

EPISODE 164

“LW: That’s how Travel Light came to be. I didn’t set off in 2018 when I moved out of my apartment in Santa Monica into my carry-on bag. I didn’t set off to write a book about minimalism. I didn’t know anything about what spiritual minimalism was. I didn’t even had that term yet. I just knew that I was curious, “What would happen if I were to live out of a carry-on bag for an indefinite amount of time?” and then that became living out of a backpack, “What would happen if I downsize to a backpack?” and then that became, “What would happen if I learned how to hand-wash my clothes?” and then, “What would happen if I started spending more time in Mexico City?” and so I just kept asking these questions, sometimes consciously, a lot of times, unconsciously, and then next thing you know, I have collected all of these experiences and when I reflected back on them, they all kind of tie together in one way or another.”

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:59.4] LW: Hello friends and welcome back to the Light Watkins Show, where I interview ordinary folks just like you and me who have taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose, or what they’ve identified with as their mission. And 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’ve witnessed them in action, or people who directly benefited from their work.

And today is the day after my fourth book has been released. As you know, it’s called *Travel Light: Spiritual Minimalism to Live a More Fulfilled Life*, and I have another solo episode for you where I wanted to talk to you about the behind-the-scenes stories of this book release and how it actually works and how it incorporates any of the principles of spiritual minimalism.

I also talk about how I first met other podcasters such as Lewis Howes, who has got the School of Greatness and Rich Roll, the Rich Roll Podcast, and Max Lugavere’s Genius Life Podcast, Shawn Stevenson has The Model Health Show, and Dhru Purohit, which has the Dhru Purohit Show and I really wouldn’t be where I am today as an author and as a podcaster had I not met those gentlemen and been featured on their respective shows.

I also did a refresher on the principles of spiritual minimalism and what happens now that the book is out as an author, what am I anticipating the most, what am I concerned about the most, which part of the publishing process am I most relegated about and what happens next. So this was a fun episode to record, it is very personal and I'm still on a high from the launch of *Travel Light*.

So yeah, that's it. Let's dive in and talk about all things behind the scenes of what it takes to actually launch a book into the world. So without further ado, here's solo episode number seven.

[EPISODE]

[0:03:19.9] LW: We're back, and guess what? Yesterday was pub day, which is publishing industry talk for the day your book gets published. Yesterday was pub day for my book, *Travel Light: Spiritual Minimalism to Live a More Fulfilled Life*. I'm so excited to have this book out in the world.

Of course, I'm recording this conversation several days prior to pub day but I'm just kind of projecting my excitement as if this was the day after and I spent the whole day doing a bunch of IG Lives with my friends and supporters and reposting everyone's post of the book and just like, really excited and giddy and curious about how people are going to experience this book.

So this is book number four. My first book was *The Inner Gym*, which is a book about happiness. Book number two was *Bliss More: How to Succeed in Meditation Without Really Trying*, which is obviously a book about meditation. Book number three was, *Knowing Where to Look* and that book was about inspiration.

That was my first book that came out since this podcast was around. The podcast launched in 2020, that book came out in 2021. So for you long-time listeners, you probably remember me talking about the launch of *Knowing Where to Look* and making a big to-do out of that and now today, we have *Travel Light*, which is a book about minimalism.

[0:04:57.4] LW: And I don't know if you can detect the theme there but happiness, meditation, inspiration, and minimalism, and those are all subjects that have an inside-out component, things that get experienced inside and then they are expressed externally and that's kind of been my deal for this time of my life that I've been involved in wellness is just really passionate about talking about and writing about and sharing stories about the inside-out approach to life.

And I wanted to talk to you guys about what happens leading up to a book launch and once the book is out because if anyone out there has ever thought about writing a book and I've talked about the whole publishing process before and how you get a book deal in one of my previous solo episodes, and that's like half of the equation, right?

When you get a book deal, it's actually raining around me, I don't know if you guys can hear the rain here but I'm in Mexico City and it's rainy season so it's raining while I record this. Anyway, if you get a book deal, the publisher before they give you the book deal wants to obviously know what you want to write about, so you have to submit an outline.

You have to submit a couple of sample chapters and that's like half of your book proposal. The outline is the sample chapters. The other half of the book proposal is, "Okay, you want to write a book about such and such. Tell us how are you going to sell this book. How are you going to sell this book?"

So they want to know who you know that's going to talk the book up, they want to know what sort of marketing strategies you come up with for this book, they want to know what podcasts you think you can get on, are there any television shows you think you can get on, are you going to hire a publicist, you know, et cetera, and they want to know all of that very specifically before they give you the book deal.

So of course, as the author who would like to secure a book deal, you're giving them the pie-in-the-sky version of all the things you're going to do. "Yes, I'm going to try to get on Tim Ferriss' Show. Yes, I'm going to be on ABC and CBS and NBC in the States and I've got all these other connections with these celebrities" and you know, you basically promise them the world.

But the reality, and they understand that, that's a pie in the sky version, the reality is that it takes a lot of effort, a lot of work to market the book and it's funny because when I thought back recently to my second book, *Bliss More*, I was so naïve. I had no idea how podcasting worked and I remember the day the book came out, my pub day, which was I think January 23rd, 2018, I called my friend Lewis Howes.

A lot of you guys know Lewis, he's got The School of Greatness Podcast, and we weren't like close friends but we definitely knew one another and I knew we had this podcast and then I call him up, and I say, "Hey Lewis, my book just came out today, I would love to come on your podcast today." I thought that when people had a book that came out, you would go to the podcast that day and then it would air live that day.

I had no idea that most of the podcasts were prerecorded and queued up to come out however long later after the recording took place but to Lewis' credit he said, "Hey man, it doesn't work like that, you have to give me a heads up. You have to give me months of notice before your book comes out" but he said, "Come on over and we can record something that we can put on my YouTube channel" which is very, very generous of him.

So I went over there on the day that it came out and we did a recording, a video recording, talking about the book. He knew nothing about the book because he didn't have a copy of the book. So he was asking me some decent questions considering the fact that he didn't know anything about the book and we had a good conversation, and then he ended up putting it on his podcast.

I guess he felt it was good enough to be on the show so it was on the podcast platforms as well as the YouTube channel, and that's basically how I got on the Lewis Howes School of Greatness podcast for the first time. So of course, now that I have a podcast, I understand how it all works. I know that you need months, sometimes months of lead time, especially with the podcast as big as a School of Greatness but I kind of got lucky in that regard.

[0:09:53.0] LW: And then I remember back in my first book when I was marketing that and I ran into Rich Roll at the Ace Hotel in New York City late one night. It was almost midnight and I was

coming from dinner and I was in town teaching a meditation training. So I was coming from dinner, I was walking back somewhere, and the Ace Hotel always had this really cool vibe.

So I would stop in there on occasion and I looked over and I saw Rich Roll hunched over his laptop and it was downstairs in the lobby and it was really crowded scene because a lot of people would just hang out in there and they played music and I just met Rich probably a month before at a wellness conference in Arizona that was set up by Mindbodygreen and they invited me to come there and lead some mediation stuff.

So that's initially how I met Rich Roll and we looked at each other and we started talking, and this is back – funny enough, okay, you're going to love this, Rich was where I am today with his podcast. He was on episode, like, 160-something. So he's still very much a one-man show, kind of like me. It was very much hands-on and he was like looking for guests because he wasn't getting a whole lot of people reaching out to him like he does now.

And it's just kind of it's fascinating to see where he is now versus where he was back then but yeah, he's about 160-something because I think my first episode with Rich was like episode 167 or 173 or something like that. I've been on his show about four times now but anyway, we made a loose plan for me to come out to his house in Calabasas in Southern California and record an episode for the Inner Gym.

So when we both got back to Los Angeles, that appointment materialized, and just like Lewis, Rich was recording in his house, just recording in his like one of his spare rooms. Lewis' recording happened in a spare room in his apartment in West Hollywood. So those were humble times, early days, whatever you want to call them but that's how I initially formed my relationship with Rich Roll and started to get on his podcast for those of you wondering.

And then I remember being in Venice, California one morning, and guess who I was hanging out with? My friend Dhru Purohit. I don't know if you guys have heard of Dhru but Dhru has a science and health show called The Dhru Purohit Show, which used to be called, The Broken Brain Podcast and it's gotten to be a really big podcast, thousands of downloads per episode and Dhru and I have been friends for several years.

We initially met in New York City at a health expo and then we ran into each other in LA a couple of times and then we just said, “Hey, we should grab lunch” and then when I started my shine movement back in 2014, Dhru came to one of those and I invited him to come on to the organizational committee for that.

So we partnered up with that for a little while, and then when Dhru started his podcast, I came on and did a couple of episodes in the early days, same thing. He didn’t start in his apartment but he started in his office where he was already working with Dr. Mark Hyman. So anyways, I was with Dhru, we were at Bullet Proof Coffee.

It’s not called Bullet Proof anymore but back then it was called Bullet Proof Coffee and then, I ran into – I saw this guy coming out of there named Shawn Stevenson, who a lot of you guys may know from The Model Health Show, and I went up to Shawn and I said, “Hey man, I love your work, I love your show.”

This is back when Shawn was living in Saint Louis and he happened to be in town for some stuff, he was thinking about moving to LA. Anyways, I made connection, introduced myself, and then later on when Bliss More came out, I remember Lewis’ book, I think it was *The Mask of Masculinity*, had just come out as well.

Lewis was on Shawn’s podcast and he told me that he flew out to Saint Louis to be on Shawn’s podcast. I was so impressed by the fact that he’d fly to Saint Louis. So when I reached out to Shawn several months later, I said, “Hey Shawn, I have a book that’s coming out.” He goes, “Oh, I’d love to have you on the podcast.”

This is before the Zoom days, right? So I guess if you were going to do something like that, you had to fly out. So I flew Southwest Airlines out to Saint Louis for the day and I did Shawn’s podcast and that was my first time on The Model Health Show, and he was renting a studio in Saint Louis by the hour. So he was doing most of his recordings like that before he moved to Los Angeles and before he started up his own studio in LA.

[0:14:59.2] LW: But that was my first time on his show and then Max Lugavere, he and I were also friendly from some of the wellness events and some of the – just the community. I

remember meeting him at some parties and stuff and he hung out with me and Dhru and Dr. Hyman and some other people like that.

So I ended up going on his show for my book, *Bliss More* as well and that's kind of how I got my start with being on podcasts and promoting and then those guys all sort of became my mentors as well when I started my podcast. You know, I was reaching out to Shawn, to Dhru, asking them a thousand questions, and continuing to go on all of their podcasts every time I had a book release.

So that was a part of my marketing plan for *Travel Light*, which was to leverage those kinds of relationships. I also was fortunate in that living in Los Angeles, I was able to teach a good amount of celebrities and people who were doing pretty big things, high profile types. So of course, you list those on the marketing proposal as well but I knew now that it was important to start a lot earlier.

So I decided that I was going to start my sort of full-court press in April, first of April. The book was scheduled to come out July the 18th. So that gave me almost three and a half months to promote *Travel Light* and one of the things that I wanted to be very intentional about was this concept of spiritual minimalism, which nobody had ever heard of before.

We've all heard of minimalism before but this book addresses a different style of minimalism, which I call, spiritual minimalism, and that's a term I kind of came up with for myself. I don't know if I'm the first person in the world to ever say those two words together in that order, spiritual minimalism but as far as I know, I haven't heard anyone else popularizing that term spiritual minimalism.

So I knew that a part of the book release had to be me educating the audience on what does it mean to be a spiritual minimalist and if you listen to any of my past solo episodes, I've gone into great detail about spiritual minimalism and the principles of spiritual minimalism but to spare you from having to go back and get a refresher, I'll just give you the short end of it.

Spiritual minimalism is minimalism practiced from the inside out. So instead of clearing out your furniture and cleaning underneath your bed and clearing out the closets and the garage and

places where we store a lot of clutter, in order to feel a sense of peace, spiritual minimalism means to clear out the internal clutter, to clear out the emotional baggage and as a by-product of that, you will feel more peacefulness inside.

[0:18:09.7] LW: The quote that I'm reminded of when I talk about spiritual minimalism is the Robert Pirsig quote. Robert Pirsig was the author who wrote one of my favorite spiritual books, which is called, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, and the quote is, "The only zen you will find at the top of a mountain is the zen you bring up there with you." I love that.

"The only zen you'll find at the top of a mountain is the zen you bring up there with you" and so what he's basically saying is that, sure, being at the top of the mountain is beautiful, you know, and serene and pristine, and if you are not experiencing a sense of presence when you get up to that mountain top, then it's going to limit how much of that peace, serenity, and beauty that you're going to be able to experience.

So just imagine something happens at the bottom of the mountain that pisses you off and get you into your head around somebody who didn't apologize. This thing, you don't think is going the way you want it to go, and then you go climb up the mountain, you're not going to be able to fully appreciate the beauty if you're still holding on to whatever happened at the bottom of the mountain.

So your internal state always affects how you experience your external environment. That's what he's saying and on the other hand, if you have cultivated a sense of peace within, a sense of happiness within, you can be in pretty, what people would consider to be miserable or mundane moments externally, such as in traffic, in the post office, at the DMV, you know, in line at the grocery store.

[0:20:02.7] LW: No one would inherently assign these moments as moments of great beauty because we've all been there. We've all been there and you're sitting there and you're miserable and you're waiting for your number to be called and you know, just – you're focusing on what's not happening as supposed to what is happening.

But what Pirsig is talking about is if you have cultivated peace and serenity within, then you can experience beauty even in those environments and so that's the essence spiritual minimalism, is taking the time to cultivate a sense of peace inside. A sense of zen inside. A sense of presence inside.

And of course, one of the most efficient ways to do that is through the practice of meditation and that's principle number one of spiritual minimalism, is to cultivate happiness within and then principle number two, is to make your most important decision from your head not your heart. And all that means is, a lot of times we'll let our head choose what our destination should be, right?

"I should be in this kind of relationship, I should be in this kind of job, I should be in this kind of environment" and we're basing that choice off of what we see other people experiencing or off of what our parents told us that success means or some other sort of external queue and instead of that, we want to make those most important decisions from our heart. We want to make them from our heart and that means we want to make decisions that feel aligned with who and what we are deep-deep-deep down, our most authentic self.

So for instance, if you are in a job that technically pays you a lot of money compared to most people but you are miserable as you drive your Ferrari to work and then miserable as Monday rolls around and you can't wait for Friday, that's an indication that that occupation is not as aligned as something else and maybe, maybe deep down in the back of your mind, you've been dreaming about doing something else that perhaps does not pay as much, and doesn't look as successful on paper.

Maybe it's working at homeless shelter or becoming a public school teacher or becoming a police officer or something along those lines and you think to yourself, "I can't give up this six-figure, seven-figure job to go and take a five-figure job with no savings and no benefits" and so you talk yourself out of following your heart in that way and so spiritual minimalism actually encourages you to make that decision from your heart instead of from your head.

This is where the heart has some bad publicity. People say, "Oh, those who listen to their heart are gullible. Those who listen to their heart are going to get taken advantage of, are going to do

silly things and you're going to be sorry that you didn't do the prudent thing, you didn't do the logical thing."

Here is my argument for that, for listening to the heart even though it may not seem like the logical choice. When you do something that lights you up inside, you will be able to do that job exceptionally well and as you are showing up fully and present to your job, even if it's a five-figured job, people will notice and you will have a bigger impact on the world than if you were miserable at your six-figure or seven-figured job, where people just kind of want to stay away from you or play politics in order to keep you down or to hold you in a certain position or to block you from experiencing a promotion or whatever the case may be.

And on the other hand, if you're showing up fully and people are noticing and people want to work with you and you attract the best and brightest to you, and then you guys end up building something, creating something remarkable together, something worthy of remarking about, and then that also gets you noticed and then eventually, I'm not saying this is going to happen but eventually, you may become a thought leader in that space and being a thought leader, people want to hear your story.

People want to understand, "Okay, where did you come from?" "Oh wow, you left a seven-figured job to take a five-figured job? That's interesting because not a lot of people do stuff like that." So then, you get written up about in newspapers, in journals, in magazines, people blog about you and your story, people want to follow you on social media, and then publishers see that and they go, "Oh, we want to hear this person's story in book form."

[0:25:04.2] LW: So you get offered a book deal. You get offered to do your book. The book does well because you tell your story in the most honest and authentic way and people can relate to that because everybody has some sort of dream and most people aren't doing anything about it.

So when you decide to do something about it against all odds, that becomes a very compelling story, and then you know, as these books get published, the movie studios, they auction the rights to this book automatically until they decide if they want to make a film about it and let's say somebody's read your stories, is really passionate about making a film about it and the next thing you know, you're being depicted on the big screen, you're the next Erin Brockovich, right?

There's a movie about you and then once that happens, people want to hear you come and speak and now, you're on the speaker circuit. Now, you're getting paid USD 100,000 a talk because there's a movie about you. Again, I'm not saying this is going to happen to you for sure but that's how these things go and then the next thing you know, 20 years later, you're in the Whitehouse getting a presidential medal of freedom because of your work, because your work lit you up.

So one of the things I talk about in *Travel Light* is the true salary of your job is based on how you feel about your job, not on what the employer is paying you. It's on how you feel about the job because you got to also factor in the paycheck to your soul and if your soul is getting fed and nurtured through your work that you're dedicating, you know, six, seven, eight hours, eight plus hours a day towards that significant amount of time that you're investing in yourself, in your spiritual development.

Your job is a part of your spiritual development. It's not some throwaway thing and you'll get to the spiritual part when you get home and go sit for your meditation. The meditation practice is just to get you more connected to your heart so you can make that bolder choice to take the position that makes you most light up inside as opposed to the one that you think everyone else want you to do be based on external measures of success.

So it's not that your head is not important for making decisions, your head's job is to analyze the situation and figure out, "Okay, how can I do this in a way that allows me to pay the bills?" That's your head's job. Your heart's job is to tell you what to do, where to go, where to focus your path, okay?

So they can work in tandem in that way but what most people are doing is they're allowing their head to call the big shots and then they allow their heart to maybe call a tiny shot that doesn't have any sort of stakes or any ramifications and that's backwards. You're going to end up creating a lot of drama for yourself by following your head as supposed to following your heart and so really quickly, the rest of the principles of spiritual minimalism include treating life so there are no throwaway moments.

So when you find yourself in that grocery store, in traffic, in the DMV, understanding that that's a necessary component for you, maybe you're learning patience, maybe you're learning compassion, maybe you're learning self-forgiveness, boundaries, what have you, in those otherwise, ordinary or mundane situations.

You have an opportunity to help people, to compliment people, to be generous with people to do it at random acts of kindness and then we have, leave places better than you found them. That's under the principle, give what you want to receive but that's what that means. That's pretty much the golden rule and it applies to relationships.

If you want love in a relationship, you give love in a relationship. If you want a friend, you become a friend. If you want someone to be generous with you, instead of being stingy, you be generous with them, that's how it works. We've all been in that situation where we have our stingy friend and it's so interesting because when you're around your stingy friend, you become stingy.

You don't want to be as generous around a stingy person. You may be generous once or twice but if you see that they're still being stingy, you become stingier than you would be otherwise, and vice versa. If you're with someone who is really, really generous, you're more prone to be really generous with them or with other people and so if you want to create that type of dynamic, then it helps to give that thing that you want from that other person and it may not be a one-for-one type of transaction.

It could mean that you have to give 10 times to get reciprocity one time back from them but we're not taking score. We're not doing it for them, we're doing it for us because it makes us feel more present. When you're in stingy mode, it yanks you out of the present moment because all you're thinking about is what didn't happen in the past. When you're in generosity mode, you're in the present moment.

You're in the present moment and that's where you want to try to be as much as possible because that gives you access to the most information about what's going to happen next. That's number four. Number five, I say don't worry about trying to find your purpose, just follow your curiosity, and your purpose will find you.

[0:30:25.7] LW: Every time I write about living a life of purpose, finding your purpose, I get this flurry of emails from people saying, “Oh, I don’t know what my purpose is, I can’t hear my purpose” and I had a conversation with a woman at one of my retreats once and we were talking about the subject of purpose and I was saying, “What kind of things are you curious about?” She’s, “Oh, I love conversations, I love talking to people, I love finding out people’s stories” and I said, “Oh, well, maybe you should consider starting a podcast.”

She said, “Oh no, I couldn’t do a podcast.” I said, “Why not? Why wouldn’t you be able to do a podcast? Of course, you can do a podcast.” You know what she said? She said, “I only have 300 followers on social media.” So in her mind, that was the reason why she was incapable of doing a podcast because she’s evidently comparing herself to whoever, Joe Rogan or whoever Mel Robbins, somebody with a massive audience, and if she doesn’t have 50,000 followers or a million followers, then she disqualify herself from being a podcast host and we all do that to an extent and some do it more than others do it, right?

We have this idea of what we think we need in order to follow our purpose but our purpose couldn’t involve that because I don’t have the resources and that’s completely backwards because guess what? Mel Robbins didn’t start off with thousands upon thousands of followers and fans, right? Joe Rogan didn’t start off like that, nobody starts off like that. You start off by just following your curiosity and just seeing what happens once you, “Oh, I like talking to people, I like having conversations.”

“Okay, well, let me go to these free podcast platforms and let me just pull out my smartphone and just hit record the next time I am having a conversation with someone who I consider to be interesting” and it is just a natural organic thing. Guess what? That’s how I started this podcast. I started this podcast with my smartphone, with my iPhone. I happen to be in London and a friend of mine invited me onto her podcast and I said, “Oh.”

You know, in the back of my mind I said, “This is the perfect time for me to start my podcast.” So the day after we record hers, I will set my phone up on a tripod and I will just record us having a conversation and that’s exactly how it went. That was my first recorded podcast episode. That

wasn't the first one I released, I think it was number three that I released but I did the first few just like that, just like recording it from my phone.

I didn't have some sort of big major podcast platform, I didn't have a podcast audience, I didn't even have a podcast. When I recorded that, it was in November of 2019. The podcast didn't launch until June of 2020. So I was just holding on to these recordings and I just kept having these conversations before I even had a name for the podcast, before I even had a format for the podcast and you know, I was just curious.

I too was curious about having these conversations and I thought, "What would happen if I set my phone up on this tripod and just hit record and just start having a conversation?" That's how *Travel Light* came to be. I didn't set off in 2018 when I moved out of my apartment in Santa Monica into my carry-on bag, I didn't set off to write a book about minimalism. I didn't know anything about what spiritual minimalism was.

I didn't have that term yet, I just knew that I was curious, "What would happen if I were to live out of a carry-on bag for an indefinite amount of time?" and then that became living out of a backpack. "What would happen if I downsized to a backpack?" and then that became, "What would happen if I learned how to hand wash my clothes?" and then, "What would happen if I started spending more time in Mexico City?" right?

So I just kept asking these questions sometimes consciously, a lot of times unconsciously, and then the next thing you know, I have collected all of these experiences, and when I reflected back on them, they all kind of tie together in one way or another and then I reached out to my book agent and I said, "What would you think about a book on my experiences living from a backpack?"

[0:34:53.3] LW: Obviously, you know still teaching meditation and doing all that stuff, and maybe there is a way to kind of tie it all together to make it unique. I still didn't have the term spiritual minimalism until I actually started writing the proposal for the book and then I remember just sitting at the table and I was working on the proposal, the first half of the proposal where you actually talk about what's going to be in the book and the name spiritual minimalism just came through me.

It just came through me and again, I had been writing my daily dose of inspiration email for several years at that point. So I was used to ideas like that coming through me, plus my meditation practice and that's one of the big benefits, the hidden benefits of meditation is you make yourself a portal for creativity, for ideas and so you can get ideas like that streaming through you all the time.

But once it came out, I was like, "That's it, spiritual minimalism, that's what this book is going to be about, the principles of spiritual minimalism." I didn't have the principles of spiritual minimalism at the time. I just knew that there were going to be principles and I just trusted that they were going to come through me and so later on when I finally got to the actual writing process and I am sitting there in the sticky note phase and I am just writing down all of the stories that I haven't told yet that I felt could be in this book and then sticking them on my wall.

Eventually, I am starting to see little themes form, right? I see a lot of those stories are dealing with meditation and cultivation of the heart voice. "Okay, that's going to be a principle." Then, I saw that a lot of the stories had to do with making decisions from your heart, "Boom, that's going to be a principle" and then a lot of stories had to do with following your curiosity, that's a principle and then don't throw away, that's a principle and then giving what you want to receive, right?

So those became five principles and then it kept going. There were another collection of stories that had to do with finding comfort and discomfort, which became a principle and then finally this phrase, freedom of choicelessness kept coming through, the freedom of choicelessness, and so I came up with a principle. So then it became the seven principles of spiritual minimalism and I started playing around with the order.

And realizing that the most efficient order for them was cultivating the heart voice, making important decisions from the heart because you have to cultivate the heart voice in order to make those decisions, then it's easier to treat life and so there are no throwaway moments because you have more presence. Then, now that you have gotten out of your head so much around why things aren't going the way you want them to go, you can start to give what you want to receive.

Then that allows you to be a little bit less worried about things that are not happening and when you are not so worried about things that are not happening and you know, it is not always possible to be in that state all the time but you can be a little more curious because curiosity is your natural state. Think about it, those of you who have children listening to this, your children are just naturally curious.

They're just always wanting to ask why and trying to find answers and picking up sticks and balls and playing with them for hours, just fascinated by it, and guess what? You were like that too when you were a child and I was like that too when I was a child. That was our natural state, we were born into that state of curiosity and then life does this really thorough job of beating it out of us in our teenage years, in our young adult years, especially when we hit the "real world" and we have to start to survive, right?

We spend very little time to explore curiosity and that's where we start to veer away from our path and into whatever society has conditioned us to believe success is going to come from this job or this type of relationship or this type of lifestyle. So following your curiosity is a way to kind of get back to your path and to do so shamelessly and without judgment and that's number five and then eventually, you're going to find yourself in a very uncomfortable situation because your curiosity is probably going to lead you out of your comfort zone and into your growth zone.

Just like when you go to the gym and you work with a trainer, there is no trainer in the world that is going to have you come in and do comfortable exercises in order to get into the type of body or the level of strength that you have already communicated you want to experience. Your trainer is there to push you and to hold you accountable, to move you beyond what you would normally do for yourself and that's kind of how the universe works.

So now, you're really doing serious inner work when you find yourself in these uncomfortable situations that you have already indicated this is where you want to go, right? And the phrase for it that we often times refer to it as is imposter syndrome. "I have imposter syndrome" and I have written about this before. I've said that anyone living life on the edge tends to have imposter syndrome.

[0:39:58.8] LW: In fact, if you don't have imposter syndrome, you need to go further because you're probably still deep in your comfort zone. So getting to the perimeter of your comfort zone will start to invoke imposter syndrome. Just like when you are in the gym working with your trainer and the trainer tells you to do some craziness and you're thinking to yourself, "There is no way I can finish this exercise."

It's like you know, I heard somebody, you know who David Goggins is, who is sort of the extreme ultra-athlete and so this guy was talking about doing a workout with David Goggins and David had him come over and do as many pull-ups as he could do and the guy was able to do like seven pull-ups and he said, "Okay, take a break" and then a couple of minutes later he said, "Okay, get up there on the pull-up bar and do some more pull-ups as many as you can do."

The guy was able to do like five and then he took another break and then he got up again, he had him do as many as he could do and he did like three, and eventually after about five sets, the guy was only able to do one pull-up and he was wailing and wobbling and all of that just to get that one pull-up and then Goggins goes, "Okay, we're going to do a hundred. You've already done 10" or however many he already did, "You have 80 something more to go."

The guy is thinking to himself, "There is no way I can do a hundred pull-ups" and Goggins says, "Look, we got all day long. We're going to stay here all day until you get to that hundred pull-ups" and his point was when we think we are completely tapped out, we're really only about 40% tapped out and there is still a 60% untapped potential in there that we rarely veer into because we tell our mind to tell our body that we're done.

So sure enough, this guy over the course of the next several hours ended up getting all 100 pull-ups and obviously, it was a struggle. Obviously, he was resistant the whole time but he said after he got to the end, to that 100, he did feel like a freaking superhero for having pushed himself well beyond his limits. So that's what we mean by finding comfort in discomfort, it's just recognizing that when you feel like you're exhausted and worn out, you're actually at your limit.

You're not actually at your edge and if you can just stay in it a little bit longer or a lot longer, you may find that there is some untapped potential in there that can move you further into your path and your purpose and then eventually, you begin to normalize that and so other opportunities for

growth are no longer as intimidating, no longer as scary. I have a section in that part of the book called scary yeses.

I compare that to what a lot of these motivational guys talk about now, which is, “You know if it’s not a hell yes, then it’s an automatic no” and it’s like, of course, you know? That’s easy and obvious. If something is a hell yes, obviously, you’re going to do it but what you really want, what’s really going to move the needle are the scary yeses, scary yeses. So things like cold plunging, which to me is a scary yes.

It is not something I wake up in the morning and the first thing I am thinking about, “So I can’t wait to get in that cold ass water” but if it has health benefits, maybe that is something you want to kind of push yourself into or as a means of expanding your mind and just letting your mind know that it’s not in control, that you are in control of it. It’s not your master, it’s your servant, right?

Or if you have a bit of a, you know, if you’re a bit of a functional alcoholic, maybe it’s time to make some different choices related to that, which flies in the face of your comfort zone. It is not something you probably want to do, you probably are telling yourself, “It’s not that bad, it’s just one drink here and there” et cetera, et cetera but you couldn’t go a month, two months, three months without drinking anything.

So that indicates that you do have some degree of alcoholism if you can’t. That’s what being an addict means, you can’t go without it. So if you can’t demonstrate for yourself that you can go a few months without drinking, then you’re an addict and it’s not a good thing or a bad thing. It’s just it is what it is and so that is again, it’s prohibiting you from experiencing a degree of presence that could otherwise make it easier for you to move in different directions to make choices in your life.

[0:44:39.1] LW: Finally, when it comes to the freedom of choicelessness, if we have a choicelessness, so this is like this is the last principle because this is really the one where you start to recognize your path for what it is, right? Your path is your path, this is the thing that you have been called to do and I sent out an email this morning in my daily dose of inspiration talking about Paulo Coelho.

Paulo Coelho was the author of *The Alchemist*, which is one of my favorite books and I remember hearing him getting interviewed by Oprah Winfrey and Oprah asked Paulo, “You know, talk about this term, personal legend, which you described throughout the book, *The Alchemist*?” and Paulo’s answer was and I’m just going to read it here for you, he says, “Your personal legend is the reason you are here.”

It’s as simple as that, you are here to honor something called the miracle of life. You can fill your days with something that is meaningless but you know you have a reason for being here. It is the only thing that gives you enthusiasm and you know when you are betraying your personal legend when you are doing something without enthusiasm. When you are doing something without enthusiasm, you are betraying your personal legend.

So having the freedom of choicelessness means through your curiosity, you’ve identified what you’re here to do. Obviously doing that thing is not going to necessarily be easy but you can still be enthusiastic about the challenges that you’re facing because it’s allowing you to have a sense of impact in your life, in your community, in your country, in your world but it also serves as an editor for your life because you now have a framework through which to compare other things that you may be considering.

The question is, “Is this serving my path or is this not serving my path?” and if it’s serving your path, then you have a greater inclination to engage with it. If it is not serving your path, then it’s easier to say no to it. It’s easier to prioritize it down. It doesn’t mean you don’t have to ever do it but you don’t have to make it the priority that it may otherwise be if you weren’t that clear about your path.

So it gives you a sense of freedom because now, you don’t have to go back and forth in your mind, “Should I do this? Should I do that?” you already know, “Okay, this is either align or is not aligned” and therefore, it liberates you to make that choice a lot easier and so what all this does is it gives you an overall sense of efficiency in your life. You know, following your curiosity, finding comfort and discomfort, it’s helping you to create spaciousness inside of yourself and that’s where the minimalism part comes into play.

The spiritual part is you're being informed by your heart voice or also known as the voice of your inner guidance or your intuition, your essence, your spirit. So together, that approach to life does not necessarily involve getting rid of your furniture or cleaning out your closet, although as a desirable side effect, you may find yourself being more and more unattached to the things that you have on the outside.

You may also find yourself being unattached to old outdated belief systems that are no longer serving you, such as it's a positive thing for me to be out of shape and unhealthy, and look, I am not against body positivity. I think everyone should love themselves wherever they are and I also think that everyone should strive to be the best version of themselves. So those two things can coexist, it doesn't have to be one or the other.

We can love ourselves knowing that we're in process and we can be an example for the people that are around us of someone who takes excellent care of themselves. In the same way that if you are to acquire a nice luxury car, you would probably at least initially, you would treat that car very, very well. You wouldn't let people eat in your car, you won't put just any old kind of gas in your car.

You won't treat your car like a rental, you know, like some cheap rental, you would treat it like the luxury car that I was. Even if you could afford to fix certain, whatever went wrong with it but yet, we treat our body like that cheap rental car and the body is the car that we have to ultimately drive every day for the rest of our life. So if anything, we should be treating our bodies better than we treat our cars, okay?

I'm not saying you have to have a six-pack, I'm not saying you can't have any body fat, I certainly have body fat, I don't have a six-pack or anything like that but our physical health is a reflection of our mental health, our emotional health, our spiritual health, et cetera and you could say the same about all those other states. Our emotional health is a reflection of our physical health and all the other health, so why not try to optimize health in all areas?

[0:49:55.3] LW: Instead of excusing ourselves because society has told us that we're beautiful just the way we are, that's true and we want to be in a process of improvement. Again, that is not coming from your external world, it is coming from your authentic self. When you think about

it and we experience this at the end of December each year, we have the holidays, which means most people are not working in the same full-time capacity that they were working prior to the holidays.

So you're more relaxed, perhaps you're around your family, perhaps you've been eating home-cooked foods and in that state where you have community, you have connection, you have relaxation, you can kind of settle into your authentic self and you start to dream, you start to imagine what could be possible in the oncoming year and that's where we make those resolutions and that's why we come up with these really big visions for ourselves.

"I'm going to be in the best shape of my life. I'm going to finally follow my passion. I'm going to finally start my podcast. I'm going to finally write my book this year" right? And then what happens? January first rolls around and you launch out of the gate and then two weeks into it, the excuses start. "Oh, you know, I didn't know I was going to get sick. I didn't know people are coming to town."

"I didn't know I was going to travel for work" and you start letting yourself off the hook and off the hook and off the hook and then the next thing you know, six months later, nothing really has changed but that part of you that was rested and that was connected, that's who you truly are. So when you're dreaming those big dreams for yourself, no one is saying, "Oh, I want to be out of shape in this next year."

People are normally saying, "I want to be in the best shape or at least I want to be in better shape than I'm in right now. I want to get those steps, I want to drink more water. I don't want to drink as much alcohol. I'm going to do dry January" you know, all these things, and through the process of attempting to change, we start to see how deeply rooted some of these old habits and old belief systems are.

So that's an opportunity to face all of that and that's what the book is intended to do. That's what the book is intended to do, right? That's what spiritual minimalism essentially means. So anyways, I wanted to educate the market on spiritual minimalism, and at the beginning of April, I started creating a bunch of content on my social media with quotes. I used photos with quotes written over the photos and I labeled them "the spiritual minimalist."

I wasn't saying that I am the one and only spiritual minimalist, I'm saying that a spiritual minimalist moves like this, thinks like this, considers these possibilities because I wanted you guys, I wanted the people listening and consuming this content to put themselves in the shoes of a spiritual minimalist and start to identify as a spiritual minimalist and just to become more and more familiar with that terminology.

So that when you finally get your hands on this book, you can start to use it for your life to adopt as many of these principles of spiritual minimalism as you can and it's the same kind of like choose your own adventure format as my previous book, *Knowing Where to Look*, where you can crack it open at any page and just see what catches your eye and you can start reading from there.

So that's kind of how it was written and that's how it was being marketed and so as I am going on the podcast circuit right now, I'm getting an opportunity to share a lot of stories and I'm noticing that some stories are coming up more often than other stories. I'm really trying though as a podcast host myself to keep it unique and we have a goal of doing I think, well initially, it was like 70-something podcasts.

Right now, we're probably around 50, so we're going to keep doing more and more podcasts but my goal is to try to tell something different in each of those podcasts and a lot of it depends on the questions that I am asked but also a lot of it just depends on me going in with the intention of making this like the first and only podcast I've ever done each time I go and do a podcast.

So that is a really wonderful opportunity that I have that we have created, my team and I, and I am just super excited about that and I'm just excited for the book to be out in general and for this term, spiritual minimalism, to now be in the zeitgeist and I am curious to see there is so much lifestyle tips in this book, stuff about dating, stuff about exercise, stuff about finances, stuff about just lifestyle in general.

I'm so curious to see which parts of it stick, which parts of it get talked about the most, and which parts of it no one really talks about at all and you never know how that's going to go when you publish a book.

[0:54:54.3] LW: So that will be quite exciting as well but I just want to take a moment to thank you all for your support, for helping me spread the word about this work, about spiritual minimalism, for sharing my posts, and following me on the socials, and for pre-ordering the book. Those of you who pre-ordered the book, I have this contests where I'm giving away some of the items that I have been carrying with me over these last five-plus years of intentionally practicing minimalism.

My backpack, my meditation shawl, my hand-strung Mala beads, my reusable water bottle, some galley copies of the book, meaning the early copies of the book that the publisher sends out just to show you what the book is going to look like as it's laid out. So once you either pre-order the book or purchase the book in the first week and we're in the first week right now, you can upload a proof of purchase to lightwatkins.com/travel and that will give you access to my seven-day spiritual minimalism challenge.

As well as you will automatically be entered into the drawing for one of those items and I will ship it to you with of course, a handwritten note, and it is just my way of again saying thank you for your early support, for being an early adopter of this work. This is a book I think I'm most proud of because it's a combination of the other three books that I've written and I think it's the most personal book that I have also written as well.

I really felt that when I was reading the audiobook version of *Travel Light*. I just kind of got really emotional at certain points because it was so personal. Yes, so I'm just excited to share it with you and hear what you guys have to say and if you already have the book, please leave a review, an Amazon review and in fact, if you leave an Amazon review, you will get an additional entry into the drawing if you leave a review within the first week of receiving the book.

So that's it for now. Thank you again and we'll be back with our regularly scheduled programming next week but I really appreciate you all for supporting this podcast and for supporting my work and for spreading the word and I look forward to hearing what you have to say on social media. So if you have the book, make sure you share it. It's, *Travel Light: Spiritual Minimalism to Live a More Fulfilled Life*. Share it on your socials, tag me, and then so I can reshare it and thanks again and have a lovely rest of your day.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:57:21.9] LW: Thank you so much for listening until the end of my solo episode. You can see the show notes for this episode at lightwatkins.com/show, and of course, I would appreciate it if you and everyone that you know got a copy of *Travel Light*, which is available in hardback, audiobook, as well as the Kindle version, and if you grab your copy this week.

And if you show proof of purchase at lightwatkins.com, you will automatically be entered into a drawing where you can win some of the items I've been carrying around with me, my meditation shawl, my hand-strung Mala beads, and other items I have been using along my spiritual minimalism journey, plus you get immediate access to my seven-day spiritual minimalism challenge.

You just have to show your proof of purchase at lightwatkins.com/travel and again, we'll put that in the show notes. In the meantime, 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.

You can also watch these interviews on my YouTube channel if you want to put a face to a story, just search Light Watkins Podcast on YouTube and you'll see the entire playlist. I also post the raw unedited version of each podcast in my Happiness Insiders online community. If you're the type who likes to hear all the mistakes, the false starts, and chit-chat at the beginning and the end of the episode, you could listen to that by joining my online community at thehappinessinsiders.com.

And you'll also get access to my 108th-day meditation challenge along with other master classes and challenges for becoming the best version of you and finally, to help me bring you the best guests possible, it would go a long way if you can just take 10 seconds to subscribe to the podcast and then to rate the podcast.

All you do is you glance down at your screen and you click on the name of the podcast, then you scroll down past the seven or so previous episodes, you'll see a space with five blank stars,

just tap the star all the way on the right if you feel inspired by these conversations and you've left us a five-star rating.

If you want to go the extra mile, of course, we'd appreciate that too, you can leave a review with just one line about what you admire or appreciate about this podcast and/or a recommendation that a new listener should consider starting with to get a good introduction to the podcast. Thank you very much in advance for that.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like me, just like you, taking a leap of faith in the direction of their purpose and until then, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep taking those leaps of faith, and if no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you, sending you lots of love, and have a great day.

[END]