EPISODE 150

*"**AB:** Around the age of 19 is when I would start to Google different things. Is it normal to blackout? Is it normal to drink this much? Pathological lying. Just all these different things that had become really harmful, because at some point, the party has to stop. You can have this identity of a fun time passing, but people want to know more. Who are you? Outside of this, who are you? What do you even enjoy? What makes you happy? Who are you as a person? I didn't have any of those answers. I didn't have any of those answers and it felt quite scary actually, to even start to think of myself in that way.*

Without realizing, I had dehumanized myself. For me, being unreliable was a very, very big thing. I just didn't know how to commit to what I said I would do. I didn't know how to commit myself, to other people and I would just find myself in these cycles of getting to know people and then needing to cut people off whenever they came too close."

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:01:09] LW: Hello friends and welcome back to the Light Watkins Show, where I interview ordinary folks just like you and me who've taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they've identified as their mission. In doing so, they've been able to positively impact and inspire the lives of many other people who've either heard about their story, or who witnessed them in action, or who've directly benefited from their work.

This week, I am in conversation with someone who I've admired from afar for a long time. She's originally from Zimbabwe, but she's now based in London and she's been lighting up the socials with her very outspoken stance against cancel culture. Her name is Africa Brooke. Africa is an international speaker. She's a consultant. She's a coach and she's a podcaster. Africa has an unapologetically honest, transparent and thriving social media presence, one that has made her controversial for saying things like, "As a black woman, I do not feel oppressed." For also publicly stating that she's leaving the culture of wokeness and for speaking out against cancel culture.

For those of you who hear those kinds of statements and you think that she's misinformed, I highly recommend pausing your conclusions until you hear the whole backstory in context from Africa's own lips. What I discovered during our conversation is that she and I actually have a lot more in common than I even initially thought. In addition to being outspoken on many of those more controversial topics, Africa is also a lover of tea and of walking and of sobriety, same as me. Plus, she thoroughly enjoys challenging conventional wisdom whenever and wherever possible.

During our conversation, we talked about Africa's process of creation, how she creates the content that she posts, and we talk about how to create distance in your own echo chamber of beliefs and why it's important to do that, even if you feel like whatever you believe is infallible. We talked about her journey into sobriety and what switch allowed her to do that without going to AA. We talked about the importance of taking responsibility and we talked about when Africa discovered that she was black, even though she's from Africa. That was an interesting perspective. We talked about the importance of self-forgiveness and so much more. This conversation, in my opinion, was an instant classic.

Remember, you can always hear my raw, uncut, unedited version of my podcasts inside of The Happiness Insiders online community. Without further ado, let us dive into my conversation with Miss Africa Brooke.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:04:22] LW: Africa, thank you so much for joining my podcast. I'm so honored. I'm so excited to have this conversation.

[0:04:30] AB: Thank you. Me too. We already started laughing and smiling quite a lot before hitting record, so I'm in very good spirits. I'm a great admirer of your work and your – not even just your work, your essence and your message and everything you're pouring out into the world. It's an honor. It really is.

[0:04:49] LW: Thank you. The feeling is very, very mutual. All right, so I like to start these conversations off talking about childhood. I've done a little bit of research, but for the listener, you grew up in Zimbabwe, which is in the southern part of Africa.

Well, interesting. Okay. I've heard you refer to your father as Maxwell. You call him by his first name. What's interesting about that is that I used to call all my brother – I have three brothers. There are four of us, just like there were four of you. We all called our father by his first name, Donald, growing up. We just, “Hey, where is mommy and Donald?”

[0:05:25] AB: Wow.

[0:05:26] LW: We didn't think anything of it. It was the most normal thing in the world. We'd never call him dad. I'd still never called him dad, or father, or pop, or anything like that. I just call him Donald. And we all had nicknames. Now, you grew up in this Shona tribe, I believe. That's your tribal heritage and you all spoke that language. I don't know which dialect that you spoke that language growing up. Talk a little bit about childhood that you have a nickname, that you call your dad Maxwell. What was the vibe like in the house and I don't know which city you grew up in in Zimbabwe, but yeah, talk a little bit about that. What were some of your favorite activities?

[0:06:04] AB: Yeah. Oh, I love that. Such beautiful questions. I grew up in Harare. I was born in Harare, which is the capital city. But my childhood was split between the city, Harare, which is where my dad's family is from, and Gweru, which is in the countryside, where my mother's side of the family is from. I really got a beautiful experience of the city and just being around such vast landscapes, climbing trees and growing up in my grandma's farm. I really honor the upbringing that I had in terms of being exposed to such a rich environment.

I'm from the Shona tribe and the language that we speak is Shona. Something that I'm so grateful for, having have lived in the West now for 21 years, is that I still speak my mother tongue. It's still my first language. It's still what I speak with my family. I remember going back to Zimbabwe last year after some time. When I say after some time, I hadn't gone back to Zimbabwe since leaving. I'll go back to some of the questions that you asked, but I say that to say, even after 20 years of not being in the country that I'm from, stepping on the soil, because I

can still speak my mother tongue, I didn't feel like an alien. I didn't feel like I can't catch the nuances of everything that's happening around me. I'm very, yeah, as I get older, I continue to be so grateful that I can still speak my language. That's what I grew up speaking.

My family, it was a very interesting dynamic, even though I can only call it interesting now in retrospect, there was nothing profound, or unique about it at the time. I grew up in a household where my dad was an alcoholic. My beautiful, beautiful father, Maxwell. We didn't grow up calling him Maxwell. We called him daddy, dad. As I got older and started to acknowledge the environment that I grew up in and just how emotionally detached he was from us, me and my siblings and my mother, and how emotionally detached we were from him, I just started to call him by his first name, when I would talk about him to other people. It's not even something that I noticed. Somewhere along the way, I had just stopped calling him dad.

The household that I grew up in is probably the first environment that taught me the importance of holding multiple truths and being able to honor the goodness in something, but also, the badness in something. For me, that was very much modeled in my father, because it's a story I've shared many times in different ways, but it's a big part of my journey. Through him, I was able to see a man who was incredibly charming, incredibly kind, incredibly thoughtful. He found honor in protecting his family and being there for his family and in making sure that we were okay. That was only when he was sober.

The moment that he would drink, he would become a very different person. He would be extremely abusive, not just verbally, but very much physically. He was also, was very quiet and observant man, which meant that his way of being violent was really confusing, because it's not even like he needed to say much. You just never knew whether you were going to get beaten, or whether he was actually going to be really impressed, because you said something quite funny. You just never knew what you were going to get, or which version of him you were going to get. But I loved him so much and I hated him so much.

Now in adulthood, again, retrospect is a wonderful thing, because you have all of this language to describe your experience. Now I realized that that's where I really was able to learn the importance of holding multiple truths and that a person is never just good, or just bad. Even though the abuse got worse as I got older, until he then passed away in 2004, I had a wonderful

childhood. We played so much, me and my siblings. We have a very, very big family. There was never any time, or space for loneliness, or to focus on the sad parts of our lives.

Growing up in a country where you can easily play, you can run for hours, you can climb trees, you can go to your neighbor. Even if you get on a bus, we call it a Kombi, you end up having a conversation with someone that knows your family, or is from a similar tribe. It's just very communal living, collective living. Even when you have problems, it's very easy to escape them. Of course, I was a child, so you don't hang on to problems in the same way that I might have if I was an adult. I had a very, to me, a very profound childhood and it was all the things. It was not just one thing.

My father being an alcoholic, became a very significant part of my own story, because I went on to have my own problems with alcohol growing up and I'm sure we might talk about that. Yeah, that's my childhood and hobbies. I'll tell you about the hobbies that we had. At the house we lived at in Marlborough, in Zimbabwe, we used to have been orchard. This is the wonderful thing about being from Africa and being from even parts of Asia. You don't need to be rich to have fruit trees all over your home. You really don't. We want, we definitely, definitely want, but we had an orchard.

Me and my sisters, I have two older sisters, one younger brother, we named it Pearline City. Every single day, would get into the wheelbarrow and one of us would be the driver. The other one would be the conductor and we would go to Pearline City and we would climb trees and collect fruit and bring it back. It would last us hours, hours. That was my favorite thing to do. I think we did it for about five years straight, until we moved to the UK.

[0:12:06] LW: Your dad's drinking, was that common in that community that everybody's dad drink? Did everybody's dad beat their mom? Was it just something you observed in your house? Was it an elephant in the room? Did anybody talk to you about it? Makes sense of it? Or it's just like, this is what happens here.

[0:12:23] AB: Yeah. You know what? That's the sad thing about it. The very last thing you just said. This is what happens here. It doesn't seem out of the norm that my dad straight off to work would go to the Civic Center to sit around with his friends and they would all just drink and then

go home. Some of them might be beating their wives. Some of them might not be. Some of them just enjoy drinking. But it was a very big part of how men socialized and still do. Probably now, it's even worse with the economic situation in Zimbabwe. It was just one of those things that men do. Men gather and they drink and they get very drunk and they go back home to their wives.

It was very normalized. I wouldn't say that it was normal, but it was very much normalized, including the abuse. Because even when my mom would have bruises and have a black eye and be in obvious distress, people would just ask what she did to make him beat her. That would be one of the first questions. It's usually the first thing women are asked, “What did you do to make him respond in that way?” Or you're then told, similar to other issues to go to church and just pray it away. Just pray for your marriage and hopefully, everything will be okay. Or to just stay away from the house for a little while, which she would do sometimes and she would come back and he would be better, promised to never drink again. The cycle would just repeat itself.

I think it was a combination of being from a very religious culture, where people believe that all problems need to be addressed in church. Problems should be addressed in private, but also, that the man is the head of the house, even if he is beating you. Sometimes there might be a reason, reasons that you're not sure of. You need to figure out what it is that you are doing, because leaving, especially at that time, was never really seen as an option. Divorce, forget about it. Yeah. I think it was a combination of a lot of things, but ultimately, just that cultural silence of you don't talk about certain things.

[0:14:29] LW: Yeah. I grew up in the 70s and we used to get beat all the time, my brothers and I, literally in the craziest ways that today would be, someone will report you. I never thought about it as abuse. I just thought, well, I just need to be better. I need to either lie better, or I need to behave better. You started self-sensoring around that time.

[0:14:51] AB: Absolutely.

[0:14:52] LW: AKA lying.

[0:14:55] AB: Yeah. Yes, exactly. By definition, self-sensoring is when you withhold your opinions, you withhold your ideas, you withhold how you truly feel and the driving force for that is fear. You're afraid that you're going to be punished in some way. You're afraid that you're going to be abandoned, or rejected, or you're going to be misrepresented. Or, if we use the language of today, you're going to be canceled, right? Fear is the main driver for that.

For me, growing up in an environment where there was physical safety, I had to look out for my physical safety as a child, but also, my mother had to do the same for herself and us. Of course, you learn to lie, exactly as you said. You find smart ways to lie, or smart ways to please the person that has more power over you. When I started to take a look at some of the things that I was experiencing in adulthood regarding ideologies, or feeling afraid to express how I truly feel, I nearly tricked myself into believing that this was suddenly happening and it was coming from nowhere. When I allowed myself to be in stillness and silence and to just be curious, I realized that I had actually learned to do this from a very, very young age. Very young age.

[0:16:07] LW: Yeah. I know for me, I got really good at it. I mean, I would just lie about stuff that wasn't even really significant like, “Did you eat today?” No. Or whatever, “What did you eat?” “I had an apple,” but I really had a sandwich. It's like, why am I even lying at a certain point?

[0:16:25] AB: Yeah. Yeah. A part of me feels – it feels quite nice in a very odd way to hear someone else being honest about that, because pathological lying is something that I find so interesting, like compulsive lying, whatever you'd like to call it. That was also part and parcel of being in that environment. Then at some point, this is where a thing that can happen, where you realize that you're good at it, and then a part of you starts to feel the word is not coming to me right now, but it's feeding a part of you, because you realize just how good you are at this thing, how easy it is to manipulate other people.

There were a lot of things that were formed in that environment that I then had to deal with later on in life. It's yeah. I find it really important to be very honest about those things that can feel very gross, that can feel like, “Ooh, should I say this, or acknowledge this?” Because it allows me to then actually course correct in a way that supports me.

[0:17:23] LW: Yeah. I didn't get really intentional about trying to be more honest until relatively recently in my life. Because I found myself lying to avoid conflict and to avoid someone, or the perception that someone was going to interrogate me and then it's just going to escalate and I'm just going to turn it into a thing and so on relationships. It's interesting how it just continued to show up over and over and over. Maybe there's some deeper issues of worthiness and things like that that could be unpacked.

I really do feel like, we all grapple with that in one form or another. I think that's a large part of your current work of not feeling like – people feel they don't want to stand out, because they don't want to be attacked in certain ways. Now the attack is so public. We can get to all that. I do want to talk a little bit about your mom. She took that big leap of faith in going to Kent, to set up a new life for you all and had to basically, switch careers and drop her passion of being a geologist. I don't know how old she was at that time, but I imagine she was probably in her twenties, or thirties, or something. That must have been a big deal that she probably couldn't even talk to you guys about. You're too young to understand it. I'm sure at your age now, you have a greater appreciation for the sacrifice that she made.

[0:18:41] AB: Absolutely. Absolutely. These are now the conversations that me and my siblings can have amongst ourselves, but we can also have with her. Because now she's 60-years-old. My older sister is 35. My other sister is 34. I'm 30. Elijah, my brother is 27. We're now at that age where we can actually have very open and honest and loving and curious conversations about some of the things we all experience. My mom at the time in 2001, when we would have come to this country, I'm really bad at math, so I should – what do I get my fingers out? Can you watch this out? She's 60 now.

[0:19:23] LW: Oh, she's 60 now. That would have been 22 –

[0:19:25] AB: 2001 –

[0:19:27] LW: 22 years ago, so she would have been 38.

[0:19:29] AB: Yes. Yes. She was 38. With four children coming from Zimbabwe to the UK, realizing that the incredible work she had been doing for such a long time as a geologist was

irrelevant now. It was not transferable to the country that she was going to. The only thing that was available was nursing. Because at that time, the UK was pretty much opening the borders for people that could add to the economy in some way. Nursing has always been and still is a very big part of that.

She had to put her ego aside. She had to start from absolutely nothing. By that time, my dad had taken pretty much all the money that she had and all the resources that she had. She really was starting from zero. Now, I get to really, exactly as you said, I get to really appreciate that in a very different way. Because something that I think about, Light, is my life would be very different had she not made the decision to come here, which was not an easy decision to make. My dad was supposed to follow some years on. I believe it was at least a couple of years on, and he ended up passing away from alcohol before he could do that.

When I think of just all of the things that she experienced herself as an individual, but having to grieve her relationship, but to still continue, to still fucking continue because she had no other choice, those are things that I think of quite a lot today. Because 60 is still very young. She's still only 60-years-old, and she's lived so many lives. Yeah, it's something that I think about quite often, and speak to her about quite often as well.

[0:21:20] LW: One more question about these early, early days before you go to the UK. What was your idea of success as a family? What was that conversation like? Was it about becoming something like a geologist, or moving away from Zimbabwe to a Western country? What was that idea like for you guys?

[0:21:39] AB: Oh, wow. What a question. I don't think I've ever been asked a question like that before. Also, because there was no elective familial idea of success. It was not something that was spoken about at all. I never witnessed my parents dreaming together, or talking together about the family, or about their individual selves ever, ever. Yeah, I don't think there was any collective idea. I think, to be completely honest, I think it was about survival. It was just about purely surviving. My mom had a good job, my dad had a good job, good enough to be able to support four children living in the city. Any conversations that could have happened around what happens next, what's next for the family, they never happened in front of us, if ever at all.

Because I think, my dad's health and mental wellbeing declined so much that my mom had to do quite a lot of things secretly. I think even her coming to the UK, at some point my dad tried to sabotage the trip. I think he tried to hide the passports, or something along those lines. She couldn't include him in the plans, because he didn't want her to leave. He didn't want her to stay and be happy, but he did not want her to leave.

I think it took a lot of convincing for him to even finally agree for us to go. The plan would have been, was, as I said, for him to come at some point. He made peace with that. Whether he could have said this consciously, or known this consciously for himself or not, I don't think he wanted us to leave that cage that had been created. He didn't. He didn't.

[0:23:26] LW: That's interesting. That was your mom's idea. Did she choose Kent because there were other family members there or?

[0:23:33] AB: Yes. Yes. She chose the UK, first of all, because it was one of the easiest countries to get into and where there's so much more opportunity. But also, Kent because that's where a lot of people, immigrants that were coming from Zimbabwe and many other parts of the world would pretty much live in Kent, because it's closer to the hospitals, it's closer to work. It's not because you're thinking, where's the nicest place that we can live? You don't options. It's not to do with that. Your options are very limited. You go where you can. You go where work is. You go wherever you can be accepted. That was just the destination.

[0:24:16] LW: In Kent, you discover two things. Number one, you're black, number two, you're a rock star. Where did you get the idea of wanting to be Stevie Nicks?

[0:24:25] AB: Oh, my goodness. Oh, my goodness. I got that idea. I can't wait to meet that woman. Her and I are going to share some stories about how I discovered her. I was 10-years-old, and this would have been before they had found a school for me here in the UK.

[0:24:44] LW: You spoke English, I'm assuming, right?

[0:24:45] AB: Yeah. Because in Zimbabwe, you speak English. Actually, in Zimbabwe, we were in boarding school because my mom had moved over and my dad couldn't look after us, so we

were put into boarding school for a couple of years. Because English is pretty much the second language in Zimbabwe, in boarding school, you would actually get hit if you spoke Shona. We were trained to speak English.

[0:25:11] LW: That's a very effective method. My mother probably got her raising strategy from Zimbabwe, it sounds like.

[0:25:19] AB: Right. Yeah, so I was speaking English by the time that we came here. Of course, it was English with a very Zimbabwan accent. Didn't know that I had an accent, until other children pointed it out. That's where you start to understand how other people experience you. You start to understand how different you are and how –

[0:25:41] LW: Kids will let you know everything that's different about you, too.

[0:25:47] AB: Everything. No self-censoring there. No self-censoring there. No. For me, before I went to school, it was at a time where also on TV, you didn't have a thousand channels like you have now. You just had channel one to five. We would go to my aunt's house who didn't live too far, but she – I remember, I used to see her as the richest person in the world, because her TV channel went beyond channel five. One of the channels that was on her TV was Sky Arts, which is a wonderful, wonderful channel that shows different art documentaries and concerts, like classic arts channel. They would always show different Fleetwood Mac documentaries. They would always just on repeat.

I would just sit in front of the TV, just being so in awe of Stevie Nicks and the band and just wondering, how can someone sing like that? How does someone play the guitar in that way? How does someone drum in that way? I would just sit for hours watching Sky Arts. Yeah, that's when I fell in love with Fleetwood Mac and Stevie Nicks. I decided that I was going to be her.

[0:26:54] LW: Mm-hmm. Talk about your discovery of your race.

[0:26:58] AB: That happened when I'd started school, and I was 10-years-old at the time. I think, it was obvious to me that yes, this is what my skin looks like, but there was no language, there was never any language in our household of race, or anything of that nature. I guess, that

never needed to be, because we had been in a black majority country where people don't even call themselves black. The closest thing is a monomotema, which does translate to a black person, but no one really uses that at all.

People refer to themselves by tribe. What tribe are you from? What family are you from? What is your family name? People identify in that way. It was very bizarre for me to come to this country and in school, when you're filling out different forms, you're supposed to tick this box called black, and I didn't really understand what that meant. My mom then explains to me that that is pretty much monomotema. There's a difference. There's white people, then monomotema, black person.

That was it. There was no father spiel of this is your identity. This is who you are. You have to navigate the world like this. We were living in Kent, which is a white majority and especially in the early 2000s, very, very white. I started to be told that I needed to lead with this thing called black. For me, it never really made sense. Again, I can have this language now as an adult, but at the time, it was just very intuitive and just more confusing than anything. It just never made sense to me why I had to lead with this thing of being a black person.

I am from Zimbabwe. I'm from the Shona tribe. That's all I knew. I'm still like that today. At 10-years-old, yeah, I think it's when I – I wouldn't even call it an identity crisis, but it's when I started to see and experience my identity in a different way. By the time that I had moved to London, when I was 13-years-old, three years later, I was now being told in London, in school, that my version of being black was not the correct way to be black, because now I was too white. In the way that I spoke, it didn't sound like a black Londoner.

There was just so many, again, that messaging of you're not – Now we've told you you are this thing, but you need to do this thing correctly, depending on what that environment needs you to perform this. It was just very confusing. It was one of those instances where I really realized that black people are expected to think and speak and feel in a very specific way. I don't know if any other race has those same expectations placed onto them.

Yeah. I think that's when I started to experience a lot of tension in this idea of blackness. What is it supposed to be? Why am I white, because I like Stevie Nicks? If I'm listening to Outcasts, then

it's fine. It's acceptable. There's no difference. Why can't I like what I like without it being racialized? I didn't understand that at all. I think that's when I started to experience these things internally, but didn't feel I could say them out loud, because even questioning it, or saying something about it, or pushing back against it would result in me being ostracized by the very group that I'm trying to belong to. Because culturally, I am more drawn to black people, because it's a cultural thing that's embedded in all of us where we're naturally drawn to each other.

We remind me of home. There's a sense of home, even if I'm walking by someone across the street and we don't know each other, something, something that I probably can't even explain, means that we'd lock eyes and we see each other, we smile. I love things like that. But it's not because, I'm thinking this is a black person. There were just so many things that I didn't quite understand, but I would say, yeah, 10-years-old is when I was given this newfound awareness of what it means, or what it's supposed to mean, rather to be black.

[0:31:07] LW: Is that the impetus you're dealing with the cultural differences in, because you experienced your father, essentially kill himself from drinking. Then you began. I find, it usually goes in one of two ways. People never touch alcohol if they experience something like that, or they go all in on it. Were you conscious of that when you were starting to drink at 14? Or did it just catch you by surprise and you were just curious and dabbling and you divorced yourself from what happened with your dad?

[0:31:41] AB: Yeah, I think I really numbed myself when it came to the experience that I had with my dad. I pretended that none of it ever happened. I think that was also a result of things never being addressed in my family, even if we can all see what's happening, it will never be spoken of. Even if there's a violent incident, or even something wonderful happens, or there's some news, things are just never spoken about. I think it was quite easy for me to numb that experience with my father. I would say, a lot of it happened unconsciously. Not even in a conscious way.

The drinking culture in the UK is so massive. It's such a deeply embedded thing in the culture. I can see a face of recognition there. It definitely is, especially when you're young, actually. It's just seen as part and parcel of growing up. For me, starting to drink at 14 was not even – There was no deep thought. I didn't even think, "Oh, my dad used to drink. Maybe I should." It was just

not a thought. I just wanted to be part of the group. I just wanted to have the same level of fun that other people were having. I just participated. I think, it was the moment where, because there were already a lot of insecurities starting to be formed because of questions around identity and belonging and things that had happened in my family and things that I was forcing myself to forget, but a part of me would never forget them.

I saw, even from the first time that I drank, that I could drink this thing and all of that would go away. It would be replaced by confidence. It would be replaced by just this desire to have fun and this liberation. Just so many things that made it truly seductive from the very first time that I drank. But also, at that time, I blacked out and I found myself pretty much blacking out every single time that I drunk after that, because I was binge drinking, which is, again, part of the drinking culture in Britain, especially if you're young.

You're not swirling wine in a glass for notes when you're 14-years-old. You're not doing that. You're in a park slamming big bustles of very cheap wine and beer. I trained myself to drink in that way. I think, following my father's blueprint was a very unconscious thing. The numbing that I had done, even when it did become conscious, I didn't bring the two together in any way. I just saw it as a form of escape, which is what it wants for a decade.

[0:34:10] LW: What does it mean to black out? Because I don't think people understand how that even works, because when we hear black out, we think passed out, but you're not actually. You're still conscious and you're still having conversations.

[0:34:22] AB: Man. It blows my mind that something like that is possible. Blacking out is essentially, when you drink so much in such a short space of time, but of course you can continue. You drink so much in a short space of time that you stop making short-term memories. You can still be an autopilot. Again, you can have conversations. I would have so many wonderful conversations, or so I was told that they were wonderful, because I want to remember them, because amnesia is a part of it. You can't make short-term memories, so you're in a state of amnesia, where a lot of things are happening, but you will never be able to remember them.

For me, sometimes it could be an hour. Sometimes it could be three hours where I'm in a state of amnesia, but I'm still operating and I just won't remember a single thing. The longest, I

believe, was about eight hours. Sometimes it would be six hours. Sometimes it would be much longer than that. If I carried on the binge, maybe introduced different drugs, it could go on for longer. But it was a very dangerous way to live.

For a lot of people, we've normalized it. Even though, I think some people do know the difference between blacking out and actually passing out. I think even the language and the knowledge around blacking out, we just see it as part of the experience of drinking, that it's this inevitable thing that will happen at some point in time. For me, it started to happen very, very regularly. I would wake up in locations where I wouldn't even know how I got here from being in the city and waking up in the countryside and not knowing how I got there. Not knowing if I've had sex with the person next to me. I had normalized that way of being from 14 to 24. Even though these were very objectively dangerous situations, I would find ways to make peace with them. That was –

[0:36:11] LW: People who are talking to you while you were blacked out, or having sex with you wouldn't know that you were blacked out. They would just think, you were just you.

[0:36:19] AB: Yeah. They would just think I'm just me. Unless, they had something to compare it to. By that, I mean, usually when someone's blacked out, especially if you know them, there's just a deadness behind the eyes. They might be functional, but there's just a blank nothingness behind the eyes. It's a very subtle thing that sometimes you won't notice, because I wasn't flailing around everywhere and dropping and vomiting. It was not like that. I could be exactly as I am now, but there's just a deadness behind the eyes. Maybe if you were to ask me a specific question about something that I said a few minutes ago, or half an hour ago, I might not remember. But I'll find a way to dress it up and then we continue. It's a very, very dangerous thing.

[0:37:04] LW: Wow. You're –

[0:37:05] AB: Have you ever experienced anything like that, Light?

[0:37:08] LW: No. I mean, I used to drink when I was younger. I stopped drinking when I was about 25, or 26. Just made the decision to stop. But I never really felt like I had an – it was out

of control, or anything like that. No, I have never had that experience before. But you had this persona that you were very much embodying and you worked in advertising, but you skipped around to a bunch of jobs and started to keep a job. Everything was snowballing to this rock bottom moment. Can you talk, just give us a little montage of those days of –

[0:37:46] AB: Absolutely.

[0:37:47] LW: - of trying to quit, not able to quit, partying, self-sabotaging.

[0:37:53] AB: I would say, I started to notice that there was a problem around 19-years-old. But I, by that time, I'd already really started to build this hearty girl persona and just this very extroverted version of myself, which allowed me to escape so many things, because the older that I got, the more information I had on my upbringing. The more information I had around what had really happened with my dad, what had happened with my mum, the level of abuse that she had experienced. Out of all my siblings, I'm the one that is most like my father. I'm very much like my dad in so many ways, even –

[0:38:34] LW: Charming.

[0:38:36] AB: Even the way we look, the way we are, the way we are truly introverted at heart, but we can also be introverted if we need to be. Just very much like my dad. The times when I would start coming home drunk, my mom would tell me that I'm like my dad. She wouldn't spit the words at me, or anything like that. Not in a malicious way. But through her concern and worry, she would tell me that I'm just like my father.

The sad thing is that we didn't get to have the productive conversations that we can have now. She didn't tell me what she means by that. She didn't go further into it, but I can imagine now for her as a woman who's lost her husband and experienced this abuse, now she sees him being reflected in her daughter and her exhibiting the same behaviors and patterns. I can only imagine how odd that must have been for her.

I don't carry any resentment around that, but we didn't have extended conversations, or her asking me what I was trying to mask, or anything like that. We just didn't have the tools that we

have now. She would tell me that I'm just like my dad. Just little things like that, and me seeing my own behavior, started to show me that there was a problem. Around the age of 19 is when I would start to Google different things. Is it normal to blackout? Is it normal to drink this much? Pathological lying. Just all these different things that had become really harmful, because at some point, the party has to stop.

You can have this identity of a fun-time person, but people want to know more. Who are you? Outside of this, who are you? What do you even enjoy? What makes you happy? Who are you as a person? I didn't have any of those answers. I didn't have any of those answers. It felt quite scary, actually, to even start to think of myself in that way. Without realizing I had dehumanized myself. For me, being unreliable was a very, very big thing. I just didn't know how to commit to what I said I would do. I didn't know how to commit myself to other people. I would just find myself in these cycles of getting to know people and then needing to cut people off whenever they came too close, because I didn't have anything to give if I wasn't drinking and partying. I didn't have anything else.

There was always this feeling of being found out in some way. It meant that I couldn't have authentic relationships with people. Over time I tried. I tried my very, very best to get sober. It could be as simple as I'm not going to go out anymore. I'm not going to go out for a couple of months. I'm just going to stay away from drinking. I'm going to stay away from drugs. I would manage to stay sober for those three months, sometimes four, sometimes two, sometimes two weeks, whatever it might be. Then every single time, I would relapse. It's almost like, I wasn't used to life being at a happy constant. It's like, I wasn't used to things actually working out. I needed some level of chaos and drama to feel like myself. Any time that I would actually achieve something, achieve sobriety, I would start to feel anxious.

I would start to feel like, I've done enough time. I've done enough fucking time. Let me back in. That's what it would feel like. I would pull the plug on myself. I would pull the plug every single time. That's when I came across the concept. Actually, yeah, just before I got sober, finally got sober after seven relapses, I came across the concept of self-sabotage. I'm always so grateful that my curiosity has never gone anywhere. The curiosity that I've always had as a child. I've always had questions. Sometimes that's not always convenient to the adults that don't have the answers. It's just a nuisance, especially when they don't have them. I've always wondered why

we do the things we do. Even just language, why do we use the words we use? Why do we think and the way we do?

My curiosity led me to immersing myself into the world of psychology to find out how addiction actually works, to find out how behavioral cycles work. Why am I constantly in this cycle of getting well? Then when I start to actually experience the benefits and the results of getting well, I feel very uncomfortable and I feel like I need to do something, so I can be back in destruction. Coming across the term self-sabotage, which is essentially when you get in the way of your goals, when your behavior is in direct conflict of what you say you actually want. I was saying that I want to get sober, but my behavior was in stark contrast to that.

Starting to have the language actually helped me stay sober this final time. Now it's been six years. Because immersing myself in that world and treating it as research, sharing my story publicly, even though there were so many moments of shame, so many moments of guilt. People close to me in the beginning were like, “Really/ Are you sure you want to be sharing this?” I knew that I couldn't get well in private. I had to hold myself accountable, truly accountable by sharing things in an open way. I started my anonymous journal online and started researching. Fell in love with the world of psychology and, yeah, six years on, I've been able to stay sober, because I found a way to move out of my subjective experience and to shame myself, because of this cycle that I would find myself in and then actually acquired the language to describe my experience, so that I could get better.

[0:44:13] LW: Okay. Let's double click on this moment for just a second. You had your party friends and you had your few real friends. I think I've heard in a conversation, you only had one really friend and your boyfriend at the time, who were messing around with you, because everyone else would cut you off. I think we all have, or we've had someone in our life who we saw, they were living unsustainable and maybe wanted to say something. Why did that friend of yours –

[0:44:42] AB: Roxanne.

[0:44:43] LW: Yeah, why did Roxanne get through to you in 2016, that month before Halloween? What did she say, or how did she approach it that just finally got your attention?

[0:44:54] AB: Similar to when people ask me what finally made me get sober, it was not one specific thing. It was a election of different things and different moments and different conversations. I would say, one of the final things that sticks in my mind is when she saw how much pain I actually was in. We were still going out a little bit. She was no longer wanting to party in the same way. When we went out, it would just be at a restaurant, or to a bar, something that wasn't too much.

The reality of it was, at that time, my drinking and my alcoholism didn't care where I was. I could have been, I've said this many times, but I could have been at a baby shower, or a funeral, my mind would tell me that it's party time. There was no care of what the environment actually was. She would see, I remember one of the last times that we went out together, which I think is a huge contributing factor to my sobriety, she could see that there was always this urgency to not want to let go of the night, to not want things to end, to not want to go home, to not want to face myself, to just want another drink. She could see that even though someone who didn't know me could have looked at the way that I look, the way that I'm dressed and think I just want to have fun, I'm celebrating something. She knew the reality of my life at the time. She knew that there was no one else. She knew that me and Billy were in a very bad place, my wonderful boyfriend at the time.

She knew that I wanted to get sober so badly. She had held my hand every other time. She told me that if something didn't change this time around, she didn't want to say this time around, but if something didn't change, she didn't know if she could be there for me in the same way anymore. I really needed that. Similar to my boyfriend, Billy, it took her a lot to be able to confront me in that way in such a loving and calm way. She can see how much pain I truly was in. That's what I would say happened. But the thing is we'd had conversations like that before. I don't know why that time was really so different. But again, I think it was just a mounting effect. My shoulders had become so heavy carrying these different conversations. I just couldn't do it anymore.

I think, it also felt so good to know that someone loves me enough to stick with me, but to also be very firm and direct with me, because no one had been that firm and direct with me ever.

Even my own mother had been very indirect. “You're just like your father.” I don't fucking know what that means. You mean, charming, well-dressed? Thank you.

[0:47:37] LW: Charming and well-dressed.

[0:47:42] AB: Roxanne was very honest. I needed that. In getting sober, something that I'm always very honest about too is that I didn't do it because I loved myself and I felt I deserved better. I wanted to get better, I guess. It's because I was starting to feel the social cost and the physical cost of being that unwell. I actually had to get sober to keep those two people in my life. I didn't do it for myself. I did it for them and for my relationships, the only ones that existed at the time. Then eventually, it became something for me. I would say, about two months in, it became a choice for me. All the research that I was doing, all the language that I was getting, allowed me to realize that actually, there's something much bigger happening here. It's not some moral failing. There's something that is happening to me in terms of addiction and how alcohol actually works and the blueprint that I've had for my dad. Yes. I would say that conversation with Roxanne was because she could see through my bullshit and she wasn't afraid to be honest about it.

[0:48:52] LW: Were Roxanne and Billy supporters of you posting anonymously online and then publicly? Or who was pushing back? Who was saying, “I don't know if you want to put this out there. This is a little bit too much”?

[0:49:04] AB: Roxanne and Billy were huge supporters of everything that I did right from the beginning. Even after Billy and I broke up, he continues to be my biggest cheerleader. They were very, very supportive of that. It was actually Billy's mom, who I'm very good friends with, and she is from a very different generation, the same generation of you do not – Like, “What are you doing? What?”

[0:49:28] LW: Don't make yourself vulnerable. Are you crazy? No one's going to hire you anymore.

[0:49:32] AB: No one’s going to hire you. That good job you wanted, no one's going to hire you.

[0:49:36] LW: When they say Google you, they're going to see your problem.

[0:49:41] AB: She loves me so much and she just wanted to protect me and to know that I'm okay. With my family, it was a very similar thing as well. Actually, they were very supportive of me sharing. I had my own assumptions about what they might think, me sharing so openly about some of the things that I experienced in our family dynamic. But also, the messy aspects of my journey to getting sober. They were very, very supportive and it actually brought us so close.

Now, we've never been closer, whether it's my mama, or my siblings, all of us. That was through me sharing those things that it could have been so easy to listen to just one person who said, maybe that's a little bit too much and not. Those people that were left in my life at the time, they were very supportive. They had their initial concerns. But I think when they realized that holding myself accountable in this way, and I've been writing since I was 10-years-old, it's where I'm able to actually, it's really cathartic and it allows me to be truly honest. They saw that it was helping me, maybe more than rehab, traditional rehab could have ever helped, or AA, which I tried and it just never worked. Sharing in that way was a huge healing tool and I was supported in that.

[0:51:05] LW: If someone's listening to this right now and their heart is telling them to do something. It may not be writing on a public blog, but to do something that is honest and honest expression and people in their life are telling them, “You're crazy. Don't do this. This is the worst thing you can do,” what would you say to them, generally speaking, to help them make the right choice, whatever that is for them?

[0:51:29] AB: I would say that you have to know what your why is and you have to hold on so fiercely to that why. When I think of, and to illustrate this better, I can continue to use my own example. My why was that I had tried to get sober privately. I had tried to deal with certain things privately, but that was not a good way to hold myself truly accountable to what I needed to do. I needed to be well. I needed to become braver. I needed to be more courageous. I needed to start telling the truth. That was the biggest one. I needed to start telling the truth.

I tuned into, how can I tell the truth in a way that feels good to me, in a way that feels honest? And that was writing. That was me sharing my story, storytelling. I had a very clear why. It was so clear and it had an emotional charge to it that regardless of what anyone else said, I knew that I had to hold on to it. It's so important that when you identify what your why is, make peace with the fact that not everyone is going to understand it. It's not going to make sense to everyone and it's not supposed to. It just has to make sense to you.

I think for me, that's a way of being that I use to this very day. I'm always very clear about what my ultimate intention is, but I make sure that it's not some fluffy intention. It's something that has an emotional charge for me, something that actually feels true, even if it feels a little bit uncomfortable. I allow myself to make peace with the fact that not everyone is going to understand it. That is not the goal here. That's what I would put forward.

[0:53:08] LW: You go sober at 24-years-old, or around that time you adopted your trademark bald look, that's so beautiful. We mentioned, we talked before the interview started about how that is a traditional look where you come from in Zimbabwe. You learned how to swim at 24. Talk about that time of transitioning into the silver version of you. What did that look like? How did that shape, or reshape your idea of success at that time, which I'm sure you had developed from living in London over those years?

[0:53:43] AB: Yeah. Oh, I love these questions, Light. For me, it was actually another thing that made my early sobriety a really exciting place without diminishing just how hard it is to make such a huge life transition in that way. Another thing that made it exciting for me was remembering that it's actually an opportunity to become who I truly am. Even though I didn't have the specifics of who I truly am actually meant, it meant that I could go into this place of discovery. I didn't have to perform anything for anyone anymore. I could really go back to the basics of what it is that I like to do. I knew that I love to write and the space that I had already created online and the Instagram that I have today, by the way, is where all of those original posts still are from day one to right now.

I love that my journey is very publicly documented, because people see where I am now an they can assume that it's always been this way. But it's been six years of commitment and consistently sharing and showing up. For me, writing was one of the first things that I really

tapped into in early sobriety. Swimming, as you say, because it's something that I always said that I was going to do, but I just never did because again, I was very unreliable even to myself. I would make so many plans and never follow through with anything.

There was discomfort in following through, because it meant that I would change my identity. I would suddenly become a reliable person. I couldn't accept that about myself. It was very interesting to do all of these things that are seemingly simple, but they were so rewarding for me, because I'd never done anything simple before, just for my own joy and pleasure. Another thing that I started exploring around that time was tantric sex, tantra. It was not just the sex aspect of it, but just tantra in general, like a slower, more intentional way of living and connecting with myself and nature and the world around me.

That was a very important part of my story, because in getting sober, I realized that I had just so much sexual shame, and so many ideas about what sexuality meant to me about how my body should be, about how I should perform in relationships with men, etc., etc. Just so many stories. That time of self-discovery, which is still in motion right now, allowed me to just explore so many different aspects of myself.

Even though it was challenging in parts and there were moments where I never built myself, I'm going to start drinking again, but I did experience just that discomfort that comes with unfurling and growing in a different way. I never thought to myself, I'm going to break my sobriety ever. I never did. I think it's because I had filled my life with all of these different things that were starting to fulfill me. That's when I discovered tea, my love for tea six years ago as well, because I realized that what I was really craving was ritual.

I come from a culture and a country where rituals are so important. Early in the morning, around 7 a.m. at my grandma's farm. Everyone sits by the fire stove and we all drink tea together before going to the farm. Even people eating together with your hands from the same part, everyone. Coming to the West meant that there were just rituals that were not a part of our daily living. Drinking in the way that I did and even taking drugs and being in a room with people passing plates of cocaine, whatever it might be, those were rituals that were not supported to my well-being. In sobriety, I was able to revisit my relationship with what rituals mean to me.

Now, a tea ceremony is a big part of my life. It's something I do all the time. I have it right here as you can see. This is something that I do every single day. Yeah, that was my process of self-discovery in early sobriety. Yeah.

[0:57:54] LW: Then about a year or two after that, the Me Too Movement hit. Everything got really polarized, I think, on a global scale. Where did you fall in that conversation?

[0:58:07] AB: I wasn't really tuned into that conversation so much, Light. That would have been about a year into my sobriety. I think, I was so tunnel vision on getting well, on just understanding what was happening with me. Actually, where it links a little bit is that when I started to share more about the sexual shame that I had and the different things that I was experiencing, it was at the time where I was starting to get curious about using some of the knowledge and insights and the training that I was guessing to support other people. Because I realized around that time that I'm a natural storyteller, but also, I really think assuming the role when you can of teaching and mentoring is so important.

I don't think we should be hoarding any information, or wisdom and insights. I made it a commitment for myself to be trained in different pockets of psychology, so that I could turn my story into a tool that could be supportive for other people. I was sharing a lot about sexual shame and the lengths of self-sabotage, how that presents itself in intimacy and interpersonal relationships. I started a sexual wellness company called Cherry Revolution in late 2017. There were a lot of conversations that were happening, because of the Me Too Movement. I think that is when I started to notice the huge division and a lot of things being pointed at the patriarchy. That's when I first came across that time and a lot of language around patriarchy and men are trash and kill all men, and just these very things that felt quite aggressive to my spirit.

I felt that if I was to be a woman that is truly in support of other women, there are certain aspects of this that I have to agree with, even if I don't. I did feel that pressure. Even though I was noticing that there are some important conversations that need to be had here, I don't quite agree with the approach that people are taking. I think it's much more nuanced than that. I think there's a lot of context that is missing. I felt that I couldn't say that. Because saying that felt like a betrayal to women.

Again, I didn't think much of it. I just thought that it's normal, even if you notice certain things, if it has potential to go against the movement, you don't say it. That was just my way of thinking. I didn't overthink it. Now when I look back, again, when I notice those patterns of self-censorship, that is around the time that it started. All I wanted to do was to create and continue conversations around removing shame from women's sexual pleasure. I found myself in movements that were heavily politicized. It's almost like, I had to take on a certain identity, or to pick a side, right? Yeah, that's the impact that I would say, 2017, and that time would have had on me and my identity in any way.

[1:01:08] LW: Were you having aspirations of becoming a culture speaker, or anything like that at that time? Or how are you making money? What was your day-to-day income, your work life?

[1:01:16] AB: When I started sharing in 2016, my work spread very quickly. I had no intention of building any community, any, being a persona of any kind. I just needed to get well and sharing in this way was the best way that I could do it. My writing and my work got picked up very quickly here in the UK. I would say, about six months later, I was invited to be on a national television show to talk about my journey getting sober, my sobriety.

I would say, around that time is when I saw that I had a natural gift for speaking as well, which is something that I had never even considered. From one thing to the next, I started getting invited to speak and share my story, but I was not earning anything at the time. Even though I was working with very big organizations. It was that exposure thing. I was working in advertising at the time. I was working in advertising up until early 2019, when my profile and everything that I was doing started to get so big that I wasn't able to manage that and to also be in a full-time job.

Yeah, that's how I was doing things at the time. But it was never a fixed plan to become a coach, to do consulting, to do mentoring, to do any of the things that I do now. It's almost happened accidentally, but then it's become a conscious choice every single time that I've realized that okay, there's something that I can add here. Around 2017, at that time, I was still working in advertising, but I had my company at the time and I was sharing publicly. Everything was starting to be in motion around then.

[1:02:55] LW: I'm sure you were a gifted writer. But I would imagine that one of the reasons you got so much traction so quickly was the honesty that you brought into your writing.

[1:03:05] AB: Yes, yes. Absolutely. I think it's something that I never really think about in the sense that even from that very first post that I shared publicly, or all of my journals, anywhere that I've been writing since I was 10, I've always been okay with allowing the messy stuff to be on the page. I've always been very okay with that. Even though I'm a very private person, I consider what I'm going to share. I'm very intentional about what I'm sharing and I share things when I've actually processed them and I've gone through them, but I will not admit anything. I won't hold anything back. Well, anything that I will always share what I believe is relevant to it.

I think you're very right. I think my work was very refreshing for a lot of people. Because anything that I write down with words, I can also say it with my voice and still give you the full picture. I think, yeah, that's a big part of it. Especially at the time, when I was 24-years-old, there were not many young women from a metropolitan city that were talking about getting sober at such a young age. I think now it's more on the rise, because sobriety is seen more as something that's in the area of wellness, so there's something quite appealing about it. At the time, it wasn't anything like that. I think that's also part of it.

[1:04:20] LW: How intentional were you at that time about algorithms and, “Oh, I need to post something every day. I need to post this content, because this gets more traction, this gets more views. I need to get on Twitter, as well as YouTube and blah, blah, blah.” Was that any of that an intentional choice for you?

[1:04:38] AB: Never. It's still not. Never was. It never was. I think that's why I enjoy sharing in the way that I do, because it's, it's not calculated. I think the reality is that yes, I am in business, I am an entrepreneur. There are many other things that I do. But I share when I have something to say. I always want to be intentional. I never want to do anything in a forced way. I think just the nature of the work that I do, being mindful of where I'm sabotaging myself, being mindful of when I'm acting out of integrity, it just translates into how I share. I don't need to be everywhere and everywhere.

I think we were talking about this before, around the conversations that I say yes to in terms of interviews, etc. There's so many things that I could be doing. I could have my face everywhere, but I don't need to. I don't need to. I think I'm also – I remind myself that I'm in this for the long haul. There's no rush. There's really no rush and no urgency. There really isn't. I allow for that to show through in how I share as well.

[1:05:42] LW: Where do you get that from though? That doesn't seem innate in our quick fix, fast-track to success social media culture. Where does that come from? Did you read about it in a book? Did you have a teacher, or mentor that's reminded you of this, of this deep wisdom? Then also, a second question is, what is your incubation period like, or process like when you're getting hit with a download, do you sit with it? Do you draft it out? Do you make sure it's perfect before you – perfectly aligned with what you feel like is authentic to you, before you publish it, or you just go with the first draft? How does that work? That's a lot.

[1:06:21] AB: No, no, no. Not at all. I love these questions. They're so refreshing. The first one, it's not even something that I've had to read necessarily. I think, maybe it's something to do with getting older, because by age, I'm 30-years-old, but I think I've always felt 60, even when I was 18. I've always felt like my grandma a little. I love that.

[1:06:43] LW: That's 60-year-old wisdom. Saying, it was you're a time billionaire. No hurry. Yeah.

[1:06:49] AB: What am I rushing for? Maybe there's also a cultural thing here. because where I'm from in Zimbabwe, even in the city, or whether you're in Gweru, no one's rushing anywhere. No one's in a – Really, no one. People will look at you strange if you're the one that's walking a little bit too fast. People take their time. People do wake up very early, for example, but their day is just so slow and leisurely.

I understand that the West doesn't really afford you the same grace, but I think everyone has their natural pace. I think, since getting sober, especially, and also, working for myself allows me to have that more and to honor that. But I do have my natural pace. I think, I'm always very intentional about following that. We were talking about this before, before we started recording, but I'm a huge walker. I can walk for hours. I can just walk and walk and walk and walk. It just

makes me so happy. I can sit and drink tea for hours and write, or just nap. That's my natural state.

When I was drinking, it was very easy for me to override that. I've always been this person, but I was just masking it, because the world we live in requires you to be fast, fast, fast, decide what you want to do now, optimize metrics, what are the things, blah, blah, blah, etc. Yeah, I think I just know what my natural pace is and I'm very honest about what that is. Yeah, I'm in it for the long haul. I'll always be a writer. I'll always speak as long as I have a voice. I'm grateful enough that I speak about topics that are ever evolving, which is why I said I'm in a constant state of observation, collecting stories in real life, talking to people.

Then when I share, it's not pre-planned. I tried before the whole schedule thing. It doesn't work. What works for me and with every single post you see, I feel it and then I just write it. It doesn't take me long to write. It probably takes about five minutes, a post that I write. Something comes to mind and then I just write and share in that moment. If I'm going live, I just press record and I just channel, see whatever comes out. I might have an idea, or a theme, or if I'm doing my podcast, I will have, even if it's three bullet points, so I have an idea of where I'm going. But some of them are more stream of consciousness. I know what works for me and it doesn't work to be very rigid with my creativity and my words. It needs to flow and it needs to be in the moment. That's the approach that I take. What's yours?

[1:09:19] LW: I would say, it's very similar to yours. I get these hits and I'll just stop what I'm doing and I'll start writing it down. I do post on more of a schedule though. I try to post a couple of times a day, at least.

[1:09:31] AB: Okay. That’s good.

[1:09:32] LW: Just because I've found that if I don't give myself a deadline, I won't really publish anything. I find that the deadline actually generates more content. The downloads, that I don't think about too much are usually the ones that resonate the most with –

[1:09:52] AB: Yes. Every time.

[1:09:54] LW: Yeah. With both myself and with the audience. Those are the ones that are most honest.

[1:09:59] AB: Yes.

[1:09:59] LW: If I have to go out of town and I'm sitting down thinking, what can I write for the next couple of days? Those are the ones that feel a bit contrived and inside. I go back. I'll go back and keep tweaking things that I posted weeks ago.

[1:10:14] AB: That's exactly what I do. I think, I found that to be very powerful. One, because it allows me to refine my message. There's so much goodness that I've shared before that not enough people have seen, that maybe I've even forgotten about. Also, if we're thinking about the platform in which you're sharing, for me, which is mainly Instagram, it's not a searchable platform, right? It's, you share something that is so profound and something that resonates and then it disappears. People won't see it again, unless they're so committed.

I also think bigger than that, it allows for my message to really sink in in the way that it does, because there is a through line to everything. Sometimes people need to see things again and again. I continue to realize that it's not about reinventing the wheel. It's about actually repeating your message in new and creative ways, so that you can embody it better as well, but so other people can. That also offers me relief and creates the – not knowing that I don't have to reinvent the wheel. I can simply just change, even if it's a word, or a sentence and it's a completely different message, but it's still tapping into the core. I love that.

[1:11:19] LW: Love that.

[1:11:20] AB: Yeah.

[1:11:34] LW: A couple of years after Me Too, we had the summer of 2020, we were all woke. You're aspiring to be woke. We were ashamed of how unwoke we were. What was interesting is, so I had been posting. This is interesting. In February of 2020, I made a commitment to post a video a day. That was my deadline for myself. Most of my videos were about wellness topics;

meditation, happiness, whatever, inspiration. George Floyd comes along. I'm like, I can't post something about inspiration today. I'm going to sound tone deaf.

I told an honest story about how I got profiled, because I think people don't see me as someone in the same category as a George Floyd. That video that I posted that day, which I honestly took me five minutes to do, when I was just so happy I got it done, because now I don't have to think about posting a video for the rest of the day until the next day. That video got 3.5, 4 million views. It legitimately went viral more than any other video I've ever posted. My follower count increased. It doubled within a few days.

I essentially became a voice of reason for helping white people understand what was going on with the whole conversation around Black Lives Matter and blah, blah, blah. It turned out, I was really good at it. When I look back now at some of those posts, most of them still hold up. Some of them, I probably wouldn't say it in the same way, or say it at all. That's why I resonated with your work, because you posted something saying, how you were leaving the woke culture. I'm really curious, what was your evolutionary process? Because I'm sure you were all woke at one point and then you started asking yourself questions as you've been doing your whole life. It led you to this conversation around self-censorship. Let's talk a little bit about that.

[1:13:50] AB: Yeah. Gosh, the further away that we get from that time, the more that I'm just – I just think, what the hell happened that year to all of us? For me, 2020, around that time, the way that it had started, I was doing my work around self-sabotage, which I have been at that point in time, had been doing for about four years and just having conversations that were always very thought-provoking. Some could say they were controversial, but they were never really that controversial anyway.

I think, because of the work that I had been doing in sexual wellness and sexual activism, which it was labeled, but it never really was that. Being a sober activist, I'd never really said that it was. I was seen as an activist already in many different ways. Even though in the background, I had so many questions, there were different things that I didn't believe anymore, whether it was around feminist ideology, or just that I had questions about still very much supported and respected. Still do. But I just had questions and curiosities and different contradictions that I wanted to at least discuss, but didn't think I could.

When 2020 came around and there were already – there was already tension around the handling of the pandemic and the medical choices that people would make, or might not make, etc. But the George Floyd incident, it was a very emotionally intense time. It was a very emotionally intense time. I don't think I've ever felt anything like that in my lifetime. I don't know if I will. On a collective level, that same intensity, everyone focused on one thing that is happening in one country, but it's so global and it's kick-starting such vital conversations and I will never dismiss that.

I actually think a lot of things have changed for the better, because it's meant that people have had to be in the state of self-inquiry, which I'm awful. But I immediately slipped into a place of deep anger and rage. A part of me felt like I had to. I didn't have any other choice but to do that. Very similar to you, I made one specific expression of rage and anger. I think, there were things that I was resharing and reposting at the time, just different mantras and different phrases and different things. Again, the emotions, it was all consuming, but there was also this very addictive and beautiful solidarity that was happening at the same time. You have this cocktail of feelings and emotions.

I was very angry. Because essentially, I was being told that I'm always going to be oppressed, that this incident is absolute evidence that I will always be in the position of victim, always, regardless of what I do, regardless of – All of it. None of it matters. We will always be in this place of victimhood. That made me very rageful. I was resharing a lot of things without any critical thought, without asking who's saying it, where is it coming from, what is the context, there was no rationale. Nothing. It was purely emotion.

It meant that anytime someone approached me to say, “Hey, have you thought about this?” Or a conversation from a place of rationale, it made me furious. Because someone trying to speak to someone who's in a deeply emotional place, from a place of rationale, it never works. There were a lot of mantras that I was repeating around white supremacy and silence being violence, etc., and many other things of that nature, that I didn't truly believe. I think there was this deep desire to belong, and I felt I was already starting to belong anyway, that I was just finding myself performing and behaving in ways that I hadn't even decided.

Anyway, I shared something specifically. This man sent me a message, and he was a mixed race man. He sent me a message saying something along the lines of, “Do you think this is the best approach to take?” Because of a lot of things that I was sharing at the time and reposting. He simply asked a question. I publicly shamed this man. I took a screenshot of something that he had said to me in private in my DMs, and I made it a post on my Instagram, and it was at that time where there were so many eyes on Instagram. You could post one thing, and it could just take a life of its own. So many careers were created in that time. So many people's identities were formed in that time, because of the validation and affirmation that they were getting in this really unique environment that I don't know if that will ever happen again.

Immediately, and in the caption, I wrote something around it being an example of white supremacy, people positioning their questions as some – Something along those lines. Immediately, it got validated. Immediately, there was a huge response to it. “Thank you for saying this.” This people were calling out this man, etc., etc. There were maybe 4,000 likes in the space of under 10 minutes. Just these things that really just feed your ego and make you feel exhilarated that you've done something right. You're on the right side of history, whatever it might be.

Just as quickly, it all just started to feel very wrong. It felt very wrong just as quickly. I think that post was up for a maximum of 20 minutes, and there were hundreds of comments, and it was being re-shared, this is an example of white supremacy, blah, blah, blah, blah. Suddenly, it's almost like, I had an out-of-body experiencing where I was witnessing an alternate reality version of myself, which wasn't actually me. I felt deeply uncomfortable. I knew that I had found myself in the clutches of groupthink. I had abandoned all rationale. There was no critical thinking. I was not asking questions. I had betrayed my values and my own boundaries in order to belong, and this moment was illustrated this perfectly.

I immediately deleted the post, and I didn't message the man straight away, but I did a couple of days later, and I apologized for that. He didn't think it was that big of a deal, but I definitely did. That was the moment where I started to zoom out of this very addictive environment that was feeding my ego, and I started to realize what I had been participating in. As someone that had been researching and studying self-sabotage for such a long time, I realized that what was happening was collective sabotage. People called it cancel culture, etc., but at the time, I didn't

believe that cancel culture existed. I thought it was just an excuse for people to evade accountability, which is another mantra that you hear, right?

The language that was more specific to me and made sense was collective sabotage. It was a group effort to get in our own way. We're saying that we want unity, we're saying that we want solutions, but actually, our behavior is proving otherwise, because the moment someone asks questions, we're shaming them. The moment someone deviates from what is seen as acceptable, we dox them, we humiliate them.

I always think of it like a virtual public stoning session. You're in the public square and everyone's stoning you. That's how it feels. That's what I did. That's the environment that I created. That's when my own process of realizing that I had participated in something that was so vile and disturbing to my spirit. Not only that, I had been internalizing certain things as fact, without even asking myself questions. I'd fallen into the trap of identity politics. Then I started writing about it bit by bit in my notes, in my journal, and that eventually became my declaration, why I'm leaving the cult of wokeness.

[1:21:56] LW: I think people hear this, initially, you can conclude, well see, that's what happens when you try to be woke. But really, you're just talking about any form of groupthink, any form of medical chamber. You need to have some sense of diversity and just formulate your own opinion, no matter how long it takes to be able to do that, which is incredibly difficult when you're connected in the way that we're all connected on social media and just through the news and the “new,” because it's rarely new information. You're just watching, repeat. They should call it the repeated.

[1:22:27] AB: We'll start a repetition.

[1:22:29] LW: The repetition. It's not the news, it's the repetition. Okay, leaving cancel/woke culture, what was the exact title of the post?

[1:22:40] AB: Why I'm Leaving the Cult of Wokeness.

[1:22:44] LW: Of wokeness. Okay. Talk about that moment before. Did you feel confident the entire way through from inception to publication? Or was there some doubt, like this is really going to – if I come out and say, “I don't feel oppressed as a black person and da, da, da, da,” is that too much? Am I going a little bit too far, even though that's become my brand at this point?

[1:23:07] AB: Yeah. I would say, it was around June, July that I started to write and started to think about putting some of my thoughts out. The beautiful thing is that it had never fully become a part of my brand, this idea that I'm oppressed. I was using other people's words and language to share my stance on what I was supporting. I never used that language myself specifically. I think I did indirectly, whether it's talking about opportunities that were not given to me as a black person, blah, blah, blah.

Before that lesson even came out, I started sharing my thoughts on intolerance. I started sharing my thoughts on division. I started sharing my thoughts on being mindful of the people that were put on pedestals, without actually allowing ourselves to think critically. I was sharing about the importance of not discarding people, because of one mistake, as someone that had made plenty of mistakes and had the blueprint of getting sober. I knew that I had dismissed a lot of people, a lot of people who are now brilliant friends of mine, different thinkers and different curious people that were contrarians, or mavericks, or people just went against the grain, I had dismissed them because of their identity, because of something that they said once without taking in the full picture.

Everything that I was starting to realize about my own behavior and participation I was sharing. I built a little bit of confidence over time before that letter, but everything that was in that open letter was very raw and it was very direct and it was very upfront, even in the way that I opened the letter with, if there's one thing I'm not afraid of, it's been cancelled. Saying something like that in 2020 or early 2021 was just a very audacious thing to say, but I knew that's what it had to be.

In the moments before that, I was in my living room, which is where we're speaking from right now. I was on my couch and I had been writing this thing for a couple of hours and I was feeling so much – I felt so charged. I felt like I could shoot up through the roof, like a little rocket, like a little bald rocket. I felt so nervous. I felt so scared. I felt so uncomfortable. But I also felt so

excited. I felt so liberated. It was almost like that first feeling that I had when I started my Instagram page on day one of getting sober and putting that picture up off a cocktail, a photo that I'd taken before and saying that I've found myself at 24-years-old in the clutches of alcoholism. It was that same exhilaration and fear and the exact same feeling.

Then I shared it to my newsletter. My heart was pumping. I think at the time, I had a very modest number on my newsletter. I think maybe about 3,000 people. I can't quite remember, which felt modest at the time compared to my following in other areas. Shared this thing. I'd never received so many replies before of people saying, “Thank you so much for sharing this. I've always felt this way.” Again, it was this validation and affirmation that I'd received months prior, but it was in a different way.

I shared this thing from a place of integrity and knowing that this is not comfortable, but I have to be honest. I can't lie anymore. I knew that sharing it in my newsletter was hiding. I was hiding, because it's safe to do it there, because then I don’t have –

[1:26:33] LW: Yeah. These are your fans.

[1:26:34] AB: Exactly. The next day, I believe that it was January the 2nd, I posted it onto my Instagram. Then again, this thing just took off. I had no control over it. The comments were not all just loving. Thank you. Of course, they were not.

[1:26:56] LW: You're not black. You're a sell-out.

[1:26:58] AB: Right. How can you say that? People called me.

[1:27:01] LW: What about this or that situation?

[1:27:04] AB: Right. You're the British Candace Owens. There were a lot of things that people were saying, but still those comments were not even that many at all. They were not even that many at all. I think it's because in my open letter, it wasn't just me leaving the left and going into the right. It wasn't that. I think sometimes it's easier to deal with the person when they're moving

from one ideology and neatly into another; one political party and neatly into another. For me, it wasn't anything like that.

I am, if we look at my values, I am a left-leaning person. I don't over-attach myself to any ideology. If we look at my values and what I stand for and who I am, you could think where to place me. I think for a lot of people, they didn't and still don't know where to place me. What I was saying was echoing so many people's hearts, and it offered so many people relief. I remember not being able to sleep for about three days after that. I just couldn't sleep. Because the energy of that –

[1:28:02] LW: You keep checking the comments.

[1:28:04] AB: Oh, of course. Of course.

[1:28:07] LW: What was your relationship to comments like? Were you replying to everything? Were you just letting your fans reply?

[1:28:13] AB: I was allowing people to have the conversation amongst themselves. I was responding to some things, but the energy was so intense and so overwhelming. This thing was spreading. Some very high-profile people shared it at the time. It was going beyond what I could control. With the analytics that I could record from my end, from my newsletter, it was read by, I think within the first three weeks, it was read by 1.5 million people. It was shared, but on different platforms that I don't have any control. This thing was huge.

[1:28:47] LW: Was Fox News reaching out, wanting you to come on and talk to Tucker Carlson or somebody like that?

[1:28:54] AB: No, they didn’t. They didn’t. But I was able to have really important conversations. Something that I knew from that time is that I don't want this to become a gimmick. I don't want it to become my personality. I don't want to become the person that speaks about wokism and this is just my – I've been very mindful of that from the very beginning, which is why I think also my work resonates so much, because I will have the conversations and I will say what I need to

say. I know that the problem is much bigger. It's a philosophical problem. It's not a politics problem.

I know that if I just focus on looking at the cost of self-centering, it allows me to stay honest and it allows me to really stay in the gray. Yeah, the moment before pressing share in such a public way, there was a lot of discomfort. There was a lot of anxiety. But I knew that I had to speak. I had been holding this thing in for such a long time. My need to stay true to myself was always going to come before any discomfort that I felt.

[1:30:00] LW: For the listener who hasn't read your piece yet, what is the thesis? What are the action steps for someone who's listening to this and goes, “I agree with that, too, but I don't know how to do that. I don't know how to navigate these conversations with my friends, my family, who have these really strong polarizing views that I'm supposed to agree with. What do I do to be myself, be authentic to what I believe?”

[1:30:24] AB: Right. Something that I think about often, and there's really no neat way to do this, because it will look very different for everyone. If you're anything like I was, I think there was a big fear around listening to people that have different opinions, even opinions that I really don't agree with. I was so tight in my echo chambers that anything that veered from what already affirmed my beliefs, the cognitive dissonance was too intense. I just couldn't handle different opinions.

Something that really helped me on a practical level was listening to different thinkers, listening to people that don't echo my sentiments. Allowing myself in conversations with people, if I feel safe to do so, to be in debate, to say, “Actually, I don't agree with that. Or, I feel differently about that because of this.” To do it from a grounded place, not to do it from a defensive place. The very first thing that I personally needed to do and what I think most people need to do is to embrace and understand that different worldviews exist, number one. But to allow yourself to take in different worldviews, so you can refine your own.

I think the communication piece of what do I actually say comes way after that, because I think there's a more silent and personal process that has to happen first, because I think a lot of us have to deal with the mob in our own minds before we try to think of what do I say.

[1:31:49] LW: I like that. The mob in our own minds.

[1:31:52] AB: Yeah. That's how I think. For me, that was the first place that I had to look at and make peace with. It did mean listening to people that think differently to me and strengthening my own worldview. Yeah.

[1:32:07] LW: Yeah, it's funny. I just sent something out to my email list, saying to invite conflicting views into your echo chamber. Watch an Andrew Tate video, see what he has to say. Kevin Samuels and whoever else you have a problem with. It doesn't mean you have to agree with them, but it could help you shape your own perspective a little bit more. I think it's definitely a good thing.

[1:32:30] AB: Absolutely. Just a little funny, very quick story on that, I remember in 2020, watching Kevin Samuels. People were saying how bad he is, how wrong he is, etc. I thought, let me just watch. I was in that place, which is why I'm recommending to listen to people that I will by default, think that I will not like, will not agree with. I found myself thinking, he's kind of right.

[1:32:59] LW: That's how I feel about Andrew Tate. I was like, Tate is actually making some good place here.

[1:33:05] AB: Then I was like, “Oh, my goodness. It's because I've been taking in what people that I trust and believe, taking in by default what they will think I will like and not like.” Also, I've been taking out of context clips as if they are the full story of what someone needs to say. I can take what I need from someone and leave what I don't. It doesn't mean that I have to take everything. I think that's something that's been very helpful for me actually, to remember that as an adult, as an autonomous adult. I get to choose what is going to be useful and what is not useful. I have to accept that what might not be useful for me might be to someone else, even if I don't like it. Yeah, that mindset has been helpful. It was such a shock to me when I realized Kevin Samuels, I actually quite liked him.

[1:33:55] LW: Well, the same is true with our parents, our grandparents. We just inherently do that. We don't agree with everything they say, but we don't take offense as quickly as we would

have take offense to a Kevin Samuels, or to some stranger on the Internet, because we understand the context. We know where these people came from. We know how they were raised. We know how they were conditioned and indoctrinated. We can separate that in our mind, but we forget that everybody has the same experience. Everyone had a certain upbringing.

Kevin Samuels, for instance, he had a cancer scare when he was in his early 20s. After that, he was like, “I'm not holding back anymore. I'm living like every day is my last.” That informed his willingness to put himself out there in the way that he was doing it. Now I'm not saying everything he said was correct, but –

[1:34:42] AB: Of course. Of course.

[1:34:44] LW: I'm loving seeing all these polarizing figures in the world, because it starts conversations. You were at a podcast with Jordan Peterson. That's someone else who a lot of people who have only experienced little clips here and there have formed strong opinions about. They've never actually sat down and read the guy's whole book. He says himself, “Look, I'm actually quite liberal in my values. A lot of people think I'm like this MAGA Republican.” Because he's confident and strong in his beliefs.

[1:35:17] AB: I think, it can be easy for people to hear us mention some of these names and have a visceral response to it.

[1:35:24] LW: People are getting triggered right now listening to this. Like, “I thought Light was one of us.” I am one of you in some respects. I have my own opinions about other things and other respects.

[1:35:35] AB: Yes. I think that can be an invitation to, instead of projecting the discomfort that you feel to give meaning to the other person to be like, “Huh, I wonder why I expected Light to speak in this way, or to reject that person or to not?” What are the expectations that I have of people that I don't actually know? I think those moments of discomfort, we shouldn't judge them. I think they're so normal. There are people that I can hear their names and I will have a visceral response before I then intellectualize that I think, “Okay, why am I feeling in this way?”

I think we have so many opportunities of self-inquiry. That's also something that I would invite people to do before allowing yourself to just react and to give meaning to someone else's worldview, to just come back to yourself and inquire about why you feel that way and whether you can just take it and leave it and still accept the other person as a whole human being.

[1:36:31] LW: I posted on my socials, if you have a question for Africa, what would you ask? I got a few questions, but I'm just going to ask you one, which is –

[1:36:39] AB: Sure.

[1:36:39] LW: - what area of life are you struggling to be in integrity with?

[1:36:42] AB: Oh, that's a good question. What area of life am I struggling to be in integrity with? I will try to keep this answer short, but it's in the realm of relationships. Where for me there can be the most tension, romantic relationships. More specifically right now, monogamy has never worked for me. Even from when I was quite young. I of course didn't have the language for it, but I've just naturally, I've never understood on a deep level monogamy, or seen it as something that is a part of myself. It's something that I've always tried, because naturally relationships are assumed to be monogamous.

I'm finding myself in a place right now where I am navigating a relationship that is in a very defining stage, where we have to get specific about what it can look like to be in a non-monogamous relationship. I'm finding that a part of myself wants to fit the mold of what is expected of me, to honor the fact that I am a non-monogamous person, but I'm willing to be as monogamous as you need me to be. That's something that I am working with right now, because I don't want to go against what feels true to me in order to make it work in a relationship.

Yeah, that's an area that I would say, I'm having to take a close look at, so that I can accept that there's a level of risk with me being completely myself and loving in the way that I want to love and to be loved. I might potentially lose this man, or this man might not be able to be in this

relationship dynamic. I think that's the main thing that I can think of when that question is put forward. That's the thing that's at the forefront right now.

[1:38:33] LW: Beautiful. How are you defining success these days? What does that look like for Africa Brooke?

[1:38:42] AB: Success these days looks like spaciousness, having space in my life, having space to nap every single day, which I do between 3 and 4.

[1:38:53] LW: Siesta?

[1:38:54] AB: Exactly. Something that I brought back from Zimbabwe. I nap every single day. Spaciousness is to me, success. The space to be with my friends and to be with the people in my life, I really care about having rich, fulfilling relationships. For me, true success is having meaningful relationships with my people and having time for them. Also, success looks like sharing my message without holding back. I feel that I do that very well and it feels really good. I don't hold anything back.

I give myself the space and the time that I need to actually nurture my message, so that I'm not performing for the algorithm, or for my audience, or for potential clients, or whatever it is. I think because of that, actually, I experience huge, wildly success. I think, because I've clearly defined what success looks like for me in the simplest ways, it allows me to be extremely successful in the more mind, wildly stuff.

[1:39:56] LW: One thing you said earlier that I just really inspired to hear is you've mentioned your values, which means you clearly thought about your values, which I think is an important thing for all of us to do. You don't have to be an influencer. You don't have to be any special person to sit there and just say, okay, what's really important to me? A quick way to be able to discern that is, I think, and I would love to hear your thoughts on this, when you think about the end of your life and people get up at your eulogy and talk about what they remember about you, what do you want them to remember most about you? I think that's a quick way of just, “Hey, I want them to remember me as a generous person.” Okay, so generosity, that's one of my values. I want them to remember me as a family person. Okay, family connection. Making time

for that is one of my values. What are your thoughts on that? How should someone derive their values?

[1:40:46] AB: I think that's such a simple, practical, easy way for people to figure out what their values are. I have another side of that, which I think could work with that very well. For me, we have to be honest about what our existing values are. I think it's very easy, for example, for me, I value integrity. I value autonomy. I value freedom, and I value relationships.

[1:41:12] LW: Honesty.

[1:41:13] AB: Honesty, exactly. These are the things that I deeply value. When I think of my future self, I want to value these things. I often think about the importance of being very honest. I think, how I put it is, the results that you're currently seeing in your life will show you what it is you currently value. We all want to say we value freedom, we value transparency, we value this. Are the results that you're currently seeing in your life showing you that you value that? When I look back to 2020, and that period that we spoke about, that highly intense time, I could have said at the time that I value integrity and honesty, transparency. The results in my life were actually showing me that I value popularity over truth, right?

I think you have to be honest about your existing values. The best question is, what are the results that I'm currently seeing in my life? If you say, you value health and well-being, but what are you putting into your body? What's your relationship with porn, for example? Are you delaying certain things that you need to be doing and procrastinating? “Ah, I'm not going to do this now. I'll do it tomorrow.” Then you find yourself in that cycle. Be honest about what you're currently seeing. Then I think what you've put forward is beautiful. Then that can be your desired, right? At the end of your life, what would you like for people to say about you? That will show you what your desired values are, versus your existing ones. I like that.

[1:42:44] LW: I love that. Yeah. Every day is another chance to turn it all around. You don’t like where you are? Don't feel the shame. Just turn it around today.

[1:42:53] AB: Absolutely.

[1:42:54] LW: I love it Beautiful. Thank you so much for coming on and sharing your perspective and your backstory. I feel like I have a dream job of having this podcast and I get to talk to people who inspire me from a distance. Then you may not know who the hell I am, but I get to reach out to you and say, “Hey, let's talk about this.” I'm just appreciative of that. I'm appreciative of you. I really, really look forward to getting to cross paths with you in person at some point sooner, rather than later. Maybe we'll enjoy fruit bowls, so we can circle back to the old days of you going through your fruit trees with your sister.

[1:43:36] AB: Yes. Yes.

[1:43:36] LW: Having that experience of freedom and liberation.

[1:43:41] AB: Thank you so much. I'm usually in conversation because of the work that I do, etc. But every now and again, I have a conversation that I know is going to really stay with me. I think I know this is one of them. I feel, you've reflected my story back to me in a way that I find to be so profound from my father, to my mother, to my upbringing, to driving to Pearline City with my siblings and tracking my life to now. Your questions have been so profound. I really look forward to listening back to this. I think it's no accident that you've landed where you are in the world and doing the work you do. I can't wait for a part two. I think we're going to have to have one.

[1:44:23] LW: Well, your book is coming out soon, I imagine, right?

[1:44:26] AB: Yes, next year. Yeah, so we'll be coming back.

[1:44:29] LW: Yeah. You'll come back on and we'll talk about that. We'll talk a little bit – What's the book about?

[1:44:35] AB: The book is called *The Third Perspective*.

[1:44:39] LW: Ooh, I love that. Is that your title, or their title?

[1:44:42] AB: That's mine. It's mine.

[1:44:44] LW: Okay. Love that. *The Third Perspective.* I don't even know what that means, but it's fantastic. It sounds amazing. I'm intrigued. I wonder what the first and second perspective are, then I want to –

[1:44:56] AB: To me, the third perspective, essentially, is an invitation for us to go beyond the binary.

[1:45:01] LW: The nuance.

[1:45:01] AB: An invitation for us to – Yeah. It's a call for nuance. It's just an opportunity for us to refine our worldview, to learn to be in relationship with each other, even if we are different. It's a reminder as well that understanding does not mean acceptance for the examples that we gave around Jordan Peterson. You don't have to accept in order to understand. I think there's always an opportunity in every single interaction with another human being to create a third perspective. It's not about mine or yours. Even in our conversation today, we've created a very big one. Those are the seeds of the book that I'm –

[1:45:40] LW: My God. You know what just hit me is like, Pearline City, it's like, you're picking the fruits that are right for your life at this moment. Some of those understandings aren't ripe yet though, and some are a little bit too much, and so you just – you cherry pick what feels good for you and you leave the rest behind. I love that.

[1:45:57] AB: Oh. Oh, I love you. That is it.

[1:45:59] LW: Maybe you can work that into the book.

[1:46:05] AB: Oh, that's beautiful. You've made my day with that. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:46:10] LW: Thank you so much for listening to my interview with Africa Brooke. For more inspiration, make sure to follow Africa on the socials @AfricaBrooke. That's Africa and then B-R-

O-O-K-E. Of course, I'll put links to everything that Africa and I discussed in the show notes on my website, which is lightwatkins.com/show.

If this is your first time listening to The Light Watkins Show, we've got an incredible archive of interviews with many other luminaries who share how they found their path and their purpose, such as Yung Pueblo, Ava DuVernay, Ed Mylett, Steven Pressfield, Zachary Levi, and so many more. You can search these interviews by subject matter in case you want to hear episodes about people who've taken leaps of faith, or people who've overcome financial struggles, or people who've navigated health challenges, etc. You can get all of that at lightwatkins.com/show.

You can also watch these interviews on my YouTube channel, if you want to put a face to a story. Just go to YouTube and search Light Watkins Podcast and you'll see the entire playlist. As I mentioned in my intro, you can listen to the raw, unedited version of every podcast in my Happiness Insiders online community. If you're the type that likes hearing all the mistakes and the false starts and the chit chat in the beginning and the end of the edited version of the episode, then you can listen to all of that by joining my Happiness Insiders online community.

Not only are you going to have access to those unedited versions of the podcast, but you will also have access to my 108-day meditation challenge and my 30-day mindfulness challenge and the gratitude challenge and the Find Your Purpose Masterclass and all the other content that you're going to need for becoming the best version of yourself.

Finally, to help me bring more amazing guests onto the show, it will go a long way if you can take 10 seconds to rate the podcast. Just glance at your screen, click on the name of the podcast, scroll down past the seven previous episodes, you'll see a space with five blank stars. If you like this conversation, if you find it useful and inspirational, tap the star all the way on the right and you've left us a five-star reading. If you want to go the extra mile, leave a review. Just write the name of the episode you think a new listener should start with, or one thing that you really love about the podcast. Thank you so much in advance for that.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story, about someone just like me and you who took a leap of faith in the direction of their purpose. Until then, keep

trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep taking your leap of faith. If no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you so much and have a great day.

[END]