supposed to do, around that person and whether or not they're a person that we want to engage with or that we want to prop up or support.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Moving forward.

So, um, side note, but it feels connected to like why we're here.

Tracy Stamper: And I just can't help but to, as you're saying that, Candice, to hear Shannon's words like, I wish I had had more full information going in.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: We, none of us had that because we were all such good little [00:41:00] soldiers, and we didn't gossip. Even though what falls under the umbrella of gossip is solid information sometimes and warning our friends.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

And we're good little soldiers in our own little corners of the country. That's also a big part of the mystery is not being present and seeing the day-to-day and ins and outs of what happens at the Org.

And Candice knows that probably more intimately than any of us.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: But, you know, hearing Candice's story, I'm like, not surprised. Not surprised. Doesn't shock me in the least. So yeah, I, I agree with that, Tracy.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. And I, you know, I was thinking when Candice was talking about the whole, you know, we have all of these [00:42:00] opinions that we conform and these judgments that we make, but like, my opinion matters. My experience matters. Mine is a side of this situation. Um, it's not something that I made up. It's something that happened, you know. And I was on the receiving end of it, and it didn't feel good. It, it, it was hurtful.

And to be able to, to talk to that, it's a lot. It can be overwhelming. But it's also kind of very cathartic in getting it out and having other people acknowledge, oh, you know, that happened to me too. Or I had a similar experience. Um, and that's, that's what's so healing about this whole process. This goes back to me years after I left the Org, um, googling, Is the Org a cult?

Candice Schutter: Right.

Shannon Geltner: I the only one out there Googling? Because [00:43:00] I'm not finding anything not positive, not negative about this organization. Is that in itself a red flag? I don't know that that's where I remember just being, just Googling it and being.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Really? Okay. Okay.

Yes? Yes, Tracy?

Tracy Stamper: I can say for sure from personal experience that you are not the only one who Googled that. I did that for years. I actually recall, I started the googles.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: When I was still in.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: I repeatedly, I remember like picking up my son at school. I got there 15 minutes early, what am I gonna do? Oh, let's check and see, is the Org a cult?

Candice Schutter: How about now?

Tracy Stamper: And I would.

Candice Schutter: How about now?

Tracy Stamper: Exactly like, has anything changed in the last seven and a half weeks?

I, I do remember so clearly going through the li the checklist of cult dynamics. Like, this is what [00:44:00] you wanna look out for. And some things were kind of close, but not exactly it.

Like does everyone dress the same? Well, we weren't required to dress the same. So no, we don't have that.

It was so easy, even looking at that list for me to want so badly for it not to be what I, the truth that I was seeing. There, there was that grappling. There was that grappling for me as well, Shannon. While I was still in.

Shannon Geltner: And I had family members ask me in the years that I was in is, is it a cult? I've never heard of that. What is that? Well, I've never heard of it.

And I'm like, it's not a cult. I mean, how many times did you say that? Did you say that ever?

Candice Schutter: Oh

yeah.

Shannon Geltner: that. It's not a cult.

Candice Schutter: A dozen times. Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: It's a fitness practice.

It's really not.

Tracy Stamper: We're just dancing how can that be a cult?

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, Yeah [00:45:00] it was.

And I think the whole, just, once again, the stepping away, the moving further and further away and then looking back and being able to see.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: That in itself is overwhelming. And I know for me personally, there were moments where I could see, but I would shut it down. I would just shut down. Like, that's not who I am. I'm not, I'm not. Am I that gullible that I would get sucked in? We've, you've said it before. Nobody goes to look to be in a cult.

Candice Schutter: Nobody joins a cult.

Shannon Geltner: Nobody joins a cult.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: It's hard for me to, to digest that. That I could have been in that situation. But then, you know, I mean, as things progressed as I got, we talk about getting closer and closer to the inner circle. And the way things change as you get closer to the inner circle. You know, that's what happened to me.

And you hear, I hear people say, I even say it because I love to cook, right? Like, that's my thing. I love to do it. It's what I do when I'm at home to [00:46:00] relax. And people are like, oh, you should write a cookbook or open your own place. And I'm like, no. I'm not gonna do that ever again. I'm not gonna get so close to something that I love, that I get burned. I'm not doing it again. Once bitten. Good enough.

So I'm like, I'm gonna keep that for myself.

I'm, I'm highly allergic to anything organizational as well.

Candice Schutter: Oh, a hundred percent.

Shannon Geltner: Highly.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Join me. Absolutely not. It's not happening.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. I think I tell this, this story in one of the episodes about Zumba. And how I like, I did one class with the founder and I almost went up and introduced myself. And then I was like, no, nevermind. Back away slowly.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm. That's exactly it.

Tracy Stamper: Step away from the scene.

Shannon Geltner: Step away

from the guru.

Candice Schutter: Exactly. Guru? I'm out.

Candice Schutter: [00:47:00] Shannon, tell us, because there's people who are on the edge of their seats at this point.

Shannon Geltner: I'm sure. You know.

Candice Schutter: Who haven't met you and don't know your story, like what's your, like story arc with the Org? If you would give us an overview of your journey of like how you got in and, and how it all kinda played out.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, I, I have twins. My twins are now 24. And they were born, um, not well. So I had them three months early when they were 26 weeks and had a lot of, like three years of just completely being consumed by taking care of them and raising them, and being a mom. And felt that I had gotten to the point where I had kind of lost myself in this, being a mom and taking care of my [00:48:00] kids.

Um, I was extremely obese. I had gained a lot of weight. And I had this like, epiphany moment where like, I can't do this anymore. I can't be like this anymore.

So long story short, I, I did a lot of, um, like traditional exercise, lifting weights and running. And lost a lot of weight.

But then, um, just kind of to skip ahead. I went on a retreat to Red Mountain Spa. This was a retreat that was put on by Self Magazine. If you remember Self Magazine back in the day. And it was one of those things where I was like, saw it in the magazine. I was like, this is what I need, like I'm gonna go do this and, um, just get away. And so I went, and it was just like when I went to Portland, I went by myself. I didn't know anybody. Um, I was just kind of taking a leap of faith.

And in that retreat I did the Org practice. I remember being in that class at Red Mountain. [00:49:00] Having that euphoric moment of, I found it. I found the thing that will carry me. I found the practice I wanna do. I found it. The whole class I was just, I can't believe I'm doing this. This is amazing. I love this, love this, love this.

So left there, went home. Found it locally at a studio here in Dallas and started taking classes.

And then in 2004, I did my white belt. 2005, did my blue belt. 2006, did my brown belt. And 2008, did my black belt. Those are like the core ones. I also did the first degree black belt. So.

Candice Schutter: Woot woot.

Shannon Geltner: I'm just gonna say.

Candice Schutter: Fancy.

Shannon Geltner: It's not what it sounds.

Candice Schutter: Yeah. For those of you who are not a part of the Org.

Shannon Geltner: It's

Candice Schutter: it

Shannon Geltner: not what think it is. Um, I'm just gonna throw that out there.

And I loved [00:50:00] every minute.

Candice Schutter: Did you do them at at HQ or did you do them regionally?

Shannon Geltner: I did my first belt here locally in Dallas at the studio where I was taking classes. And then every other belt that I ever did, I did in Portland. So I did go up.

Candice Schutter: With Marissa?

Shannon Geltner: I did my blue belt with Marissa and Raul. I did my brown belt with Marissa and Raul. And I did my black belt with Raul.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Well, the reason I always ask, people might wonder like why I always ask who people did their belts with. The reason I ask is cuz I think it's interesting to see the arc of someone's story, and when they actually got exposed to the founders directly. Because it's just a different experience depending on that, I think.

To do the first level of training, not with them, I think it's a different kind of slow burn indoctrination.

Shannon Geltner: And it was a very intimate first training. My white belt was [00:51:00] intimate. Small, nine or 10 people. Fast forward to Blue Belt, it was 50 people.

in

Candice Schutter: Oh, wow.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, it was a big one.

Candice Schutter: So it's a big difference. Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Huge.

Candice Schutter: Speaking of your blue belt, I have a note here.

Shannon Geltner: Mm.

Candice Schutter: And I think you know what I'm gonna say. I just have, here's what I have noted, everybody. Red flag, blue belt, prostrating.

Would you care to elaborate?

Shannon Geltner: First red flag. First red flag. That I remember thinking, what is happening right now? One of my fellow trainees, we were in the award ceremony at the end, the belt ceremony. We were getting certificates and our belt. And at the end or in the middle of the ceremony, this particular trainee went up to Marissa and Raul and proceeded to [00:52:00] prostate herself on the floor in front of them.

Full, full stomach down, face down, feet out, hands in front, like Superman, prostrate. And I remember, I mean, I remember thinking that is the weirdest thing I've ever seen.

I respected my teachers. I did not view them as better than or godlike. For me personally, having grown up predominantly Christian, and I just say that I'm not really practicing anything at this point in my life, but that whole prostrating thing, it was like other otherworldly or there was a worshipfulness to it that really bothered me.

And I also admittedly had a moment there where I was, did I miss something in this training?

Candice Schutter: Oh, right.

Shannon Geltner: Did I, did I miss something? Which I'm. [00:53:00] It, I've heard throughout the podcast, there are people that are like, I didn't get it. And at that point I didn't get what was happening. It was something that was not. It didn't compute for me

at all. at all. So

I, I recognized that there was mysticism in the practice. I'm not going to lie and say that it wasn't intriguing. It was very intriguing, the mysticism. And I felt like Raul really brought that, that's what my personal experience was, that mysticism. Um, but I didn't, I was very creeped out. I remember being really creeped out by the prostration and on the floor.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: And that, now that I look back, I recognize that was definitely a red flag to the Organization.

And the whole thing is, is they're standing there nodding and [00:54:00] smiling.

Candice Schutter: Well, that's what, I was gonna be my question. What was their reaction to that?

Shannon Geltner: They're nodding

and smiling as if this is expected. This is expected. Is what I remember energetically sensing from them.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: So weird.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: That was a big red flag

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Also

Shannon Geltner: looking back now, knowing cult dynamics, having listened to your podcast, watched a lot of documentaries, read a lot of books, that was a very culty thing that happened.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: It happened in one of the trainings I was in. I remember seeing one of the main trainers, one of the golden children, do the same thing.

And I remember standing in the circle, it just was so startling to me. And I find myself wondering, Candice, did you ever see?

Candice Schutter: Probably.

Tracy Stamper: That behavior? Okay. Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Because my [00:55:00] memory and the way that it works, Um, I tend to not remember things that are dissociative triggers. I remember plenty that are, but I tend to not remember certain kinds of things. And I have like, the flavor of that

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: 100% I saw all the time, especially working at HQ. That flavor was present.

It was the doe-eyed gaze that I saw more than anything. Just the way that people would look at them and communicate with them. And so I don't know if I ever saw the body position exactly, but I saw a lot of that. I saw a lot of fawning, that's the word I'm looking for. I saw a lot of fawning in lots of different forms.

Um, and I'm sure did plenty of it myself from time to time. I'd like to think, look back and feel like I never. But it's, it's absolutely not true. I

Shannon Geltner: That's why I was sitting here thinking, Candice, I did the same thing. I remember feeling doe-eyed and, and not being comfortable communicating with them directly. It, it [00:56:00] felt very intimidating to me. Um, it, it was never natural for me.

Candice Schutter: yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Never natural.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Shannon Geltner: goes back to that. I wasn't really sure I was getting the guru part of it.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: too, so.

Candice Schutter: Well, I I appreciate that you say that too, because I think it's important to, to make that distinction. Cuz I think a lot of people that I've spoken to will say, well, I never really bought into the guru thing. Like that wasn't really a thing for me. And like, that can be true. And also fawning could still have happened. Um, because of the way that fawning works as a trauma reflex, right?

So even if we didn't position them in that way, because of the structure of the training and the way feedback was offered and all of that. Um, I think fawning, not I think, fawning was rewarded. And so, and it was also a way to respond to not this, and [00:57:00] this is key, this is definitely was the case for me.

Because my tendency when I get dysregulated isn't to fight. And it isn't to flee. It's to either freeze and dissociate or to fawn. And so I've had so many times in my life where, even recently. Like just full transparency, Sarah & Nippy. When I first met them and talked to them on the phone. Now they are not intimidating humans, just at face value. But because they were like celebrities, the first time I talked to them, I got dysregulated, cuz it was just an awkward situation. And I got off the phone and I remember being like, what the fuck, Candice? What the fuck was that?

Shannon Geltner: I've totally been there.

Candice Schutter: Because I really went into this like fawn response. I was oh,

Shannon Geltner: I just like that, what the fuck just happened?

Candice Schutter: Right, exactly. Like right after the fact.

Like, and even in the moment, like sort of floating above it being like, what are [00:58:00] you doing?

Tracy Stamper: I do remember talking to you on the heels of that, and this is, I remember that. What the fuck?

Candice Schutter: I was like, what? Yeah. I was like, Tracy, oh my God. Seriously in the middle of doing this series? Like this thing happens?

And these are not people who are asking me to do that. To be, to be quite clear. It's about the social hierarchies and because of they were on TV and all this stuff. And like I c, like rationally don't give a shit about any of that. But it's like, it just kicked in.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: You know?

I got over it by the time I did the actual interview. But like, it was freaky.

So just to say all of that, to say that fawning thing, I think a lot of us probably experienced, even though we weren't putting them on a pedestal consciously.

Shannon Geltner: Right. Well, there was a dynamic in the trainings of attention, of,

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: of doing things so that they would give you attention, [00:59:00] asking questions to get attention, seeking out their expertise, and therefore bringing attention to yourself in the question.

I mean, and I'm speaking from my personal observations in space that it, that it's definitely, that, that dynamic is in the trainings.

And once again, there's always like the ones that that were given a lot of attention. And then there were the ones that weren't given a lot of attention.

Candice Schutter: Or were given negative attention.

Shannon Geltner: Negative attention, um, experienced that myself. So, you know, there's a lot of that in the dynamics of the training.

And, I wanna say, you know, another one of the reasons why I started to get a really creeped out feeling about what I was doing with the Org was the body shaming that I was enduring as well.

And I just wonder if there are people that experienced that as well. I know in our Org group there has been some [01:00:00] conversation about it. But I will just say really quickly that being body shamed by Marissa on multiple occasions was very demeaning. And if that is happening to anyone now that once again, I feel really sad about that.

The idea that people could be being hurt and be going home and being sad and angry at themselves because of something that someone else said. It just makes me run cold. I hate, I can't, I just don't like the thought of it at all. Um, and I'm confident that there are other people that experience that as well.

Candice Schutter: Definitely.

Shannon Geltner: That part of it. I remember being so taken aback by it. If the Org is for every body, why is that even coming up and being said?

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And so if I could just give [01:01:00] everybody a virtual hug that has experienced that, or that might experience it, that was a small part of my experience. Um, but it was still a part of it.

So I do wanna say that, just so that people know that that did happen to me as well. And that anybody else that had happened to, I have you. I've got your back. I know what it's like. We are broken, and we struggle and we get up every day and we do our best. And to be put into an environment where you're broken down more is just, it's unacceptable.

It's, it's not necessary. We need to be, like what we're doing, being vocal about all of this so that hopefully people will hear it and recognize that it's not the best path. It can be a path, but it needs to be a thoughtful one for sure.

Tracy Stamper: Body shaming is violence.

Shannon Geltner: [01:02:00] Absolutely. Abuse.

Tracy Stamper: it is. Oh, it's absolutely abusive. It is absolutely violence. And to me, what makes the fact that body shaming was happening even more egregious than it already is, is that the practice is repeatedly portrayed as a safe space with regards to that.

Love your body. Love your life. It's based on body acceptance. And you cannot say that and then turn around and body shame people.

That is so fucking confusing.

And I'm also thinking. So right now we're speaking about our roles as trainees. And I found myself flipping that, and we can get into this later or not, or whatever, but when I stepped into the role of trainer, how did it feel for my trainees?

What was? [01:03:00]

Oh yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, I felt like whenever I started facilitating, I had more energy around not bringing those weird dynamics to the training. I kind of had this sense of I know what not to do. What I don't want to happen. I wanna get down there with them. I don't wanna be up here above 'em. So that, that was an element that I brought to my trainings that I was conscious of. I don't want to have that weird, like, I'm the guru and you're the student sensation. That's not what I was looking for. Let's learn together was kind of more of my style.

Candice Schutter: Well, I think one thing that can happen there that I feel like Sybil Nance spoke to a little bit in my conversation with her, cuz in yoga culture this happens a lot as well.

The guru worship specifically. She was talking, and I don't wanna put words in her mouth, so, [01:04:00] um, maybe she can clarify if I get something wrong.

But what I understood that she was saying, one of the things she was presentencing was how when somebody would be in that space of fawning that the teacher, the leader rather than dealing with that as an issue of regulation and helping that student to reconnect with themselves, they would be sort of made an example of. Like, they would almost be picked on in a way.

So it's either, either the leader's like feeding off of the fawning and getting off on it, or they're like, don't fawn at me. And it's a deflection of you're fawning at me, there's something wrong with you. Not understanding that it's a dynamic of the nervous systems interacting. It's a dynamic of how you're leading. How do I respond to this in a way to help this person connect?

And so I think that's another tricky part of it, right? Is like sometimes the person who's the most, this, I can think of an exact individual. When I think back at working at the Org. The person who's the most worshipping and devoted, [01:05:00] becomes the scapegoat for the anger and the backlash.

Tracy Stamper: Whoa. Can you say, can you clarify that a little more? The person who's the most, the best little

Candice Schutter: It's almost like the, yeah. It's almost like the person, not even the soldier thing, so much as the person who's deferring their authority at all times becomes the person who, it's almost like they know they can get away with mistreating that person. So that becomes, that person becomes sort of an outlet for that mistreatment.

Tracy Stamper: Uh,

Candice Schutter: it's sort of like in family dynamics. I, I'm not an expert in family systems at all, but I have a sense that this dynamic happens in family systems where there's like a scapegoat. Like the child who is maybe the most, um, meek just by nature is more submissive becomes the kid who gets, you know, picked on the most. The omega of the pack, if you will.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: It's sort of that dynamic. Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Interesting.

Candice Schutter: Total tangent, but [01:06:00] interesting.

Shannon Geltner: No, it's very.

I mean, the whole, the psychology of what happened in intensives as a trainee and a trainer, it's massive. Just the whole, I mean, we would, the things that we saw, the things that we experienced. When we would sit in the circles, the things people would share. The things, honestly, there at times I felt coerced to share.

Um, those situations created such a strange environment. There were so many times where I was like, is this relevant to the training?

Candice Schutter: I just thought of one. Can I give an example to people out there who maybe.

Shannon Geltner: Yes.

Candice Schutter: Weren't there.

Tracy Stamper: Please.

Candice Schutter: I remember, I don't remember which belt or what context, but we were in a circle and Raul was leading, and we had to go around and introduce ourselves and say like our name, where we were from, and then it was like a quirk, [01:07:00] something quirky about us. And I remember the circle took forever, because Raul kept rejecting people's quirks.

Like they would say a thing and he would be like, no.

Shannon Geltner: That's not a quirk.

Candice Schutter: No, that's not. And they'd be like, what, what, what do you, like? He's like, a quirk. And then other people would try to help the person cause he was not clarifying what he meant at all.

They'd be like, it's like your eccentricity, like something weird about you. You know? We'd be like whispering to each other and like sending like messages across the circle, like 'help her!'

Shannon Geltner: Yes.

Candice Schutter: and.

And then we went through this whole thing. And I remember I said mine, I still remember it.

I said, I eat, I make brownies. I make the mix and I eat the brownie mix. And then I bake the brownies, but then I never eat the brownies and I throw them away.

Tracy Stamper: I would say is quirky.

Candice Schutter: And he stopped, and he was like, [01:08:00] okay.

And went on to the next person. And I was, yeah, sweating bullets. I was like.

but I still, why do I remember that stupid detail?

Because the tension of that circle as he went around and like patted certain people, he didn't. He was never one for praise. And he, he kind of a little bit was behind closed doors, but not in the, in the training ever. And so he wasn't really giving anybody reward for doing it, right? You just got to have your turn be over. It would go onto the next person.

Tracy Stamper: Which a reward.

Candice Schutter: Which is a reward in and of itself.

Um, but it was kind of torturous. But that's an example of, what was the purpose of that? Like I could see the purpose as an icebreaker, ironically. But that was not like breaking, like icebreakers are supposed to break the tension so everybody can bond and it's cool and groovy.

Shannon Geltner: And that

Candice Schutter: a

Shannon Geltner: tension builder.

Tracy Stamper: It was icy. That circle

Candice Schutter: I'll

Tracy Stamper: little bit

Candice Schutter: it was pretty Frozen. Frigid.

Tracy Stamper: And I would like to point out [01:09:00] that, to anyone who is not from the Org or just to reiterate, that exercise happened on the first, the first hour.

Candice Schutter: First, the first thing. Yes.

Tracy Stamper: The very first thing. It sets the tone for what's to come.

Candice Schutter: That's right. Good point, Tracy. That's really important.

Candice Schutter: So speaking of the trainings, where we are getting back to Shannon's story is you progressed through the belts. And then there's this moment where you, you have this opportunity to become a trainer, which you ended up taking. Can you tell us about how you moved into the path of being a trainer?

Shannon Geltner: Yes. I received a letter from HQ inviting me to come and be a trainer after I had been. This was like 2010. And I remember getting this letter and thinking, [01:10:00] really? Me. How exciting.

First I was like, oh, so they saw me. That was my first reaction was I've been seen. And they want me at HQ to carry on the mission.

And so I went, I went to Courting Your Destiny. Um, was a really fun weekend. I remember.

Candice Schutter: That was the love bomb event, right?

Shannon Geltner: Exactly. Uhhuh. That was a 'we're amazing' event. That was not what we're doing wrong or any of that. It was, you're amazing and we want you on the team.

There were parts of it that were really woo woo, um, a little crazy as usual. But it was also kind of just this whole band of like-minded people coming together to conquer the world!

You know what I mean?

It's kinda what it was like. Yes, we're we made it.

Tracy Stamper: yes.

Shannon Geltner: That was what happened. And I got that letter and I went and I [01:11:00] chose to step in. There was that moment, I'll never forget it. There was a moment where I think Marissa, I think, but I remember the moment itself more than who was speaking. But it was if you got that letter and you wonder why me, you shouldn't be here.

Tracy Stamper: I remember that.

Shannon Geltner: And I thought, maybe should I, should I not, should I not be here? But then again, I was there. And I decided to step in and, and do the work. So I paid my training fee, and I started doing all the work. I did all the work, all of it. Read all the books. Did all the assignments. We had a portal that we would go in and record our assignments. Taught the classes. Created my own routine. Did everything.

And I say it that way because it wasn't, oh, you're a trainer now. It was a lot of personal work. It was a lot [01:12:00] of traveling to headquarters and coming back. It was a lot of calls and, and meetings and writing and reading. And to me, it felt very intensive over the course of time that I did it. And I was very determined to finish and be a trainer.

I loved the work. I wanted to do it until I died. I didn't see myself doing anything else. I had a passion for helping people. I wanted, wanted to do good and share this wonderful body of work with people. I wanted to be a part of it. I wanted to be a part of the team. And I wanted to be, know, co-creating with all of my peers on the, the faculty.

And I held that position in very high esteem for myself. I felt like I had a responsibility to make sure that [01:13:00] this was delivered in an impeccable way, to use some of the languaging. And to provide a great experience for these people that I would be training and bringing in. Creating community, helping them be the best versions of themselves. All of this was in my head. All of this was who I was.

Um, it didn't turn out that way.

It was very humbling, to use one word. It was very humbling. Um, it was at times,

I'll say this, it didn't fit well with my personal longtime narrative of not being good enough. It didn't vibe with that. The messaging that I got was, I wasn't good enough, constantly. And I know that it wasn't just me that was directed at. There were times where I was in the environment in Portland where that was said to all [01:14:00] of us on the training faculty.

It was, it was disappointing.

The wanting to give my best and knowing I was giving my best and wanting to be helpful and part of the team. Not getting anything in return. Not getting any props. Not getting any financial gratification. Um, that, that it, it was very, in the long run, it, it was very harmful to me personally.

The story of the not being good enough. Whenever, and I mean, admittedly, this is my, once again, we have these voices that talk to us. I have this voice that I've always had. It goes all the way back to my childhood, um, of not being good enough. Something definitely that I've worked with [01:15:00] my whole life. And being in an environment where I know I'm with people of the upmost character and caliber, these amazing people in my training faculty group, being demeaned in a circle in the studio and being yelled at by Marissa that we aren't being grateful enough to her... was a lot for me.

You talk about disassociating, Candice, that I'm exactly the same. Freeze. Disassociate. And I remember sitting in that, that session and her screaming at us. And I remember my eyes starting around the group thinking, is anybody else freaked out about this? Or are we in that zone of, we're not taking it personally?

Candice Schutter: Mm.

Shannon Geltner: But I'm feeling a little, I'm taking this a [01:16:00] little personally. Because I'm traveling and I'm doing all of this. And I'm, and I'm working and I'm doing everything to be great at what I do, to be a master of the practice.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: And I'm being told, nope, it's

Candice Schutter: Not good

enough.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. You're not good enough. aren't thanking me enough. You're not worshiping me enough. You're not grateful enough for everything that I do for you.

There was a lot of that.

Tracy's nodding her head. I think.

Candice Schutter: She is nodding.

Tracy Stamper: A lot of that and, um, I don't, I don't really know that I have anything to say at this point. I'm just doing my damndest to not cry.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: But.

Shannon Geltner: That, that feeling of being like, I just wanted to teach. I just wanted to help people. And it just, being so sideways was, was really hard, [01:17:00] hard to, to grasp. Hard for me to process. That's, that's a better way to put it.

I would leave there and go back to my hotel room and just be, what just happened?

I feel my nerves are shaky. And I, I don't think I've ever had anybody talk to me like that before. There was just a lot there. It was a lot wrapped around all of it. And I admittedly don't think that I handled it well. I think that it was very disturbing for me.

That's another big red flag right there. I mean, we don't have enough gratitude for, for the head of the Organization. And I'm like, that's impossible.

Tracy Stamper: Thank you.

Shannon Geltner: That's impossible. We are here. We have paid a lot

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: money, a lot of personal time, energy to be here, to elevate this [01:18:00] practice. I was, and then I guess, you know, honestly, getting down to it, it offended me. It really did. It left a really bad taste in my mouth.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: But that's was the first of, of several of those events where I'd be like, what is happening? I don't understand. I'm, I'm here. I'm giving everything that I have financially, physically, mentally, emotionally. What else? What else can I do?

Tracy Stamper: How can this not be enough? When I am so devoted to this, and I'm pouring so many resources. How can I be told that this is not enough?

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: And this is all coming off the heels of, so that Courting Your Destiny, the first time that the second generation trainers all came together, before anyone had committed to becoming a trainer. That was the love [01:19:00] bombing event.

Candice Schutter: And just to pause for a second and say the name of the training. Just let's just all take a minute to just. I'm not even gonna comment. Just take a minute.

Shannon Geltner: I'm sorry, I'm laughing.

Tracy Stamper: Uhhuh.

Candice Schutter: That's a suitable response. Okay. Carry on. Yes. Courting Your Destiny.

Obviously.

Shannon Geltner: Courting Your Destiny!

Tracy Stamper: Cry. Laugh.

Shannon Geltner: For sure.

Tracy Stamper: We were in that same circle in which later we were berated.

Shannon Geltner: Yes.

Tracy Stamper: The first time we all came together under the love bombing. Which was so intense. So intense. We were all told, like, I remember Marissa standing in the middle of that circle looking around the entire group. She was wearing orange. I remember this so clearly.

We were told that we were the cream of the crop. We had smoke blown up our arses. And the only reason I'm [01:20:00] saying that now is knowing how Shannon's trajectory takes a turn and how my own trajectory took a turn. But it was so confusing, those mixed messages. How, how do we go from being cream of the crop and the chosen ones, and the one that Marissa

wants to be in the fold, because blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. How do we go from that to being yelled at it? It, it was the confusion. The confusion.

Shannon Geltner: yeah. It was always, it was always a lot of whiplash moments, in my opinion. Just like, love bomb, you're not good enough. Are you in? Are you out? Are you in, are you out?

Well, clearly I'm in. I've invested. You know, this isn't, I didn't just walk up and do this for free, you know, like I invested. It, it was an investment to me. It was a betterment of [01:21:00] myself. It was being able to carry this message to other people. And that, that was just so diminished. There was no, I felt as if there was no respect for just that. I'm here.

Tracy Stamper: Absolutely.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: I'm here. And that that was not enough. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: perspective of the narcissist in the leadership role. like when you say like the, I'm glad you brought in the cream of the crop story again, Tracy, cuz it's like that was given to you before. That was the bait on the hook.

Shannon Geltner: Yep.

Candice Schutter: So you hadn't given her the money yet.

Tracy Stamper: Exactly.

Candice Schutter: Right. Okay. So then you commit and you're in.

So it's like that disorganized detachment obviously is super real and super important to presence that. And also that alternating, like what's the motivation there? She wants something? Love bomb.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Candice Schutter: She gets something?[01:22:00] Down you go. Don't get too big for your britches.

Shannon Geltner: Exactly.

Candice Schutter: She wants something. Love bomb. Don't get too big for your britches. That's the dance. And when you're in it, it's so disorienting you have no idea that that's what's happening.

And it's like, well it's just classic, like narcissistic playbook.

END OF INTERVIEW

Next week, we're gonna pick up right where we left off. And trust me, you won't wanna miss the second half of Shannon's story. Shannon and Tracy are going to take us inside of a trainer training, and share with us publicly for the first time a very disturbing, performative trauma therapy ritual that honestly sounds like something straight out of a cult doc.

And then Shannon speaks from the heart, sending out a Mama Bear message that moves Tracy to tears, and then some.

Here's a quick peek.[01:23:00]

PART 2 TEASER

Shannon Geltner: And I think that it's so important to recognize that every single one of us that stood up and said, I'm in. We were so, so worthy, so worthy. Every single one of us never chose to get up in front of people and pour our hearts out at the risk of being humiliated that we would do things wrong, that we would mess up, that we wouldn't deliver the message right.

All of us stood up and said, I am here. And I am gonna share this amazing thing that's changed my life. And some of us were treated less than, and that is the reality of it.

The stepping away was quick and silent. And when I hear Tracy's story, I could not quit crying.[01:24:00]

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: Fuck.

Shannon Geltner: I know. Cause I was like, she was out there alone. I was out there alone. We think we're dealing with this on our own. We're all going through the same thing.

Candice Schutter: Thanks for listening. Again, to access Patreon bonus extras, visit patreon.com/thedeeperpulse. We'll see you back here next week. Ciao.