

EPISODE 159

“MW: When I was deciding whether or not to run again, I was aware that it would happen again. This time, in some ways, it's worse. This time, the crystal lady thing seems to have been replaced by, ‘I'm a horrible human being, and I scream and yell and I'm mean to people’. You get some emotional antibodies when you go through something like that. You get to the point of realizing, ‘At least I see this now. I have to be making a difference on some level for people to be working so hard to obstruct the process by which anybody would really hear what I have to say.’”

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:46] 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 on the show, I am honored to have Marianne Williamson, who is a best-selling author, a political activist and a spiritual thought leader. Marianne also ran for the Democratic presidential nomination back in 2020. Recently, she announced her candidacy for the 2024 presidential race, because she says that the political status quo will not disrupt itself and that what we need is a president who tells it like it is - that president could do a lot of good.

For over three decades, Marianne has been a leader in the spiritual and religiously progressive circles. She's the author of 15 books, four of which have been number-one *New York Times* best-sellers. She's the author of that famously viral quote that everybody originally attributed to Nelson Mandela, which is, “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.” She is definitely walking her talk.

Marianne also worked throughout her career on poverty, anti-hunger and racial reconciliation issues back in 2004. She Co-Founded, The Peace Alliance and she supports the creation of a US Department of Peace. In this interview, we talk about her backstory that led her to want to

introduce love into politics. We spoke about how back in 2020 she was dismissed as this kooky spiritual candidate who was this crystal-loving lady, how she didn't end up breaking out from the crowd and why that was the case, and why she decided to announce her candidacy for 2024.

We also talked about what it's like to run for president as a non-politician and what she learned from her previous experience. This interview also happened on a day when Marianne had a couple of major hit pieces written about her in the media, so she shared some very vulnerable insights and thoughts about how that made her feel and how she was navigating those challenges. Of course, we also talk about the course of miracles and how she's able to view her ups and downs of running for president through that lens.

All in all, this was a very poignant conversation. I felt honored to be able to speak to someone whose work I admire so much and who's taking the biggest leap of faith and running for president of the United States. Whose journey is also very aspirational for a lot of us, spiritual seekers who want to become more engaged in the world and make it a better place for all. Without further ado, I introduce you to one of my personal heroes, 2024 presidential candidate, Marianne Williamson.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:04:09] LW: Marianne Williamson, thank you so much for joining my podcast. I'm really looking forward to diving more into your story and into your platform. To kick things off, for the listener who is not as familiar with your background, can you just give us a little snapshot of how you got into – I really want to talk about, *A Course in Miracles*, how you got into that. But you weren't born this spiritual being, although you were born into a family that was very concerned with social justice. Yeah, just give us a little montage of how you got to that party where you saw *A Course in Miracles* on that table.

[0:04:45] MW: I was brought up in a home that definitely had concern with traditional social justice values, liberal Democrats and so forth, but also a Jewish home. My grandfather particularly was very religious, so that was a strong sense of God. It was just a given. Then I was always interested, starting when I was in high school. When I was 14 years old, I took my first philosophy class. I went to a summer school class at Phillips Exeter Academy in New

Hampshire. I remember that title of the class was Philosophical Approaches to the Question of God.

I remember, my heart just leaped seeing that on the page, like there is such a thing. I loved that class and I remember being introduced to Kierkegaard and other philosophers. Then that extended into a college. I always was very interested in exoteric and esoteric. I would be interested in traditional religious philosophers. It could be St. Augustine, it could be Martin Buber, it could be Heidegger. I was always fascinated in things like that, but I was also interested in astrology. I was interested in Carl Jung. I was interested in Alan Watts and Rob Das. That was also very much the time that I was raised in, starting about when I was in high school.

Then into my college years, that was the counter cultural milieu of that time. It was musical, sexual, philosophical, spiritual, political, all of those things. It was a revolutionary time, the 60s and the 70s. After the assassinations, there was Kennedy first of course, but then Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King. It felt as though the political and the spiritual aspects of the counter-cultural revolution divided into two. I never got the memo. I never got the memo that you're supposed to separate those aspects of self. They both remained very important to me.

Then as my own personal journey proceeded, particularly when I first read, *A Course in Miracles*, I felt this is where I belong in terms of what my heart feels like I can contribute. I started reading *A Course in Miracles*, I loved it. I never thought of it as a career, because when my career began, there was no such career niche. There was nothing to be ambitious for. It never occurred to me that I would one day be able to make a living doing these things. Remember, when I first started lecturing on *A Course in Miracles*, I was still a temporary secretary in Los Angeles. It never even occurred to me that it would be something I could make a living off. It was a suggested donation of \$3.

Then what happened, of course, was that more and more people became interested in these kinds of things. Then I sold my first book. Someone said to me, you should write a book based on this, etc. You would ask how I got to the point of even seeing the book on the coffee table in New York. I'd been living in San Francisco. I went to a party in New York. I saw these books on the table and I opened it and I read in the introduction. This is *A Course in Miracles*. It says, The

Course can be summed up very simply in this way. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists, here analyze the peace of God.

I've talked about this in my books. So, I started reading. You know how you just – going through a book and it was fascinating material to me, but I saw the Christian language. Now I had studied in college, Christian philosophers and Thomas Aquinas and so forth, but this wasn't school. Being Jewish, I was a little like, "I don't know about this." But then the more I read, I remember in the introduction it said, "This is a required course."

Now if you keep reading, you realize, it's not saying this particular book is a required course, it's saying, the spiritual journey is that's what living is. I looked up the front and I didn't see an author – anyway was just intrigued. Then I ended up seeing it in a bookstore and then my boyfriend brought it back to the apartment and the rest really is my personal history.

[0:09:05] LW: What struggles had you gone through when you came across this work and how did you think about life missions at that point in your life and callings?

[0:09:15] MW: I think the introduction, perhaps the beginning also, a chapter of *A Return to Love*. I talked about my journey in my twenties. I was very much a child of my generation, sex, drugs, rock and roll. Also, just the difficulty of individuation at that time. I think the twenties are hard. When I look at what young people go through today, I don't see it as that different. The twenties are hard, becoming an adult is hard. I went through what everybody I knew went through and what I think people go through now.

I couldn't find my way. I dropped out of college in my junior year. I was aimless. I wasn't looking for a life purpose or mission at that point. I was just treading water, looking to survive and find some sense of meaning and purpose in my life. I didn't have any grandiose concept of life purpose or mission. I just wanted to find where I belonged in this world. Of course, in *A Course of Miracles*, it says, "The goal of the course is the attainment of inner peace."

Now, I think there's one truth spoken in many different ways. The *Course in Miracles* doesn't have any monopoly on truth. It doesn't claim to. So, whether you're looking at the mystical truths and Judaism, or Christianity, or Islam, or psychotherapy, AA, yoga, transcendental meditation. I

mean, there are so many doorways to the same room. Even when I read the *Course in Miracles*, I didn't find like, "Oh, I have found the truth."

I had read so many books and even in my own religion, things that I embraced, but I didn't know how to apply these concepts in a meaningful, practical way. That's what the *Course in Miracles* did for me in a way that I had not found before, but it's not for everyone. If it's for you, you know it. I think that's true of all our different religious and spiritual and psychotherapeutic paths. When I say when the student is ready, the teacher appears and you find that, that is a particular doorway for you.

[0:11:21] LW: You became a very prolific teacher and author through interpreting this work and helping other people, because you said you've been working 40 years with people who have been experiencing pain and suffering. Did you have the same moment when it came to getting into politics, where you felt called to take what was existing and put your interpretation on that and then spread that to help people? If so, when did that happen and how did that happen?

[0:11:52] MW: Well, with the *Course in Miracles*, once again, as I said before, there was no career niche. I'm also thinking that my talking about the *Course in Miracles* was going to be any a career. It was just what I loved to do. Then when I had started, I moved to LA and I was working at this place called the Philosophical Research Society. They had these lecture series and the woman who ran the place that I hear you do this book called *A Course in Miracles*. I'm looking for someone to give lectures. I was so excited. I was just beside myself. I thought that was just the coolest thing you could do. I was still working there in their book publishing department, but I got to do these lectures.

Then what happened was not long after I started those lectures, the AIDS crisis burst onto the scene, much like when COVID burst onto the scene. All of a sudden, there's this horrible disease in our midst, right? More and more people, particularly gay men in LA, started coming to my lectures. That really was how my career began. Then my work, my nonprofit activism that emerged from that and then my first book came out at that same time and all those things.

Now with something like AIDS, and then there would be people, let's say, who were diagnosed with cancer. Then there would be people who they found out their child was on heroin, or they

themselves were 12 step people and also doing this 11-step work dealing with *A Course in Miracles*, or it could be someone who lost a loved one. My life and career unfolded in such a way that I found myself up close and personal with people whose lives were in trouble. I didn't even conceive of it that way. I was just answering to what life was calling me to, and it was meaningful and wonderful.

When my career began, I began lecturing in 1983. It was a sense that America was basically okay, that people whose lives were in trouble, that was the exception and not the rule. About 20 years later, I began to notice a change. A lot of it came about in the late 90s when I moved to Michigan. I noticed it before. I began to gradually notice that the culture had become one in which people dealing with serious anxiety, serious grief, serious depression, serious chronic upset seemed almost to be more the rule than the exception.

I began to realize these weren't the proverbial shit happens. These weren't the proverbial acts of God. It just came out of nowhere. This was rather becoming the general tenor of our times. People whose lives were too hard. People who had done everything right. People who had not been diagnosed with a disease. People who had lost a loved one. People who were addicted. It was that everybody was living under this pressure more and more. People not having healthcare. People having college-run debts. People having to work more than one job.

Remember, I grown up in the 1970s. The average American worker had decent benefits, could afford a car, could afford a yearly vacation, could afford a house, could afford to send their kids to college. When I was in my 20s, none of us had any money, but you didn't have to or even when my career began. You could rent a church. I mean, some of the places where I rented to give my lectures when I began, they are so expensive today.

I saw this change in a society where you had to have more and more and more money, just to live and be okay. I began to realize, "Oh, something's wrong here. Something's wrong." That this chronic anxiety, and I had gotten very lucky, because I had written a book and had gone on the Oprah show. I had been lifted into this life of economic advantage, then I had to work very, very hard. Don't get me wrong, to continue to write books, but there's no doubt about it. I had a lucky, lucky, lucky moment when she had me on her show.

I began to realize people just as smart as me, just as talented as me, just as productive as me, just as creative as me, having a hard time in ways that had not been true 10 years before, 15 years before, 20 years before. I began to realize that, yeah, you can do all this nonprofit work, but there's at a certain point, no amount of private charity can compensate for what is in essence a basic lack of social justice. I looked, and I looked at the politics and I realized what had happened. What I was seeing was 20 years after the beginning of Reaganomics, when it all came to full blossom. There had been such a massive transfer of wealth. All of a sudden, we become a society in which only a few people had easy access to health care.

Remember, when I was growing up, Blue Cross Blue Shield was a nonprofit. Until the 60s and 70s, there was tuition free, public, colleges and universities. University of Texas, University of California system. You just began to realize like by the late 90s, early 2000s. It's just everybody's like finding it harder and harder. I would meet people. I was supporting political candidates. I was always interested. I always voted. I was supported fundraiser, blah, blah, blah. I started – I was doing my own nonprofits. I began to meet people who were in very high places in politics, right?

I was lifelong Democrat and came from – my father said, no matter – until the day he died in 1994, if there was an election, daddy who did vote for a Roosevelt. I would ask my friends who were in political office. You really ought to do something, because these people don't have health care, or they're underinsured, or these people are having too hard a time and they can't send their kids to school, or these people shouldn't have to work more than one job.

Political leaders that I knew went, “Absolutely, you're right, Marianne. Absolutely.” Five years later, nothing changes. When I started saying the same thing to the same people. “Oh, yeah. Well, you know what you ought to do, is you ought to raise some money and then you could start an organization and you could lobby for that.” Oh, why should I need to? Then 10 years after the first line of questioning, I thought, “You people aren't going to do anything, are you? You're not going to do anything.” This is the way the system works, isn't it? Even you who are the best of it, something's really wrong here.

It was about that time that I thought I can write books about these things. I had written a book called, *Healing the Soul of America* in 1998. I realized I could give lectures. I could start

nonprofits, but that those with the levers of power, really didn't care if you wrote books, didn't care if you had a voice, but that the political system itself was walled off and it was an unholy alliance. The marriage between those with political power and those with corporate and financial power. I thought, "Oh, my God."

Now, I wasn't quiet about it, when I saw what was happening to people with AIDS. I'm not the type who was quiet about it, when I see women who would be battered. I'm not quiet. I just not – I mean, that's not the home I was raised in. I'm just not the human being. If I see it. I'll say it. It's like, they say, "If you see something, say something." I say something. That's when I decided to run for political office, because at a certain point. I remember I was on a phone call with some young people, just about a year or so ago. One of these young women said to me, "Marianne, what do we say to influence and convince these political leaders to see it our way about the climate or whatever it was?" I said, "At this point, honey. Don't try to convince them. Just try to replace them."

[0:20:13] LW: As I mentioned before our interview, I'm a longtime meditation teacher. Inevitably, when I do my trainings and whatnot, somebody will say, "Why doesn't everybody do this? The world would be such a better place if everybody meditated. Why don't they teach this in schools?" I want to ask you, why don't they teach this at school, as someone who's study – educate those system?

[0:20:33] MW: You probably know, people like Tara Guber. I know Goldie Hawn has been active in a lot of initiatives. Of course, they should, but you know? A lot of the people from the more traditional conservative Christian corners of our society don't want meditation taught in school. Now when I grew up, we prayed in the morning. We said the Lord's Prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance. I know it's not something that liberals or progressives are supposed to say, but I'm sorry they took that out, because I come from a religious minority. There's nothing in the Lord's Prayer that is offensive to any religious perspective.

Now, there are those who are atheists who might not like it and they shouldn't be forced to pray, but if we're going to pray at the opening of Congress and you're going to pray at the inauguration of a president. Then I remember Bill Clinton when he was president, I'm pretty sure

that he said, “Well, how about a moment of silence,” or “A minute of silence,” or something. It was the more conservative Christians who didn't want that. I think that's very sad, actually.

You see more and more initiatives that I'm sure your part of, of young people, including in some of our most disadvantaged neighborhoods who are being taught meditation. The Dalai Lama said, “In order to save the world, we must have a plan, but no plan will work unless we meditate.”

[0:21:57] LW: I have certainly had casual ideas about maybe running for president one day and what I would do differently, as a more spiritually inclined person. But then after seeing what happens to someone like you who ran for president, how you get mocked and how you get characterized. People start calling you airy fairy and crystal loving and this kind of thing here. It's almost like, it's too disruptive for the current system. I'm wondering how you think about that? Because you're one of the most thoughtful people I've ever seen and whose work I've ever read and you're going into this system that's very entrenched.

You obviously believe that you can actually do this and we want someone like that in there. That's really the only way you can do it is, if you believe you can actually do it. How do you do that though? How do you break through that stereotype that someone may have when they hear, “Oh we need a politics of love” “Okay, that's too soft for us, we're Americans, we should be stronger than that,” or whatever the general market may think about hearing those kinds of messages?

[0:23:04] MW: When it happened during the last campaign, it was very hurtful. Such an insult. I feel that I've had a very serious career. The indignity of the smears and the mockery and I would say, Martin Luther King said, “It's time to inject a new dimension of love into the veins of civilization,” or Cory Booker could talk about love, that's okay. Of course, it was very painful. When I was deciding whether or not to run again, I was aware that it would happen again. This time in some ways it's worse. This time the crystal lady thing, seems to have been replaced by, I'm a horrible human being and I scream and yell and I'm mean to people.

You get some emotional antibodies when you go through something like that. You get to the point of realizing at least I see this now. I have to be making a difference on some level for

people to be working so hard to obstruct the process by which anybody would really hear what I have to say. Last time it felt like all this fairy dust was being thrown in people's faces, so that they wouldn't really listen to me and that's exactly what was happening. This time, it feels like, "Wow, they really don't want someone talking about Medicare for All, tuition free in college and tech school, free childcare, guaranteed living wage, paid family leave, economic bill of rights, guaranteed sick pay. They really don't want that person in the conversation, do they?"

It is such a spiritual - nothing could be more perfect. It is such a challenge. Okay, Marianne, this love is real and nothing else exists. How you do with that today? Right now, it's embarrassing when that people are reading lies about you, smears, when you know what really happened in a situation. When you try it in a court of law, there are rules of due process. Your lawyer gets up and presents your own witnesses in your own evidence and cross examines your accuser. When you try it in the media, but only love is real.

[0:25:28] LW: What do people get wrong about Marianne Williamson, the candidate?

[0:25:32] MW: Well, I think people who actually hear me, I'm pretty much of an open book, actually. I don't think people who actually listen to me, get me wrong. I'm just a human being. I may not have been out there for 40 years. When people have heard me talk, it's just in the political sphere. If you've read all these articles about what a nutcase I am, or how silly I am, or I don't think disease is real. I do think that it's shocking how many people will think they're not so easily misinformed or willing to buy an article, just because it was on the internet.

I also think that and I have no control. You talk about what you can control and what you can't control. At a certain point, I can't control what narratives people buy. I can't. What I can control is this. I can control whether or not the American people in this presidential campaign season are being offered the option of an agenda for the replacement of soulless economic principles with deep humanitarian values as the governing principle of American society, that they are offered the option of a president who would lead a genuine season of repair and an economic return. That's all I can control.

At a certain point, I can't control whether or not people want that. More and more, it remains to be seen, can I control the process by which I'm able to raise enough money to be able to

override the smears against me, and the media blackouts, and the obvious efforts to suppress my message. I have to live every day just knowing I'm doing my best, trying anyway.

[0:27:16] LW: What are you going to do differently this time around that you didn't do the last time around from a strategic point of view?

[0:27:21] MW: Last time, the things I was saying politically aren't that different than what I'm saying this time. I haven't changed my mind about anything except for Medicare for All. I have fully had an amazing grace moment when it came to the issue of universal health care. Other than that, my sense that we need a more holistic, more whole person, more integrative approach to healing our society that the last 50 years of triple down economics, have been an operational chapter in American society, has led to a massive transfer of wealth into the hands of 1% of Americans that has caused huge, huge amounts of human suffering. I was saying it then. I'm saying it now.

Now, I had less of an opportunity to be heard, number one, because no one knew who I was and also because of all the fairy dust thrown, "Oh, she's a kooky lady." This time, there's not all those candidates, but there's also even more of a blowback from corporate media, etc. the smears, the head pieces. It is a serious example of what is it, the serenity prayer about accepting what I can change, what I can't change. I can only do my job to the best of my ability.

[0:28:37] LW: You said that the spiritual seeker is important to the transformation of our politics and of our country. I have a lot of spiritual seekers in my audience. What's a real practical thing that we can do to stand behind candidates like you who represent those values?

[0:28:57] MW: Spirituality is the path of the heart. The point I'm making is that public policy should express the path of the heart, just like personal behavior. All the public policy is an expression of our collective behavior and our collective resources. Our collective resources and our collective behavior should express a path of the heart no differently than our personal. That's all. Gandhi said, "Anybody who thinks religion, doesn't have anything to do with politics, doesn't understand religion." There is no spiritual path that gives anyone a pass on addressing the suffering of other sentient beings.

There is this faux spiritual notion that has taken hold in our society in the last few decades that justifies this apolitical stance, based on this idea that all I can do is in my own individual world. I think people are waking up from that. People are waking up from, I've been saying for decades. Good luck with all that green juice, when they're poisoning the water, and they're poisoning the air, and they're poisoning the ground. You're not going to be able to wall yourself off from the ravages of climate change and so forth. People are getting that.

People don't want to go into people from a spiritual perspective. Don't want to go into the old-fashioned types of politics. I understand that. On the other hand, everything that the higher consciousness community has touched has transformed. Look at how medicine is transformed. Look at how business in many ways is transformed. How education is transformed. The only reason politics hasn't transformed much is because we haven't gone there. The first thing I'd say is would you support your sister when she's trying. When you see someone who – one of us, hello, standing in that world and saying, “Well, you know? None of this makes sense to me, because there's a hungry child over there.” That to me is spirituality.

What you're doing now, not makes sense to me, because it's showing no reference for the earth at all. To me, that spirituality, that doesn't make sense to me, because that's just a war for to make money for defense contractors, does in oil companies. There's no love there. That to me is spirituality. I would say support whether it's me or anyone else, who is standing for the values that make a philosophical and spiritual difference in your life. If you see someone, whether it's Marianne or anyone else, trying to do that in the broader world, show up, stand up.

In my case, go to marianne2024.com and give 25 bucks or if it's 10 bucks or five bucks. I mean in politics in this country, we all know it shouldn't be this way, but until it's not, it is, money rules. These huge corporate forces that keep in place the soulless sociopathic economic system by which our government does more to serve the short-term profit maximization of huge corporate entities, rather than the safety the health and the well-being of people and animals and planet. They have billions of dollars. When you see someone who is trying to stand for a genuine alternative there, we're not backed by that money. We're not backed by corporate money.

The only way this is going to happen is if we all show up with – it's not about with those the corporate forces it's a few billionaires. With us it's a lot of people that give 10 dollars. Now

Bernie Sanders already showed that it can be done, but I think when it comes to the spiritual crowd my sense is a lot of people simply are not in the habit of financial giving to political campaigns. It's just a habit. If people really want to see a shift in the direction of greater enlightenment within public policy, we have to do that, we have to support with our financial giving.

People who are trying to get in that system and make it different, because if you don't have the money, you can't hire – I can't tell how many times people say to me, “You really should do blank. Marianne you really should do blank. You really should do blank.” I'm sitting here thinking really, because if I could afford to hire the person who could do that, I would. I mean, it's nothing when you say, “Where does money go for, nothing mysterious.” Somebody – social media to take a trip to such and such a place to have this or that. I mean it's nothing mysterious there, but if you want it, and there's the volunteering, and all the other things. I mean people are not stupid, they know how to go to a website maryann2024.com.

[0:33:43] LW: As a non-politician, historically deciding to run for president what is that like? You mentioned having to hire people, social media, people thinking you have more money to put into this than you actually do. I'm just really curious, because I'm sure a lot of people have thought about, what does it really like to run for president? I mean does the media start stalking you? Is everything you say analyzed under a microscope? Do you have to start being very meticulous about how you move through the world? What is that like from your perspective?

[0:34:14] MW: Early on in my career, I was known for saying outrageous things on stage. It was fun. We were all young. I would say, fucking on stage. Then it came to the point where I was no longer as anonymous as I was. I came to understand, you can either remain with some of your outrageousness or you can be taken more seriously in the culture, you're going to have to make a decision. Right now, it's that even further down the road. There are some things that I cannot say and be safe. Once again, it's all part of walking that tightrope.

[0:35:01] LW: You've said that we shouldn't avoid political discussions, which is again it's a very counter intuitive, right? As a spiritual person the last thing you want to get to this conversation with your crazy uncle back in Kentucky, who would you vote for in the last election, but you say we should not avoid these kinds of discussions. Can you say a little bit more about that?

[0:35:23] MW: In *A Course in Miracles* there's a line that says, "The primary responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the atonement for himself." Political conversation is as much of a spiritual challenge as anything. Every situation, every situation, it's spiritually an opportunity and a challenge. Every situation. It's all part of the curriculum of your life.

Dear God, take away my self-righteousness. Dear God, take away my judgment of the way they think. Dear God, take away my thought that I'm smarter about this than they are. Dear God, make me a neutral sweet zone of just listening. Make me – turn me into a namaste consciousness, where the spirit of me salutes the spirit of you and let me be that place where I'm an open field of just listening beyond all ideas of good and bad, right and wrong there is a field on me, either. That applies as much to politics as to anything. In fact, what a challenge, what a perfect place and that's how I feel about running. Wow, Marianne. This is the top of the mountain challenge. But you got me on today, two hit pieces came out about me today. Now am I happy they came out? No. But I would say 87% fine.

[0:36:47] LW: Yeah. I saw those hit pieces, as well. I think at this point any sophisticated thoughtful person understands that there's a lot of clickbait out there. I've even had hit pieces written about me. I'm not even anyone in the video so.

[0:37:03] MW: Spiritual circles is vulnerable to that stuff, we are. Well, thank you for telling me that. You can know that's true intellectually and still like, "Oh." But I've had a lot of that throughout my career. You walk into a room and somebody looks at you like, "I know who you are." You're thinking, "No, you don't. No, you don't."

[0:37:27] LW: You've also said something or written something before that I thought applies to this situation, you said, "It's really not about what should I do about that, it's about who are we as a society that we can allow these kinds of problems to exist among us, and who do we have to become, who we have to become in order to solve them." I have to be honest with you. I really don't think America deserves someone like you, I really don't. I don't think that the way we treat each other right now allows us to even really fully embrace someone like you. Maybe that's why you're so necessary, because you're pulling us from, and I'm saying, us just generalizing Americans.

You're pulling us from this divisive Black or white thinking back towards the center of love and introducing that word back into the conversation in a way that allows us all to own up and take responsibility for our part in everything, because one of my favorite hip-hop artists, Mos Def says is, "If you want to know what's going on with hip-hop, you got to look at what's going on with you, because you're hip-hop." If you want to know what's going on with love or politics or whatever, we got to look at what's going on with us and in our homes, then our communities. For me that's really the call is you are that, you are a call for all of us to see what's happening within our own personal lives.

[0:38:48] MW: I think we're good people. We're not better than anybody else, but I don't think we're worse than anybody else. Every people has a shadow side and the American character clearly has a shadow side and. Our shadow side is on full display, but our shadow side is not who we are. You have a shadow side. I have a shadow, but we have to remind ourselves and each other, but your shadow side is not who you are. That's why I feel about America. Our shadow side is not who we are. Our shadow side has been harnessed for political purposes, recently in the last few years and we know who did that, who started it. We also know that with social media, our shadow side is given too much of a platforming.

We also know that the media will exploit it, but if you think about the people that you know, we are a good and a decent people. We have the same learnings as anyone else in the world. Now this I do think, and this goes back to what you were saying before about the spiritual types. If you are talking to any one person in America, in my experience if two Americans are talking, we have as much propensity and as much ability and as much willingness to get down and get real as anybody in any place in the world. Where there's a problem is when it comes to our collective conversation. We have been trained to keep it unreal, to keep it shallow, to keep it sophomoric, to keep that slogan, talking to slogan, to keep it oppositional to be in lazy thinking to avoid getting real.

We don't know how to get real without getting angry and getting oppositional and getting judgmental. That's what those of us, from a more spiritual perspective, I think can help bring to the field. I think and what I've learned, and I've learned this – well, I've learned this from my entire career. I've seen this even in politics. People want to get collectively real, but the political

system actually mitigates against it, because the political system, the political elite doesn't want us to, because if we get real collectively, we're going to see what those guys are doing. It's all about power and money in the hands of a few people. That's where I see the challenge, the invitation, and the beauty.

The *Course in Miracles* has a line, "People hear you on the level that you speak to them from." What I've learned is a political candidate, as well as spiritual teacher or anything else, you speak to the noble and people, the noble and people hear you. You speak to the good to the decent, people want to be good and decent. I've talked to people in prison. I've talked to people in prisons and said, "We really as a country have to think about what we're doing as a country." I've seen people in prison, honor to be included in that conversation. They'll go, "Yeah, we really do and really want to be there."

How can we be a better country now? The political system only speaks to what is your crass basic need. Then it keeps people in survival to our economic policies, so that people don't even have the bandwidth to get noble and real and civic mind. That's why there should be economic justice, so that people aren't living in survival and just talk about the things that matter most, not just about our personal. See when people are living in survival so much, we're forced into a doggy dog. I got to get mine. I got to get mine. That's not where how a civilization can thrive. We have to have our basic needs covered enough, that we can milk and let's talk about the whole thing.

[0:42:34] LW: Is that what you meant when you said we're done with polite requests?

[0:42:38] MW: Absolutely. In every advanced mammalian species that survives and thrives, one of its common characteristics is fierce behavior on the part of the adult female when she senses a threat to her cubs at a certain point. This is to save our children. Just like we have in the spiritual community, certainly understands the concept of boundaries and we need to have boundaries in our collective experience just like in our personal experience. You cannot destroy my home. You cannot destroy my planet. You cannot hurt my child. You cannot hurt the child on the other side of town. I won't have it. You can't do it to my tribe and you can't do it to somebody else's.

One of the things that Black people and Jewish people have in common is this fierce thing. You did it to my grandparents and you're not going to do it to my kids. We need to have that. Today it's the transgender community for – it's unbelievable. They attack on the transgender community. Well, Martin Luther King said, “An attack on justice anywhere is an attack on justice everywhere.” One of the reasons I want to be president. The Declaration of Independence is our mission statement.

You were talking about mission, earlier. Declaration of Independence is our mission statement. Now we've never fully manifest it. The story of America, 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration of Independence is a statement never was there a country founded on such enlightened principles. We hold these truths to be self-evident all men are created equal. God gave all men inalienable rights of life liberty in the pursuit of happiness. Governments are instituted to secure those rights and when government is not doing its job, it is the right of the people to alter it or abolish it. Sounds great. Profound, enlightened.

The 56 men who signed that document were risking their lives in order to do so, because if the British won the war, they all would have been hung as traitors. Sounds great, but 41 of those 56 men were slave owners. That's the story of America. We're this bipolar consciousness, we've always been both. We are this living dichotomy between the most enlightened principles and within every generation from the beginning, including ours. People who usually for their own ideological or financial purposes have no intention whatsoever of seeing those principles embodied and have proven in the most violent ways that they will do whatever it takes to make sure that they're not.

That's baked into the cake. That's our story. That's what's reiterated generation, after generation, after generation. Remember the eastern religions, time isn't in a straight line it's a spiral. You just keep going through it. Now if you look at the entire historical trajectory, though. We tend to self-correct that line, the more lock of the universe is long, but it bends towards justice. We answer slavery with abolition. We answer the institutionalized suppression of women with women suffrage. We answered the golden age with the establishment of the labor movement. We answered segregation with the civil rights movement. The way I look at it, it's simply our turn.

I'll tell you something else about the spiritual. You look at every social justice movement in the United States. They were based in religious circles. Among white people in America, the abolitionist movement grew from the early evangelical churches in New Hampshire. Many of the women who were the suffragists were Quakers. Dr. King was a Baptist preacher, so this idea that spirituality religion have nothing to do with social justice, excuse me. We've always been the passion, the fervor out of which these movements emerged.

The way I look at it is we're not going through anything that other generations haven't gone through. It simply our turn now. The only other thing I'll say to that is, I hear a lot in the transformational and this isn't just the transformational circles, you hear this everywhere in this generation now. "Oh, the whole thing is so traumatizing." You think walking across the bridge at Selma wasn't traumatizing? We really need to toughen up in this generation.

[0:47:16] LW: Gandhi once famously told a reporter who asked about his message. He says, "My life is my message." Under that perspective, I was just wondering what you would say, what does your life say about you, specifically the way you're handling these situations that are happening right now?

[0:47:31] MW: I'm trying my best. We all make mistakes. I seek to atone. I seek to apologize. I seek to make amends. When I don't owe an apology, I won't apologize. I do get that my political path is not only not separate from my spiritual path. It is my spiritual path.

[0:47:56] LW: Beautiful. Well, thank you. I just want to acknowledge you and your courage for stepping into that fire, being the example for walking your talk, because a lot of us, especially in the spiritual community, we talk about everyone is one. You got to love your fellow person. All the different concepts is happening for me, not to me, but I feel like, unless you stress test those things in real life in the field, they don't really mean –

[0:48:21] MW: Yeah. It's like, I've always felt that way. The universe goes – nice. This is nice. This is nice. Oh, can you take? That just real life. Thank you very much, because having this conversation with someone like yourself, who I know is coming from a place of deep understanding of what it's all about a bigger picture is, makes me feel less lonely on the journey, so thank you.

[0:48:47] LW: Beautiful. I want everyone to go to marianne2024.com and support in whatever way you can. Thank you.

[0:48:55] MW: Thank you so much.

[OUTRO]

[0:48:57] LW: Thank you so much for listening to my interview with Marianne Williamson. If you connected with her message and you feel called to support her candidacy in any way, you can get more information and even make a donation at marianne2024.com. You can also follow her at Marianne Williamson. Of course, I'll drop links to everything else that Marianne and I discussed in the show notes on my website, 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 Young Pueblo, Ava DuVernay, Ed Mylett, Zachary Levi and so many more. You can also search these interviews by subject matter in case you want to hear more episodes about people who've taken leaps of faith, or who've overcome financial struggles, or health challenges. You can get a list of all of those episodes at lightwatkins.com/show.

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blank stars, just tap the one all the way on the right and you've left us a five-star rating. If you want to go the extra mile, leave a review, just write one line about the episode that you recommend a new listener should consider starting with as an introduction to this podcast. It could be the episode that had the biggest impact on you personally, or just write something nice about the show.

Thank you very much 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, and keep taking those leaps of faith. If no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you and have a great day

[END]