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

Today I'm back with the second half of a two-part conversation with former 'Org' trainer Shannon Geltner. If you haven't yet listened to last week's episode, please press pause and circle back now, because it provides context that is absolutely essential to where we're headed today. And today is a doozy of an episode. Let me tell you.

If you are, or if you have been affiliated with the Org, please be advised. In this episode, my guests share details about their personal experiences in Org training environments, sharing stories about power over abuse, coercion, and performative trauma therapy.[00:01:00] The content in this episode will be triggering for some. As such, I've added in a few extra chapter markers and music breaks. Just as a gentle reminder that you don't have to take it all in at once.

And as always, the stories and opinions shared in this episode are based on personal experiences and are not intended to malign any individual group or organization.

Okay. I am gonna do my best to keep today's intro short and sweet because we've got a lot of ground to cover today.

That said, I wanna take just a hot minute to acknowledge all the many messages that I've been receiving from listeners out there. There's been another sudden burst in downloads and it's really hard for me to describe how it feels hearing from so many people who can relate to these stories. It's [00:02:00] been heartbreaking and validating all at the same time. And I occasionally shed tears of relief, sorrow, solidarity. It's been a lot. But as I've said before, I'm here for it.

And speaking of all of this alot-ness, I just this morning finished listening to a very timely episode of another podcast, one that I've referenced numerous times before called Conspirituality. And last week, as if on cue, Matthew Remski dropped an episode entitled *Deep Cut: Post-Cult Shame*.

And I am mentioning it here because it explains so much of what so many of us are experiencing right now. Remski speaks about three different kinds of shame.

The shame that abuse and cult survivors experience.

The shame of apologists, or in other words, [00:03:00] defenders of the cult that are still in. He talks about why they say and do what they say and do. It's incredibly insightful.

And then he also speaks about a third type of shame, and how the general public shows up, turning survivor's stories into a punchline and refusing to listen because, well, that could never happen to *me*.

This episode is a brilliant deconstruction and I can't recommend it enough, especially if you're a listener who is, like me, grappling with all the feels around this 'culture series content. So I'm gonna link to it in the show notes. And also if things go as planned, I'll be dropping a deconstructing dogma episode that looks a little closer at this content using Org specific examples. I really hope it happens. So wish me luck on that.

Okay, onward.

Last week I introduced you to the Org training hierarchy, and Tracy Stamper [00:04:00] joined me once again to welcome our guest former Org trainer, Shannon Geltner.

Shannon shared with us how she found the Org practice and what it was like moving through the ranks to eventually be recruited into the NGT or next generation training program.

Before we roll into part two of this convo, just a couple of quick editorial corrections. I've since edited the audio around this bit. However, in part one, initially when I referenced this year's IDEA convention, I incorrectly stated that it was in Las Vegas. Where it sometimes is and where it was many years ago when I attended as part of the Org. But it should be noted that this year, that particular fitness convention was in Los Angeles.

And secondly, I think I've just recently sorted out that the letters that were sent out for the Courting Your Destiny event that a select group of teachers received as recruitment bait into the next generation training [00:05:00] faculty, that those letters were actually sent out in 2010 and not 2011, as I previously stated in last week's episode.

Apparently Courting Your Destiny, the love bombing event that we spoke about last week, was in August of 2010, when Raul co-founder of the Org, was still in, but on his way out. It's also worth noting that, as I understand it at least, he was not in any way involved in the NGT trainer trainings.

Now, I know all of these might sound like really minor details, but details and timelines are very important. There's enough confusion in our hearts and minds. No need to add to it with inaccurate reporting.

And just quickly, one other thing that I wanted to add.

Once you start to dig into the world of cults and cult recovery, you'll sometimes hear the phrase 'high demand group' used when referring to cult dynamics. And this is actually really important. [00:06:00] Cults are by definition, high demand in the sense that they are "relationally and ideologically extreme." But they're also high demand in terms of devotion, self-sacrificing service toward the group's larger mission.

And I'm bringing this up now because an important detail that I failed to mention in the intro to the last episode about Org trainer culture, is how, in my opinion, the entire hierarchy is only functional due to the Org's exploitative labor practices. The system functions because so many people are willing to work for next to nothing or for free.

First generation trainers, and again if you missed the last episode, please circle back and all of this will make sense. First generation trainers are expected, or are voluntold, to train next generation trainers who are essentially going to become their competitors in a market where there is no growing [00:07:00] demand. And it would take me an entire episode to unpack the degree to which they have to set aside their own financial security in order to mentor these individuals who continue to flood in.

And then of course, I would imagine these second generation trainers, the very few who are remaining, remember, there's only about a dozen now, are most likely expected to do the same for the incoming group of third generation trainers that are currently being recruited.

And just to give another example, outside of the trainer culture. Org choreographers who offer their time and talents to the educational curriculum often do these routine shoots for free, never seeing a dime of the money that the organization is pocketing after packaging and selling their hard-earned expertise.

I could offer many more examples, but you get the idea.

The point is, one of the defining characteristics of a cult is this high demand [00:08:00] influence and the expectation that bleeds into the culture so that people feel as though they're volunteering for a service when in fact they really don't have a choice if they wanna stay in the fold. It's give it your all or be pushed aside.

Which brings us back to today's story.

When we left off, Shannon and Tracy had just given us a quick peek inside of a trainer training, laying the foundation for how the deeper into the Org they went, the stranger things got. And strange doesn't even really cut it.

Disturbing. Inexcusable. Abusive.

Way back in episode 34, which is this podcast's most downloaded episode to date, Tracy shared about a trainer training experience that was part of this NGT program. It's an incident that we now commonly refer to as the bathing suit exercise. It was an odd and unsettling session to hear about, to [00:09:00] say the least. And as it turns out, she was still holding back a bit, not sharing the all of what went on in these trainer trainings.

We open part two of this conversation with another troubling peek inside of the trainer experience that neither Shannon or Tracy were ready to talk about publicly. Until now.

And then Shannon will share with us the details around her own painful separation from the practice.

Here's part two of our conversation with Shannon Geltner.

START OF INTERVIEW:

So there's Courting Your Destiny love bomb event. Everybody commits. And then there's these other trainings. Where the bathing suit exercise, for example, happens. And there's this other instance that happened during one of these trainings that we haven't talked about yet on the pod or on Patreon, which is like, I have written down [00:10:00] mask ceremony.

I recall us three of us talking and we were discussing those trainer trainings and there's a specific exercise that Tracy brought up that you, Shannon, didn't remember until she brought it up. Which is a thing that we've talked about before.

When there's, if you go back in the deconstructing dogma there's a whole, uh, couple of episodes that Tracy, or one episode, it's just long that we did on Dissociation where we talk about this phenomenon that's been happening a lot. Especially with the trainers, cuz you guys were in this like traumatic, intense space more than anyone else.

Except maybe for those of us who worked with them in a different way, so.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. That's a whole level. Yeah. Yeah.

Candice Schutter: So we're remembering things for each other, essentially. And this was an example of that where Tracy was like, oh, this exercise. And then Shannon, you know, you can speak to what it was like for you hearing about it again. But Tracy, will you describe to us what this mask ceremony was that went on and what you remember about it?

Tracy Stamper: I will. And first of all, I just wanna [00:11:00] apologize to folks who don't remember it. I feel like I have this knack for bringing up things and people are like, oh my God, I repressed that for reason.

Shannon Geltner: That's how my, that's how I feel right now. My chest is like, okay, yeah. Here we go. Okay.

Candice Schutter: Thanks, Tracy.

Shannon Geltner: Bring it up. Hit me. Yeah. That, that, it was, yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Anyone who does not want to remember the mask ceremony, please hit mute.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: There you Yeah. Trigger warning. Mask ceremony.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah, no, seriously, for me, this was, I'm gonna guess the most intense, worst moments of my experience at HQ. And that is saying a lot since the dynamics could be so tough.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: So this was during a trainer training where it was only first generation and second generation trainers. So there, there were no other [00:12:00] belts or students there. It was specific to trainers, which is important I think. I know. Um, There was, let's just say there was some funk in the space because there was always funk in the space.

Shannon Geltner: Always.

Tracy Stamper: Always funk. And, the way that it was presented was that Marissa wanted to clear the funk so that we could all come together as a body that worked together, trusting one another. The irony of that in and of itself is huge, but that was the stated purpose. And we had all gone out on a break. We were like ushered out of the studio and even the hallway, if I remember correctly.

Shannon Geltner: Mhm, we had go the, to the back room. I remember that part.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah. Okay.

When we were called back to [00:13:00] session, I remember it was a very, it was almost like a solemn, it felt like a ritual we were going into where we were led down the hall. There was a long, long bench outside of the studio door. And it was covered in different masks, which were so intriguing, like.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. There were so many different kinds.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

So we're not talking a mere Eyes Wide Shut kind of thing, where the masks are all the same. We got different masks in this cult.

So we were all instructed to choose a mask that resonated with us. And I remember my son was really young at that time and I remember there was like a one that looked a little Spiderman-y, and I picked that one up because I was excited to take it home and share something with him. Like, mommy got to wear this.

Um, so we all got our masks and it was very solemn and quiet and [00:14:00] reverential.

Shannon Geltner: I remember it being dark, too, in the studio. Dark.

Tracy Stamper: We walked with our masks on. We were instructed to hold our masks up so that we were always masked for this next session. We walked the studio door opened. Marissa was standing there with, some kind of a sage stick. She would cleanse us each with the smoke, and then we would walk in and we were in a circle.

And once we were in the circle, the exercise was introduced. The intent was to clear the funk. And here we are. We are one body. We need to move forward as one body on the same page. So we are gonna take this opportunity to clear the air of any misunderstandings, jealousies, contention. If there was anything, [00:15:00] any static that could get in the way between you and anyone else in the circle.

Um, once the mask ceremony started in public, in front of everyone, we were directed to walk across the circle, find that person we had beef with, and just right there like magic, clear the air.

Shannon Geltner: Drop it. Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: So that that's the background. That's how it was set up.

Candice Schutter: With your masks on the whole time. Did she explain the purpose of being masked as it relates to this?

Tracy Stamper: I do not recall.

Shannon Geltner: I don't recall that either.

Candice Schutter: Okay.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Um, the, the exercise was very, I mean, it really created contention.

Candice Schutter: Of course.

Shannon Geltner: It was a little ugly.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Well, do I remember correctly in your telling of this that, so there's this idea of like, if you have anyone with [00:16:00] beef, like go over to them and, and I wanna talk about that in a second. Um, just the pressures inherent in that and how that might play out. But do I remember correctly that she also called out certain pairs of people to hash it out in front of everyone?

Tracy Stamper: Two pairs, at the end. And the whole reason that this story. I, I've remembered this story the entire time and I kept waiting for someone to bring it up on, you know, in the, in our private space. Like, Hey, does anyone else remember the mask ceremony? No one has. And the reason I brought it up when we talked to Shannon is because Shannon was one of the lucky four who got.

Shannon Geltner: I was. And it's funny when Tracy brought it up in our first conversation, I did not remember it. I promise you.

And then since we've talked, when I start thinking about it, I get, um, I feel traumatized. You know what I mean? Like I have that fast heartbeat and that [00:17:00] shaky unfocused feeling. So I am confident that it was, forgotten due to trauma. I feel like I, I remember being really embarrassed. And it was out of my control. And I'm not a huge fan of being out of control, so I've learned over the years. But I remember that was really scary in front of people that I admired.

I had conflict with a fellow trainer, here in Dallas. And it was years and years of contention. It wasn't something that happened overnight. Nor would it have been something that could have been diminished overnight.

There were many conversations that were had between me and my colleague about this situation. This was not the first time, but the [00:18:00] conversations were usually, you need to change, Shannon. You need to fix it. Like the issue is you. And I, while I appreciate someone else's opinion, I don't necessarily think that was the case.

I was just kind of the scapegoat for the situation, so to speak. But also in that space of really being sure that that was not going to impact how I did my job. How I taught the work. Um, I didn't have a choice. It wasn't reconcilable. So it was one of those things where I would say there was a lot of shame around that, that was just blasted to everyone.

The two of us were put on the spot. There was a transmission to the entire training faculty that we were a problem. You know, and we're also talking about moving in a space where we, I'm gonna use the word abuse The Four Agreements in this [00:19:00] organization.

Okay. So there is an element of, I can't take this personally.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: I have to speak my truth. I have to do my best to manage through this. But it was really not okay. I feel like that it made, it gave this impression that I, once again wasn't good enough to be in relationship with this, this body of people, and that I needed to fix myself to move forward.

And that's kind of challenging to do when you're in a conflict with someone who is also a human dealing with all of the complex emotions that we have and our own personal feelings about interactions. And like there is, I'm going to say even though I had this conflict with this fellow trainer, I [00:20:00] wasn't in a place of disrespect or dislike or not wanting to work with that person.

In fact, I would say a lot of years there was a high amount of respect for this person, but there had ju, it had just become a conflict where I had risen through the ranks. I had my black belt. I was also invited to be a trainer. It was not something that was handled well from my

colleague's perspective. It wasn't something that, in her words to me, she knew how to handle. I don't know how to handle you now, was what she said to me.

And so those kind of things coming at me when all I wanna do is do the work and be good at it and help people. It was a lot. There was nothing about that that was okay. There was nothing about airing dirty laundry in a conflict that had built over years. There was nothing that was going to be resolved in one night. [00:21:00] Unless it was on their terms.

Like, this is what this is. Also, I'm gonna just go back, I mean, just real quickly, parallel this with my divorce is there's always two sides to the story. And there's going to be somebody who isn't satisfied with your version of the story. And unless you are willing to reconcile on how they want it, which was very Org-esque. It needed to be reconciled in a way that they wanted it done or it wasn't reconciled. That it's not okay. Or it's not right, or it's not done. And, you know, sometimes this is for me, my life experience. Sometimes two people just don't get along.

Sometimes there is no resolution. Sometimes no matter how much you give, you just don't get that, that resolution. And it needs to be left alone. And in this situation, it needed to be left [00:22:00] alone.

So the trauma from that honestly, is, I, I remember being shamed, feeling shamed. Felt once again, like I had just been pushed to the peripherals, like, you can't be a part of this team because you can't resolve this conflict that, let's be honest, I don't know that I had a lot of control over. It was just, it is what it was.

And can I respect someone? Can I respect you, Tracy, if you came to me and said, I can't do this. I can say, okay. It's okay. We don't have to be besties, you know?

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: so the mask ceremony was a big, big beginning of the end for me.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: A big shifting in my perception of how they viewed me because this conversation was not brought up by me. The conflict between me and my [00:23:00] peer was not brought up by me. There's some of this going on behind me. I don't know where. I don't know what's happening. I'm just feeling somewhat victimized in front of all of my peers in this situation.

And heartbroken. Just really heartbroken that all of these years of feeling like I'm managing this situation, which is the best that I can do.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: To be told it wasn't good enough once again. You know, there is that common thread of the messaging that I received that I needed to do things differently or, you know, I wouldn't be part of the faculty. And I felt like at that point there was a real wedge driven, you know.

Candice Schutter: That was just beautifully expressed. Thank you for that.

I can't help but think like the spectacle of this situation. And like you know me, I'm like always asking the question like, what is this in service to? What was this about [00:24:00] really?

I don't think it was about Marissa wanting everybody to be PC and love and lighty. Cuz she's, that's not who she is. She's, she feeds off of conflict quite frankly. So when I look at like, what is this in service to, I think one of the things that would help is if we talked, in a general way, of course about the other example.

Who were the other two people that were presenced. And what, what do we think this is really about? Aside from, I can tell you what to do and you have to do it. is really.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: a big part of it.

Shannon Geltner: The other two, it was equally as explosive in my opinion. I've never spoken to either one of them about it.

Candice Schutter: They're both first generation trainers. Is that correct? Do I have that right?

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And very ingrained in the organization. Very revered, very respected. Both still very active. um, I [00:25:00] think back to that and how uncomfortable. It, I feel like I'm panting thinking about it, you know, just like getting, like panicky, thinking about it, remembering their confrontation as well. It wasn't playing nice, in my opinion, from Marissa. That was really stirring the hornet's nest.

Do you remember more Tracy about the first generation trainers interaction?

Tracy Stamper: Yeah. Once again, apologies.

Shannon Geltner: I think I was just in this, like this. I'm, I'm a deer in the headlights. I've checked out moment.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Can you blame me? No, I don't think so. That was, that.

Tracy Stamper: Not at all. Would you like me to pick up the baton here?

Shannon Geltner: Please. [00:26:00]

Tracy Stamper: As someone who it was always easiest for me if I didn't even know what, at the time I called the gossip. It was always easiest for me if I didn't even know what was going on with interpersonal conflict. I just wanted to do the work and not even have that.

Shannon Geltner: Cool.

Tracy Stamper: Which in retrospect I understand is that was protective on my part. I needed in order to stay where I was. Yeah, it was, it was my cognitive dissonance hat.

So my experience of standing in that circle was looking around and seeing all the masks and just being confused by the masks because we could all tell who one another was. So I didn't understand why we had the masks in the first place. Obviously we know who one another are, if we're instructed to go find people we have beef with. Like?

Candice Schutter: If you can find them behind those masks, good luck.[00:27:00]

Tracy Stamper: Exactly. Like, that was so

Shannon Geltner: It's like Superman puts on the glasses and no one him Right.

Tracy Stamper: It,

Shannon Geltner: We know it's Superman. Come on.

Tracy Stamper: So confusing to me. So I remember as soon as the exercise started and people started like whipping across the circle, I remember there was a long line of people wanting to clear beef with Marissa.

Candice Schutter: Oh.

Tracy Stamper: Was interesting.

Candice Schutter: I wonder how that went. If anyone out there tried to do that, I would love to hear how.

Shannon Geltner: I'm in.

Candice Schutter: that went down.

Shannon Geltner: Accepting comments below.

Candice Schutter: Exactly.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah I don't know if I want to read that comment or not.

Candice Schutter: right. I know.

Tracy Stamper: So

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Shannon, just to share with you, I have sweaty palms and I'm really anxious talking about this.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: okay. So people started like walking across. So everyone is kind of looking around like, what the fuck? I remember I am [00:28:00] standing to my right in the circle is a woman I adored. I didn't know her very well, but I had so much respect for her. She worked at HQ for a while, and I remember knowing that she had been in that environment, and I'm guessing, knew how to deal with this stuff better than I did. Because I just flew in for, you know, weekends or weeks. Um, I remember looking to this woman. I noticed at one point she like stepped out. She put her hands on her belly and then she just started going like this, like moving energy or trying to take care of herself in this really intense moment. And I remember looking at her and being like, oh, if she can't do this, I'm fucked.

Shannon Geltner: There were a lot of those moments in those trainings, but yeah, that that's, yeah. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: [00:29:00] And then someone came across the circle to me. And I do my best to walk through life without having beef with anyone. I'm a people pleaser. I'm a heart gal. I'm who I am. I have trauma. I was so horrified to see someone walking towards me. I was horrified. And this woman who I love, she cracks me up. A fellow second generation trainer, this amazing woman came over and she said, Tracy, I just wanted to come say hi, because this is really fucking uncomfortable. And as you know, there's no beef between us, but I just wanna kind of flee the scene. So can we just have a little chat? I'm like, oh, thank you. Yes, please.

So,

Candice Schutter: Good for her.

Tracy Stamper: That seemed like it took forever to get through that circle. And [00:30:00] then, that's when Marissa kind of held court and made this speech about how well, I feel we've made a lot of progress here, but we're not completely there because there are some folks who have not talked to one another yet.

As someone who made a point of not knowing the dirt so that I could just keep going, I was so perplexed. And then I saw her walk into the circle and head directly to my friend Shannon and the woman with whom whatever was happening, I didn't know, happened to be standing right next to her already. And Marissa made some comments to everyone about how these two needed to X, Y, and Z. And there, there can't be this history or this tension or this blah blah, blah.

So it was confusing to you also she came forward?

Shannon Geltner: Yes. And mortifying.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: I All these [00:31:00] years that I've been focusing on being professional and taking care of me. And all the years of just doing my best to make sure that things weren't ugly. And then it just was all vomited right there on the floor in front of everybody.

It just was wrong.

Tracy Stamper: It was so intense, even for that amazing woman to my right.

Shannon Geltner: mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: And then, so to come full circle on, Candice your question. I do remember what happened with the other two trainers. The first generation trainers. After Marissa felt like she had wrapped up the situation with Shannon and a colleague, which obviously that was not what was actually happening.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: Then Marissa said, you know, and we do have one more relationship that [00:32:00] needs to be healed in the interest, and I don't remember the wording, I'm just kind of filling in blanks. But she did call those two women into the center of the circle.

Shannon Geltner: That I remember. Yes. Yes.

Tracy Stamper: Face to face. And they were instructed to talk about their conflict in front of everyone. This is a conflict that has gone on for years and years and years. It's not gonna be, I just, it's ridiculous. So tense. And abusive it is

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: horrifyingly

Shannon Geltner: So disrespectful and so abusive. Shaming. Not enough. You, you know, you're causing problems like the whole. Yeah. It's, you know, my heart goes out to the first generation trainers that were exposed to that as well. It was not, not fair.

And like what Candice [00:33:00] was speaking to. What did this serve?

Tracy Stamper: Exactly.

Shannon Geltner: It just created more conflict.

Candice Schutter: Well, that's.

Tracy Stamper: Is there to be lasting change from this? Well, there might be, but not in the direction that we're saying it's gonna go

Candice Schutter: Right. It was never about that. I mean, this is, and you might've seen me, I was like flipping through Janja's book, Janja Lalich's book we were talking about this, um, multitasking, so pardon me for that. But I was looking at just some of her writings on criticism sessions as they're called.

And this is not an uncommon thing. And that's part of why I wanted this story to be presented, aside from the fact that it's a story that needs to be told and outed.

And I didn't really find the section where she sort of talks about the purpose of it, but it's really about, as I understand it, shoring up that tension. Because you've got, you know, all these people in the room that are trauma bonded to the leader. And they're also sort of trauma bonding in a way to each other in a different way, meaning it in a different way.[00:34:00]

But the way the hierarchy's set up, especially in the training world, is that there's no, and I say this to all you trainers out there, I've talked to some of you who are like, kind of, gritting your teeth at the fact that you got caught in this sort of competitive energy of it. By design there was no other way to navigate it.

Like that tension was built in. It's like an MLM.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: There's no way for you to meet the demands that are being put on you. And so you are scrambling and clamoring for territory in your different regions across the, the two first generation trainers that we're talking about were in totally different countries.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Yet there's still, built into the model itself and the hierarchy, there is this tension because everyone's vying for the favor of Marissa.

So there's just this inherent conflict and competition. And so in these criticism sessions, and this is true of any cult, right? That that tension's there. [00:35:00] If you can actually demonstratively make an example of that tension, it sort of builds more of it. Like you're saying, Shannon.

Like you said, it's like, a total gaslighting maneuver. Because the message is, it's in service to dispelling the tension when in fact it's actually in service to more of it. And maybe that's not a conscious idea in the leader's mind, but that's how it functions, is that it's just creating more tension.

And it's also, performative trauma therapy. Um, if I can create the illusion of having created harmony where there's conflict, then I'm the hero here. I get to be the hero of this story. Regardless of the fact that I've just put two people on the spot and traumatized them further.

Tracy Stamper: Four people.

Candice Schutter: Right. Four people.

Exactly. Two at a time, in twosies. And arguably the whole room.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, is traumatized,

Candice Schutter: Got, you know, cuz.

Exactly. I mean, you got a woman like, you know, deep breathing over there. And we don't [00:36:00] know what private conversations happened, also, y'all. We don't know when she had people go to people, like what was, what happened and how that went and how that felt for people.

So it's just the whole thing is a pure total shit show. But, just to draw a parallel, if you listen to the episode with, Lindsay on the troubled teen industry and the place where she was sent to go live for two years of her teenage life. that was one of the things they did. It is known in the troubled teen industry as like attack therapy.

Shannon Geltner: Mm.

Candice Schutter: where they're, they have to stand face to face and basically give feedback to the other person, which I know you guys had feedback sessions too, as trainers.

Shannon Geltner: We had to

Candice Schutter: right? So you have to say something negative or constructive if you wanna frame it that way to this other person. So you're put in this position where you have to be the asshole, cause that's part of the therapy. That this is all culty shit that happens in all different kinds of groups. [00:37:00] It's disgusting. And I'm just, it breaks my heart that you

guys had to witness or be a part of it in any way, cuz it's just, it's wrong. It's gross and it's wrong.

Shannon Geltner: For me personally, it's so disrespectful. So, so degrading. We're trainers. There should be a modicum of respect. We all bring great things to this work. There was a real lack of respect in that, that situation for me and for the faculty.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

I do remember at the end, we ended up taking off our masks. We put them in the middle of the circle and then we back out. And so there was like an artwork of all these masks that we were all wearing. And I remember Marissa calling in the photographer at that point. I'm pretty sure the photographer came in and there were photos taken of her kneeling at the altar of [00:38:00] forgiveness or what, however it was portrayed.

Yeah, I'm, I'm trying so hard to keep a straight face as I'm saying this. Stop laughing. You're not making it easy.

She knelt at the altar of whatever the altar was. And I remember those photos were like being bounced around Facebook. And I'm thinking, what is that gonna look like to folks who don't have any context to the ceremony? Not that it's any better to have had context. It was.

Shannon Geltner: Right.

Candice Schutter: They're gonna think, glad I dodged that bullet.

Shannon Geltner: Well, how much, how much of what we did was just plain weird. I mean, there was a lot.

Candice Schutter: Oh god. Like Monica said in one of the episodes, like it was just ridiculous the environment that we were in. It was just ridiculous. Like, you have to laugh cuz it was just ridiculous.

Shannon Geltner: It was, but, but we were all so serious about it.

Candice Schutter: Oh yeah. Dead

Shannon Geltner: you know?

Tracy Stamper: It was [00:39:00] Sacred.

Candice Schutter: Sacred. the word.

Candice Schutter: So how did that progress, that beginning of the end? Like how did the end come to pass?

Shannon Geltner: Yeah. So when we first had our conversation, I talked a little bit to the, to my divorce and how I was struggling with my marriage, which was happening the last time I was in Portland. I was in this free fall from finding out, um, that my ex-husband had done some unsavory things. And now I was making the choice to step away from that marriage.

I went into therapy for a couple of years during that timeframe. I'm still teaching for the Org and I'm still a trainer. And I am going through my divorce in therapy. [00:40:00] And as I'm doing therapy for codependent behavior, I'm starting to see parallels between my marriage and the things that occurred in it and my relationship with the Org headquarters and the figureheads in the company, particularly Marissa.

And I'm drawing these parallels myself. I mean, for me, therapy gave me a lot of thinking to do. And I remember thinking in the bathtub or thinking in the car. And just starting to draw these parallels and recognizing, with a lot of fear, I'm gonna put that out there. A lot of fear, that my relationship with my job was very similar to my relationship with my ex-husband. And how [00:41:00] devastating that is.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: That's something that I loved and that I had put all this energy into and that I was living my life with, could potentially be not healthy for me where I needed to be get better.

So this was floating around this oh shit moment that I'm experiencing personally through therapy. That my relationship with my job and my business is codependent. And my relationship with my ex-husband is codependent.

And I am an enabler in letting these things happen.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: And that I needed to figure out quick how I was going to approach this. Because I'm liberating myself from my marriage. I'm taking a stand and I'm saying, this does not work for me [00:42:00] anymore.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: deserve better. So then I'm having to look at my job and say, I think I deserve better.

But I'm just gonna say, once again, this is all just hovering in my space. This is in my head. And I'm just getting up every day, going to teach classes, driving all over the city. At this point, I'm working seven days a week, no days off. I'm teaching every day. I am seven days a

week teaching Org classes, driving around the metroplex, working in five different locations. Putting my life force energy into it. Going through a divorce. Supporting my children. it was a lot. It was a lot.

I also, in all of this, did a training. Which went fine. I mean, it went well. Like I'm compartmentalizing all of these things and going through my day. And so there was an event in Dallas. It was going to be at the [00:43:00] studio where I taught my, my Org classes and where the, it was kind of like the main hub in Dallas of where everybody would come for workshops or trainings. And if Marissa was coming to Dallas, this is where she would go, would be to this studio.

So she was doing a training. And I cannot even remember what it was. It was a workshop. It wasn't like a belt. It was like more of, she's coming to town. She's doing a workshop. So I have, you know, just keeping in mind, I have all of these things going on personally. I have all of these thoughts in my head recognizing this codependent patterning and scared of all of it. And I register for this workshop, the whole community's turning out for it. And I go to the studio a little early because I thought, oh, you know, I'm one of the heads of the community here. I need to show up and be present to greet people as they come in. And [00:44:00] I need to just have my presence there.

So I show up, I go in early. The studio's in the back where we took class. And I walked in and Marissa was in there already by herself and she was standing over by like where all of the sound equipment is.

And so I walked in and I was like, hi. And she turned around. And do you know, have you ever been in a situation where you run into someone who you recognize you know. And you say hi, and they don't recognize you immediately.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And you're like, oh yeah, you know, we met at so and so, or. But that split second, that moment of no recognition.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: At this point, I've been in the Org for 14 years. I'm on the training faculty. I have paid thousands of dollars to be part [00:45:00] of this organization. And when I walked in, there was no hint of recognition whatsoever for that first minute. And then I remember her recovering and being like, oh, hi, you know, whatever.

But at that point, all of my years of Org training and conditioning went out the window. And I was mad, mad, raging, mad. I don't remember the classes. I remember rolling around on the floor being pissed off. That's what I remember. I don't remember what we learned. I don't remember what she taught. I remember rolling around on the floor going, I am never giving a dime to this organization ever again.

It was just so boom like that.

All those years, all the things that we, that happened at [00:46:00] headquarters, all of the trainings, all of the. And I think that it was just a culmination of, once again, recognizing those parallels and the codependency. And that I'm enabling this. I'm, I'm allowing all of this stuff to happen.

And I went to this place of no more. What do we say in Brown Belt? You get to that point, enough. That's where I was just like, enough.

And I remember doing the whole thing, going home, and the next day I called headquarters and I wanted a refund. I had registered for a Moving to Heal training. And I called and I said, I want my money back. I'm not doing any trainings any longer.

And that was an issue cuz you know, they didn't part with the money easily. But I was persistent, and I did receive a refund for the deposit that I put down for that training. And [00:47:00] then this was summer that this happened, so I wanna say like June, July, maybe it was even May. May, June, July, something like that, of that year. And this was 2017. I got my money back. And then in August or September of that year, I got a letter that said they were revoking my trainer status and that I was going to be demoted to an apprentice. And I wasn't necessarily going to be on the training faculty any longer.

And my response was nothing. I didn't respond to it. I didn't call anybody and say, what's going on? I didn't call friends and ask them what I should do. My response was I took that letter, and I put it in a folder and put it in my files. And I never went back. I never paid another licensing fee. I never interacted [00:48:00] with anyone from headquarters at that point. There was never a reach out to me to find out what happened. There was nothing. Dead silence.

Even to this day. We were talking, I think in the After The Org there was something about y'all were getting letters about. Not me, not one. There was never any. That was it. That was it. It was that simple. I just never engaged again.

I remember sitting in my kitchen with my husband, this was my new husband. I had met Sam, and we had remarried. I mean, we, both of us were in our second marriage. And I remember sitting in, he was always so supportive of everything that I did. And I said, this is happening. I got this letter. They wanna demote me.

I said, I, think that I'm done. But I said, but I don't know who I am if I don't do this. It [00:49:00] was hard.

And he said, you're my wife. You're the kid's mother. You're everything to us. You're Shannon. He was like, it's gonna be okay. And, you know, it has been. I stopped teaching my classes. I didn't relicense. I've never done another class since I walked away from it. I tried, I shouldn't say never. I did try once here in my house. And I was like, I, I feel stupid. I can't do this. It was just very, um, it was a very hard stop.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Um, I left very quietly. I did get a message on Facebook berating me for leaving from another faculty member. And Tracy knows who I'm talking about.

Um, that it

Tracy Stamper: a similar one.

Shannon Geltner: the same one. It wasn't fair that I had decided to do that without [00:50:00] letting anybody know. And, um, I kind of disagree with that.

But I left very quietly. And eventually I've made the transition. I, I'm a Pilates instructor now. I teach classes. I'm a general manager for two studios locally. I run very large businesses. I just found another way to do it that wasn't so screwed up.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: in the process of all this going away, I had a breakfast meeting with one of my colleagues. She was in town. We met for coffee. The thing that was really, really rough was letting go of all of my friends and my relationships in the organization. There was this part of me that was like, I know I have to have boundaries now. Like, I can't just let it all be [00:51:00] there and me keep going back and forth into these like, we're gonna do a dinner, or we're gonna do a happy hour, or, you know. It was too, too difficult for me to be in that space. Part of it was that I loved them so much, and I couldn't be that person to them anymore. I couldn't be that head of the community or leading classes due to everything that had happened to me with the Org. So then I had this breakfast meeting and we're talking, and, um, it was revealed to me in this conversation that this person had never paid a dime for any of the trainings that they had done, including their trainer training.

And I was floored. I remember feeling robbed and hoodwinked and scammed, and you can name any of those words. I remember being outraged. That not only did I [00:52:00] pay for everything, that they're going to send me a letter and say, we're taking away your certification now. This is like paying for a degree and having someone say, nevermind, we're gonna give you, you know, we're letting you know we're taking that back.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: maybe you weren't performing to the highest capable level. Maybe you were struggling. I was struggling a little bit with getting my trainings filled, which isn't unusual.

Candice Schutter: Everybody

was

Shannon Geltner: any of these trainers. I was fighting against the random sales that HQ was throwing, taking my money outta my pocket and, and all of this.

And, but I got selected to be pushed aside essentially, even though I paid for it.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Even though I did every single ounce of work and earned that certification just like the person who went through their white belt last week, paid for it and earned their certification, and now they're a white belt.[00:53:00]

I would just caution anyone who does these trainings, that that could change at any minute. You could be told that you are no longer a white belt, even though you paid for it.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: Because that was what happened to me. And I remember thinking, there were so many things, but that one thing, this was a cult.

They took my money and they ran. And then they turned around and said, no.

Candice Schutter: Shunned you.

Shannon Geltner: You're not doing what you're supposed to do. Now I, this is the one thing I go back and forth in my head about. I don't recall. And Tracy, you might recall, did we sign a contract? I don't remember signing a contract. That's the one thing too that I can't remember signing a contract that states that they could take my training certification away.

Tracy Stamper: Oh, [00:54:00] I'm not saying we signed a contract that said that.

Shannon Geltner: That's what I'm saying is like legally, I kind of wonder sometimes. Like they robbed me. And I am, I just, and now, and now maybe I'm being dramatic, I don't know. But that's, that's really what it felt like. Like viscerally, like I have been so hoodwinked.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And I made so little.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Like I almost now doing what I do make in a month what I made annually.

Tracy Stamper: Shit.

Shannon Geltner: I'm telling, I mean I it.

And I left that situation. I will never devalue my worth again. I will never work for nothing. And I train teachers all the time now. I support these Pilates instructors coming up, and I am stress the importance of boundaries with them. I have learned a whole different [00:55:00] way of training teachers to teach from this situation that

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: the Org.

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. So, so like 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. Every single one of us did. And some of us were not given the appreciation and [00:56:00] the acknowledgement. Some of us were treated less than, and that is the reality of it. That is why when I hear this whole, we're trolling for new trainers, we're taking new people on. They had great people, and they pushed us aside. And now they need more money, so they're out there asking for more people to come into the fold and sign the contract to be a trainer.

It is not set in stone. Even if you think that you're secure in that position, you are not. I would not believe it if someone told me that everybody that's going through the training program now is secure.

And that's where I was, I was offended and upset when I saw that post on Facebook. And I was like, are you kidding me right now? They took it away from me. I didn't voluntarily say I'm giving it up. The letter was the [00:57:00] straw. But I was still chugging along. Like I, I know that there's a dissonance here with my life and my divorce and the reality of what this relationship is with corporate or with HQ. I'm working it, I'm working it. I'm working to find that spot where I can exist and be true to myself and authentic in this space. And in that process that was taken away from me. I was not able to fulfill that process, let's say that. Right? I wasn't able to get to the end for myself. Except that the letter was kind of a catalyst for me.

And then when I did find out that there were certain people on the faculty that did not pay money to become who they are that was a straw that broke the camel's back for me.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: The stepping away was quick and silent. And when I hear Tracy's story, I could not quit crying.[00:58:00]

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 were given this, like, there were these walls between all of us. We think we're dealing with this on our own. We're all going through the same thing.

all of us.

Tracy Stamper: And you and I are friends, like we're friends.

And we had been through the same thing and we had no idea.

Shannon Geltner: Nope.

Candice Schutter: Tracy, tell us about your tears. What's happening?

Tracy Stamper: I think, um. By the way, I think this is the first time I've like cried, cried.

Shannon Geltner: I'm sorry.

Tracy Stamper: On a recording. No, you know what, it's really, you do not need to do that after I brought up the whole mask ceremony, Shannon.

Candice Schutter: [00:59:00] Paybacks are hell.

Tracy Stamper: Exhibit A.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: When, um, the tears started when Shannon said every single one in that room who raised their hand and said, I am in, they are all worthy. I did not know that this was still in there, but clearly I'm still carrying the shame. I

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: moved through so much of it. I've done so much healing. And fuck does this shit go deep.

This.

Shannon Geltner: It does. It does. It does I definitely agree with that. That's like this whole last week, I've just been like, these things that I'm saying are nothing that I've [01:00:00] said to anyone but my husband. I have never dragged the Org or done anything negative since I walked away from there. It was a silent departure. My community was flabbergasted. They were floored, confused.

I had people coming to me right and left asking me, what's happened, what's going on? And my response was, I cannot make a living doing that. That was my response, which is truth. I was speaking truth. I just was not giving the details.

This is the conditioning of The Four Agreements and the practice. And it goes so deep. And I would agree with you the shame of being bamboozled and hoodwinked and all the things you, that is a huge part of this. The shame. [01:01:00]

People ask me, what did you do before you came to Club Pilates? I don't tell them. I just said, oh, I taught dance. You know, like it's real simple.

Um, I've been teaching now for six years doing Pilates. I have 21 years of movement experience. I will tell you, I get the groupies that you guys were talking about earlier that stop me after class and you know, oh, what the, the adulation, the, the, you're so amazing at what you do.

And I'm just like, oh, you know, I couldn't do it if I didn't have my students to teach. I try to be as, and then I had one client look at me and go, you don't take compliments well do you?

Candice Schutter: Right.

Shannon Geltner: I was like, well, maybe I don't.

Candice Schutter: It's complicated.

Shannon Geltner: I, exactly. It's not that I don't love that you love the movement experience. But there is so much here. It is not.

Candice Schutter: So feel you there?

Shannon Geltner: it. thank [01:02:00] you. Thank you for that validation cuz

Candice Schutter: I feel that all the time.

Shannon Geltner: There are times when I'm talking to, I had a client come in, she goes, I read your bio. And my bio says that I taught, I've taught fitness for a lot of years. She's like, yeah, I read your bio. I know you're not a doctor, but I have this thing going on with my hip, and I'm wondering if you could tell me like, what that. And I'm like looking at her like I'm not a doctor. She goes, oh, oh, I know you're not a doctor, but you're so, you have so much experience.

And I was like, yeah, okay, well I would probably recommend you go see an actual physician for something that's. But I get that like all the time. And, and so it's, having been in the organization and seeing how dangerous that is, I'm so, like, I'm just here doing my job, y'all. Like, there's nothing else to it.

Candice Schutter: Yeah,

Shannon Geltner: it's shaped the way that I [01:03:00] move through my current profession. I have strong boundaries. I've had conversations with my boss about it. You know, I do my job. I go home to my family where I'm happy and where I wanna be. And I'm here to do the best that I can do, but I'm not getting caught up in any dogma, politics.

So everything that happened shaped where I am now. And I guess my biggest, I love, I miss my friends.

That's what I miss the most from it.

Candice Schutter: yeah.

Shannon Geltner: miss them.

I miss the trainings and going and seeing everybody and hanging out. And more than the practice, just, just the people.

So I, I think that Tracy can relate to me in that sense, too.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: There is that.

But on the backside of it, it's all the right thing. What I've chosen is the right thing. It's all the right thing. So.[01:04:00]

Candice Schutter: And here we are now, coming together.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, that's been a blessing

to what the two

of you have done. you giving us a platform to tell our stories. And, and to bring us back together in a healthy way is kind of the way I'm looking at it.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: where we're not, there's so much love here. There's no shaming here. There's no competition or any of the, the yuck.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner:

I guess the awakening at the end was just so dramatic. And I was angry for a while, and then I just, then I, then I kind of did this exploration of like, why is it bad to be angry? There's so many.

Candice Schutter: Totally.

Shannon Geltner: Do you know what I'm talking about? I, I feel like there's a lot of forgiveness culture. Like you have to forgive them and forget. It just on [01:05:00] you.

Candice Schutter: Outrage gets you outcast. That's the larger culture at work. Outrage gets you outcast. I mean that's what tone policing is, that social justice activists have been talking about it for fucking ever.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

It's real.

Candice Schutter: It's real.

Tracy Stamper: It's real.

Candice Schutter: you're a woman. Not okay to get angry. To get worked up to. To express, to be big. A good friend and I talk about it a lot about being too much, like that feeling of too muchness. Oh, I'm being too much again. There it is again. I'm too much. I'm too much. I'm too much. Big emotions. So

Shannon Geltner: And I was like, you know, in the healing process there is a anger portion. Like there, you actually

hit that.

Tracy Stamper: Yes.

Shannon Geltner: And it is, it is part of the, what, what is it called? The, uh, grief, the

Candice Schutter: Oh, the five stages of.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: Grief.

Shannon Geltner: And anger is [01:06:00] a part of that.

Tracy Stamper: An And important part.

Shannon Geltner: Yes. And so there's this, why is being angry a bad thing? And I really explored that and really have kind of come to peace with, unless you, you get angry and you get, like you said, well, getting angry is what creates social change. Right? That's they say that that initial like, this pisses me off. Yeah. And I have to do that.

It's a growth point. It's necessary. Now it's just more of like acceptance. I did move to this place of acceptance, like this was part of my past.

And you know, I tell my kids all the time, this happened at the same time as my divorce. There was a lot of this after the divorce of you need to forgive and forget narrative coming from my ex. And then my son said it to me. My, my son came home one day and said, well, you know, dad says that you need to just forgive and [01:07:00] forget. I said, come over here and sit down with me for a second. We're gonna talk.

I said, I was like, you know what? I was like, how would you feel if someone said that to you? Like you were righteously mad at something? And they said that to you. He goes, I guess it probably wouldn't make me feel so good. And I said, yeah. I said, here's the deal. I was like, I'm allowed to be angry. I'm allowed to be angry about the divorce. I'm allowed to be angry about my split with the Org. I'm allowed. I'm allowed. I'm giving myself permission to be in that space. It doesn't mean I'll always be here.

But forgetting the past, to me, this is me talking, is really a bad move. I said, the fact that all of these things happened to me in my past, help me be who I am now. I walk side by side with my past. It is with me every day. The choices I made. I carry those with me, and I learn from them. [01:08:00] They are what made me who I am. And even though all of these things that happened, and we've just touched on a few things, there were so many dynamics in the space of the Org. There were so many.

Um, so these are, what we talked about today is just like the, the straws that broke the camel's back. But, you know, all of those experiences I've learned.

and that's valuable to me, that ability to say, oh, yeah, you know, that happened to me and I have a choice. I can choose to go along or I can choose to say uhuh, enough. Right?

Candice Schutter: And it's valuable to us.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Like That's

Shannon Geltner: talked.

Candice Schutter: That's an piece of it, right? It's like if we hold the, it's like, oh, well that's fine. You can have your anger, but you need to go have it over there. You need to have it only in this particular space or in this kind of container. That's what therapists are for.

It's like no, anger when expressed consciously, or even when it's [01:09:00] messy.

Tracy Stamper: Even when it's messy.

Candice Schutter: Can be incredibly degenerative and regenerative. Like it's what dismantles and it's what rebuilds, ultimately. It's the power. It's the fuel. I mean, I used to always say this when I worked as a coach. Which every time I say I worked as a coach I get like a, that's when I start to get the cold sweats.

Cuz I'm like, coach.

Shannon Geltner: Well, yeah, and then there's the people that are I can coach you.

Candice Schutter: Oh my

Shannon Geltner: no.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

But when I worked as a coach, when somebody would come and they would say, I'm angry. I would get so excited. Because I had seen this pattern of like, anger's the thing that catalyzes change. It's the thing that makes shit happen. It's like when we get angry, that's when we finally say enough. That's when we finally make things different. And I feel like this podcast, I've learned so much about that since then.

I mean, that was more like conceptual understanding of it, me as a woo coach, but like really now it's like, oh. It's like a [01:10:00] fire that's building. People coming out and there's more outrage because they're fucking should be, it's been going on for 40 years.

Shannon Geltner: Yes.

Candice Schutter: We should be outraged.

It's like, what's that quote? If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention. So all these people keep coming forward and it's like, yeah, I get more pissed off when I hear more stories. But I also feel more connected to my values. I feel more connected to the people who share those values. And I feel more hopeful, the more voices that join who are also outraged, that we can do it differently somehow. But we have to dismantle first.

We can't just like walk over here, let that keep happening the way it's happening and do it different. Which again is like sort of the new age notion of, right, I'll just opt out of society entirely and go build a utopia over here and then it will be contagious and the whole world will change. It's like bullshit. That's not how it works.

Shannon Geltner: Or that concept of reframing your reality.

Candice Schutter: Right,

Shannon Geltner: That whole concept of you can just reframe it. I mean, that's Landmark. [01:11:00] That's Tony Robbins. That's, you're the master of your reality. And you can reframe that shit. And guess what? Sometimes you can't. Sometimes it is what it is.

You were a jerk. You did something bad. Or I was a jerk. I did something bad. That can't be reframed. It is what it is.

Tracy Stamper: Uh huh.

Candice Schutter: It is what it

Shannon Geltner: I have done the Tony Robbins trainings. I've done Date with Destiny and I've done Life and Wealth Mastery. Yes.

Tracy Stamper: You courted and dated your destiny.

Shannon Geltner: I did, I did. I did all the courting and dating of the destiny.

Candice Schutter: Oh my god, that's great.

Shannon Geltner: Let me tell you, it doesn't make a difference. No, I'm kidding. Nothing changes.

Candice Schutter: on them what your destiny actually

Shannon Geltner: I'm,

Candice Schutter: but Okay.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, nothing changes. It's [01:12:00] so funny because that whole thing is. You know, and of course I was telling Candice and Tracy that I had started listening to Lucy's podcast that she shared with them. I just have listened to the first part. Just a lot of, uh, really commend her for saying, doing what she did. And, you know, as I was listening to her and she was talking about the articles about Tony Robbins and the, the sexual assault allegations. I'm with her. There really isn't any gray area there.

And his whole shtick, like I, so after Candice and Tracy and I talked last time, I spent a little time thinking back on my experiences with that.

So this was running parallel to my training faculty position. I was on the training faculty when I did this. I remember going to the first one in Toronto. It was like Unleash The Power Within or something. The one where you walk on the coals. And then the Date with Destiny in Arizona. And then I did Life and Wealth Mastery in Fiji. Okay.

So, yeah, really [01:13:00] interesting. And so, the one thing I remember thinking like, you know, of course it's like this crazy show. People are screaming. There's thousands and thousands of people. The lights are going, it's fucking freezing in there. And that is no joke. That's one thing they talk about. They keep it really cold.

And so they're going and they're starting, they're doing all this stuff. And I remember thinking, I know all this. I've already done all this. This is all, this is all.

this is, this is everything that we learned in the Org.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: But in a white collar package.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: This is for the business guys and the corporate dudes and the people that are professionals. That's what it's for. Same stuff. Four Agreements in there. He talks a lot about whether you're a person that craves certainty or a person that craves, I don't remember the other one, but there was like a whole list. And just [01:14:00] all of these exercises and sleep deprivation and food and water deprivation.

And there is a very strong overtone of male dominance in that practice. Okay, so first of all, I'm like, oh, this is all very corporate. This is all very, the woo woo stuff put into the package that tied with a bow that the corporate people can understand and get behind. This is really the same stuff just called different things.

There was this one part, they do this whole thing in Date With Destiny about relationships. And, you know, my ex-husband and I were not in a good place. We had been struggling for several years. And there's this whole thing of like, women being willing to be submissive to your partner. And I'm just kind of spitballing here with the, with the languaging. But that's pretty much what it was. And they did this whole thing [01:15:00] where they talk about if you're here with your spouse, you know, grab him and give him a kiss. They got this music playing. The lights are down. And I remember standing around, like watching people like, this is so weird and like fascinating at the same time. Cuz I'm like a, I wanna like look at the microcosm, the macro, cause I'm gonna look at it all and kind of take these people in and see what's happening.

And I remember standing there. And then my ex-husband, we weren't in the same like groups cuz they split you up from the people that you come with. They don't allow you to stay with the people that you know.

Candice Schutter: Yeah, that's classic,

Shannon Geltner: In to break patterns.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Shannon Geltner: And so he comes running over and he grabs me and he gives me a kiss.

And the first thing that happened in my mind was I didn't consent to that. Which was weird because we were married. And then I remember immediately feeling guilty. I mean obviously we're divorced, so there was a lot of shit there. But, but at that time it was like, that was the energy that they were [01:16:00] perpetrating in this, this training was, you know, you need to be willing to submit to your partner.

And that goes back to that, that conversation you had with that lady about being a crazy bitch.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Shannon Geltner: How do you know you aren't being the crazy bitch? Like they want to help you break out of your patterns. But they want you to be in the same gender roles is kind of what

I was like these, women should be doing this with their man and men should be doing. Women want a man who takes control and you know, women want a man who takes care of them. Like all of that messaging is in there.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Shannon Geltner: And Life Wealth Mastery in Fiji was, I mean, Fiji was beautiful. It was a beautiful environment. I'm not gonna lie. But that was kind, it was the same thing for me. I had already done all of this work in my Org trainings. So I felt like I was a real observer to a different [01:17:00] way of transmitting the same message.

So my whole thing about it, I guess to say in a nutshell is that really there never is a lot, in my opinion, a difference between the self-help programs. They're all quite similar and they all, in my experience, have kind of fed on people's insecurities and like giving them the magic bullet to fix the problems. Like, you are flawed and we are here to fix you.

And

Candice Schutter: For the low price of.

Shannon Geltner: \$5,000 for Tony Robbins. I mean, thousands.

Candice Schutter: Do the math. There's like 2,500 people in the room.

Shannon Geltner: I know. It's, crazy.

Candice Schutter: I couldn't help but wonder when I saw the post, because I saw it when it came out, the post that has been referenced in Lucy's episode where the [01:18:00] COO and

the founder of the Org are sitting in, which may have not been emphasized enough, in the HQ offices.

Tracy Stamper: Very identifiable.

Candice Schutter: Very much the appearance of this is a thing we're doing for the sake of the work or as a part of the work. There's, you know, debate out there amongst dissenters to what we're doing here saying this was not in any way an endorsement of the work of Tony Robbins. And I disagree in terms of appearances for all of those reasons I just stated.

And so I couldn't help but wonder though, when I first saw it. Because I know enough about Tony Robbins work to know that it's running on parallel tracks with the Org and that they're probably not gonna be exposed to anything that they don't already know about or whatever.

My immediate thought wasn't, oh, they're taking this for their own personal or professional development. My thought was, oh, they wanna see how he's doing these online [01:19:00] trainings so that they can figure out how to replicate this model, so they can make mad cash the way that he is. That may sound cynical. But based on having worked in the inner workings of that company for a number of years, I feel really confident that that's probably what the motive was for attending the event.

And so then when the backlash comes, the defensiveness, aside from just being see episode 59. What happens is also, we weren't there for that anyway. Right? It's like we weren't there for that. We know that stuff. Like, oh yeah, he screws. Like, well then why were you there? And I think my theory is a pretty strong, you know, contender as far as why they were there.

And that's what you're saying, Shannon, I guess I'm saying sharing all this to underscore what you're saying. Like this is not, nothing new is happening in any of these spaces. And because [01:20:00] we were so isolated and in our insular bubble at the Org, we thought it was very unique and there was nothing like it. And there could never possibly be anything like it. So how can I step away from this? There's nothing like this anywhere on the planet. I'm just so sure of it.

Shannon Geltner: And they would tell you, this is all you need.

Candice Schutter: Yep.

Shannon Geltner: You don't need to do anything else to get fit. You don't, this is what you need. This is it.

Candice Schutter: Personal growth, health, all the things.

Tracy Stamper: It checks all the, all the boxes.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: Yeah.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: The way I see it now is that these are large group awareness trainings with different flavors.

Shannon Geltner: It's true. Yeah.

And I mean there, once again, we. Tracy, you and I know personally people who have been impacted positively by the practice that we taught.

Tracy Stamper: Hundreds.

Candice Schutter: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: Mm-hmm. Yeah,

Shannon Geltner: were. Which was what led us down the trainer path.

Candice Schutter: course.

Tracy Stamper: Absolutely.

Shannon Geltner: So I'm not here [01:21:00] to poo poo or negate any of the value of what's being taught. There are lots of great nuggets. There are things from the communication part in my blue belt, I still practice and it's very effective. However, when you're starting to throw in all of the shaming and the, and all of the other stuff that goes along with it, it's not okay.

And I wish, I wish that there was a way to give people this information and it not become an MLM, a hierarchy, a cult. I mean, the Tony Robbins trainings, your constantly paying for the next training, and it's always more expensive than the last. So, you know, at, in the Life Wealth Mastery, I remember we're there. It's not cheap. We're there, we're doing it. And they're still wanting more money for us to join, like the President's club of it. And I was like, no way.

And then when my ex and I split, one of the things before we split is he asked me to go do the Landmark [01:22:00] Forum with him.

Candice Schutter: You've done it all.

Shannon Geltner: I've done it all. I, I did the Landmark Forum years ago. But he asked me to go back and do it again. And I said, no. I said, I'm done.

Candice Schutter: Mm.

Shannon Geltner: You know, this is in that space of like, I'm realizing I've done so many trainings and stuff, like, can I just apply some of what I've learned and see if any of it works for God's sake? I'm too busy training. I don't get any chance to apply. And so it was one of those things where I said, no, I'm good. I mean, I, I don't need to do that. And so I didn't.

Tracy Stamper: And a lot of them are based on the belief that we need to break you down in order to build you back up. And what I say to that is that just fucking look around you, we are all already broken down.

Shannon Geltner: Exactly.

Tracy Stamper: We We don't need to be broken down further to be built up. So I don't subscribe to anyone who wants to break me [01:23:00] down. I can do that all by myself.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: Just gimme a mirror and 20 minutes. Right?

Candice Schutter: That pattern is like the hook that makes them the savior, though. You know? It's like they have to do that first part. How can they offer the solution if there's not a problem? Right. They have to, they have to underscore the problem. We all have problems, so there's endless, endless sales funnels that we can, you know, ride. Put in anything that's going on in your life, and you'll find somebody who's got the solution to sell you.

Shannon Geltner: It's true.

And I mean, you know, you mentioned Sarah and Nippy. They're the same thing with the NXIVM thing. That was a personal growth thing. Same thing.

Candice Schutter: Yep. Yep.

Shannon Geltner: It's out there, and it can be dangerous. That's all. I mean, I, whenever I talk about this, it really comes from a place of love. I really want others to be mindful and careful about what they're getting into. [01:24:00] And, um, you know, if they're a student and they're coming to classes and they're on the peripheral, great.

I mean, it's when you just start marching closer to the center of the web that it gets a little dangerous.

I think.

So I hope that the people that have stepped in recently to become trainers are having a better experience. I just have no knowledge of whether they are or not.

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Shannon Geltner: so.

Tracy Stamper: When I think about, what happened to my friend Shannon through this whole thing, it just woo, I feel like steam could come out of my ears. And circling back to the topic of anger.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: That is not a rut in my brain that is well grooved. That is not somewhere that I automatically go. And through hearing [01:25:00] other people's stories big time today, I witnessed myself getting angry on.

Shannon, right now, I'm just so sad and I'm so pissed off on your behalf. I have love and respect for my friend Shannon.

Shannon Geltner: Mm-hmm.

Tracy Stamper: And when I witness myself getting angry for the ridiculous way that she was treated, it allows me to feel that anger for myself and, god do I love those moments because it helps liberate me further.

Candice Schutter: Well said.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, for sure.

For sure.

Candice Schutter: I love, I was gonna say before when you were talking about you and anger, I was like, I get so excited when Tracy gets angry. I said, I do. I'm like, yes. Tracy's angry. It's so exciting.

Tracy Stamper: It doesn't happen that often, does

Candice Schutter: No, But I love it. It's happening more and more. I mean, since we started this like March of [01:26:00] whatever year, I can't do years.

Why are years so hard? March of 2022 is when we started recording. We released in August.

Shannon Geltner: A changed in a year.

Candice Schutter: There's been a j. So much. I feel like we've both changed so much. I mean, tremendously. Tremendously. And one of the things that I've noticed in terms of your transformation is your willingness to express your anger. For sure. And I love it. It's beautiful. And to all of you out there, you know, I think we can practice our outrage, like our righteous, healthy outrage together. And there's room for it. I just wanna say there's room for it. And we're not gonna shut that down.

Shannon Geltner: Seriously. It's that whole idea of being angry as being wrong, and it's just not okay. That goes back to that victim shaming or

Candice Schutter: Hmm.

Shannon Geltner: that you've been talking about recently. That there, there are times where [01:27:00] yes, yes, you have been a victim of something. It's a reality. It's not something to be ashamed of. And it's not something to say, oh, I'm not a victim.

Well, maybe you are.

And you know what, it's okay to own it. And just say that I, I got into a situation where I know better now.

Candice Schutter: Yep. That's right.

Tracy Stamper: And I would add, you don't have to fucking forgive anyone that you don't wanna fucking forgive.

Shannon Geltner: forgive. That's right. Thank you.

Candice Schutter: That's right.

Shannon Geltner: That's the one that's, you

Candice Schutter: There she is. Everybody look out. The lids come off.

Tracy Stamper: Made my.

Shannon Geltner: I'm so, that is so true. I'm so glad you said that. That whole thing you need to forgive and forget. Ooh, it rubs me the wrong way. Every single time I hear it. I'm like, you cannot. And then these people that are like, oh, I forgave them. Did you really?

Candice Schutter: What does that even mean?

Shannon Geltner: Did you? [01:28:00] So I always tell, I told my son whenever he said that about my, you remember I told you, my ex. I said, if I said, I forgive you, there's a good possibility that I really don't. And I'm not willing to say it unless I actually do.

There's a chance that it may not be true.

And so I don't always buy that, oh, I forgave them. I don't always buy that. And I think that there's a real unhealthy culture in our country about this whole forgiveness mentality.

And I don't mean to come off as the angry old lady, but I mean, you know, they're really, let's just call a spade a spade.

Candice Schutter: Right.

Shannon Geltner: it's a challenge.

And I'll say I spend more time working on just forgiving myself more than I need to forgive anybody. I'm gonna forgive me first, right? This whole experience, these all these years, I'm gonna forgive myself for allowing myself to [01:29:00] continually be put in a position that was abusive. And whether we're talking about physical, mental, emotional, um, I'm, I'm just, I'm gonna work on me and you can work on you.

Candice Schutter: Amen.

Shannon Geltner: And then when you feel good, we can go out for a drink or something. But I, right now I'm just not, you know.

Candice Schutter: And in some cases, we're never gonna go out for a drink. And it's all

Shannon Geltner: we're We're Exactly, not.

Candice Schutter: Not gonna happen.

Shannon Geltner: Gonna stay. It's what it is.

And that whole just acceptance of where you are at this point in time is really, I would just want to give everybody that gift where I have your back. You're accepted. You're angry, great. Knock yourself out. As long as you're doing, keeping your anger in a constructive, non-harmful to other people way.

Tracy Stamper: That's

Candice Schutter: And if you wanna be in forgiveness, be in forgiveness. You get to do it however you want. These hard line rules, the [01:30:00] dogma, oh wait, yay, we've segued all the way back to the title of this little series. Deconstructing Dogma. It's the dogma.

Shannon Geltner: Deconstructing dogma.

Candice Schutter: right? It's the d, It's the dogma that's the problem. Like you do you. You've, just do you and express the way you wanna express whatever's true and honest.

And that's what we can make room for. We don't need to have all these rules and guidelines and principles.

Shannon Geltner: Yeah, and don't let anybody put you into a mask ceremony situation.

Candice Schutter: This is good advice.

Shannon Geltner: If you take one thing you away from this episode.

Candice Schutter: Somebody tells put on from a mask, run.

All right, Shannon, thank you so, so much for bringing what you brought today. I can promise you that it's just gonna touch so many

people. It's really touched me in a really deep way. And obviously Tracy had some, some breakthroughs today. So

thank you

Shannon Geltner: Oh, no. Thank you both so much for doing what you're doing. Just immense [01:31:00] gratitude for the two of you and what you've brought, helping us all navigate the aftermath. It's just, it's, I can't even, I, I don't even have words for how healing it's been for me personally. Um, from the very first podcast I listened to with the two of you.

And I've said it before, just that realization that I wasn't alone and how, profound that was for me to have been sitting over here in silence, but realizing that that was not the best way to handle all this.

So I appreciate you allowing me to, um, come and share my experience with you guys. It means the world to me. It really does. Thank you so much.

Candice Schutter: Thank you.

Tracy Stamper: Thank you for your courage and your heart

Candice Schutter: Yeah.

Tracy Stamper: friendship.

Candice Schutter: And your righteous fucking anger.

Shannon Geltner: Well, you know, can't say I didn't apply what I learned.

Candice Schutter: There you go. That's it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[01:32:00] Wow. Right. I know that was a lot to take in, especially for those of you who were or still are involved with the Org. I'm so blown away by both Shannon and Tracy's courage. It's not at all easy to talk about the harm that we've suffered. Especially when in doing so, you break an unspoken vow to never ever betray the brand. Cult scholar, Robert Jay Lifton called this *doctrine over person*, and it's one of the hallmarks of a cult.

And not only is speaking out a betrayal of the brand. It's considered blasphemous. Sinful and unholy. Or in more modern terms? Negative and unenlightened.

Right now an exponentially [01:33:00] growing number of Org representatives are now questioning. And some are joining me and my friends as we stand in solidarity and shine a light on the staggering history of abuse within a culture where we also experience tremendous benefit.

And because of these dueling dissonant forces, many of us are being gaslit and are in a sense being re-traumatized by loyalists who reflexively reject our stories. Or overlook them due to their own internalized shame.

And as painful as this can be, none of it is surprising. Cognitive dissonance very often leads loyalists to double down. To dismiss stories like these as overreactions around personal dramas. To compartmentalize harm as entirely separate from the continued glorification of the practice. To [01:34:00] default to privilege, denial, or projected blame.

And all of this is the function of grief. This is the human psyche doing what it does to deal with truths that are too painful to grapple with. I know because I have done all of the above. No joke, y'all. Blind spots are called blind spots for a reason. Because I have a feeling that around some issues, these are things that I very likely still do.

And so we come together in this work with compassion towards ourselves and toward one another. And yet we will no longer allow an explanation to be used as an excuse. Which circles us all the way back to accountability and where we're headed in the final installments of this series.

The last few weeks have been a lot, so I'm taking another short production break to work on some [01:35:00] recordings and to edit some of the new content. But I'll be back here on the main feed in two or three weeks with a couple of conversations that I recorded a while back that I really can't wait to share with you.

We're gonna be moving away from the Org content on the main feed just for a bit. Digging deeper into capital C cult realities that have been driving these dynamics for centuries. And we're gonna talk about what on earth to do about it. Specifically discussing what it means to decolonize a culture and our psyches.

All of that and more to come. But if you'd like to continue exploring more Org related content in the meantime, or if you'd just like to help support this work, consider visiting the growing community over on Patreon. It's a content hosting platform so, unlike social media, there's no pressure to engage publicly in any particular way. It's just a way for you to support

the podcast and access a growing [01:36:00] library of bonus episodes. You can learn more at patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

Thanks again to Shannon, Tracy, and all of you for listening. And I'll see you back here on the main feed again soon.

Until then.

Ciao.