

## EPISODE 165

## [INTRODUCTION]

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**[00:01:07] LW:** Hello, friends. And welcome back to another episode of 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. 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've directly benefited from their work.

And this week, I've got something for you that I wasn't planning to do originally. But I was listening to my heart voice, as I talk about in my new book *Travel Light*. Long story short, last week was the launch of *Travel Light: Spiritual Minimalism to Live a More Fulfilled Life*, which is book number four.

And a part of the rollout was to do Instagram lives with a dozen of my influencer friends and supporters. And we ended up having so many amazing conversations about things that I had

yet to discuss in the podcast interviews leading up to the launch that my heart voice said, "Light, you should put together a compilation of the greatest insights from your IG lives into one episode and make that your next podcast."

And I said, "But heart voice, I just released a solo episode last week." And my heart voice replied, "Light, what did I tell you about trusting me? Why do we always have to do this whole back-and-forth thing where you start second-guessing what I'm saying only to wish that you had followed me sooner?"

And I admit it that my heart voice was right. When I follow it 100 times out of 100, I'm always happy that I did. So all that to say, this week I am releasing a compilation of my IG lives with luminaries such as Tara Stiles who started Strala Yoga. And Yoga with Adriene's Adriene Mishler. I'm speaking with Africa Brooke who went viral after writing an op-ed about leaving woke culture. And then there's the *Kindness Diaries*, Leon Logothetis. *War of Art* author, Stephen Pressfield. We're going to hear from actress Rosario Dawson.

I was in conversation with thought leader Bozoma Saint John. The Big Quiet founder, Jesse Israel. We're going to hear an interview with Diane, who is my editor for *Travel Light*. As well as the illustrator, Simona, who helped to design the beautiful mixed media art pieces in *Travel Light*. We'll hear from Dr. Will Cole who started the world's first telehealth clinic. And my guy, Robert Brix Glover of Brix Fitness who is a body transformation guru.

And we're just going to take short audio clips from each interview. Because these were IG lives, the audio quality varies from interview to interview. But the questions and stories make it really worth it. Without further ado, let's turn the tables and I'll be the one getting interviewed for a change instead of me being the one asking the questions.

First up, we're going to drop into my conversation with Africa Brooke whose work I've been following for years. Africa is based in London and she speaks, writes in podcasts about being your most authentic self, irregardless of what she calls the woke mob and what they think you should be doing or saying or supporting. Let's get into it.

[EPISODE]

**[00:04:34] AF:** What for you this idea of spiritual minimalism? Where was it sort of born from? And how is it different from the mainstream idea that we have of minimalism and the judgments that a lot of people probably have around that capitalized, brandable, marketable aesthetic lens idea of minimalism?

**[00:04:50] LW:** Such a good question. So the book opens with me talking about how I moved out of my two-bedroom apartment and into a backpack. And this happened in May 31st of 2018. I left my beautiful two-bedroom flat, which was 10 minutes walking from Venice Beach and I started living essentially on the road.

And what I realized from that experience was that the experience itself didn't make me any happier. It didn't make me more fulfilled than I was prior to that. And that I made the choice to do that because I was sort of tapped into this sense of fulfillment. So that's essentially where it came from. And that started when I began taking my meditation practice seriously, back in 2003.

And so, what transpired in between 2003 and 2018 – and this is not unique to me, this is anyone who takes their inner work seriously. Is it helps you to get rid of the internal clutter. It helps you to get rid of the emotional baggage that we don't even realize is keeping us stuck in outdated belief systems, in soul-sucking jobs, in toxic relationships, right?

You and I talked about your relationship with alcohol on our podcast interview and how that was manifesting and you were losing friendships. But you still – until we get to that point of reckoning for ourselves, we still justify it, and justify it and justify it. And in the process, we think that the answer is not internal. The answer is I just need a little bit more. As soon as I get a little more money. As soon as I get a little more alcohol. A little more recognition. More success externally. That's going to lead to a sense of fulfillment.

And the old spiritual traditions have reminded us for thousands of years that there is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way. I kind of learned inadvertently through taking my meditation practice seriously that the thing that I've been looking for all my life was actually found inside of me. And I start cultivating that. And then I just find out I'm so much less attached to my things. And when things don't go my way, it's okay. I can hit the reset button easier and easier.

And so, that all sort of culminated in this. I got an idea in 2017 to see what this experience is like of living nomadically. And then in 2018, I resisted it because I'm normal. That's what we do. We resist it. But it didn't go away. And that's one of the telltale signs that your heart is listening to you. It doesn't go away.

There's this sense of exciting anticipation. It doesn't go away. You can try to drink it away. You can try to snort it away. You can try to smoke it away. But it's still there in the back of your mind. It's in your heart. And then eventually, once you take that leap, you see that, "Oh, this was the next stage of my own personal growth and evolution."

**[00:07:57] BG:** So what is this book about? Travel Light, what is it about? What's the main idea and what's the mission of the book?

**[00:08:04] LW:** Main idea, it's about spiritual minimalism. And what that means is – I'll tell you my own experience now and how it relates to spiritual minimalism. I felt inspired to become nomadic in 2018. I moved out of my apartment in Santa Monica. I had a great apartment. Everything, great setup. Under market price, I was paying. The whole thing. 10 minutes walking from the beach. But I felt deep down that I was no longer meant to be in that place.

And I made the mistake years and years and years ago when I got that same feeling about my apartment in Harlem New York. I live in Harlem first for many years. And I had a beautiful apartment. Paid under market. And New York is one of those places, as you know, where if you have a good deal on an apartment, you hold on to it. You hold on to it like a pit bull. And I held on to it even though I had moved to Los Angeles.

And man, it was like a nightmare. Just like having to deal with tenants and having to deal with the landlord. And then I realized, "Look, I'm about upgrading my life. This is not about going back to the same place. This is about moving on and evolving to the next phase. And if I keep holding on to this place because it costs a certain amount that I feel is a deal, then I'm basically operating in scarcity."

I learned from experience not to hold on to things like that. When I got the call in LA to move on from this place, it was the same situation. Holding on to this would essentially be like going backwards.

And so, I went into this nomadic adventure. I had no idea how long it was going to last. I didn't know where I was going to be month to month. And then it's through that experience I sort of developed the framework for this idea of spiritual minimalism, which is checking in with your heart to determine what you do next.

A lot of us, we check in with our head. We make decisions based in analysis. And we consider what the heart thinks last. That's like the last consideration. It doesn't even really matter that much because society tells us that we should be ... And when you listen to the heart, the narrative in your head is like, "Oh, something told me to ..." And so, you want to get into the habit of following that heart voice more and more.

And what I found, and what I'm sure you found as I'm speaking to you, and you're in the middle of this journey, I'm sure something told you to go to Belize. Have that experience. And you probably have discovered things about Belize and about yourself that you didn't anticipate when you first had that idea to go to Belize.

And so, we all have our version of that. Yours is Belize. Mine is living from a backpack. Somebody else's maybe starting a podcast. Somebody else's may be losing weight and transforming their body. But it's something that pushes you out of your comfort zone and gets you into your growth zone where you start expanding into your potential. That's the essence of Travel Light.

**[00:11:29] LW:** You got a chance to read the manuscript, early manuscript, before it was even finalized. There were some stories there that didn't make it into the final book. Talk about your understanding of how it was going to be laid out. We were obviously having talks about it. But then I think we had this conversation around making it an art book as opposed to a minimalism book.

**[00:11:55] SVW:** Yes. I remember the moment it was I think maybe five minutes into our first conversation in London, in the soul house, when you just handed me all your photographs, all the most personal photographs. I think I said that before, I was very impressed because you didn't even ask me to sign any NDA before. You just gave me everything. I was like, "Wow. How is that possible? You don't even really know me. You met me through internet." And I was very

surprised and proud. I felt like, "Wow. You must trust me." But now I know it was because of your inner guidance. You knew you can trust me with all your private stuff because there was lots of private stuff in there. Like pages of your journal and some photographs. Any kind of photographs. So, yeah.

**[00:12:43] LW:** there were some nude photos that I had taken [inaudible 00:12:45].

**[00:12:46] SVW:** Yes. I didn't want to say that. But, yeah. That's more or less true.

**[00:12:52] LW:** You used one of those in one of the illustrations.

**[00:12:55] SVW:** Yes. Yes.

**[00:12:56] LW:** Yeah. When you heard the word minimalism book, how did you interpret that in terms of the design?

**[00:13:02] SVW:** The first thing that came into my mind was, "Okay, I want to use some lines, contour or something." Not show everything. I wanted to have everything plain, clean. And then I understood it's not about the minimalist I'm used to. It's more than that. So then we decided to get creative. And the illustration, they don't look really minimalist anymore, right? It's more artwork. It's a mixture of everything.

**[00:13:32] LW:** When you look at your art, what do you invoke? What do you see as someone who created those illustrations? Because, obviously, you've done some really beautiful Instagram reels showing a bit of the creative process. But I'm curious, do you see perfection? Do you see abstraction? Do you see mistakes that you wish you could have done things differently? What do you see? Or is it a mixture?

**[00:13:59] SVW:** If you want to hear my honest opinion, I think I only started to like them after you said you liked them. I was always so unsure. Is it good enough? And can I stop now and do the next one? Or shall I spend a little bit more time? And, yeah, you made it very easy for me because you've been motivating me the whole time.

And I don't remember you criticizing me in all this month we've been working together. I don't remember anything negative. That's really, really special for me. I haven't experienced something like that before.

**[00:14:38] LW:** One of the disagreements you and I had – and it wasn't like a major. It never became an argument. But you wanted to show my face more than I wanted to show my face. And it's not because I'm ashamed of my face or insecure about my face. I think I have a beautiful face. It's just that I didn't want the reader to associate me with being the spiritual minimalist. I wanted them to see themselves as a spiritual minimalist. I wanted to just use me as more of an archetype than like an actual personality in the book through the illustrations. Do you have any comments about that experience?

**[00:15:16] SVW:** I think we don't show enough of your lifestyle. Because, for me, that was very inspiring to see how you live. How you wash your clothes? What you do in your free time and all that? We didn't even include many photos of your exercises. And there were a few good ones in there. The one when you were exercising in the park and not caring about anyone around you. They were watching you and you just carry on doing your workouts. I thought that was very impressive. A great example for people that are too shy to go for a jog outside or walk or exercise. Yeah, this is what I would do differently. Just show even more.

**[00:16:02] AM:** Have you noticed from book one to book four, and just with your work, the whole encompassing of your work in general? Isn't it funny how it's much easier to just like hit people over the head — it takes a lot of energy I should say. It's not necessarily harder.

**[00:16:15] LW:** Yeah.

**[00:16:16] AM:** A lot of energy to soften all of that and actually share your work respectfully I think. Hats off.

**[00:16:24] LW:** I think it also comes from – let's take the words hard and soft out of it. I'm just thinking of this now. But coming more of a place of authenticity. Like is this really how I feel? Or am I getting caught up in this wave of the marketing conditioning? Like it needs to happen right now. And I need to become a bestseller. And I need to have certain number of subscribers.

And if you keep extrapolating that, you eventually arrive at this point of to what end? Like, okay. So let's say I have a million subscribers. Let's say I have a bestseller. Then what? Am I going to be happier than I am right now? And then I have to be reminded of my original message which is, "No. No. The things you're doing are because you're happy. Because you're experiencing a degree of fulfillment." And maybe these things that we're doing, they have a longer tale than we imagined for ourselves.

That reminds me of the story behind *The Alchemist*, which is one of my top three favorite books of all time, by Paulo Coelho. You read it and it's clear why people resonate with this book. It's such a great story. Follow your personal legend. Take leaps of faith. Everything is going to work out.

Well, guess what? When he first wrote that book, it was crickets. It was cricket for nine years. I think like two people purchased his book in the first year. This publisher gave him the rights to the book back. They gave it back to him, which is unheard of. The publisher was so uninspired by the results of trying to sell that book that they actually did something that no publisher does, which is, "Here. Take this book back. We're going to go try something else."

And he shocked it around to the largest book publisher in Brazil, which, again, publishers don't republish a book that failed. But for some reason, this book publisher decided to take a chance and they did. And still, nothing happened. And then a few years later, Madonna's posting about it. Bill Clinton, Justin Timberlake. All these people. Will Smith are posting the book and the guy is thinking, "Okay. Of course, it's going to become a bestseller now." Nothing. Crickets.

And then eventually, one day, he's just out in the grocery store, he gets a call from his agent. Guess what? Your book hit the New York Times bestseller list years after all of that traction." And so, you just never know. And now it's been on the best-seller list consistently for like years. So you just never know. You have to trust that if your message is authentic, the right people are going to see it at the right time. And this famous artist, I'm not going to mention who he is because he's canceled right now. But he said, "While people are criticizing your work, don't be bothered by that. Just keep creating more work. Let them deal with if it's good, if it's bad, if it's whatever. You just keep creating your work and just keep putting it out there." And that's sort of been my mission.



**[00:19:29] AM:** But I wanted to just ask you like what you had learned since this was your fourth book. And I think you really already covered that really sure.

**[00:19:37] LW:** Yeah. I mean, look, you never feel like, "Okay, now I'm this amazing writer," you know? Even after four books, I think you're reminded that you could finish a book. That's really the big thing. The first book I ever wrote, I had major doubts that I could finish the book. And that if I did finish the book, that it would be any good.

The second book I wrote, I knew I was going to finish it but then I was like, "Is this book going to be any good to anyone?" And I actually had to rewrite that book because I didn't realize that people who write books for the publishing industry, there's a certain format that self-help books need to follow. We don't need to get into it now. But it's different from like self-publishing and writing what you think people or how people want to experience the book.

And then the previous book, *Knowing Where to Look*, which you also gave me a really beautiful blurb for, that book was the first time I felt like, "Okay, I'm going to finish this book." And I feel like I know how to structure it in a way that people typically are used to digesting books.

And so, this book was the same. I knew I was going to finish it. I knew that it was going to fit the format. But now I got a chance to make it really personal. And that's what stands out to me, is just being a little bit more. Because, look, I'm a dude. We're not the most publicly emotional and vulnerable people. I use this as an opportunity to really just open up a lot more than I opened up in my past writing and just make it all – tell more personal stories.

What's interesting is that when you do that, there are all kinds of like hidden nuggets and lessons that you don't recognize when you're trying to protect your ego. That was really an interesting takeaway from the process. And then it becomes addicting. You're like, "Okay, what else can I share that I've never told anyone before? And what lessons did I glean from that experience?"

**[00:21:44] JI:** What's the first question that people tend to ask you when you share with them about the way that you've been living since 2018?

**[00:21:52] LW:** Do you miss having a home? And the answer to that question is, "Surprisingly, no. I never miss having a home." In the same way that if I were to ask you, "Jesse, do you miss high school? Do you miss being in college, in NYU?" Right? I mean, yeah, you think of it fondly and you remember. You have memories. But you don't want to go back there because your life has now evolved beyond that.

And for me, it's not about being on the road indefinitely. I mean, I have a home. I have an Airbnb that I stay in. And that's more or less my home. When I walk in it, I feel like home. But at the same time, I don't own it. I don't own any of this stuff in here. And when I get the call to go to the next weigh station along my journey, I'm going to leave everything behind and it's going to be fine.

And so, what I've noticed is that, from traveling in this way, everything is sentimental. It's not just the stuff that's back in our apartment that we consider to be sentimental and then everything else is just kind of like arbitrary. No. Everything is sentimental if you're present enough to really be with it and to really experience it.

And when you get to that state, you start to find nuggets of insight and wisdom pretty much everywhere you go. So that's been a wonderful surprising realization of the journey. And by the way, this is not about anyone else having what I've experienced. I'm not encouraging people to do this. What I am encouraging you to do is to find your version of that.

And so, someone else's version of that may be starting a podcast. Writing your first book. Becoming a personal trainer. Starting to volunteer on a regular basis. And what happens is you get out of your comfort zone, because that's what this did for me, is I had gotten so deep in my comfort zone while I was living my dream, while I was living my passion.

It wasn't like I hated my job. It wasn't like I hated my apartment or anything like that. But you can still be in your comfort zone even though you're considered to be someone who is very much on their path. And so, you can never get comfortable, right? You can never get comfortable if you want to continue to grow and stretch into your potential.

**[00:24:05] JI:** I think this is a good segue into the book. Does the book help people understand how to live in that space outside of their comfort zone? Does it teach people how they can

practice some of these things that you've talked about? Tell us a little bit about the book and ultimately why you felt called to writing a book about this.

**[00:24:23] LW:** Yeah. The book is broken down into seven principles of spiritual minimalism. So I'll just go through them really quickly.

**[00:24:29] JI:** Cool.

**[00:24:29] LW:** Principle number one, cultivate a connection with your inner guidance. Principle number two, make your most important decisions from your heart and not from your head. Number three is to leave places better than you found them. Number four is to give what you want to receive. And what I mean by – it sounds like the Golden Rule. But it's more nuanced than that. It means if you're in a relationship where you feel like your partner isn't giving you enough love, enough compassion, they're not generous enough. A lot of times we'll wait for them to go first and we'll withhold our love and our generosity.

And we're thinking to ourselves, "Okay, as soon as I've already been generous enough, as soon as they reciprocate, then I'll be generous some more." And that's not how it works. First of all, that takes you out of your moment, out of the present moment. Now you're living in scarcity. Because what you're saying effectively is that I don't have enough generosity to go around. You're saying that I only have enough to give for this moment in time and then they have to replenish me.

In other words, they are the source of my fulfillment. And that setting you up, that's a trap. That's the acquisitive approach to happiness. Instead, you want to keep being you to the best extent that you can be yourself. And if you get to a point where you realize, "Okay, this relationship is no longer nurturing the things that I have to give. And I'm going to take the things that I have to give and put it in a different outlet, a different type of relationship. Maybe it's just a relationship with myself for a little while." So that's what I mean by give what you want to receive. And then there's follow your curiosity, find comfort and discomfort and celebrate the freedom of choicelessness.

Those are all prompts to go within and source the solution or the answers to whatever you're challenged by inside of yourself and then allow that to come through you. And then that will create a more adventurous life.

The alternative is not a boring life. The alternative is a chaotic life. By ignoring what you're feeling inside, you're ultimately choosing chaos, a life of chaos. There is no neutral path. You're either choosing chaos or you're choosing adventure. And I think – I don't know you guys personally watching this. But I think you want adventure over chaos.

**[00:26:58] JI:** You talk a lot about intention. And one of the things that I love about the book is that there's really clear intentional exercises that people can apply from the very basic to the most meaningful things in our lives. One thing that I love that you talk about in the books, which I'd love you to talk a little bit about here, is the minimal approach to exercising. Would you mind getting into this framework a little bit? It's great. This is something that people can try today.

**[00:27:26] LW:** Sure. Yeah. I mean, during the pandemic, like most people, I wasn't able to go to the gym. And I wanted to create some sort of workout that I didn't have to really think about. Because that's one of the hang-ups with working out, it's like, "Okay, what do I do today? I did push-ups yesterday. Maybe I'll do push-ups again today. Maybe I'll do a jog. I don't know."

What I did was to take the guesswork out, I really thought about, "Okay, what calisthenics, what body weight exercises can I do every day that corresponds with a different part of the body?" Mondays were push-up days. Tuesdays were air squats or chair squats, right? Like I'm sitting in a chair right now. Chair squat is you standing up and sitting back down. That's a chair squat. You're standing back up and sitting back down. And just kind of getting some movement going. And I start with like 25 reps broken down into like however many sets you want to do. So maybe five sets of five reps of chair squats. Take a little break. And then do another five reps at the half-hour mark.

And that way, you can still get your work done and then you can budget in some movement and you feel like, "Hey, I did a little workout." And you leave yourself wanting more by doing less than what you're capable of doing. But the intention is you're working up to a certain number. Maybe you're working up to 100 total reps for the day all throughout the day, right? But it starts

with just maybe 10 depending on what kind of condition you're in physically and cardiovascularly.

I present that in the book as a way of people getting more movement. There's something to do every day. At the very most, you'll just have an exercise band. Just one of those like elastic bands to work with. If you have to do back, it's hard to do back with just body weight. But if you have a band, you can do some bent-over rows or what have you or shoulder presence.

And by the end of the week, you've exercised every part of your body and you have that momentum, which obviously makes you feel better physically, emotionally and even spiritually. And you throw in some walking in addition to that. And next thing you know, man, you're starting to get into better shape. And that's what everybody ultimately wants.

When we're experiencing our most authentic self, nobody is thinking, "Oh, I don't want to be in shape." Everybody wants to be in shape. But the question is how do I do it? When am I going to find the time? Et cetera. Et cetera. And if you break it down it's a little small hops, just little baby steps, and you build upon that and you use things like – I talk about using affirmations to count off your reps. So instead of saying five, four, three, two, one. You may say, "I am full of love." "Dad is full of love," second set. Third set, "My wife is full of love." Like that.

And so, then you've prayed for everybody. You've affirmed the experiences that you want to have by the end of your exercise. You get that expansive feeling and you moved your body. And so, there's a way to check so many boxes by just thinking about these kinds of things a little bit differently. And that's really what I want people to do with Travel Light, is to think about everything in your life that you already do. Just think about it a little bit differently.

Instead of looking for the parking space closest to the door, park half a mile away if you have the time and then walk to run your errand. And that way, you get some steps. You can do a little flaneuring. You can get some sun exposure. You can maybe follow the heart voice. Maybe the heart has you take a little scenic route to the door, to the store you're going to. And you may find that your life becomes a little mini adventure without even trying.

And if you have these little mini adventures, then you reduce the need to have some big, massive vacation adventure once a year because you're budgeting that into your day every day or two.

**[00:31:29] BSJ:** When you say spiritual minimalism, it also makes me think of like that emotional baggage that you carry, that perhaps your heart voice. Which, by the way, first time I've ever heard heart voice as a description of your intuition, I love that. I'm about to use it all the time. But do you think then that your heart voice, your intuition, how do you use that to get rid of some of this baggage that we're walking around with, literal and figurative?

**[00:31:59] LW:** Okay. The first practice that I suggest in the book is a stillness practice, which that's how you and I met. I came to Beats and I talked about this book right here, which is my first book. And I talked about meditation. I think I led a meditation for you guys. I've been sounding like a broken record for years talking about the importance of going within in order to hear what that heart voice is telling you to do.

The reason why we don't follow that voice more often, even though it's advantageous to do so, is for a couple reasons. Number one, it doesn't inspire us to go in a direction that we're going to be certain how things are going to turn out. That's a bit scary, right? That's why it's called a leap of faith.

But number two, it's hard to hear that voice. And so, we refer to it as the still, small voice. Still, small voice. And the reason why it's still and it's small is because we haven't made a habit of following it. And the louder voices, which could be the ego voice, the voice of fear, the voice of social conditioning, the voice of your parents, the voice of your teachers, the voice of the media. Those voices tend to be louder in our head because we've listened to those voices and we've acted upon those voices more, right?

What meditation does is it turns up the volume on the still, small voice so that it becomes a loud, annoying voice. And that's what you want. It sounds weird to say it like that. But you want your heart voice to be – it's like imagine if you have a GPS and you're in the car and you're about to miss your turn. And what if the GPS could like raise its voice that you and say, "Turn right here. You're about to pass –" you know, that would be very useful if we were like lost, we're about to miss a turn and we're going to have to go on a detour and turn around and come back.

And so, you want that voice to be loud and annoying so you don't miss your cues. Because when you can hear it and you can act upon it, because it's not going to let you just ignore it anymore, then you're going to find that you're in a better position than you were before.

**[00:34:13] BSJ:** Now as we've already discussed, I don't know if I'm going to get to the one backpack situation. You know what I'm saying? I don't know if that is my testimony. But I would like to get to the spiritual lightness where like –

**[00:34:26] LW:** You have your version of that. That's the whole point, is that's my thing. That's what I thought I'm called to do. You may feel called to write another book, right? And maybe in your mind you're like, "Oh, I just wrote this book. I just went on this tour. It was nice. But it was a lot of work. I don't know if I had much else to say." I'm just speaking generally. Because somebody else may be thinking the same things.

Or it may be time to go back into the studio, create the next album. Or maybe time to start your podcast. We all have – we're all at the precipice of some crossroad moment in our life. And our head wants us to do the comfortable, safe, certain thing. And our heart is like, "No. You've already done that. That's the ever-repeating known. You have to take a leap of faith into the unknown because that's where your potential is."

You go to the gym every day. Your trainer is not making you more comfortable. That's not their job. Their job is to help you grow into your potential. And that's what the heart is doing for us. Our heart is not trying to make us more comfortable. And that's how you know you're following it, is that it's taking you in a direction that it stretches your potential. Because the vision you have for yourself, you aren't that person yet that can fulfill that vision. You have to go through the uncertainty and the challenges and putting yourself out there and potentially embarrassing yourself.

**[00:35:46] BSJ:** Wait. Light. Light. Light. Light. Can you say that one more time? That – oh, my gosh. That part about you aren't yet the person.

**[00:35:55] LW:** You're not the person right now watching this. You are not the person that can really fully step into your vision for yourself. If you visit yourself being the next Nelson Mandela,

the next Gandhi, the next Martin Luther King, the next Jeff Bezos, the next Elon Musk, you are not that person yet, yet. Your heart has the blueprint for getting you to that place. And that may require you to go home and take care of your sick mother for a year. And you may be looking at that situation going, "Well, this is setting me back. This is holding me back." All my friends are out there moving forward. I'm over here stuck in hospice care. But that's teaching you things. That's teaching you patience. That's teaching you compassion. That's teaching you generosity of spirit.

And then once you navigate through that situation, you will be in a better position to lead in the way that you've always envisioned for yourself. It's just like Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison before he became president of South Africa. And he famously said when he walked out of that prison, "If I wasn't able to forgive my captors, I would still be in prison." And you could make the argument – I don't know this for a fact. But you can make the argument that it took him 27 years to get to that point.

I read his biography. He didn't start that way. But the moment he finally got to that point where he was able to fully and unconditionally forgive his captors, he was set free. And I would say the same is true for all of us. The sticky situations we're in, we're learning something. And our heart is trying to navigate us through it in the most imaginative, adventurous way. And the moment we fully embrace it – whatever it is. Whatever it is. The moment we fully embrace it, that's when we graduate from this situation.

If you're still in the situation it's because you haven't fully embraced it yet. You haven't seen it as a necessary part of your path. You see it as something that's standing in your way. And so, you're going to have to keep going through it, unfortunately.

**[00:38:05] LL:** I love the term heart voice. It's brilliant. Is that something you came up with?

**[00:38:11] LW:** I mean, I probably heard it somewhere. I don't remember exactly where. But I just wanted to keep it really really simple, right? And I think it's good to distinguish the heart voice from the head voice, from the voices of social conditioning, which are all in there. Your parents' voices are in there. Your caretakers. Your coaches. The media you've consumed. All those voices are in there. And they're all shouting and vying for our attention. And the place where our attention ultimately goes is whoever's voice is the loudest and the most convincing.



And what I want, what I advocate for for each of us, is to turn the volume on the heart voice up as loud as possible. Because some people, they refer to it as the still, small voice, right? Which means you got to get really quiet in order to hear it. But I want your heart voice to be loud and annoying.

And the reason why you want it to be loud and annoying is because the thing is going to have you doing is not going to be something you want to do. And so, if it sounds like your roommate, right, and you're late on the electric bill, your roommate's gonna let you know, "Hey, you got to pay the electric bill. No. You're not going away for the weekend until you pay this electric bill." You want your heart voice to sound like that. Because that's really going to inspire and motivate you to take the next hop of faith along your path to explore this thing that you've always been curious about. And that's how you find your purpose. I always say, don't worry about trying to find your purpose. Just follow your curiosity shamelessly and your purpose will find you.

**[00:39:53] LL:** Beautiful. Beautiful. Tell me. Can you read us a few paragraphs? Like your favorite paragraphs? No pressure.

**[00:40:01] LW:** Yeah. No. No. I'll find a really short section to share with you.

**[00:40:07] LL:** And what does it look like inside? Can you show us what it looks like inside? Oh, it's beautiful, man.

**[00:40:11] LW:** The publisher – and the reason why I wanted to work with them again is that they really get it when it comes to design and illustration.

**[00:40:20] LL:** Oh, wow.

**[00:40:21] LW:** And they allow they allow me to really make it my own in that way. And I told my illustrator, she kept asking me about what's in the book and the minimalism stuff? I said, "Look." I said, "Don't worry about fitting in all the texts and houses." I said, "I want you to approach this project as though it is an art book. It's an art book. And then I'll worry about how we're going to get the text and everything in there and how many pages we have." And so, she did a beautiful job of really bringing the stories to life and making it relatable through illustration.

All right. So I'm going to read a section called hop of faith. Since we're talking about hops of faith, I'll read hop of faith, okay? In 2020, I started a podcast that featured the stories of people who had found their purpose. In fact, you've been on my podcast twice.

After conducting around 200 in-depth interviews with ordinary people who took extraordinary leaps of faith to find their purpose, here's what I deduced. There are two motivating factors for taking a leap of faith. The first one is pain. See, we find ourselves in situations that are so unbearable, so intolerable, that the idea of remaining in those situations is no longer an option. I call this the burning building motivation for leaping into your purpose. In other words, it's too hot to remain in the status quo and you have no choice but to take the leap.

The other approach is curiosity. That's my favorite approach. A thought or an idea gets planted in your consciousness and it just won't go away. No matter how much you try to ignore, it keeps bugging you. During the day, into the night. It lingers in the back of your mind. It keeps coming up in conversations. You see it on billboards. It becomes the subject of many of your daydreams.

Eventually, you take it seriously enough to act upon it. And the deeper you explore it, the more fascinated you become by it. There's a third reason why some people follow their purpose. They didn't have a choice. But we'll talk more about that when we go over the final principle of spiritual minimalism, which is the freedom of choicelessness.

When it comes to corruption, they say follow the money and it will lead you to the source of the corruption. Well, when it comes to finding your purpose, like my podcast guests have experienced, you must follow your curiosity. No matter how strange it sounds. No matter how many people laugh at you. No matter how unqualified you may feel to explore the area you're curious about. Just keep following your curiosity and it will eventually lead you to your purpose. And then I go into the story about me taking a hop of faith.

**[00:43:22] LL:** I'm going to tell you something quite fascinating. Well, I find it fascinating. The first thing about desperation, that's how I started my journey. The pain was too much. I was pushed by the pain. The second moment, which I'm actually currently going through to be honest with you, is about curiosity. And it's beautifully written.

And I'm glad you chose that one because I had no idea you were going to choose it. And for me personally, it resonated beautifully. Because it's more of a gentle thing. Like however I turn my head, if I'm like, "Oh, I'm not going there. I'm not going there." It always comes back. There's a new way. There's a new path. So just keep going. Something's going to happen. Just keep going. It's not desperation anymore. It's the second one. So, beautiful.

**[00:44:11] LW:** And the other thing about your experience that I've actually cited before is just in knowing your story, because I've read your books in preparation for our interview, is that people may look at your Netflix show and think, "Oh, Leon, he went around the world. Or he went from Chile to Alaska. And he just woke up and decided to do that one day."

But you took several hops of faith before you did those bigger excursions. You did the smaller ones across the states, across Europe. And then finally, you did the bigger ones. And so, there was some preparation ahead of the bigger ones. And that's why I encourage other people to do.

For instance, if you do feel inspired to perhaps live out of a backpack, don't just throw all your stuff away you know in a haste. But start living from a backpack while you have your apartment and just try it out for a couple days and see what you need and what you don't need. And keep replacing stuff.

And then eventually, when you do have to take a trip for two days or a weekend, you'll already have road-tested that thing that you've been curious about. Whatever you're curious about, start road-testing it now. That could be considered your hop of faith.

**[00:45:21] TS:** I feel like my experience of just getting to kind of hang around you has always been seeing you. And you've always been without a bunch of baggage or stuff. Is this something you've been thinking about for a long time? I remember just the first time I saw you with our friend Tracy, you're just there. And I remember, even back then, it was sort of before social media. People didn't have these phones to distract ourselves on. But you were just like just there, right? You were like moving around and doing stuff.

But there is – I don't know if you're aware of it or that sounds like dorky for me to say. But does this kind of quality, do you feel that as an experience of being present maybe because of your

long-term meditation practice? Because I saw you and it reminded me of when I took my first yoga class. And it was a good yoga class. And the teacher was happy for no reason. And he was just sort of there and ready. Not expecting. Not looking for things. Just there to see what was kind of going on.

But I guess my question is are you aware that that's how maybe people other than me also kind of experience you? And is that something that you kind of walk around with as an experience of yourself? Because it's something that I want for myself. I want to do these practices so I have that more of the time.

**[00:46:40] LW:** Yeah. It's a good question. A couple things. Number one, I just posted something yesterday. It was from Eckhart Tolle, the author of *The Power of Now*, who said, "The moment you realize you're not present, that's when you're truly present." In other words, if you're walking around thinking about be present, be present, be present, you're not really present. But if you're just lost in a moment and then it dawns on you, "Oh, okay. This is what's happening right now." Like that's when that present moment awareness kind of hits. And then eventually, we want to do our inner work to sort of cultivate that.

Look, for whatever good fortune, I was exposed to a meditation style that I took to like a fish to water and it really worked. I never thought that was going to be my experience. I thought meditation was this thing that was just – you're just staring at the back of your eyelids waiting for the time to pass.

And I had this teacher who really showed me how to enjoy the practice. Like legitimately enjoy meditating. So much so that I would wake up in the morning and crave it as much as people would crave coffee or runners would crave the runner's high. When I started doing that and then I started teaching people that, I did get comments like, "Oh, you're so present." But it doesn't really feel like that. You don't walk around feeling like you're present.

I'll never forget, I was in this restaurant in L.A. called Gracias Madre. It's a vegan restaurant. This is back in my – I used to be a very strict vegan. I'm not anymore. But I had some downtime in between a couple of appointments in the afternoon. And I went to this place and I was just kind of going to get a couple snacks. And I had this email from this person who was basically

accusing me of something that I didn't think I did. And she wanted me to pay her money and all this stuff.

Everybody hates these emails. Or at least most people do. I do. Let's just talk about my own experience. I hate dealing with those kinds of emails. And so, I'm like racking my head. Like, "Do I just pay her and just forget about it? Or do I like stand firm and hold my ground?" But I'm a spiritual teacher. But I'm also a business per – you know, I'm going through that whole thing in my head.

And I have my computer out on the table and I'm starting to compose a draft and I'm like erasing stuff and just going through the basic stuff that people go through when they're trying to deal with a difficult business situation. And then this waiter comes up to the table to greet me and he says, "Oh, welcome to Gracias Madre." And he does his little greeting and then he's just standing there and he's staring at me.

And eventually, I look up and he goes, "Can I ask you a question?" And I was like, "Sure." He goes, "What do you do for a living?"

**[00:49:25] TS:** Oh, wow.

**[00:49:27] LW:** And I was so in my head that I wasn't really interested in getting into that conversation about what I – because I was like, "Why? Why does it matter what I do for a living? Are you judging me and something?" I'm all in my head completely.

And then, finally, he breaks the silence. Because I didn't know how to answer him. And he says, "I'm just asking because you seem so happy. And I was just curious what you did for a living that makes you so happy." And it was just ironic because that was the last thing I was feeling in there.

But it also goes to show that when you invest so much time into your inner work that it can exude from you even when you're not intentionally trying to be personable and trying to have a moment of connection or compassion and generosity. And I've seen that in other people too. And it's a wonderful gift to be able to give to other people.

**[00:50:25] SP:** Tell the story from the book about when you were at the car wash in your Fiat with the Ferrari. I say this just because I think it will give anybody listening a real sense of what the book is like and what you're like. So if you don't mind me putting you on the spot.

**[00:50:42] LW:** Not at all, man. Yeah. Back in the day, I was living in Santa Monica and I was driving a Fiat. I had a Fiat. I'm six-foot-three, right? And I had a two-door Fiat. And I would go to the local coin-operated car wash and wash my Fiat.

**[00:51:02] SP:** Is that the one on Ocean Park?

**[00:51:05] LW:** No. I know that one. No. It's actually right on Lincoln Boulevard. Just north of Rose Avenue.

**[00:51:10] SP:** Oh, okay.

**[00:51:11] LW:** And so, one day I was there and I was trying to finish washing the whole Fiat within the allotted three minutes. Washing, soaping and then rinsing. And there was this beautiful matte black Ferrari that was in the next stall and the guy was over there watching his Ferrari. And we both happened to drive out of the washing stall at the same time over to the drying stations.

And I was there. Again, I'm like this tall guy and then this folkier but shorter guy was drying his Ferrari. I have my little reusable yellow cloth drying my Fiat and he's got these really beautiful, thick, plush, white towels. The kind you'd see like pool side of the Four Seasons.

**[00:51:58] SP:** Yeah. Yeah.

**[00:52:00] LW:** And I'm in my head around this and I'm just like in my ego, in my head. I'm like, "Oh, my God. This is so emasculating." Here I am grown-ass man, six-foot-three driving this Fiat. And this guy, he looks younger than me and he's over there with his matte black Ferrari. What does he do for a living? I wonder. How did I end up in this – meanwhile, I'm teaching meditation. I had already ridden a couple of books. And I was just kind of like insecure.

And again, it's not like I'm immune to these kinds of comparisons. But then something told me to take tire – I had tire polish and he didn't. Something told me that if you like the car so much, go over there and offer the guy some of your tire polish, which was a completely ridiculous thing to do. It's like I don't know this person. This car is nicer than mine. Why would I go and offer him some of my tire polish?

But I got to that point in my life to not second guess these kinds of nudgings. I walk over there with my tire polish and I just – I didn't know how to start the conversation. I was like, "Excuse me. I really love your car. I was just admiring it. And I noticed that you didn't have tire polish and I do. And I thought it would be a shame for you to take your car back on the road without tire polish. I would love to offer you some of mine." And to his credit, he was gracious enough to accept my offering.

And then I went back to my car and I finished drying it. And he did something really unexpected. He comes back over to my car with his white towels and he started spraying the tire polish on my tires and wiping it in with his white towels. And I almost like stopped him because I was like, "Oh, my God. This guy, he probably has more important things to do than [inaudible 00:53:54] my tires."

But then I decided, "You know what? I'm going to have the same grace that he had in accepting and receiving that gift." Because if you don't receive it, then that robs somebody else of an opportunity to give unconditionally. And so, the whole thing was a testament to listening to your heart voice, which I talk about in the book. And how a lot of times it will have you doing things that don't make a lot of logical sense. But if you follow through anyway, you never know what's going to happen.

And what ended up happening from that interaction was we started talking. He found out I was a meditation teacher. He actually invited me to come and teach his whole staff. He actually owned a Ferrari dealership. And he worked his way up from a right being in the States as an immigrant. He had this really wonderful story. But he found out that what I did, he always admired it. Never tried it himself. And he just liked my energy, especially when I came over and offered him my gift.

And so, for the price of a few squirts of tire polish, I ended up teaching this whole staff of people at this dealership meditation. And who knows what the ripple effects of that will ultimately be when it's all said and done. But that's how these things happen. And instead of like sitting around thinking, "How am I going to get more people who teach meditation or to copyright for whatever your thing is?" Just follow that heart voice and the heart voice will help you achieve those goals in the most adventurous way.

That's the essence of this book, *Travel Light*. It's not about getting rid of anything. It's about lightening the load of your internal baggage, your emotional clutter. And as a result, you'll be able to take those what I call hops of faith a lot easier.

**[00:55:36] SP:** Yeah, that's a great story, Light. It's so true to what the book is. In fact, I'll tell you a story that's sort of similar that I heard that's kind of – and you see what your comment is on this. A good friend of mine who's a mentor to me died recently. And I went to his memorial service, he was like 93 or 94, back on the East Coast. And his son got up to tell a story about speak at this – there was like a hundred people or something at a dinner kind of a thing.

And this was kind of the story that he told to sort of summarize his dad's life. He didn't tell a story about how much money he made or how many friends or achievement, right? He's told this story. He said that like maybe back in the 80s or the 70s sometimes, his dad's cousin called him up and said, "I need \$15,000 bucks and I need it right now." He was in some kind of trouble like gambling or something like that.

My friend gave the guy \$15,000. Came through it, which was a fortune at that time, right? Of course, the guy never paid him back. And it became like a really bad thing because he was his cousin. And they would see each other at various family events or something like this.

And finally, a few years went by and it was a Thanksgiving or Christmas and the two of them were in the same room with the rest of the family. It was kind of excruciating because everybody knew the story. My friend started walking across the room to his cousin, his deadbeat cousin. And everybody was at their eyes. Everybody's eyes turned out. What was going to happen? And he just walked up to the guy and didn't say a word and just put his arms around him and gave him a hug. And everybody sort of burst into tears in the whole place, you know?



When I heard that, I sort of thought about your story when I heard your Ferrari story. Because it's sort of like, in my friend's mind, if I can mind read him, prior to that he must have been thinking something like this, like, "My freaking deadbeat cousin, man. I came through for the guy in the clutch when he really needed it. And this SOB never paid me – and he's never going to pay me back." You know?

But at some point he must have thought, "If I'm on my deathbed, am I going to really let some few lousy dollars stop – I grew up with this guy. I love this guy. Why don't I –" it's sort of like you going over to the Ferrari guy, right? And he got that kind of a nudge. And he did the absolute right thing just like you did, you know? And the proof of that was that when he died and his own son was going to sum up his life to other people, this was the story he came up with.

Anyway, that was sort of – but I wanted to ask you something on the subject of meditation and spiritual minimalism and all that sort of stuff. I would say of my friend, when he made the switch from thinking my deadbeat cousin to thinking I love this guy. He went from his ego to his soul and acted out of his – and I just want to ask you. In the world of spiritual minimalism, where does soul come in?

**[00:58:48] LW:** It's a great question. And by the way, I have a part in the book where I talk about that specifically. Like at the end of your life, what do you want people to say about you? And that gives you a way of sort of editing your choices from this day until that day. Either it aligns with that ultimate vision you have for yourself or it doesn't. And if it doesn't, then it's easier not to do it. If it does, it's going to be challenging perhaps to go across the room and hug the person who owes you \$15,000. But that's the legacy that you're ultimately creating. And that's the stuff that people talk about. Those are the things, the positive things, that people talk about. And surprisingly, the negative things that people remember are also small little things.

**[00:59:35] SP:** It's true. Yeah.

**[00:59:35] LW:** Of course, the thank you for that thing that I did for her. Or it never showed up for the meeting that I set up for them. And these are like things that could be easily corrected. Even today, if there's something that you have left in the wake of your final impressions with people, you can start today just one by one making amends and just reaching out.

People are so receptive when you reach out. Even years later to say, "Hey, I know this is not going to make up for it. But I just want you to know that this has been on my heart. I'm sorry. I apologize. I was in a bad place. I'm doing better now. And I just want to recognize that you put so much on the line for me," and et cetera, et cetera. And then it makes you feel expansive. It makes them feel expansive.

To answer your question, that expansive feeling that you have when you take those kinds of steps is that's your soul affirming that the choice that you made was a part of the path that you are here for. A part of the reason that you're here for. Spiritual minimalism is a lot about taking your cues from the inside out. And when I say the inside, I'm not talking about your ego, your mind. I'm talking about your heart. Your heart. Your heart has a direct line to your soul, your spirit.

And when you do things that are soul-affirming, you feel it. No one has to even tell you that that's what it feels like. You already know because you've had that experience before when you did the right thing, when you went above and beyond to be the better person. When you did went the extra mile. And so, when you collect enough of those kinds of experiences, then it reminds you in the heat of the moment where it's hardest to make that choice, "Oh, this has happened before. And it's probably going to happen again."

And it's kind of like the runner's high. I ran for years. And to get to that part of the run where you experience the high, you got to go through all the slog. Meaning where you're kind of rusty. You're working out the kinks. Your shins are sore from the day before. But then eventually, after finding your groove and your rhythm, you've been going for 20, 30 minutes, then that high starts to set in and you're like, "Oh, my God, this feels so amazing." And life is kind of like that, too, when you're in line with your soul, your spirit. You got to go through the challenging part of putting yourself out there, being vulnerable. Taking what seems to be a risk, which is actually the safest action is to do something that's aligned with your soul. But you get that wonderful confirmation and it just feels amazing.

**[01:02:23] RD:** Can you talk to us a little bit about this flaneuring? Because I love the idea of walking meditation. As an ADHD person, like sometimes the sitting still thing can be challenging. But like meditating in activity is always something that I really love, like Tai Chi or walking or cooking. But fasting. Iman is also hitting in on that.

**[01:02:44] LW:** Yeah. No. Flaneuring is wonderful. It's a term that I first became familiar with literally just before I turned the manuscript for this book in to the publisher. Because it perfectly captured my spiritual minimalist approach to aimless walking. Aimless walking, which is something I do here in Mexico City quite a bit.

And it's an 18th-century French term, flaneuring. It kind of sounds rich if you think about it. It was something that was embraced by the higher society. It was actually seen as a status symbol to be able to flaneur. And what that meant was you go out during the day usually do you just walk around with no specific destination or time frame in mind.

On the surface, it looks like you're just kind of getting lost, walking around, popping into stores, popping into cafes, having an espresso. Going and walking some more. Checking out this scene over here. And you're kind of allowing your intuition to guide you through the various places where you're walking the various paths.

And it's something that, like you mentioned, you can check a lot of boxes. It can become a meditation. Just a moving meditation. It could become a way to practice listening to your intuition. Because your head may say go to the left. Your intuition may say go to the right. It's an opportunity to practice listening to the intuition and going to the right. It's a way, obviously, to enhance your immune system, your digestive system. Walking does that. It's a way to get exercise. It's a way to be out in fresh air. It's a way to just clear your mind and think about things. It checks multiple boxes. And it's something that you can do for free on a regular basis.

Obviously, in a safe area. That's a given. But, yeah, it's something that when we're driving and running errands, a lot of times we'll circle the block over and over looking for that parking space closest to the front door. And I say if you want to practice spiritual minimalism, forget about that. Park half a mile away and give yourself an opportunity. If you have the time to do this, give yourself an opportunity to just immerse yourself in that environment and walk a bit. And you'd be surprised at the kind of things you can see. The down way half as you're walking there, the ideas, the connections you make. The people you may come across and speak to. I mean, there's so many wonderful things that can happen if you give yourself and create space to have that experience.

**[01:05:21] LW:** What sort of questions and considerations do the bean counters at these publishing companies ask about ideas like this? What sort of questions and/or considerations do the bean counters – the people who – the money people. There's always the money person. There's got to be – it's a business. You guys aren't a nonprofit. What kind of considerations do they ask when considering a project like this?

**[01:05:47] DV:** Yeah. I mean, well, they obviously want to know about your previous track record in history. Not many people are previously published authors, right? But you are. So you have experience. You know what goes into it. That's a huge selling point for a publisher because it means that you've done this before. You know what goes into it. You know how promotion works. You know how writing works. And there's so many steps in the process of publishing a book. And so, an author who has done it before I think is bringing a certain level of knowledge that is really valuable to a company. That's one thing that they certainly think about.

Platform is something, right? we can't not think about and talk about platform. But I think platform is a very nuanced conversation and something that the team talks about and looks at is actually engagement over numbers. And I think that's really important for anybody that is looking or has a desire to write something. And it's like I only have X number of followers on Instagram.

It's not necessarily about the number. It's really about you and your connection to the audience. You know, that you are actively communicating with them. That they're showing up, right? They're coming to lives. They're subscribing to your newsletter if you have one. It's so much less about the number and so much more about the engagement. So that's something that they look at. That's something they question when reviewing proposals.

And of course, the idea, right? I mean, it really needs to be something that feels distinct or that we can really speak to in a very clear and concise way in the market. There are a number of travel books, right? But there really isn't something like this right now. There really isn't something that's speaking to minimalism I think really the way it should be spoken about.

The idea was so fresh and so timely, too. Those are some things that everybody thinks about and talks about in those meetings. Because all of that contributes to numbers. All of that contributes to how many books we think we can sell in a period of time. And that's, of course,

based on our P&L, which is how we kind of come up with our profitability for a book. A couple of different things that we talk about.

**[01:08:11] LW:** Was there anything about this book that surprised you as it was sort of coming to together in a good way, obviously? Not a bad surprise. That you thought, "Oh, that's really cool. I didn't think of it that way." Or, "I'm glad that he did that." Or, "I wish you know we could do more of this type of thing."

Because we talk about like it's not about getting rid of stuff. But I do talk about my backpack. I do talk about the stuff that goes into my backpack. And so, talk a little bit about that when you saw it coming together. Because you didn't like – we didn't sit down. I mean, there was a proposal. There's a loose outline. But it still can deviate from that a little bit during the creative process.

**[01:08:51] DV:** Yeah. I have to say that I was so surprised – I mean, I was surprised that I'm not surprised, right? I knew that there was going to be a real level of depth to what you were offering. But I was just so surprised at how easy it is. It really, really is so easy. And the practices and the principles, I mean, they are so applicable. You can do them right now.

I mean, I can easily go outside for free and walk and be curious about that experience. And I can sit here right now for free and listen to my heart voice. I don't need to pay somebody or go outside to do that.

And so, I think I knew that this thought was going to be so much a part of it. But seeing it coming together like that and seeing it really pan out into its full existence was so amazing for me. And I was doing the practices. And I know I mentioned this to you. I was doing my yoga squat in the morning and I was doing my – I was like, "I'm going to do 10 push-ups and 10 squats." And I was doing it. I was doing the stuff in real time and it was so powerful.

And, I mean, I personally love seeing and I love the additions of like what's in your backpack, right? What are you using to meditate? And I kind of wanted more of that I think now in hindsight now that I've kind of been through my own experience of it and have listened to your conversations too with other people. I'm like, "Oh, yeah. I want to know more about what has been working for him. Has he parried it down since he started? What does he wish he would

have maybe added to his backpack? What does he wish he would have taken away from the backpack?" Those are some little things that I'm super curious about obviously now.

But, yeah, I just was so happy to see it come together and just feel its accessibility. It really is so accessible. You don't need to get rid of your belongings. You don't need to go in a trailer, right? You don't need to like be nomadic to actually experience this level of minimalism. It's so powerful. And again, I'm surprised but not surprised because I was expecting it. But being in the moment in real time, it really blew me away.

**[01:11:16] LW:** I was saying on a previous live that this is the first book that I felt like, A, I was going to be able to finish it. No problem. Because that's always a concern when you first start writing a book. Like, "Oh, my God." I've actually compared it to cutting the grass at Central Park with a push-mower by yourself. And you're the only one that can do it and all anyone can do is like say, "Hey, you missed that section over there." Or, "You need to —" and you're just like I'm never going to finish this thing. This is crazy. The grass is already growing back behind me.

But this is the first time I knew that I was going to finish the book. I think I had the process of laying it out was a lot more efficient this time. Because I just recognized the value of kind of knowing where you're going in the book. And then I also – having work with you before, I know what you like. And I know, "Oh, she likes lots of exercises. She likes lots of practical application. Everything has to be broken down in very easy to understand types of ways."

I felt like I got less notes from you during the process than on our previous book together, which I consider to be a good thing because it means I'm kind of learning how to create more for the market, more for like the wider market than just the people who live in my head.

And I think the biggest – really, the biggest issue is we wanted to put more in there than we had enough pages for. It's just about, "Okay, is this story really adding to the overall narrative?" It's a great story but is it really adding to the narrative? Or is it just kind of like you just want to tell a good story? And so, we ended up taking out some stories that I thought were close to me. But I think at the end of the day it's about serving the work. And I think we did a great job with curating the stories.

**[01:13:03] WC:** First question that I have is you have a quote in the book that says here, "The grass is always greener on the other side until it's green on the inside." What does that mean?

**[01:13:12] LW:** Yeah, the grass is always greener on the other side until it is greener on the inside. And what that means is that if you lack a sense of fulfillment inside, then you're always going to see something external as the better option, right? Better than where you are right now.

And all that does is it robs you of your present-moment awareness. It's really hard to be present if you don't have fulfillment inside. And I'll give you a very simple example that a lot of us have experienced in the last 10 years. You have the iPhone 12 and you're perfectly happy with the iPhone 12 until the moment you hear about the iPhone 13 and all the wonderful things it can do. And now you don't like your iPhone 12 anymore because it doesn't have the third little camera lens in the back. And now you look like you can't afford the high-status accessory. And so, then we're in our head, "Oh, I need to hurry up and make enough money so I can go out and afford to buy an iPhone 13." And that's what that means, is the grass is always going to look greener on the other side.

Now granted, there's nothing wrong with getting an iPhone 13 or 14 or 20 or 25 provided that you're not thinking or deluding yourself to believe that your happiness is going to come from being seen with the latest gadget or the Tesla or the bigger house or moving into this particular community or being an entrepreneur, right?

Instead, you want those choices to upgrade your phone, to get the electric car, to move to another neighborhood. You want those choices to be informed by the fulfillment you have inside. In other words, I'm so fulfilled inside that I want to create more content to share how to replicate this with other people. And so, the best tool that I can use is this latest gadget. It's not about let me get the latest gadget so I can look cool and be validated by society. It's let me use this as a part of my mission, as a part of my purpose.

So the first act is not to get the phone but is to sit your butt down, close your eyes for a few minutes every day, meditate, get still, cultivate that fulfillment inside. And I show people how to do that in the book. I call it the minimalist approach to meditation. And over time, you'll start to make different choices based on how you feel inside.

**[01:15:46] WC:** That's not necessarily the what. What can be fine? But it's what's motivating you? What's the intention behind the purpose of it all? And are you doing it mindfully or are you doing it – doing it proactively or just reactively, I guess would be another way of saying. People feel like they're validated by society or feeling like it's like somehow bear without. It's that lack mentality that's so embedded, right? It's like we need more, more, more, more stuff just to fulfill some gaping hole in our soul.

There's a lot of quotes attributed in the book to the spiritual minimalists that people have heard us talk about this concept. We haven't really defined it. Who is a spiritual minimalist? Are you one?

**[01:16:31] LW:** That's a good question. No one has asked me that question yet. Who the hell is the Spiritual Minimalist? Obviously, I wrote the book and I kind of created this character of the spiritual minimalist. And I was inspired. Do you remember that book *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, from many, many years ago by Dan Millman? I was inspired by that book.

There's this character of the Peaceful Warrior to create this character of the spiritual minimalist that embodies the principles. There's seven principles of spiritual minimalism. And I didn't want people to associate me with this spiritual minimalist handle, right? As though I'm the only spiritual minimalist. I wanted people to read this book and to practice these prompts and see themselves as a spiritual minimalist.

I wanted to make that part of the process a bit more anonymous so that, ultimately, this work lives well beyond us. And it's 400 years from now, somebody comes across it. They have no idea who I am. What my name was. But they are connected to this idea of a spiritual minimalist and they can embody that.

Because a part of the framework is that when you follow these principles, it takes you on your path. Your path may look completely different from my path or anyone else's path. Some people may be living from a bag. Some people may live in a mansion. Some people may live on a yacht. But are you being service-oriented in your choices? And that's really the most important thing.



And because there's so many needs in the world, there's so much help that's needed in the world, everybody's path is going to be different in accordance to how they can serve. Your path, as a telemedicine doctor, is going to be different from someone else's path who also practices the same type of medicine. And that's great. You're attracting the people that you need. Someone else is attracting the people that connect with how they're presenting. And everybody gets what they need. And that's what it means to become a spiritual minimalist, is to be hyper connected to your path.

[OUTRO]

**[01:18:43] LW:** Thank you so much for listening to this compilation episode. Most of the folks who interviewed me were actually past guests of my podcast. You can go through my archives and listen to me interviewing them as well if you feel the need to know more about their life. We'll also put the individual episode numbers and their social media profiles in the show notes for this episode, which you can find at [lightwatkins.com/show](http://lightwatkins.com/show).

And of course, I would appreciate if everyone got a copy of *Travel Light*, which is available in all formats, hard copy, audio and electronic version. If you haven't already done so, please leave an honest review for *Travel Light* on Amazon. It helps with so many things. And so, if you could do that, that would be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for that.

And in the meantime, if this is your first time listening to the Light Watkins show, we've got an incredible archive of past interviews with other luminaries who share how they found their path and their purpose. You can watch these interviews on my YouTube channel. And I post the raw, unedited version of these podcasts in my Happiness Insiders online community, which you can find more information about at [thehappinessinsiders.com](http://thehappinessinsiders.com).

And then, finally, to help me bring you the best guests possible, it would go a long way if you could take 10 seconds to rate this podcast. All you do is you glance down at your screen, you click on the name of the show, you scroll down past the seven previous episodes. You'll see a space with five blank stars. Just tap the one all the way on the right and you have left a five-star rating if you think it's worth it. And if you want to go the extra mile, leave a review. Just write a line about something that you enjoyed from listening to this podcast.

And 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 someone 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. And by all means, 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 and have a great day.

[END]