

Candice Schutter: [00:00:00] My mouth is a fire escape. The words coming out don't care that they are naked. There is something burning in here." ~Andrea Gibson

teaser

Candice Schutter: And I am effectively the asshole who said the things that I wasn't gonna say. But I just can't, with pretending not to feel all of this, pretending not to be judgmental. Like I judge. I am critical. Because my brain is designed to do that. I can judge without being cruel. And many people will hear this and think I am being cruel. That is a subjective read that I cannot control. And neither can you.

intro

Candice Schutter: Hey y'all. I'm back.

[00:01:00] Most podcasts that you listen to rely on a production calendar where episodes are rolling out continually. But here on The Deeper Pulse, I do things a little differently. I drop episodes based on what's alive in the moment, and it's shaped by in real life interactions and sort of what my gut is saying to me.

Which means that I'm never here out of obligation. It's only ever because I want to be.

I had plans to take another sort of longish break from the main feed to work on my graduate degree and carve out some time to plan the next series of episodes that I hope will be born out of my studies.

Yet here I am back with you today, and kind of in the feels, to be perfectly honest. I had plans to record this intro, and then last night I forgot to take my perimenopausal hormone pill. Which means that I am feeling a little bit fired up, coming down from another wicked hot flash in [00:02:00] this moment. And I'm sharing all of this with you because today I am feeling about to turn 50 years old and dog fucking tired of walking on eggshells.

And right now with what's going on politically, directness is a matter of urgency. Spiritual bypassing and toxic positivity is not gonna help us get outta this mess.

So here I am on the main feed with a release entitled Mean Girl.

Here's a little context.

A little over a year ago, I released the final episode of the 'cult'ure series. And it was a Q&A with friend of the pod and wing woman, Tracy Stamper, and we covered a lot in it. It's a personal favorite of mine. Episode 84 if you wanna circle back.

But anyway, in this conversation, and for anyone out there listening who maybe is new to the pod. In a very much nutshell, Tracy was Q'ing my A about the two year project that we had embarked on together wherein [00:03:00] she and I and many of our former colleagues, and

new friends in the field of cult recovery, had spent countless hours sharing stories and healing out loud together.

We spoke an awful lot about an organization that we referred to using the alias 'the Org', a mind-body fitness brand that a lot of us were diehard devotees of at one time. And so in this episode, it's sort of a recap. And it was released in June 2024, and that was pretty much the moment when I decided the 'cult'ure series needed to wrap and it was time to move on from talking about the Org.

And there had been a bit of a mass exodus going on in the organization, very much influenced by content that was shared on the podcast and the conversations that people ended up having as a result of that. But I knew that the content here on the main feed of this podcast and over on Patreon, that it's evergreen. And that anyone who ever wanted to [00:04:00] take that journey with us could revisit it at any time. Our stories aren't going anywhere. They're here and they're there. Have at it.

And I'm sharing all of that as a lead in because while today's episode doesn't focus primarily on the Org, I do touch upon some of what's been happening in the aftermath of the 'cult'ure series as it relates to folks who have left that particular organization.

And I wanna reiterate from the get go that once again, what I'm sharing isn't about one organization or specific group of people. It's about new age wellness culture in a more general sense, and really any social space that we occupy where we feel we have to filter our expression or fawn in order to win favor. Spaces where saying the true thing that we're feeling might earn us a mean girl label or something worse.

In this episode, I'm gonna pull from more than one recent drop over on Patreon. I'm gonna be sharing a short excerpt from a solo [00:05:00] episode on parasocial influence and how it functions. Which another way of saying that is how do our social media fan girl crushes impact us psychologically? And what do we need to look out for so that these one-sided relationships don't lead us astray?

So you're gonna hear a little bit of that. I'm also gonna talk a little bit more about gender bias and the performativity that results. And then, yes, I spill the tea, speaking specifically to some current events in the world that exists after the Org.

So I wanna play you a clip from that earlier episode that I mentioned, the one from June 2024 with Tracy over a year ago. It's really short, but I wanna just give you a sense of where my head was at.

June 2024

Candice Schutter: And it makes me afraid that people are going to take this work and leverage it. And they're going to create something really similar using this work as the [00:06:00] vehicle to do it.

I just feel like this conditioning is so ingrained in us that we just can't help ourselves. I guess I just have to check my expectations that we all have to live through the learning of these lessons. And that it's never going to be like, oh, I'm going to listen to this podcast series or read this book or whatever and get this and understand it and not walk into the lair. You know, it's like we have to walk in and get ourselves out. And then do it again and do it again and do it again. And we wake up a little bit more each time. And I just, um, the idealist in me, I guess is still a little punch drunk on the idea that we don't have to do that. But I think that's just how it works.

intro continued

Candice Schutter: / Okay. So I still stand behind everything I said there. It is a concern of mine. It does still feel valid. And also, humans are gonna human, right? Like, there's no such thing as post cult utopia. It's messy, messy stuff.

And [00:07:00] so, today I'll be speaking about what can happen when high profile individuals who have left behind a high-demand group continue to work as public figures in ways that echo some of what we've been critiquing here on the pod.

But I'm not here to just critique leadership. Followership is a big piece of this puzzle. So I also wanna speak to how fawning can fan the flames of cult conditioning, perpetuating parasocial agency grabs, and paving the way for problems down the road.

Keep in mind that the main reason I'm talking about any of this, because remember we've moved on from the Org. I am here speaking to this because some of the public relaunches I feel like are very indirectly pointing to this work and the labor of cult recovery as if it is a finished product. Let's just say I have many thoughts to share on all of that, and you'll [00:08:00] hear soon in the second half of this episode.

But there is one thing I wanna underscore right outta the gate.

You know, during the 'cult'ure series we talked quite a lot about fawning in the face of abuse or social pressure. And if you're not familiar with this term, fawning, it's usually referenced as one of the big four when it comes to trauma responses.

Fight, flight, fawn, and freeze.

And any one of these responses, whether they're born out of trauma or imitation, can become sort of an internalized aspect of our personality and the way we present ourselves in relationship to others. And at the Org, fawning was a common feature of the communal experience. Real life challenges were tolerated, but mostly reframed as metaphysical hurdles to clear and a normy diversion from the real spiritual path we were meant to follow. Foul moods were seen as aggression really.

[00:09:00] But you know, speaking of normies, this isn't really all that different from how gender conditioning works out in the real world. Back when I used to wait tables, which I did for eleventy-seven years on the sly, because turns out new age proselytizing doesn't quite pay

the rent. I would raise my voice two octaves every time I greeted a table. It wasn't like full blown fawning, but it really does speak to the fact that sugarcoated sweetness is more palatable to the masses. Of course, this was a rule that only seemed to apply to us lady servers.

Another example? Thank goodness for exclamation points and emojis. Am I right? They really soften the blow of being a woman with her own thoughts and feelings. Heaven forbid a flat affect and how it might offend.

And some of you may remember episode 59, which I re-released on the main feed back in March, where I talk about gaslighting, victim blaming... and tone policing. [00:10:00] Today's topic really speaks to a variation of tone policing wherein we are censoring ourselves in order to not defy social norms that label and seek to shame us back into compliance.

Here in this episode, I am speaking more generally about gender. But just side note, worth mentioning, as a white cis woman, tone policing is something that I experience, but still not to the degree that many of my friends who have been racialized or are gender nonconforming experience it. But again, go back to episode 59 for more on that.

We're gonna start with an excerpt from an episode called Parasocial Relationships: Empathy & Influence in a Digital Age. This is from a Patreon release in the Subject to Change series, and it dropped on May 17th of this year.

Let's listen in.

Patreon clip - Parasocial Influence

Candice Schutter: The topic of today is how platforming a [00:11:00] certain individual, particularly through a digital medium, but also it can happen in large group awareness trainings and communities like at the Org, where a thing happens psychologically for the quote unquote followers, for the people who are surrounding that individual, where they develop a certain kind of bond to the leader, to the person who is doing the communicating to the group. That sense of connection is called a parasocial relationship. And it's called a parasocial relationship because it is, by definition, a one-sided relationship wherein a person is investing time and emotional energy into another person who is mostly unaware of them.

And what happens is the person who is listening or viewing or however you're experiencing, imbibing, feels a sense of connection. It feels as if they have a relationship. But our bodies and our beings, as much as we tell [00:12:00] ourselves, this person doesn't know me, there's something that happens within us with celebrities, public figures, leaders wherein we are invested emotionally in a way that they're not invested in us. And that's what I wanna talk about today. Not only because of nefarious things that can happen, whereas people can exploit that relationship. But because it's so important for us to understand our read on the person who is delivering curated content to us, we're not actually experiencing them in their integrity. Because integrity is the wholeness of them. And we're not experiencing the wholeness of them. We're experiencing the curated version of them.

This is the curated version of me. It's not the whole story.

And meanwhile, on the other side of the screen, people are in their whole story comparing their selves to an image, to a curated representation of what authenticity looks like. But in reality, when it's plucked out of context, it's not an [00:13:00] authentic representation of what that person would be like if we were in real life relationship with them.

And inevitably what ends up happening when somebody's created a personal brand around their personality, their persona, is that when you get close to that person, you realize that is just one facet of who they are. And there's a complexity, as there is with all of us. And there's a fallibility. And there's a lot of things that, in many cases, it feels like they were misrepresenting themselves publicly. In some cases they were. In other cases they weren't. They were just showing us that sliver of who they are. And when you get up close, you realize, oh shit, this person isn't who I thought they were.

And this might seem really obvious, but the reason I'm harping on this is because in this capitalistic economy, these parasocial bonds are created deliberately, and they're leveraged.

And this is something I've seen happen repeatedly in the cult recovery [00:14:00] community. And it's arguably happening on the other side of Org recovery. I see people stepping forward who have grappled with their involvement in a particular organization and their engagement with particular leader and have stepped away from said community and have done that work. And that's beautiful. And then I see them either making a lateral move into another similar organization or positioning themselves in a way that ignores the larger forces that create these dynamics in the first place. And then step into sort of influencer roles that mimic many of the same dynamics.

And there are cult recovery influencers who have developed kind of a cult-like following through parasocial means. And I'm honestly not sure that it's all that different from creating an in-person cult following. As they say about history, it doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes. That's what it [00:15:00] feels like to me. It feels like these instances, they rhyme.

So let's talk about parasocial relationships, the upsides and the downsides.

You can listen to the whole episode at patreon.com/thedeeperpulse.

Now let's dive into the bulk of today's content.

the world hates women

Candice Schutter: We know, and the research has shown, and we've all experienced that in many ways the world hates women, right? The, the patriarchal gender bias has been internalized by both men and women. It shows up in the research over and over again. Gender bias is real. There is a bias, women towards women, men towards women, the world towards women. And of course that becomes infinitely complex when you factor in intersectionality and race and ability and socioeconomics and all the other things. And so it's, it's so complex.

But if we [00:16:00] just try to isolate gender for a moment and we look at this rock and a hard place that we're stuck between where, I feel. I'm gonna speak for myself.

What I've been struggling with is, one of the themes in my work is specific to critiquing women in leadership. And it's specific in that way, not because I am trying to hate on women and focus on women. But because there's a specific dynamic that happens that shows up differently than it does when men are leading. Women lead and the sideways presentations of that, they show up differently with women. And I am intrigued and interested in that. And I wanna learn about and discuss it, because I want us to do better. I want us to open our eyes and have awareness to the things that we are unconsciously maybe doing, patterns we're perpetuating systems, that [00:17:00] we're reifying through our behavior. My intention is to uncover that.

And yet, I also am really conscientious and try to be mindful of not actually hating on other women for sport. And, and I don't feel like that's something that I, I do. I mean, I think it kicks in for all of us from time to time, like maybe behind closed doors in my snarkiest moments. There's elements of that that, that eek in. But I've, I've taken great pains to not do that in my work. And to critique from that better intention.

And even so, I have had the experience of being called "a mean girl" on more than one occasion. Specifically after Tracy and I released the Flying Monkeys episode, where we, after much deliberation [00:18:00] and a year of keeping it zipped, we decided to actually talk about the behavior of our former female colleagues and the things that they were doing to bring people back into the fold when it came to the Org. And there was just things that we hadn't really named and we just decided to talk about. And again, less careful than we had been before, but also with a cautiousness in terms of how we presented that. And we released that. And then that's when I received, well, somebody passed it along to, one of those individuals directly. That action did not come from us. And that individual, somebody close to them decided to reach out to me, well indirectly through a cc and, and sort of threaten legal action. And in that message, call me a mean girl and in a subsequent review call me a mean girl.

Another sort of adjacent way that this shows up is folks who offer critique of the behavior of another woman being told that they're being [00:19:00] abusive or too aggressive or, you know, basically, they're being mean, right? And this is, this is a theme.

And I, I just kinda wanna pick at it a little bit. And I'm gonna talk about some really specific examples, because I feel this deep need to live more honestly. I wanna be honest about what I perceive and what my experience is. And I don't wanna be an asshole. And I think that there is not a lot of room for us as women to express in that tiny little sliver of whatever that, we're given like, so little gradation between what makes us an asshole and what makes us conform and complicit and, um, polite. And, and I think there's a huge gray area there and we need to expand it. And I have been sitting on wanting to [00:20:00] name some things because that gray area isn't expansive enough for me to do it. And I'm just, today I just felt fired up around it. Like, okay, today I am just gonna talk about these things. I just, I want them to be out in the open. And, um, I'll just take the label. As I've said before, sometimes it's, we just have to take the label.

And so am I a mean girl? I'll let you decide.

So about a week ago I had an interaction on social media. Am I talking about interactions on social media again? Yes, I am. Because I'm still trying to figure out my relationship to platforms. Actually, since this went down, I've been pretty much logged off, and it's felt really great for about a week now.

Anywho, I had been posting. I went back on, which is when I generally go back on when I have a podcast release, and I have something to share. And I'm not gonna go into the details of it, but there was a particular individual who was critiquing [00:21:00] my work, but pushing a button simultaneously. I mean, lots of buttons were pushed for me. But, but the, one of my biggest pet peeves is people who critique my work without listening to it. It's maddening to me. It's like the whole reason I record a podcast episode on a topic, not the whole reason, part of the reason is so I don't have to repeat myself. Here's what I think. I've thought it out. I've spent time adding nuance. But you know, a lot of people aren't interested in nuance. They just want to spar using the culture war soundbites and whatnot. And this was one of those instances.

And it was a really great opportunity for me to just kind of do it a little different. I just immediately called out the behavior, which I felt like was gaslighting. And maybe it's the perimenopausal hormones, like I, I just don't have it in me to perform politeness and wrap everything sweetly [00:22:00] in a nice little bow. And I feel like, I was telling my partner, like as we were having this exchange on a couple of different posts, me and this individual. I really appreciate it, and if you're one of the people who came on and like, you know, clicked a button of support for what I was saying, I do appreciate it. So I wanna make that clear. It does help.

And I feel like social media is like a stage where everyone's performing in the comment feeds and people are voting. It's like reality tv, American Idol, something like that. Who's gonna get the most votes on their comments? And I just, uh, yeah. This particular interaction, again, I respond to the comments not so much for the person who I'm debating with, but for those who are reading it, just to provide language and context for my particular position on something. And so I, I don't feel like the time was wasted. I mean, I sort of feel like it was wasted, but not completely.

[00:23:00] Um. I also did feel guilty for not being able to find common ground and land in a place of harmony and all the things I was trained to do in the wellness world. It just wasn't gonna happen. And right now with things the way that they are in this country, like there are people that I am absolutely not going to find common ground with, and that I am going to boundary out of my life. And that I'm going to speak plainly to.

And I guess this episode is in part that specific sliver of this, 'cause I'm gonna go a few different places, is really about just giving ourselves permission to not be liked.

You know, one of the things that I was just reading about was all this research that's been done that when a, a woman's competency goes up, when competency ratings go up, people are like, oh, that woman knows what she's doing, what she's saying, who she is. [00:24:00]

That likability goes down. We know this. I mean, we saw it happen with two female presidential candidates. This is not news.

And I think there's even more layers to it. That it's not just about competency, it's about audacity. It's about the projection of like, how dare you be so unfiltered when I'm walking around self-correcting all the time. Because it's the only way that I can stay in my job, stay in my relationship, um, all the performance that we do of gender in order to have a place in the social order.

I was just talking with a friend about how she was going to a job interview. She works in a company. She's worked there for a very long time. Works from home, is able to show up for work, you know, in her comfortable clothes. Doesn't have to wear makeup and do all the things 'cause she's working with a team, but, you know, it's, it's not a performative job. [00:25:00] And then she decided to apply for a promotion in a new position. And so she said that she went and did all the things for her interview, her hair and her makeup and the whole thing. And that it felt awkward to her 'cause she hadn't been, you know, zjuzzing herself up like that. And we were just basically talking about, does she need to do that? We were speaking about it almost from an internal place of like, why do I feel like I need to put makeup on?

And I said to her, you know, because in some ways you do. Again, it's that overcorrection of, it's an inside job. If you feeling awkward about having to wear makeup, maybe it's because you know you need to feel more confident about your body and your face and blah, blah, blah. When in reality, she is more likely to get the job if she puts on the face. This is real.

So I feel the same is true of our expression in a lot of different ways, like the way that we [00:26:00] communicate. And I've started to communicate differently. I'm communicating more publicly the way that I communicate behind closed doors. And even the way I communicate behind closed doors is, has shifted and, and opened up a bit. But more so the public facing part of me. And this piece where I feel, I'm sorry, but like irritated with the way we perform womanhood politeness is just really getting at me lately.

And I just, I wanna speak more to that, with the caveat that I am in a certain stage of life and those of you who are in it with me or who have passed through it, know what I'm talking about. My 50th birthday is in 33 days. [00:27:00] And I am definitely feeling different as I've talked about in terms of the perimenopausal stuff. And it's shifting the way that I express myself. So I wanna be clear that what I am suggesting here, or how I am emoting and expressing myself is not a prescriptive thing that everyone should do in every instance. I am sensitive to stage of life, sensitive to circumstance, sensitive to social position, and the nuances of the choices that we make.

So I guess I'm just asking us to be more conscientious about when we're performing and when we're not. Because we all perform. Anybody who says that they don't is blowing smoke up your ass, because everybody does in some way, somewhere somehow.

So, I am today challenging the notion that it is impolite to spill the tea.

We have sort of grown to see it as like, [00:28:00] truth telling of that sort, it becomes a show in and of itself. So how do we do it in a way that isn't about being the whistleblower, being the one who's telling the truth, all that stuff, and just speak honestly about what we're observing. That's what I'm practicing and that I wanna practice today.

Because I think that the mean girl trope and that whole thing, it stems from a lot of things. Definitely the women hating women, like, we can't do anything right. We can't do feedback right. We can't do anything right. But I think part of it comes from the mean behavior, the sideways stuff. And I'm not talking about, you know, adolescent girls in their developmental stage. You know, the movie Mean Girls, all that stuff. Lindsay Lohan. I'm not that, I'm not talking about that. That's a, a developmental process that, it's his own conversation. I'm talking about the way that we imbibe this and embody this into our adulthood.

I think a lot of the reason we become snarky and [00:29:00] shitty behind the scenes, or even mean to one another's face is because we're not being honest with each other enough of the time. And that if we practice being honest, we could have different kinds of relationships with each other.

I've been practicing this in a newer friendship that I have, and there have been some awkward moments, where we're both just sort of naming how we really feel about the other person's behavior or we're kind of learning each other as friends. And there've been some, some awkward conversations. But it's also made us closer. And there's something about telling the truth that has the potential to create connection.

But if you're not used to hearing the truthiest truth, it can feel like an attack on our character and that's not necessarily the case. And so when I offer the feedback I offer here, it is not to say anyone is bad or to demonize anyone. It is not for me to get my jollies off on, you know, [00:30:00] being a jerk to other women, that's not what's going on here.

Women hating each other is a thing. But fawning all over each other is not the answer to the problem. Yes. Women can be cruel and critical and harsh toward one another. That is something worth unpacking, being aware of, and shifting our behavior around. But swinging to an extreme where we are perpetually fawning and overly complimentary and gushing at one another, that's not honest, and it's not sustainable, and it's not real. I have engaged in female friendships like that for a really long time without realizing it.

What does it mean to [00:31:00] do it different?

/

spilling the tea

Candice Schutter: So I was listening to an episode of the Conspirativity podcast, which I listen to regularly. And there's a specific episode and there's quite a number of episodes where the dudes do this. There's three guys, Derek Beres, Matthew Remski, and Julian Walker. And they critique wellness grifters, cult leaders, authoritarian leaders, because on the Venn diagram, all of those overlap. And they did this specific episode on Aubrey Marcus, who is an online influencer guy. I'm not gonna go into Aubrey Marcus. But he has taken this

recent detour where he is now in a throuple. He and his wife. There's a third. And he did this whole episode about this dynamic.

And Derek, Julian [00:32:00] and Matthew basically deconstructed this video, kind of what was going on and they literally played clips and provided commentary and all the things. And they always come from a, a critical perspective for sure, but also a investigative journalist perspective. It's an informed perspective. So it's not so much snarky as just informed social commentary.

So I was listening to this and I got to almost the end of it and it dawned on me like, we can't do this. If I invited two of my female friends on to listen to one of our former Org colleagues deliver a selfie sermon. Or, um, to critique a big name influencer on Instagram. And we just started talking about what we were observing, what we saw, how it felt, how it parallels certain things. I mean, we can do it. But the feedback would be very different. We would be [00:33:00] just bitchy, catty, women talking shit. When in fact maybe that wouldn't be what we're doing. Now, I'm not suggesting I wanna do this as a practice. But it does bring up the point, like there's a double standard for sure operating. And to pretend it's not there is a lie.

And I say all of that because for a while now I have been contemplating whether or not to speak to developments in the world of Org apostates. And the fact that a concern that I had really early on in the surge of popularity of the podcast specifically to Org individuals, primarily to those who were still involved, was one of my concerns was that people who come out would make parallel moves to other organizations or replicate some of the dynamics in kind of a new launch, new iteration.[00:34:00]

And on one hand, that's none of my business, right? If they wanna do that, that's fine. Which is part of why I haven't spoken to, you know, particulars around any of this. And also, what troubles me is that people, I receive messages from people who have listened to the podcast and tell me how impactful it's been and how important it was for them to untangle themselves from the Org and who really seemed to benefit and understand the primary takeaways from the series. And then those same people, I see them gravitating towards individuals who I feel do a really good job of performing an understanding of the material, but do not, in fact walk the talk in terms of having sort of deprogram themselves from the stepping stones that create these outcomes.

So I have had these thoughts and feelings for a very long [00:35:00] time. And when some very high profile people who left the Org began to promote their work outside of it, you know, that's again, their prerogative. One of the things I say on the podcast again and again is that that embodied work does not belong to the Org, which I stand behind, and that people can go and do their own thing. That's beautiful. I have zero problem with that.

And what I've seen happening in recent months is, it's sort of the, the parasocial presencing of oneself as a specific authority in that material. It's like coming out of the cult and then saying, I am taking the best parts of this. And I'm an authority in the best parts of this. And sort of repackaging the superficial parts of it and appropriating it into an avenue to recruit people into, I don't know what to be fair.[00:36:00]

I'm not saying people are starting another cult. Let me be clear. I'm not saying that. What I am saying is that the mechanisms of influence that I have spoken to are just as important to me as that label cult. And so when I critique the behavior of people who are utilizing the mechanisms that influence people, that position hierarchically certain people above others, that replicate patterns of, of sort of fawning over a guru type persona, things like that. I do have just as much of a problem with as I do with the actual creation of a high demand group culture. Because I know that those things are the stepping stones. And even if it doesn't lead to a cult per se, people lose agency to that shit. And that's my number one concern, has been from the very beginning of this podcast, very first episode ever, which don't go back and listen to, it's [00:37:00] super cringe for me. 'Cause talk about performing.

Anyway, the, the piece around the loss of agency and the way in which we can utilize influence to encourage people toward that end, I do have an issue with. And I've seen some of that happening. And my frustration is threefold.

One, the understanding of what created the problem in the first place is not yet embodied. Two, when my and our, all of the guests' emotional and intellectual labor that went into creating the 'cult'ure series, which was not a solo project by any means, a collaborative endeavor, that depth, that like there's 150 hours worth of content. When that depth and nuance is reduced to shiny little sound [00:38:00] bites about not having a guru and things of that nature, it troubles me. Because it's about so much more than that.

And then that message, that superficial polished message, this is very much what appropriation is, that message is appropriated and then it's utilized for a capitalist endeavor that certain individuals profit from. That this is the reason why I didn't monetize this project, the 'cult'ure series specifically, was because I know how this works. It gets appropriated and monetized and it becomes leverage that is then used to create financial wins for certain people, while other people are the ones paying into it. The leader follower dynamic, the whole dyad. It just gets created.

And this, I have really mixed feelings about, that appropriation is happening without actually giving any credit to me or the guests who got them to that point. There's no credit given. [00:39:00] Not only that, and this was the real zinger that pushed me to speak up. I probably wouldn't have said anything about any of this if this hadn't happened.

Just prior to the most visible of all of those individuals with the most parasocial influence of everyone, who I had a really wonderful, pleasant conversation with after she left the Org. And she wanted to be on the podcast and I declined. Because one, I had moved on, but mostly because I felt like she wasn't really fully cooked around the recovery and accountability hadn't been taken around some things that were spoken about. Not just accountability hadn't been taken, but there was a refusal to even consider making repairs. And again, I felt, I like this person as an individual. I felt a certain connection in our conversations. [00:40:00] But I just felt like, not fully cooked, not not really getting it.

So when that individual decided to roll out that they were gonna start doing their own thing, people were letting me know. I never engaged with this individual on social media. Rarely. I think if I did, it had nothing to do with their work at all. It was maybe a political post we agreed on, um. Didn't comment, didn't engage. And when I heard that this was the direction

they were going in, I went to go look at their page. And literally the day before they made the announcement, they blocked me. This individual blocked me. Even though I have never mean-girled at them.

You know, I had opinions behind the scenes here and there. And this is part of the learning curve of me releasing this episode of like, maybe I wasn't honest enough in our conversations. Because perhaps she was picking up on my ambivalence, well, clearly in the fact that I said no to her being on the podcast. [00:41:00] So I wasn't being honest enough, I can own my part in this. I wasn't being honest enough, clear enough. And perhaps she was sensing that I wasn't gonna love what she was about to do. I mean, I can only guess. But I was blocked. I was blocked.

And that just sent red flags up for me because I thought, what doesn't she want me to see?

And, and I am telling you this because these undercurrents when women aren't speaking to each other and being honest. And you know, I thought about reaching out and asking her, but mostly I just don't wanna get entangled in all of it. And you might be wondering, well then why are you talking about any of it right now?

Because I feel like in some ways I'm advocating for myself and this work and saying, what you see happening that references the labor that went into this project. What you see happening is not a representation of an alternative to that. It is an improvement, [00:42:00] but it is not an alternative. And if you feel yourself gravitating toward these new leaders, listen to the parasocial relationships podcast. Go back and listen to some of the 'cult'ure series stuff, because again, these are not bad people.

And I feel like I can't say it enough, like this idea that it's about bad leaders and good leaders is the reason why this shit keeps happening over and over and over again. Because really, really great people can reinforce this shady shit without even realizing it because it's part of capitalist imperialism. That's a big term, I know. But that's like the, the overarching indoctrination that we're all influenced by.

And what capitalist imperialism does is it grows and learns, and then it takes something, and then it capitalizes on, it monetizes it. Tries [00:43:00] to turn it into something commodifiable that other people can imbibe, that it can sell. The fact that that happens doesn't make anybody bad. And I'm not saying that people can't leave the Org and make money teaching dance classes. They can, lots of people are doing it. If you'll notice, many, many, many, many people have done it, and I have never spoken to it once, because I think it's great what they're doing. And I'm not in the rooms that they're leading in. But there is a qualitative difference between being a leader in a community and showing up for your people and launching a personal brand. And personal brands can be problematic. And personal brands that are based on extrication from a brand that was problematic, that is leveraging and using my work and appropriating it in order to bring people into the fold, I can't not say something about that. I just can't not.

And this is what post feminism [00:44:00] does. Post feminism is the perfect example of how capitalist imperialism works. Post feminism takes the tenets of feminism. It says women should be liberated and free. And then it hyper sexualizes them as the agents of their own

oppression, so to speak. And it's a stepping stone, but it's not liberation. It's not freedom. Just like high demand influence is a thing. Cult dynamics are a thing. And so people are gonna exit, and they're gonna go to the stepping stone, which is, okay, I'm gonna do something similar and I'm gonna polish the turd. And I'm gonna, I don't know, I just, I don't.

And this is where, this is where I struggle. Because I think about the specific individuals who are doing these things, listening to this, and I think, wow, they're gonna think I'm such an asshole.

Am I an asshole? This is how I feel. [00:45:00] I'm just being honest. Does that make me an asshole? And I know some of you out there are further along on that particular path than me, and you're gonna be like, no, of course not. Get over it. It's fine.

Um, but that's what I grapple with, because I, again, I don't think they're bad people. I just think they aren't fully cooked when it comes to understanding the dynamics that we've been exploring here.

And when it comes to the cult recovery stuff, I can't emphasize this enough. We are talking about social science. And what pseudoscience loves to do is it loves to take something really complex and dumb it down so that it can be fed in like really digestible sound bites. And you can't do that with high demand influence, group think the way individuals interact, the trappings of leadership, all that stuff. It cannot be mathed out. [00:46:00] And trying to lay it out in a formula of like, oh, my eyes are open to all of these things, now I'm free.

Doesn't work that way. I wish it did. I wish it did.

wrap up

Candice Schutter: But most of all, it is about trusting our instincts. And I trust each of you to make choices for yourself. So again, this is not an anti endorsement of any particular thing, not in this case. But it is an invitation to have your Spidey senses on alert.

I will say that I've seen other posts related to this launch of individuals who are sort of rebranding their work, which again, they have every right to do. [00:47:00] And what strikes me is, again, this, this message that, we can provide the space that was taken from you. We have the answers to how to do it differently, solve this problem.

I don't even have the answers of how to do this and solve this problem. I have devoted five years to asking these questions, and I don't fucking know how to do it differently. I don't believe that they know how to do it differently either. Subtle things for sure. I'm doing subtle things differently. But I would not launch an alternative to the Org, because I don't, quite frankly, have the hubris to think that I could do it effectively without replicating a lot of the shit that is part of what has been embodied.

That's the other thing, the deprogramming, the coming out of the indoctrination of the Org [00:48:00] has to do with way more than leaving one particular licensing program. It has to do with the way we treat our bodies, the way we think about movement, the language that we

use, the way we interact with one another, the way that our groups function, the high arousal states that we get in and how that impacts our psyches and the way that we relate to one another.

I could go on and on and on. I have gone on and on and on. Go to Deconstructing Dogma and just wade through that shit if you haven't already. There's so much to it. And I am somewhat offended by the idea that people think they can right this wrong after. Listening to a few podcasts, what? Like, I don't, I don't even know. I don't even know how many podcasts they've listened to. There's a lot of interest in the sensationalized stories, but not so much in the work that y'all have done here. Those of you who came to Patreon and like really dove in. [00:49:00] And I'm so preaching to the choir. I'm sure those of you who are left here, you get what I'm saying?

And, and if you don't, you know, I've spoken with, I'm sure Adi wouldn't mind me saying this at all. Adi is a good friend. And she's been on the podcast. And she said to me, sometimes there's episodes that I've gone back and listened to more than once, because I can feel my cognitive dissonance keeping me from understanding what I'm hearing. That's responsible stewardship of your recovery.

And, and this isn't about *my* work. I'm not saying my work has the answers. My point is, is that the questions that are posed in this series and in this work are questions we have to ask ourselves over and over again. And I am still unraveling myself from so much of it. You can hear it in the passion that I feel when I speak about this topic.

I'm not fully cooked either. I'm not here to say I'm fully cooked and that person isn't.

No. No.

Humility. [00:50:00] Humility. That's what is needed more than ever. Slow down. Step out of the spotlight. Who are you outside of that? 'Cause that's part of the problem. We lose our humanity to these roles that we play.

And, and I get it, privilege to not have to play the roles. I'm not saying people don't teach the classes. But I don't know, I feel a sense of just sorrow, grief, if what's left behind after all of this unpacking of what happened to the Org is just a few spinoffs. People moving into the arms of a new guru figure.

And I want to be super clear. I have never once had a guru [00:51:00] who didn't say, they all said, *I'm not your guru*. Hell, that's the fucking name of Tony Robbins' movie, isn't it? I think that's what it's called. Something like that. I'm Not Your Guru.

Yes, every single person who has expressed this sort of colonizing power-over influence over me has done it while insisting, I am not your guru. That's not what I'm doing. And they believe it. And I believe them. Because I believe that they believe it.

I, I believe that they believe it.

But when everyone's fawning, which is what happens in the comment feeds on these launches that I'm witnessing, 'cause I can see some of the comment feeds. I haven't looked in a while, but when it all first was going down. Just people gushing. That should be an immediate red flag. That should be an immediate red flag.

People start gushing at me, I [00:52:00] back up with whatever I'm doing. I'm like, okay, people are fawning and gushing. Like something here. Now I can't take responsibility for everything that other people feel. But you get what I'm saying? If it's a pattern that's coming at me, there's something in the way that I'm communicating that is sort of feeding that beast. And how can I bring more humility. And how can I bring, not performative vulnerability, but true humility. And maybe I stop bringing altogether. Just back up, reevaluate and think to myself, why do I need all of this attention? What is that about?

And I am effectively the asshole who said the things that I wasn't gonna say. But I just can't, with this. I just can't, with pretending not to feel all of this, pretending not to be judgmental. Like I [00:53:00] judge. I am critical. Because my brain is designed to do that. I can judge without being cruel. And many people will hear this and think, I am being cruel. That is a subjective read that I cannot control. And neither can you.

And this isn't all about me and my need to move through this right to be an asshole thing. It is about all of us. And where is that line for you? And maybe, I've heard for years, like the difference between being nice and being kind. And the kind thing is to say the true thing and like being nice is to pretend.

It's much more complex than that. Because I perfected diplomacy. And like I'm gonna just figure out a way to say the true thing in the kindest way possible. That was like my jam for the longest time. And I got pretty good at it.

But it's also, sometimes you just have to say what's true. [00:54:00] And empathy toward the people who are impacted by the thing you need to give feedback to is more critical than empathy toward how that feedback is being conveyed.

And I know this is true, because men don't seem to struggle with this so much. I'm sure some of them out there do. Some of you listening may. But I don't see. Like, I, I don't think I've ever heard my partner, well, maybe on rare occasions have I heard my male partner grappling with like the way that he communicated something. And, and should he have communicated it more softly and gingerly. And like, yeah, every now and then that's come up. But for the most part, nobody holds him to that standard. That's an internal thing that he's doing for himself in terms of the way something landed, and maybe wanting it to land a little bit differently. But for the most part, he just says what he thinks and people don't flinch every time he has a strong opinion.

And people have been flinching [00:55:00] around my strong opinions of late. And I just wanna be able to be honest. And I know that I'm a kind person. I know that I'm an altruistic person. I know that I care about people and their feelings. And I'm also tired of sugarcoating and hiding behind politeness.

Am I alone in this?

You're obviously allowed to have your feelings around my feelings about things. And I'm hoping that we can still make room for each other. Because that's what we need now more than ever is people being honest with each other and also making room.

And even then, things cross over into a line of cruelty where I don't even have it in me to go there. And that's absolutely my right and yours as well. We don't have to make room for viewpoints that are dehumanizing and cruel. We don't have to [00:56:00] be nice, polite, or even kind when we feel outraged, and it would better serve the people that we're protecting to express our anger, our boundaried limit, and yeah, sometimes our rage.

So go be a human. And I'll see you next time.

Bye.