

**Candice Schutter:** The stories and opinions shared here are based on personal experience and are not intended to malign any individual group or organization.

### Clip 1 “The End of Aliases” (Patreon – July 29, 2025)

And everything's just sort of shifted in terms of what risk averse means.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes. Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** Compared to the bigness of what we're looking at now.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** And so when I say that 'the Org' is the Nia Technique, Inc. That's who it is. I don't regret having done it the way we did it. And I also feel like, enough.

Especially reading Navalny. Especially looking at people who are standing up and speaking truth to power right now. Why don't we just say what we wanna say?

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** We're not gonna make a big production about the naming of it. We're not gonna like, do a whole thing. But we're also gonna just start saying what it is, right?

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes. And another factor that has really been encouraging is seeing former colleagues now so clearly just say, [00:01:00] I was involved with Nia.

**Candice Schutter:** That's right.

**Tracy Stamper:** I was harmed. Period.

And that was a very real risk that we took. And I'm not just talking in terms of potential legal ramifications, but also the social fabric of our lives.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

**Tracy Stamper:** That was a huge, huge risk.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

### End Clip

Hey y'all. Welcome back to the Deeper Pulse.

I decided to share the clip you just heard here on the main feed, it's cut from a dialogue that Tracy and I had over in Patreon back in late July, because it is my sincere hope that after this here drop, we can finally be done talking directly about The Nia Technique, aka 'the Org', both current and former affiliates.

[00:02:00] As many of you already know, this podcast really took off in the summer of 2022 when Tracy and I began sharing stories from the years that we each individually spent working as part of the inner circle at The Nia Technique.

And I tried hard as I could to be clear from the get go that the 'cult'ure series was not meant to be about any one organization or group of people, that it was rather an opportunity for my guests and I to reclaim our voices, share our stories. And it was really serving as an in real time recovery space where I was fighting to make sense of two decades that I'd spent in new age wellness communities and the way that it had in some ways stilted my expression.

But Nia was really just one small part of my story. And in fact, one of the many reasons why I used aliases was because I didn't want the overarching message of the series to get [00:03:00] lost in fixation on a single brand or a specific group of leaders.

From the very beginning of the 'cult'ure series, since July of 2022, I have been making some variation of similar arguments.

That wellness culture has been shaped by systems that are both biased and unwell.

That many of the helpful tools, that did in part help me to transform my life, have been co-opted and placed in service to power dynamics and the paradoxical erosion of personal agency and collective transformation.

And I've continually reiterated the fact that lots of times people who have no ill will whatsoever cause harm by reenacting some shady shit.

And I know this to be true, because I was one of those people, some days I still am. Which is why I've continually tried, and I'm sure in some cases failed, to own my part in this whole wellness culture mess that we're [00:04:00] in.

But anyway, to go back to Nia, it was rather unexpected to me the way that the organization became such a prominent feature of the 'cult'ure series, because it really wasn't part of the game plan. That happened because so many people reached out to Tracy and I with stories to share.

But in each and every 'Org' release I did my very best to tie each story to themes that exist every damn where and to the larger point of the series.

I was really adamant about this because Nia was not my first *or my last* cult rodeo. I repeated the same but different pattern for years before *and after* leaving Nia HQ. This has been a theme and a pattern in my life. And after receiving hundreds of messages from listeners from across the freakin' globe, I now know that I am not alone in this.

I'll rant more about this later, but did you know that the wellness industry is now worth more than Big Pharma? Yeah, for [00:05:00] real. You can fact check that.

And if you ask me, it shows. Wellness has become business as usual, and it has shaped cultural norms, especially in the age of digital media. Pseudoscience has become normalized. It's shaped the populace in real time to such a degree that reflexive denialism and a lack of evidential accountability has infiltrated Washington through RFK Jr's MAHA Movement.

We're at a point now where literal lives are on the line, folks. This is no joke. And I feel very strongly that we can no longer afford to be precious about our personal feelings when it comes to having difficult conversations about all of this noise.

Yes, it certainly would've been nice if the takeaway from this work was just about highlighting a few bad players or one misguided group, if we could predictably sort people into good guys and bad guys.

I'm sorry to disappoint, but it doesn't work [00:06:00] that way. We are most of us to varying degrees, both victim and perpetrator. Which is why I've decided to release this episode, which was a recent Patreon drop here on the main feed. I'm gonna offer a critique here of some former Nia affiliates, and it is in some ways pointed. But it's ultimately a commentary on the new age wellness industry as a whole. There's nothing much new here under the sun.

In fact, the thing that's become crystal clear to me in the past few weeks is that speaking to it as an *industry* really diminishes the potency of its grip. Because for a great many people, wellness is a way of life and it is a social identity. I see new ageism as a contemporary religion of sorts. Particularly the way it functions in spiritualized wellness spaces where belonging is contingent upon a particular language, set of beliefs, and a posture of sorts.

Ultimately, [00:07:00] it shows up through perpetual self-management of self-expression. Vibe is akin to holiness in these spaces. Our emotional and "vibratory" set point determines our degree of social belonging. Keep it love, keep it light, yo. Don't complain, gossip, critique, or criticize. In some circles, your vibe quite literally matters. It's the metaphysical determinant of all of your future experiences, by the way no pressure carry on while being extra careful not to be *too* human.

Now, of course I've covered all of the above before ad nauseum, but I'm bringing it up again because yeah, there is absolutely no question that the vibe of this podcast has shifted over the years. And it totally tracks that I am sinfully out of sync with what my former fellow congregates would have me do and say in a situation like this.

To be honest, I'm okay with that.

I can't even listen to the [00:08:00] early on episodes of this pod, because the cringe factor is so damned high. And I'm saying this not from a place of self-deprecation. It's just that that sugarcoded cadence of my back-then voice is now almost utterly unrecognizable to me.

But there are loads of people out there, many of whom are still involved in the world of new age wellness, who really prefer the softer, more diplomatic, eggshell-talking version of me. And I know this because after the last 'Mean Girl' release, some of those folks reached out to me to express their disappointment.

But there were also others who seemed not to mind that I said all the things. And they wrote to thank me for voicing concerns that they happen to share. And interestingly, it was this latter group that offered me substantive feedback. It was less about how they felt about *me* and more about the validity of my arguments, how and where [00:09:00] they agree, and also where they saw things differently.

I welcome these dialogues, not so much the ones that focus on problems in my personality, but those that have clearly engaged with the substance of my arguments.

Either way, feedback helps me to grow and develop a thicker skin, which I am always after-the-sting-wears-off grateful for. Because now that I'm out in the real world, it's actually a relief knowing that I don't have to play along in order to get along, that I'm allowed to have strong opinions. Masking my disapproval doesn't help anyone and reporting on what I see before my very eyes isn't bad behavior or catty gossip. I have a right to my opinion and so do you.

And ultimately when we spend all of our time focusing so much on our good or bad feelings, we really miss the whole point of dialogue itself.

This is another way that too much new age naval gazing can do us a [00:10:00] disservice over time. We reflexively center ourselves when it comes to complex social problems. And whether we mean to or not, we are ultimately sidestepping what could be a substantive debate.

And so, in this episode and many others, when I use specific examples to speak to themes that are present in a *global multi-billion dollar* industry, all the focus on whether or not I'm 'being nice' feels like tone policing, like an irrelevant yet convenient distraction.

It's really no accident that a similar sort of deflection emerges when efforts are made to educate us white folks about anti-racism or colonial imperialism, and we default to self-referential arguments.

What if it's not actually about you? Being asked to own ways in which we might be complicit isn't a personal attack.

Honestly, if you ask me, one of the worst byproducts of the self-help movement is the way in which it encourages [00:11:00] hyper vigilance around the liberatory project of self, which can be helpful at first, but in time can turn into this sort of over corrective self-centering where we're not open to constructive feedback and we're favoring individualized outcomes and actions over the needs and aims of the collective. It has taken me years to start to come outta that fog, and some days I still find myself very stuck in it.

So I know that despite my best efforts to contextualize my concerns, to some people the critiques that I offer in this and the last episode will be viewed as an attack on someone's personal character or on a community identity.

C'est la vie.

Some days it's tempting to weigh the balance of all the feedback that I receive to try to math out consensus in order to please everyone. But I've learned over time the hard way that it's not only exhausting and disingenuous, the results are ethically unreliable, because [00:12:00] groupthink is notoriously untrustworthy.

Just look at the MAGA MAHA base. Their loyalty doesn't appear to be budging all that much in the face of Trump's endless cruelty and incompetence. It's feelings, not facts that very often drive our loyalties, making us blind to how the people with whom we align ourselves can and could do better.

But I wanna underscore one last thing before we launch into today's episode.

Late-stage capitalism is a bitch. And pressure to monetize our art or wellness modality of some sort places creators in a double bind.

First of all, it's nearly impossible to suss out the monetary value of a subjective creation, and advice like, "just charge what you feel like you're worth" is a whole mess of mindfuckery that can lead us to spin out into all kinds of charlatanry and it can reward and [00:13:00] incentivize the wrong kind of personality traits.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, as a friend recently reminded me over on Patreon, there exists a fundamental tension between the survivalist realities that capitalism imposes on us and our ethical duty to do right by others.

*My heart's in the right place. I'll just do the right thing.*

That sounds plain and simple on the surface, but money complicates matters considerably, especially when coupled with influence and power. And as someone who studies leadership models, I can tell you that no one has yet figured out how to reconcile altruistic intent with leader led profit margins.

I struggled with this tension throughout the 2010s. While working as a freelance teacher and coach, I waited tables on the side, in part because business coaching revenue models felt predatory and ill-fitting to me. But I nevertheless dabbled here and there, even when [00:14:00] it felt shady because, well, the bills weren't gonna pay themselves.

And despite the ways that I engaged in the spiritual hustle, I was working over time and barely scraping by. In part due to student loan debt, but mostly because the wellness world kept on "inspiring" me to max out my credit cards in pursuit of next-level programming. I kept thinking to myself, this next training, surely this will be the one that changes everything.

All of that to say, I have been the one who pays to play. And I've stood smiling ear to ear before others with baited hook. Whether we're the one clamoring to make a dime or investing in order to transform our lives, whether we stand to lose or benefit, the system is the thing we are at war with, not each other.

And I wanna flat out name that due to luck and [00:15:00] unearned circumstance, I have in recent years been able to take a different path. And I must say it's very easy to judge from a place of stability. I am acutely aware that my critiques are inextricably shaped by the privilege of financial security.

And yet. Also, and.

The wellness industry *is* whitewashed, financially exploitative, and problematic in a myriad of ways. And now that my eyes are open, I cannot will them to close again.

This is complicated stuff and whenever we start talking about money, emotions get charged. Just because we don't have answers to these difficult questions, it doesn't mean we should stop asking them.

The power that influence grants can be intoxicating. And we are living during a time when attention is currency. When money equals visibility equals the ability to leverage fans and [00:16:00] followers. And I gotta be honest with you, I don't think it's bringing out the best in us.

Marketing and sales has always been a form of manipulation. You can hate me for saying so, but it doesn't make it any less true. So when I critique the way in which some people, and an entire industry is going about doing things, I'm really not singling anyone out. I'm delivering an example of a lump sum criticism of a trend that is consistent with everything I've featured on this pod up to this point.

All of it a reminder for each of us to keep asking ourselves, despite the many benefits of wellness practices, why is it that things continue to go sideways?

What if it's not about good leaders and bad leaders? Blind followers and those with eyes wide open? What if it's much more complicated than that?

Is there something more that I can pay attention to? Not just as someone who has experienced harm, but as an individual who is in some ways [00:17:00] complicit to systems that are causing harm.

Yes, I have complicated matters by challenging categorical certainties when it comes to who's the victim and who's the villain in this story. I hate to break it to y'all, but each and every one of us is straddling that divide. Whether it's through turning a blind eye or actively feeding the energy, we are most of us, to variant degrees, in some ways complicit to systems of harm and oppression.

And like it or not, the only way for us to change these systems is through a new pattern of behavior where we're examining our part, owning up to our mistakes, and making restorative efforts.

And, yeah, sometimes restoration means overtly challenging ourselves and others to do better.

### Start “Liberation is Free”

[00:18:00]

**Candice Schutter:** Today, I was scrolling on social media and an individual I follow by the name of Prentis Hemphill posted a meme, and it says:

"When harm happens too often, the only lesson learned is how to not become the victim. It serves us all to study how not to become the perpetrator, too. Our lesson is incomplete if it is one-sided."

I'm back here with you today, because I want to dig into that a little bit more, kind of a follow up to the Mean Girl episode. And I wanna make it clear out of the gate that this isn't gonna be an ongoing commentary. This isn't me getting pulled into the "spin cycle," as Tracy calls it so wisely in our drop where we finally name The Nia Technique, we name the Org. That's in the last drop here on Patreon. And um, [00:19:00] yeah.

I feel like there's sort of these dominoes that began to fall when the 'cult'ure series was launched. And they were in some cases foreseeable and in some cases not. There are consequences of actions that I took and that the people who joined me, the collaborative endeavor that was the 'cult'ure series, the actions that we collectively took, led to a series of events. And I feel, I wouldn't say a responsibility, but I feel connected to said events. And I feel like it is important for me to chime in in regards to some specific things. And that's kind of where I wanna go today.

And I wanna give you a little bit of background because I really want it to be clear, the intention of this episode and of what I'm gonna share with you. Because it's gonna sound critical. And I, and I want to really [00:20:00] sort of clarify that I just happen to be in a place in my professional life and my studies in the graduate program that I'm in, where this is what I do. And for better or for worse, in terms of the settings and the circumstances that I'm observing. I am quite deliberately in my master's program in organizational leadership taking what is called a critical perspective. So my approach is to be looking at things through a critical lens. And as I said, some people might consider that mean or harsh, or hopefully not inhumane, because I always try to bring humanity to it. And that's why I'm gonna start with a story here in a moment. Because in almost every case, what I am critiquing is behavior that I myself have engaged in.

And that's why I wanted to lead with the quote around part of the process of recovery, of sort of [00:21:00] waking up to the dynamics that we kind of get ourselves caught in is to understand that it does cut both ways. That we are people who experience harm as a result of



social constructs and the contracts we're playing out. And that we're also people who reenact those same behaviors.

So I've said it over and over again throughout the 'cult'ure series, but I'm gonna reiterate it once again. I don't consider the behaviors a byproduct of necessarily "bad" people. I think it is about the water we swim in. And I'm really interested in cleaning up the water. And that means that I have to look at what I'm contributing.

I haven't really ever talked. I mean, I've, I've touched upon it, especially when I talked about the episode I think it was like 47. I talked about my history working as a life coach and sort of that season of my professional life. But I wanna tell you, like more pointedly, what happened for me when [00:22:00] I first left Nia. The organization that I worked for, that I speak about at length on the podcast.

It was in that period, 2006 to 2007, when I was stepping away from Nia, that I, yes, I left that particular organization, but I did not leave by any stretch of the imagination, the culture of new age wellness. In fact, what I did was I quit my job working for Nia, and I began working for another mind-body fitness company. And became very close to the founder of that company. And because I had all this experience working at Nia, I was able to bring the template for the way that company is structured to her business. Which was something she wanted to do. She wanted to train teachers at different levels, charge a licensing fee, use the brand name, all the things that [00:23:00] Nia does, Zumba does that a lot of cult fitness brands do.

And I had sort of an insider scoop. Like I had been there, I had been in those rooms. And I, and I kind of knew how it was structured and how it all worked. And so I partnered with her as a freelance consultant. And she hired me to help her create a multi-tiered training system. And we did. It was like a three-level training program. I primarily ghost wrote the manuals. She gave me a lot of, of input, but I pretty much did the writing on all the manuals. And we cranked out this training program. And I would travel with her to facilitate these teacher trainings. So it was like the two of us co-facilitating.

And I'm sharing this because back then I didn't critique the way we were going about doing business. It just felt like this is how it's done. She and I had also both individually been involved with some business coaching programs and this was sort of the way you [00:24:00] do it. And that would later evolve into what we now know as sales funnels, where there's sort of like a free event. And then there's a low price event that feeds you into one that's a little bit more expensive that feeds you into the longer term program that feeds you into the master level pro. Like it's this whole process. And we were just kind of coming in on the front end of developing that. And we did the three levels of teacher training.

Now I'm not here to say that's always a bad idea. I think in some cases that kind of thing can work. But when you couple it with the new age vibe, which sort of implies this spiritual hierarchy that you're moving through. It creates a problematic structure. So I'm not in love with the way that we did it looking at it now. But that's all I knew. And that's what I thought it looked like to do business. And I thought, because my friend she still to this day, actually has a pretty massive breathwork company, [00:25:00] has been very successful using a similar model, sort of facilitating these "journeys" at really high, high dollar prices. And that's



sort of the progression that I thought you were supposed to move toward. I was given the title of "master trainer." I used all that language in workshops, like master classes and the stuff. And I really didn't think to second guess it in any way.

And I felt entitled. I felt entitled because I conflated. This is important.

I had developed a lot of skills as a facilitator. I had certain competencies that I'd developed. And I conflated my competency and my right as a woman to take up space and the all the things that are true, that I should be able to express my competency and that, *lookout world here I come*, I've got something to say and something to offer. And [00:26:00] yes, to all that.

But I conflated that with, because I have this competency, therefore I have authority to position myself above others. There was something going on where I felt it was like this narcissistic scramble for me to matter. And I had to prove it by becoming the leader of the self-created empire.

We go through these systems and our psyches are colonized to function in a certain way when it comes to leadership and followership. And how progression, growth, and our personal evolution should look. And in self-development companies and programs and wellness cultures, *because capitalism*, it's built in such a way where there's different tiers and you rise through certain levels. And because there's always this sense of there's people above me [00:27:00] and people below me, we internalize that. In many ways, we become colonized by the structure. And then we become the colonizer ourselves.

So there's the people above us that we're looking up to. And then there's the people below us that we're either punching down on, stepping on shoulders, or feeling sorry for. And that's the way that leadership has been framed for so long that we don't even think to question it. We don't even think to question.

So when I was leading, I was reenacting the colonizer headspace. I was like, this is how leadership functions. This is what it looks like, this is how it works. And I'm calling all of that into question.

And it's a really humbling thing to look back and see some of the not so savory behavior that I engaged in when I was in that place. And I'm also able to be gentle with myself and forgive myself because I was, again, reenacting the only thing [00:28:00] that I knew. So I guess I just wanna say that I am somebody who understands the punch drunk feeling of being the authority, the one who leads the training that everybody signs up to, that everybody wants to be at the level that you're at. And there is a certain sort of intoxication that can happen.

And we know from the research, Kipnis, it goes all the way back to the 1970s. Like we know that power corrupts. Not always, and in every instance. There's also other research that says that whatever an individual's traits happen to be, it can sort of amplify those traits for better and for worse. So there's mixed research around it.

But there's a lot of research that says people who have power, they become desensitized to the people beneath them. There is a phenomenon where they become more and more

narcissistic over time. And I've been in that place. I [00:29:00] know what it feels like to progress through the ranks, to get to a certain level. I look back on some of the experiences that I had facilitating and think about my head space and how much my positionality distracted me from really being present to people. Because I was, in some ways unconsciously preoccupied with needing to prove that I deserve to be standing at the pinnacle of the pyramid that I had been climbing.

So I have a lot of empathy that may not always come through when I get "snarky." I'll get to that in a minute about some of this stuff. I do have empathy for unwillingness to engage in the accountability bit of it. Like I, we can't see what we can't see kind of thing, right? Cognitive dissonance is real, y'all. Especially when our sense of identity is tied to, well, if I wasn't this person who stood at the top of this pyramid, who [00:30:00] the hell would I be? And how would I make money? Would my life matter?

We've been taught through the dogma of the new age wellness world, that we are just a vessel and a vehicle for the divine. Like we're all divine. And if we just sort of purify our vessel enough that what then comes pouring through us, when we do something that is pleasing to others or that we feel really proud of, it's not me, it's the divine. It's not me, it's God. It's not me. It's Spirit. It's Source, it's whatever. What ends up happening though is it's sort of this dissociated narcissism. Where we're saying, well, it's not me. I am just the vehicle for this divine thing that happens through me that is of tremendous value.

And here's an example. I'm driving the other day, and there's this, um, I think it's like a accountant's office or something. And they have one of those boards out where, you know, you put up the letters and little messages. And they change it [00:31:00] out probably monthly. And the one that they have up right now says,

"I would like a monument to my humility."

And that's sort of what it's like. For me, it was like, I have insecurities around my worth, so I'm gonna pump up my tires, while also telling you that it's not really me, it's the divine. Which is in many ways the most arrogant thing I could possibly say. Like what I'm doing is somehow mandated by God.

Now I know that I'm rubbing up against some people's belief systems and this might push some buttons. You know, there's a possibility that, that somehow the intelligence that we possess when we're at our best comes from somewhere else. How do you know for sure that it has the value you say that it has? And how do you prove it? And in capitalism, the way you know and prove it is do you make money as a result of that claim? Then it must be true.

**Candice Schutter:** Okay, so [00:32:00] I find this really fascinating. Did you know conservative estimates estimate that in recent years, the wellness industry has surpassed the pharmaceutical industry in terms of profitability, money rolling in. Why is it worth so much more? Well, in many ways, because it's not regulated, right? So if you have a supplement and you claim it's good for something. There's no FDA, there's no organization who's making you prove it and provide evidence before you sell your product. You can just slap a label on it and

sell it to whoever you want. So the wellness industry is worth more than the pharmaceutical industry.

I learned these statistics listening to an interview with a woman who just wrote a book. She's a biographer. She just wrote a book on Gwyneth Paltrow. And she was talking about basically how Gwyneth Paltrow is like the template for like white ladies in wellness, right? How to use influencer status to create a brand, build a following, make money.

Because women have been pushed to the side, [00:33:00] marginalized, not listened to for so long. We sort of default to this post-feminist notion of like, you go girl. Boss girl babe. You do your thing. And like, if people don't cheer for you, then they're haters. They're doing that thing that research has shown where when a woman's competent, they don't like you as much. And there's really not a lot of room for critical scrutiny in there. Because the fact of the matter is, in many cases it's not really about not liking them. Sometimes it is. But sometimes it's about like, I don't approve of their behavior. I don't approve of the way they're reenacting toxic masculinity. I don't approve of the way they're expressing toxic femininity, which is something we don't talk a lot about, this sort of sugarcoated, love-bombing version of manipulation.

I can have those feelings and opinions and also make movement for the fact that women should be able to succeed and thrive. But not at the expense of others. And not under the guise of expertise where it's not really warranted, where they're outside of their scope of practice.

And that really brings me to [00:34:00] the topic today, which is about scope of practice. Because as I mentioned, I have watched countless former Nia teachers exit the practice, go off and do their own thing, and I cheer them on all the way. As I said, many times throughout the series, the embodied work that you bought and paid for, in many cases, many thousands of dollars over a number of years, belongs to you. And you get to express and utilize that embodied knowledge however you want. The only thing that doesn't belong to you is the brand, right?

So now we have a launch of three individuals who came together and created their own thing that I am publicly commenting on. These three individuals who used to be supporters of the podcast, who now in their launch, I think because of the Mean Girl release, which yeah, admittedly was [00:35:00] pointed, now are referring to the podcast as "a snarky podcast," sort of discrediting the foundational work that actually created the opportunity that they're now leveraging, in my opinion, the fact that people left behind a community that really gave them a sense of identity and belonging and are looking for a new home.

The Mean Girl episode was me saying like, I have a sense about this. And I would've loved to have been wrong, believe you me. I have a sense about this. And it feels a little off, and I just wanna speak to it just in case.

And now the launch has happened of this new brand. And it's about what I expected in terms of, it really does look a lot like Nia. The language of it and all of that.

However, and this was why I [00:36:00] spoke in The Mean Girl episode in the first place, there's this spin on it, which feels connected to the work we've done in the 'cult'ure series. And is, as I said in that episode, attempting to leverage that exodus that happened with Nia for this capitalistic gain. And it's being pitched as if it's in service to "liberation" of the people who've come out of Nia.

I don't always know the title of an episode before I record it, but I knew today. I titled this episode, *Liberation Is Free*. Because the biggest red flag that's waving is that there is a program that's being launched that is called The Liberated Facilitator. \$1,200, that's the low tier buy-in.

It's gonna cost me, you know, over a thousand dollars to enter in. And I'm not even exactly sure what's gonna happen there. But I don't wanna miss out on the promise. And I don't blame people. Who wants to miss out. Especially when [00:37:00] you listen to this podcast series, it completely disrupts the foundation upon which you've built your life. You come out and you sort of are still finding your legs, and somebody's like, Ooh, here, I have a soft place for you to land.

And some of you might be saying, well, what's wrong with that? Like, what's wrong with people having a soft place to land? I don't think there's anything wrong with that. What I take issue with, if it was about creating a community where people could share choreography and collaborative exchange. Uh, a place where people could go to find community and connection, a lot of the things that they're frankly promising.

But why does it have the feeling of the same pyramid structure, like where black belt teachers are at the helm. And then just under them is this inner circle. And then everyone kind of floods in at the bottom and the learning and the information is gonna flow down. [00:38:00] It's always about top down, top down, top down.

That's the structure that I've been speaking to the whole time throughout the 'cult'ure series. This is not me picking on three people. This is me saying that structure, we know it's a problem in cultic groups. We know it's a problem in MLMs. We know it's a problem in organizations where CEOs experience what's called CEO disease where they aren't getting pertinent and important feedback because the true information doesn't flow from the bottom up. It's not structured that way.

And what's fascinating about this particular launch is that they took the triad of Nia, which is like the, the sort of symbol of the practice. And I don't know if they're throwing shade. But it's interesting, they took the triad, and they flipped it upside down as part of their logo. So there's this sort of upside down triangle. And it feels to me like what they're trying to convey is that we're turning Nia on its head. The people on the bottom are now on the top. [00:39:00] And we're gonna do this differently.

That sounds really great. But there's this phrase that Derek Beres, one of the hosts of Conspirituality uses sometimes, which really feels pertinent here. "Watch what they say and then watch what they sell."

The messaging and the actual product need to align.

And this product is actually built like a right side up pyramid. And the idea that the people at the top of this pyramid, who were not at the bottom of the pyramid, just to be clear. These are folks that left Nia that were already in sort of higher rank positions. Maybe not so much within the organization, in some cases, yes, in other cases, they are really skilled facilitators who developed followings and through visibility and through the parasocial influence stuff that I've talked about, have created followings. And so they sort of climbed to top their own pyramids. And now they're sort of like stacking them all together to see what [00:40:00] they can create.

Is this a business model that works for a lot of people? Yes. Is this normalized in the wellness industry? Yes. Is it weird for me to be speaking about one particular launch when it is similar to so many others? Maybe.

But this one's different, and it feels personal. The very first thing they launch is about liberation from Nia which is what this podcast series was about. So I can't help but wonder, how are these individuals qualified to carry people over that threshold? Because it is not just about leaving one licensing program. It is about so much more than that. To say that you're gonna be liberated if you go through this 12 week program. I'm not buying it.

Actual disruption and deprogramming of indoctrination doesn't look like tethering ourselves to a new leader [00:41:00] who's doing something that's the same but different.

And as I said already, I don't feel equipped to design a program that would *liberate* someone from the experience of a multi-year, multi-level, multi-thousand dollar training program that indoctrinated them on a lot of different levels in 12 weeks.

I can't do it. I don't believe that they can do it.

I'm concerned, but also not, that they're gonna appropriate content from the podcast episodes and attempt to explain it to people. Like if we use the language of cult recovery, then by the end of 12 weeks, people will be like one and done. And like they can wash their hands of that and be free. Which is not how recovery works. If it worked that way for you, then you didn't do it all the way.

This stuff is about changing more than your flare pants, y'all. This is big, deep, [00:42:00] beautiful work. And it completely connects to what we're experiencing culturally right now. And the MAHA movement which is in denial of complexity, nuance, the facts and just doubles down on these simplistic solutions that don't have evidence behind them, that promise all kinds of things just to line the pockets of the people who are benefiting from those promises.

And it, it makes me really sad. And it is not my intention to try to sabotage their program. If it's successful, it's successful. I'm really unattached to that. I want it to be clear and known that I do not endorse what they are doing. And that I do not believe that liberation is the end point that these folks are gonna experience at the end of 12 weeks.

They might experience something that feels like that though. And when I looked at the actual breakdown of like how that program was gonna roll out. 'Cause the website's public. I, I was [00:43:00] blocked. Now I understand why I was blocked by now two of the three individuals who launched this particular program. They didn't want me to see it, I guess. I mean, I don't know any other reason, because I never engaged with them whatsoever on social media. But the website's live now. So I went and looked at it. And I can see the breakdown of the program.

And what I see is the same breakdown to breakthrough. It starts with like, you came through this challenging breakup with Nia. And so we're gonna spend the first month looking at the broken down place that you're in. And then we're gonna build you up. And then we're gonna launch you and you're gonna feel freer than ever.

This is not new. This is the same thing that every high arousal training does. And it feels really rich and compelling when you're in it. So maybe people are gonna have great experiences. But I don't think it's gonna liberate them from cultic indoctrination. [00:44:00] Or the entrapments of it. Or dependency on a tiered, hierarchical spiritual community. I don't believe that that's what's gonna happen in that space.

If you don't want any of that, what I just described, and you just want something that looks and feels like Nia, maybe it's right for you. But for those of you who came through this process and are looking for something that is different and an alternative to everything I just described, then I guess I just want it to be on the record that I don't think this is a place to go. I really don't.

I do wanna take a moment to speak specifically to the red flags that I feel are present in this launch. So that this isn't feel like it's just some personal attack, that you understand that there's specific things I'm pointing to that are [00:45:00] congruent with message of the 'cult'ure series since the very beginning.

So I wanna speak to what are the red flags that I see present. I just wanna like bullet point it. Things that I see that are problematic with this launch.

First, as with most sales pages when it comes to new age wellness, when I read through the verbiage there's a lot of word salad. And when I say word salad, I mean high-minded language that appears to be saying an awful lot, seems to be promising something really big and huge, but like you can't really grab a hold of. Like, it's not really clear what it is you're gonna be getting or doing. It's very high-minded and salesy.

There's this sort of mystery in terms of the destination, which is a sales hook strategy, not unique to new age wellness. That's a common thing. But in these sort of spiritual communities, it sounds like it's going to completely and utterly transform your life. But you still can't put your hand around what exactly you're gonna be doing.

There's what [00:46:00] they say it's about, which is liberation. And then there's this sense of, but what does that mean exactly? What is my \$1,200 paying for aside from the notion of liberation? What are we gonna be doing? The fact that it's not clearly defined, and this is true of any launch online, should give you pause.



I already mentioned, there's an inner circle. You pay in to belong to the inner circle. But oops, by the way, it's already full. You didn't quite make the cut. Maybe next time. Maybe if you come in at this lower level, you can clamor your way up the ladder to be a part of the chosen few. Very common in high-demand groups, MLMs, problematic groups of all kinds.

Cult of personality leadership branding. Who's leading me and what does that mean? As I talked about in a previous Patreon release, and I'm gonna be going way into leadership in the fall, I have a bunch of guests lined up to talk about leadership. But like, leadership is an actual event. [00:47:00] Leadership is a verb. And people have to earn their leadership role by creating outcomes for people. And if the outcome is just a high arousal state and the parasocial fascination we get because somebody's really charismatic. And we're like, wow, like I wanna be like, or I wanna be close to that person, and they're just an arm's reach away and that makes them all the more enticing. Like if that's the real hook and that's what makes that person a leader, then it's again, something to rethink and consider. What is this person leading me toward that has to do with me specifically, outside of the word salad of what they're promising, which is like authenticity or liberation? What does that mean? And why is this person qualified to get me there?

And we have to be really conscientious about this. I fall into this still, when people are really charismatic and I admire them in some way. And I start looking at them through these sort of rose-colored glasses, because I'm projecting my desire onto them. I want to be like them in some way. I wanna [00:48:00] embody something they've embodied. I want to be able to express in some way that they express. And so I feel like I need to get close to them.

Would a true mentor charge you that much money just to get close to them. When in a lot of these situations you don't really get that close actually. You're connecting actually with their parasocial persona. You're not really getting close to them at all. So then you're comparing yourself to this image that isn't even really attainable, because the humanity is sort of sloughed off through the filters. So cult of personality at the helm being seen as the penultimate persona that you want to embody.

Again, it's a moment to take a step back rather than forward, just to consider, what's really going on here for me?

Another red flag. We had a recovery group called After The Org where about 150 people came in over the course of a couple of years who had left [00:49:00] Nia, who were in the process of sort of deconstructing those experiences and unpacking it. And in the beginning, Tracy and I were super present in terms of facilitating it. And we slowly, very strategically, because wanted to overcome this sort of leader hierarchy thing that can just happen organically, we kind of faded into the background and observed and just moderated and held space. Aimee Van Ausdall came in at one point to kind of help us to moderate and monitor, but none of us was like leading the discussion. We were just there and present as moderators so that folks could have a community experience.

And there was a certain point during the process when we had that group where some individuals were coming in who were still kind of straddling, so they decided to start their own group. And so there was this sort of offshoot group where people who were trying to decide if they were gonna stay or go could hang out.



And then when ATO when we decided to freeze it, some people moved over from that. And then other people just were like, we're gonna move on with our lives, enough already about Nia, and [00:50:00] that's that.

So the only reason I'm sharing this is because this is another red flag to me, that one of the individuals who is a part of this launch who was very visible, had asked me after she left Nia, if she could come into the After The Org group, and I actually declined. I thought it would not be a good idea, because there were people who had felt as though, like going all the way back to the quote in the very beginning, like, we are not only victims, we are perpetrators. The more power and influence we have within a system that we were a part of, the more likely we contributed to the harm in some way. And there were people who kind of felt like ill at ease, and I knew would be uncomfortable if I were to bring this person into ATO.

And so I said, I don't think it's a good idea for you to come into the After The Org group. She was very gracious, completely understand. So she went into this other group. And again, totally her prerogative, great.

And I learned, and I can't see the group, so [00:51:00] this is all hearsay, but that she became eventually the administrator for that group. And there is some suspicion that she actually was using that group to sort of recruit people into this next thing that they're doing. And again, to me, that is ethically questionable. And it feels like another red flag to me.

Now, to be fair, it wasn't a recovery group. It would absolutely be completely unethical if it was a cult recovery group that, that somebody was recruiting people from. But even this other group where people are sort of on the fence around like what they wanna do, to come out and sort of try to absorb those individuals into your own thing, to me feels like, was it ever really about recovery? Or was it about I want to be the leader of the movement. That's what it looks like from where I sit.

And again, for people looking for a guru or a leader, maybe that's just right. But it's not something that I'm gonna sit back and pretend [00:52:00] isn't antithetical to the whole purpose of this work.

I've already spoken to the red flag of framing the launch as this sort of collective liberation, when in fact it's funneling people into a whole brand new organizational setup. That, to me, is not liberation.

And when we do collective liberation, everyone benefits equally.

Let me say that again. When it's a collective liberation, everyone benefits equally. There's not certain people leading the collective liberation who get the most in terms of the attention, the money, the currency, the praise, the all that, and the rest of us sort of get sloppy seconds. And are just like, pick me, pick me, pick me. I wanna be a part of all the goodness that you're experiencing. That's not liberation.

So again, it's this sense that, in order to lead we must colonize. In order to grow, we must follow the [00:53:00] leader who is the one shining the way forward. And what I've been

suggesting all along throughout the 'cult'ure series is that we don't have to rely on that person to show us the way.

That doesn't mean we have to go it on our own. This isn't some hyper-individualistic, bootstraps thing. Not at all. I'm saying we can come together, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder. And that we can find our way forward together, trading ideas and learning and contributing each in our own way at the same level. We don't need somebody above us.

So I don't believe it's fair to call it liberation when that structure is present.

And then of course, this dismissal of the work that actually facilitated the opportunity they are now taking advantage, advantage of.

And yeah, I do get screenshots of things that are happening, because [00:54:00] people know that I'm interested in what happens next. Because as I said, the dominoes have been falling. And so people do send me screenshots of posts from people who have blocked me.

Because they decided they didn't want me to see. And there are other people who do want me to see. So yeah, I've looked at them. I don't feel shame around that.

But in one of those posts, one of the individuals referred to The Deeper Pulse, I can only guess it was The Deeper Pulse, but I'm 99.8% sure it was, as "the snarky podcasts."

Which is fascinating to me, because this individual sent so many people to the podcast to listen. And I was deeply grateful for the support that she showed to the podcast. And some of the connections that I made as a result of her sending people to the podcast. And I am still grateful for that. And I find it really sad and troubling that like, as soon as I shined the spotlight in the direction of their behavior and said, hey, there's something for you to look at here. That suddenly [00:55:00] it's all been chalked up to, I'm just being snarky.

It just makes me sad, because that's missing the point.

Am I snarky? That's a relative thing. From the standpoint of like, the outside world, I can promise you people do not think I'm snarky. But when it comes to new age wellness, like if you say anything pointedly, you are a snark monster mean girl, all the things, so low vibe, that's me. I'll take the label.

But ultimately, the name calling doesn't really upset me, because we are allowed to do that. Like we're grown adults. We can have opinions about other people's behavior. That's fine. I don't care if they think I'm snarky.

But what troubles me is that it might add to the cognitive dissonance of people who both followed the podcast, benefited from it, felt connected to it, and are now looking at this material and they're like, how do I reconcile the fact that the podcast was sort of the portal through which I was able to exit? And now this thing I'm about to enter into is on one hand [00:56:00] leveraging the message of liberation, but also that's just a snarky podcast.

How do you reconcile that? And if you're confused about that, and if you're not sure what to think about that, I'm not gonna tell you what to think about it. I just wanted you to have all the information as far as where I sit around it. Not because my opinion matters so much, but because, if I pull all the puzzle pieces that are The Deeper Pulse 'cult'ure series together, and I create a picture. The overall outcome of what recovery looks like and liberation, it doesn't match what's being created over here. And I do not endorse what's being created over here as a pathway of liberation as it's being promised. In fact, I think it is just more of the same. And I just wanted to be explicit around my opinion and why I feel that way.

And again, I'm not gonna spend a bunch of energy defending my perspective or even advocating for people to engage in [00:57:00] this behavior or not that behavior. That's not what this is about for me. This is about representing the 'cult'ure series message in its integrity, staying in that lane and saying, this is what I see from the lane that I'm in. I'm gonna continue to stay in my lane. I'm gonna continue to critique leadership. And, yeah, sorry, not sorry, if people are engaging in behavior that sort of demonstrate the dynamics I've been speaking to, and it's like right under my nose. And it's also in some ways connected to the dominoes that have fallen as a result of my work, I'm speaking to it.

Whether these folks make money or not, I don't, it doesn't matter to me that much. People who have relative privilege and power are not the people who are gonna create the systems that liberate. It's in collaboration with people who actually understand oppression better than somebody who has a relative privilege ever could that true transformative justice can happen.

This is why our two party system is probably [00:58:00] not going to be the thing that brings America back to democracy. Whether it's a red boot or a blue boot, having a boot on our neck is not the answer to what ails us.

I have spoken lots of words, and I would love if this is all I have to say about this. That would be wonderful. I can't promise that. But I will commit to keeping my primary focus on where we've been going with The Deeper Pulse and continuing to move forward in advancing conversations around things that impact all of us, not just people who have left the Nia Technique. This like meso analysis of these organizational systems is just meant to give us a more detailed understanding of the macro systems that we're really up against right now.

This way in which our psyches have been colonized when it comes to thinking about leadership is functioning in our daily lives right now [00:59:00] as we have an authoritarian in the White House and fascism is becoming like an everyday reality in the United States. If we wanna understand why so little is happening to combat it. Why are organizations capitulating to the Trump administration? Why are these media organizations paying out money? All the different things. It's because of the way in which we've been taught to think about leadership and to think we have no choice but to fall in line. That that's the only way to move things forward is to follow the leader.

And I am calling bullshit on all of it.

And this release seems like it's about three people doing a dance fitness practice. That is not what I'm invested in deconstructing.

I want us all to be critically looking at how we follow the leader, how we fall in line, how we seek to move forward only by having somebody else leading [01:00:00] us along the path.

There are other ways for us to do this. And that's where I wanna go next in The Deeper Pulse. So I'm gonna keep my eye set on that horizon, to do leadership and community and connection a little bit differently.

So stay tuned if you're interested in all that. And thank you again so much as always, for your support of this work.

Thanks for tuning in and if you wanna support this work and gain access to bonus content, check things out over at [patreon.com/thedeeperpulse](https://patreon.com/thedeeperpulse).

I'm gonna leave you today with one final clip from the July Patreon drop with Tracy and I.

I'll see you next time.

### **Clip 2: “The End of Aliases”**

So I say, let's all turn our attention away from the spin cycle that is the Nia Technique. Spend your courage where it really matters right now.

And I'm not making light of anybody's recovery journey. But just, I want to [01:01:00] offer that those are training wheels. The real ride is being forced upon us, whether you feel ready or not, like whether you've been on your Peleton doing your reps, which I have not.

**Tracy Stamper:** It's here anyway.

**Candice Schutter:** It's here anyway, like it or not. So we're all being invited to, to step into that.