

EPISODE 184

“LW: When I look at the challenges and the hardships in my own life right now, I can start to see them through a new lens. Instead of looking at them as things that are holding me back from being successful, I can now look at them as the means by which I’m going to access a new level of potential because I got to figure this out. I got to figure out how to navigate this health challenge or this financial challenge or this emotional challenge or this relational challenge and in the process of figuring it out, probably going to have to read some books. I’m going to have to call some people, I’m going to have to watch some videos, I’m going to have to give some talks, I’m going to have to put myself in some very uncomfortable situations, and then through that process though, I’m going to discover some things about myself that I never would have discovered otherwise and that’s where that expansive feeling happens. I call it the spiritual pump.”

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:01:07.9] LW: Hey friend, welcome back to the Light Watkins Show, I’m Light Watkins, and normally 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 as their mission in life, and in doing so, they’ve been able to positively impact and inspire the lives that many other people, who have either heard about their story or who witnessed them in action, or, people who directly benefited from their work, and today, I have another solo episode for you.

I’m not going to lie, these solo episodes are definitely more difficult for me because it’s just me sitting in a room talking to myself while staring at my computer camera, which is not very natural but oddly enough, these solo episodes are also more popular than my interviews. So, that was interesting to see when we looked at the data and it just goes to show that you can’t tell what people resonate with more based purely on how you personally feel about it.

It’s good to be able to track and measure the outcomes of whatever actions we’re taking. So, I’ll keep putting out these solo episodes if that’s what you all are enjoying the most. It’s not that I don’t have something relevant to say, I do, it’s just a bit weird to record, that’s all but then again, you get used to it once, you’ve been recording for a bit.

So, in today's solo episode, I am talking about the conventional idea of success that most of us are probably, I would say, unconsciously adopting versus a different twist on that term that I think can put us in a better position to feel successful and then take actions that are helping us to create the life that we ultimately want to lead and one point that I make in the episode is how we probably don't have enough words for all of the different iterations of success.

"What does it mean to be successful?" Because it's super important to make money in this world that we live in but I would also argue that it's not the most important thing when it comes to being successful and by the end of the episode, I think or I should say, I hope that you come away with a more nuanced and infinitely more useful understanding of what it means to strive for success, and then through taking actions on that understanding, you're going to be an inspiration to other people who will want to do the same.

And as we heard again and again in these episodes, which are primarily about people who started movements for social good, once one person becomes the inspiration, then that leads to a handful of other people, doing the same thing, they become an inspiration to their friends and that's how movements begin. So, I'm excited to share my thoughts with you about success, directly from the bedroom of my Airbnb in Mexico City. So, let's get into it, here are my thoughts on success and how to live a more fulfilled and more successful life.

[DISCUSSION]

[0:04:17.8] LW: All right, we are back with a solo episode. I am here in Mexico City, I just want to set the scene for you a little bit. I'm in my bedroom of my Airbnb and I got a couple of friends staying with me right now. So, I'm here, I'm drinking my new white tea that I have been really enjoying lately, oolong tea, and I've been thinking a lot about the idea of success lately. It's something that I have written about and every now and again, you know, resurface, they become top of mind, and I think that happens because we live in such a success-centric society.

I know I'm not the only one who thinks about, "Are you successful? Are you successful?" If someone were to ask you that question, "Are you successful?" What's the first thing that comes to mind in terms of metrics, indicators of success without placing some sort of spiritual lens on it like I tend to do, just with at are some of the first things that come to mind?

And if you're normal, usually, when that word, "success" comes up in conversation, one of the main things that comes to mind is, "How much money do you make?" So, if someone is a billionaire, someone is a multimillionaire, we normally consider that person to be successful. You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who would consider a billionaire or a multimillionaire to be unsuccessful in our society.

And that tells everything you need to know when it comes to that word success because it is almost exclusively synonymous with wealth, with comfort, with having lots of resources, having lots of influence, having investments that pay big dividends, and that's usually what we mean when we are talking about the word success and I guess one of the main problems is we just don't have enough words for indicating other aspects of life that we are satisfied with or that we feel fulfilled in because you can have somebody who is technically happy but they don't have a lot of money and you can have somebody who has a lot of money, more money than people can ever dream up and they're not very happy, they're not very fulfilled inside.

[0:06:57.6] And so that begs the question, is that person really successful just because they have accumulated lots and lots of money? So, I think it's worthwhile to examine this word success and potentially to even redefine the word success for ourselves. Again, I've written about this mainly in my last book, *Travel Light*, which some people may hear that title and think, "Oh, it's a travel book" or "It's about living from a backpack" or which are parts of the story but the larger part of the story is about a lifestyle that you can adopt, which allows you to create fulfillment from the inside-out.

And treating that feeling tone of fulfillment as one of the main indicators of success, regardless of how much money you have, regardless of how many resources you've accumulated up to this point in your life. There's a poem that I came across recently which is misattributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson and it's about success, and it goes like this:

"To laugh often and much: To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you lived. This is to have succeeded."

And I love that because it's highlighting the things that really truly matter and it's so easy to get caught up in society's definition of success and as a by-product of that, we start to feel depressed. We start to feel insecure about who and what we are because perhaps, we have not made as much money as the next person, and so in the conventional sense, success is very much equated with mastering the capitalist gain because that's ultimately how you can accumulate all of these millions and billions of dollars.

[0:09:35.8] It's either through inheritance or through mastering that game and even if it's inherited, that means that someone down the line in your family had mastered that gain, which is great. I'm not suggesting that that is something that's bad inherently or something that is even good. It's just a function of the game and we are in a world, which one can't operate without having resources, one can't operate without having money.

And so, you know, there's a whole other spiritual discussion about money, and money is just energy and it's not even really about the money. It's about your state of consciousness and if you're in abundant consciousness and you will attract more money or more opportunities to make money and if you're in scarcity, you can have all the money in the world and you're not going to feel very fulfilled inside, et cetera, et cetera.

And then, I don't really want to talk about that today because again, that could be its own episode. Rather, I would like to talk about how we can redefine success for ourselves and therefore putting ourselves in a position where we're able to be more present. We're able to have more fulfillment in the things that do excite us because a lot of times, those things that do excite us may not have much to do with making money at all.

And then, there's another aspect to the whole success conversation that I think a lot of people don't consider, where you have women or more feminine-inclined people, looking at men or more masculine-inclined people and comparing their drive for those resources to what the masculine people are doing and, in the process, making themselves more masculine or the opposite is happening.

You have more masculine people looking at the feminine people and what they're prioritizing and, in the process, making themselves more feminine, in order to achieve those particular

goals, and so what am I referring to here? So, what success means to someone who is more masculine-inclined is the ability to provide and the ability to protect, that's what men and more masculine-inclined people cherish.

That's what they value above most other things, which is why they will literally throw themselves into their work, and be willing to work themselves down to the bone if it means that they can manifest or create the resources that it will take to provide for their family, for their community, for their, whatever it is that they're taking care of.

[0:12:29.2] And someone who is more feminine inclined, values success a little bit differently. They don't really care about how much money someone makes, they don't really care about where the money comes from necessarily, they just, you know, it's nice if you are able to provide so that they can continue to be completely in their feminine and nurture. That's how they define success, "Am I able to nurture or not?"

"Am I able to take care of things or not? Am I able to make things better or not?" Obviously, there are exceptions, obviously, I'm speaking in generalities here but for the most part, you're either more masculine inclined, which means you have a natural inclination to provide or you're more feminine inclined, which means you have a natural inclination to nurture and sure, we all have a little bit of both within us so it doesn't mean you're either one or the other.

Being inclined towards a certain way means that that way is more dominant within your life and the other way is. And so the point is, sometimes, we can confuse ourselves and betray ourselves by trying to keep up with societal narrative and story around success, which mainly has been set into place by men, right? Which means you have to achieve things, you have to wake up early, you have to work yourself down to the bone.

You have to grind-grind-grind and hustle-hustle-hustle but if you're more feminine inclined, that path is probably not going to feel fulfilled to you, which means you can achieve all the things, you can acquire and accumulate and accomplish all the things, and you still relatively unfulfilled inside, and/or, vice versa. If you're trying to do the whole feminine thing and you're making your life primarily about nurturing but that's not aligned with how you feel inside. You want to go out, you want to be the one that provides, then you're not going to ever quite feel like yourself.

[0:14:36.6] And no one can tell you necessarily which path you should be on, you have to determine that for yourself, and in order to do that, you have to know yourself, right? And so, a lot of my work is about that self-realization, that's what that term means when you hear it in spiritual circles. Becoming self-realized means that you do some sort of inner work that allows you to become more and more familiar with your true nature.

And after you are able to identify your true nature, as an extension of that, you may be able to also identify, "Okay, what are my values? What are the values that are most important to me?" So, providing may be a value, nurturing may be a value, being creative may be a value, right? So, you get to think for yourself, "What are my values, what's important to me?"

Then, you get to use those values as a filter for moving forward in your life and for determining whether something that you are choosing to spend your time doing is indeed aligned or unaligned and so when I talk about "Follow your heart" that's really what that phrase means is, follow your values because those values and this is going to get a little bit woo-woo here but just go with me for a second, those values have been encoded within your spiritual DNA.

In other words, there are things that are important to you that aren't necessarily important to other people in the same configuration, right? For you, family may be more important than anything else and for someone else, family may be important but it's not more important than solitude, spending time with yourself. So, if you're more monastically inclined for instance, yes, you appreciate having a family.

Yes, you love your family but what's more important for you is going into a monastery and spending hours upon hours every day studying the scriptures and doing your inner work and eating one bowl of rice a day and you know, wearing a robe. Whereas for someone else, having daily connection and interaction with your family, having a variety of food to eat, having recreational activities, those are more important than solitude.

But solitude is still up there. Maybe for you, it's only 10 or 15 minutes a day of solitude and that's your daily meditation practice, and then for someone else, physical activity may be very, very important, more important than shopping. For someone else, buying things for themselves or

maybe for other people, things that would improve their life, being a designer, being really interested in branding. That may be more important.

[0:17:42.4] So, everybody has a different configuration of what's important to them and again, this is an extension of our values. Value is just a phraseology or a word that we use to identify what we're feeling on that spiritual level, on that spiritual DNA level, and so it's worthwhile to spend some time just thinking about that and putting language to that and deciding for yourself, "You know when I do these activities" or "When I think about things in these ways" or "When I engage in these kinds of conversations, that's when I feel the most alive."

"That's when I feel the most expansive, that's when I light up inside, that's when I feel the most connected, that's when I feel the most present." And so, that's a strong indicator that those are your values and then eventually, you can take those values and you can look at them all together and you can craft for yourself some sort of mission statement based on those values. So, your mission may be just one line, right?

So, my mission to leave the world more inspired than I found it, and so in order to do that, I need to feel physically balanced so I need to exercise, I need to feel mentally balanced, I need to meditate, I need to engage in learning activities, I need to feel emotionally balanced. I don't want to have a lot of drama in my life, I don't want to have a lot of contentious relationships that are pulling my energy in all these different directions.

So then, those individual values, strong relationships, daily inner work, being helpful, being useful, challenging myself mentally, physically, et cetera, those values will then inform how I'm spending my time on a daily basis and who I'm spending my time with on a daily basis, and if you really look at it, there's not arbitrary anything that is happening around you.

Literally hour to hour, you're engaging with people, you're engaging in activities that are either contributing to the life that you say you want to create based on your mission statement and your value statements or you are pulling yourself away from that. I'm using this language now very intentionally because I believe that no one can betray us. I believe that no one can betray us.

I believe that the most common form of betrayal is self-betrayal, we can betray ourselves. The way we do that is by making choices that are not aligned with our values and if we do that enough, we can have all the money in the world but we will never feel successful and if we put ourselves in a position where we rarely betray ourselves, we may not have all the money in the world.

We may not even be you know, in the six figures when it comes to our salary but we feel more present, we feel more connected, we feel more authentic than most other people and so internally, we can feel successful than people who are making 10 times, 20 times, a hundred times as much money as us, and maybe even have that much more comfort in their life as we do.

But we feel like the best version of ourselves and that's how I advocate for people to feel successful in their life. That's what I think success is rooted in is in putting ourselves in the position where we're not betraying ourselves.

[BREAK]

[0:22:02.7] LW: What do I mean by not betraying yourself? Well, asking yourself certain questions, I sent out an email recently about this, about betrayal, and I said that the most common form of betrayal is self-betrayal. I said, no one can betray you if you're asking the right questions. So, questions such as, "Is this the very best that I can do?" Right? Does this situation feel right to me? Do my actions represent my values?

Am I taking responsibility for my role in this situation? Have I spoken my truth or have I honored my boundary and would I be proud of this if everyone knew what I was doing? So, when we start asking ourselves those kinds of questions if the answer that we're coming up with and we're being honest with ourselves is "No, I wouldn't be proud of this if everybody knew what I was doing. No, I haven't spoken my truth, no, I haven't honored my boundary."

"No, I am not taking responsibility for this because this is the other person's fault. No, my actions don't represent my values. No, this situation does not feel right to me and hasn't felt right to me in a long time, and no, this was not the best that I can do." If no is a frequent answer

to those kinds of questions or similar questions, then there's a very strong possibility that you are betraying yourself and all that means is that "Hey, it's time to start making different choices if fulfillment is important to you."

If fulfillment is important to you. So, what's standing in the way of fulfillment? Usually, someone's opinion and it could be a society's opinion of you, it could be your family's opinion of you, it could be your partner's opinion of you but there's someone opinion that you may not even realize is holding you hostage and it could be your own opinion based on some past belief system or what you think is right or wrong, based on you know, what you've been exposed to in the past.

[0:24:26.7] And again, when you can see that for what it is, and really, the only way to get to the point where we can start to see this stuff in real-time is from doing some aspects of inner work with ourselves. Obviously, I'm a big proponent of meditation and what I'd gotten from my own personal meditation practice over the years is an increased ability to be able to see blind spots almost immediately.

When I have enough situations where I'm saying, "No," I'm answering "No" to those kinds of questions for myself, then I know that there's a blind spot present, and so then I can start asking different questions such as, "If everybody did what I'm doing now, would the world be a better place or would it be a worse place?" And if the answer is, "No, it would not be a better place" then now, I have outed myself as someone who is operating from a blind spot.

And at the very least, I could just stop doing what I was doing and at the most, maybe I get help. Maybe I can go to a trusted friend who I know can hold space for me in that way and say, "Hey, what do you see? How am I getting in my own way in your opinion? When you see me, when you see how I move, what is something that you observe me doing where it looks pretty obvious that I'm getting in my own way?"

It's a very strong question to ask someone because normally, we don't like to hear that kind of feedback, right? But again, it's got to be a trusted friend, it's got to be someone who you know is demonstrating perhaps in the past that they can hold space like that for you and be able to give you objective feedback without making it personal, without being sarcastic, being passive-

aggressive, and all those things that can trigger us to become defensive because that's not going to be very helpful either.

So, if it's someone who you trust and who can hold that space and they can give you that feedback, then you can use that information to become more useful in your life, and then from being useful, again, you're now starting to accumulate evidence for that feeling tonal fulfillment because that's what accompanies usefulness is, "Oh, I feel good about myself because I'm being useful. I feel great about myself because I'm helping people. I feel great about myself because I'm doing something that makes me feel expansive inside" and that can be our new definition for what it means to be successful.

[0:27:05.6] Now again, I don't want people to get caught up in the idea that it's got to be one or the other. Either I'm making money or I'm being useful, either I'm being of service or I'm focused on providing for my family. You can do both and you should do both because again, we live in a world where you kind of have to at least the minimum viable effort to pay your bills, to pay your rent, to pay your mortgage and to at least provide for yourself, if not, for others, depending on you know, where you are in your life right now.

But we've also had enough evidence to see that that's not enough. Just paying your bills and making money and saving up little bit of money here and there is not enough to make you feel like you're authentically you. There's another component to that where you want to be a little bit more purposeful about how you're spending your time and usually, it involves some type of service-based action.

It doesn't have to be some massive, "You know, I'm going to start the next Ford Foundation" or something like that but it can be something very simple like, "I'm going to make some sandwiches for our homeless people" or, "I'm going to volunteer as someone who can pick people up from home and take them to church on Sundays, people who are sick and shut-in for whatever reason" or, "I'm going to raise some money for this cause by running in this half marathon."

So, things like that when we add that to the mix that usually becomes the missing ingredient for us feeling expansive, for us feeling useful, for us feeling like we're authentically ourselves, and

then we can start to see that success conversation for what it truly is, which is a lot more than just making money. It's a lot more than just being comfortable.

In fact, we can start to see that in the moments when I'm most comfortable, I feel the least successful, and in the moments where I'm putting myself into situations that are stretching me into a new zone of my own potential, it's not as comfortable in the moment but on the other side of that, I actually feel more successful.

I feel more successful and so then I start to realize. "Okay, success is also contingent upon me learning, me growing physically, emotionally, spiritually, and otherwise, and that's a beautiful realization because then we look around the world and we see, "Oh, there are endless opportunities for this." There are endless opportunities for growth, and in fact, when I look at the challenges and the hardships in my own life right now, I can start to see them through a new lens.

[0:30:04.0] Instead of looking at them as things that are holding me back from being successful, I can now look at them as the means by which I'm going to access a new level of potential because I got to figure this out. I've got to figure out how to navigate this health challenge or this financial challenge or this emotional challenge or this relational challenge and in the process of figuring it out, probably going to have to read some books.

I'm going to have to call some people, I'm going to have to watch some videos, I'm going to have to give some talks, and I'm going to have to put myself into some very uncomfortable situations and then through that process though, I'm going to discover some things about myself that I never would have discovered otherwise and that's where that expansive feeling happens. I call it the spiritual pump.

You know how when you go to the gym and you are doing an exercise that maybe you're not that strong in but maybe you're working out with friends or a trainer and they push you and they say, "Come on, don't give up, just give me three more, three more, come on, you can do it" and they're spotting you, and you're all shaking and your life is flashing before your eyes and you don't think you're going to.

You genuinely don't think you can do it but you just keep going anyway and you're breathing and you're panting and you're sweating and they are egging you on, "Come on, just one more, you can do it, just this last one, you can do it, come on, come on, come on, push-push-push-push-push-push-push-push" and then you get it, and then you rerack the weight and you stand up and you just know, you know, you've seen your whole life flash before your eyes and you legitimately did not think you're going to be able to finish that but you finished it.

And that satisfaction that you have from finishing it, you get that pump. You know, your body feels strong, your mind feels strong. So, there is an equivalent of that for your spirit, which I call the spiritual pump and that's when you get on the other side of problem-solving when you figure things out, "How am I going to get out of this situation financially? How am I going to get out of this situation physically?"

[0:32:26.1] You get to the other side of it and you feel like, "Wow, I can't believe I actually did that. I can't believe I survived that situation" and because I've now proven to myself that I could do that, I'm like a new person. I'm like a different person now and so you're going about your life very satisfied that you knew that you did that and then what happens? You come across someone who is struggling to do the same thing that you've already proven that you could do.

That you've proven that it's possible to do this and you recognize their insecurity around that and you think to yourself, "Oh my God, of course you can do it. I did it, you can do it" and so you start to advise them. You start to help them, right? Because you see yourself in them and there's no way you would have even recognized that had you not gone through that situation for yourself, so you recognize that.

You recognize yourself in them and because they can tell that you've been where they are now, they have a trust in you, they have a faith in your words in the same way that they would not have a trust in someone who just read a book about that experience and is now trying to advise people on how to navigate that situation. So, you are uniquely qualified now based on your own life experience to help other people who are also going through the same thing.

And there's also a satisfaction that comes from that because you know what it takes, you know what it took you to get to the other side of that. So, you're helping people and you're learning

how to help people even better through the process of helping people navigate these kinds of challenging life situations. You get one person to the other side and that just makes you want to go back for more and it's that Harriet Tubman sort of effect.

You know, the story of Harriet Tubman, who is the runaway slave, who escaped from her plantation, I believe it was in Maryland or somewhere, and she got to the north but then she got to the north, she goes, "I got to go back and get these other people who are enslaved and I have to free as many people as possible" and so she ended up going back dozens of times and freeing something like a hundred or 200 people over the course of you know, a handful of years.

And each time was challenging for her, you know, she was putting herself at risk obviously going back because eventually, they caught onto her and they started looking for her and there was a wonderful movie that was made about her life. I believe it was called, Harriet, if you haven't seen that I highly recommend it but that's kind of what it is, it's addictive. It's an addictive feeling and you feel like a part of your path, your life journey is to help other people.

[0:35:40.8] And you've heard it in this podcast interviews, you know that's the whole deal with this podcast is highlighting people who have turned their platform or used their resources to help other people to make the world a better place and so you know, there's almost 200 episodes at this point where you can go back and listen to anyone's episode and you can see how often times they used their own challenges in positive ways to help other people.

So, they got to the other side of it and they went back and they started bringing other people. They were engaged in that sort of Harriet Tubman effect and it usually includes some sort of pivot moment, where they realized that the conventional aspiration for monetary success and comfort is not enough to fulfill them and that being of service was the missing component and it was addictive and it wasn't easy and a lot of times, they were the lone wolf in their social improvement path.

But eventually, they started to attract helpers when people saw how passionate they were and this is what created the underground railroad that Harriet Tubman used is people saw how passionate she was and said, "We'll help you. We'll help put you guys up overnight here. We'll

help hide you there. We know some other people who feel like us, who are antislavery” or they’re abolitionists or whatever, “And we’ll connect you with those people as well.”

And so, she created this whole network of helpers, who were inspired by her courage and her willingness to put herself at risk to help other people and that’s how you ultimately will inspire and help along your journey is just through your own enthusiasm and it’s really hard to be enthusiastic about something that you don’t feel passionate about or that you don’t feel is aligned with your values and with your mission in life.

So. that’s why again, the sequence is, let me become quiet enough internally in order to be able to discern what my true values are and then let me use those values to craft my mission statement. Let me use the mission statement to become a filter for which activities in my life, which relationships in my life are most important, second most important, third most important, like that, and then let me start to take more actions that are in alignment with those values.

[0:38:23.1] And usually, through taking those actions you’ll put yourself in a position where you will become exposed to other people who are maybe a little bit further behind you in their own path and these are people that you can identify yourself in that you will then be enticed to want to help and from helping those people, you will get continuous spiritual pumps and those spiritual pumps will make you want to go back for more.

And as you go back for more, you are going to inspire other people to help you along your mission and that will be a part of their mission and that’s how a movement gets traction is through following that sequence, through following that sequence, and again, this podcast is a testament to that, to all of the people who have come on and told their story about how they established their movement.

So, if you go back and listen to it through that framework, you’ll hear it. You’ll hear it in every single conversation. There was a pulling away from convention, there was a deep listening, there was an identifying with something that was more important. There was a courageousness in taking a leap of faith and the direction of their heart, which is to say in the direction of their values, etcetera, and then there was an enthusiasm behind that that attracted other people, and that’s how 99% of these missions and these movements started.

So, if you are feeling inclined to lean more into whatever you think your mission is for this particular season of your life, there's a reason why you're listening to this podcast. There is a reason why you're listening to this particular episode of the podcast and if you're looking for a sign to take the next step, this is your sign. This is your sign, you don't have to make it any more complicated than that.

If hearing me say that resonates deeply within you, that's your sign and the worst thing you can do is get on social media, get online, turn on the television, and start adopting somebody else's philosophy around success, what success is. No-no-no, don't worry about following your heart, make as much money as possible, and then once you make all your money, you can be as philanthropic as you want to be.

You have to fill up your own cup first and then you can help other people. You know, you hear all these different variations of how to go about being successful, most of them are around making as much money as possible.

[BREAK]

[0:41:01.9] LW: What I'm suggesting is you don't really worry about the money part. You understand that the money is going to come when you are moving in alignment with your values, okay? The money is going to come when you're moving in alignment with your values. So, I'll tell you a quick little anecdote. My meditation teacher's teacher is this man by the name of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, an old Indian dude, not around anymore.

But he was around for a very long time and he started this movement, this meditation movement, and in fact, you could even link his movement to a lot of the meditation studies, the original studies in the 60s and the 70s that then gave rise to meditation reaching critical mass. He was the one that taught The Beatles how to meditate and The Beach Boys and a bunch of other celebrities, you know, back in the 60s that got meditation that helped to popularize the practice of meditation, and he started all these meditation centers all around the world.

He was operating mainly from India and then from Europe but he's just a, you know, a little short five-foot-three dude from India. He wasn't born into some sort of meditation family. He ended up

becoming the secretary of a really famous guru in India known as Guru Dev, this is again, back in the 40s and 50s and then Guru Dev passed away and that's when Maharishi, who was more or less a monastic type of a person.

That's when he got the internal calling to start teaching meditation to regular people, to non-monastic people, and as he's following through on what he considers to be his purpose and being of service and being useful in helping people because those were in alignment with his values, he starts attracting more and more people who are looking for these practices and eventually, he crosses paths with some Westerners.

And the Westerners, they resonate with his work because he is very relatable and he's very charming and all the things and they start donating to his cause and introducing him to other people and he gets this vision. You know, he gets this massive vision, "I want to create a thousand meditation centers around the world. We're going to teach millions of people to meditate over the next several years."

[0:43:36.2] Meanwhile, he doesn't own anything. He doesn't own a house, he doesn't own any cars. I think the only thing he owned was a staff and a couple of ropes, that was it but he'll be having these planning meetings and he'd be talking about all these visions and all these plans and so famously, at one of these planning meetings, one of the Westerners, who he had recruited to help him fulfill this vision, you know, heard him talking about all of these meditation centers and all of these countries.

And the guy asks the most pragmatic question that anybody would think to ask who has been living in Western society. He goes, "Maharishi, this all sounds great but where are we going to get the money from to create all of these teaching centers?" And without skipping a beat, Maharishi goes, "The money is going to come from wherever it is" and that's that kind of spiritual attitude, you know when it comes to abundance.

Like he never questioned it because he knows that money is just a function of living from that vision, living from the vision. In other words, the universe, right? Or God or whatever you want to call it, the universe implants the vision in your spiritual DNA, and provided that you are loyal

to your own vision, the resources that it's going to require to fulfill the vision are going to find you. You don't have to go and search them out, they are going to search you out.

Your job, your primary focus though is to be loyal to the vision, in other words, to operate in alignment with those values, and if your values like Maharishi's are, to help people find inner happiness through the practice of meditation, if that becomes your mission based on those values then your soul purpose waking up in the morning is, "Okay, out of the 100 things I'm going to do today" and I'm talking about little things, go get my coffee.

Go for a walk, call up this person, text that person, respond to this email, drive here, run this errand, go for a workout, watch TV, da-da-da-da, how many of those 100 things are in alignment with your mission? And if it's not in alignment with your mission then why are you doing it? Why are you doing that on a daily basis? If you can't make some sort of casual connection to whatever you consider your mission to be, why are you doing it?

Why are you spending your time doing that? I'm not saying don't do it, I'm just saying ask the question, "Why am I doing this? What value is this activity adding to my life? Because maybe, maybe you need to go in and you need to rework the mission so that it includes the things that you just feel yourself inclined to do on a regular basis, or maybe you realize, "Oh, hold on, I've got an addiction here. I'm on pornography two, three times a day."

[0:46:53.1] I'm drinking alcohol two or three times at night. I'm engaging in drama three or four times a day throughout my day. Now, am I doing this unconsciously or am I doing this consciously? And if it's unconscious, then that means it's even more deeply rooted if I don't even realize that I'm doing it until after the fact, then I'm engaged in a pathway of self-betrayal and it's that pathway of self-betrayal that then leads to more dramatic experiences in life.

It leads to less fulfillment. Again, you can have all the money in the world but you will not feel fulfilled and that can cause you to be circumstantially depressed and other things related to that. So, these are very powerful, powerful questions to ask ourselves. Is this aligned with my values? Is this aligned with my mission? And in order to properly have that assessment then you have to know what that is.

So again, going back to the beginning of this episode, creating that, crafting that for yourself just even after you finish listening to this episode, taking some time, you just take 20, 30 minutes, sit down, and just really think about that and if nothing is coming to you in terms of value, what's important to you, then sit down for 10 minutes and meditate. "Oh, Light, I don't know how to meditate. I've never been this successful at meditation."

So again, you're using that word successful and what you really mean is, "I've never been comfortable in my meditation." That's what you mean by successful because again, that's what society teaches us what success is. Successful means I'm either making a lot of money or very comfortable or everyone loves me, right? And we want to redefine that for ourselves, particularly when it comes to the practice of meditation.

I'll give you another definition of success for meditation, okay? Here's how you know you are successful in your meditation practice: You are consistent. You are consistent, if you are meditating every day like ideally around the same time of day for at least 10, 15 minutes, you have a successful daily meditation practice because really it's just about showing up for yourself. I'm not saying it's all about showing up for yourself but showing up for yourself is the most important thing.

[0:49:25.7] Now, there are ways to refine your experiences so that they become more and more enjoyable and that's something that you can check out. I have an online community called, The Happiness Insiders, there is a seven-day meditation kickstart and there is a 108-day meditation challenge. If you've never had any exposure to meditation, I would highly recommend joining that kickstart and the subsequent challenge.

And that will put you in a better position to enjoy the practice and give you some accountability so that you do show up every day and that challenge, even though it's 108 days, which is well over three months, has about an 80% success rate, which means that eight out of the ten people who start the challenge will finish the challenge and if you're one of the two people who for whatever reason don't finish the challenge, you can repeat the challenge as much as you want.

And so, that's just a way for you to start to tap into your spiritual DNA a lot easier so that you can start to determine what your values are or what your mission is so that you can start to use that filter to determine if you are engaged in a successful life path or not because again, success is an inside out phenomenon. It's not based on what you make and how much money you've saved up and you know, what kind of car you drive and all of those things.

You may have seasons in your life where you make a lot of money or you may be in a season where you're not making a lot of money. It doesn't really matter if you're on mission. You're on mission, you have everything you need at all times and those moments where you don't feel like you have physically manifested whatever it is that you need, then that's by design. That's because there's some growth that's required.

And by navigating that challenging situation and getting to the other side of it, you will acquire new skills, you will acquire new belief systems, you will acquire new aspects of your potential that are then going to become more useful for your ultimate purpose or service in helping other people so that other people can relate to you and can identify with you and that's pretty much how it works. That's pretty much how it works.

Again, if you need examples of this, listen to some more of the podcast episodes and you'll start to see it. Now that you know the framework and you know what to look for and you listen to these episodes, listen for that and you'll start to see, "Oh wow, okay, they're moving through that phase where they're realizing that conventional success is no longer resonating. Oh, now they're moving through the phase where they are describing that challenging moment and being confronted in that way."

[0:52:10.3] "Oh, now they're moving through the phase where they're starting to see that they're accessing more of their potential while navigating this challenge. Oh, now they're moving through the phase..." you know, it goes on and on and on. Now, they're seeing how they can help other people. Notice that and you'll see it in every single one of those conversations on my podcast and on other podcasts, where people are talking about living a life of greater purpose and service, etcetera.

And I would make the argument that you are not going to be completely fulfilled inside until you start to do the same thing. That's been my experience, that's been the experience of other people who I've talked to about their path to their purpose but the good news is that whatever messiness you're dealing with right now, whatever challenges you're navigating right now, they're all going to come into play down the line.

So, I invite you to look at them in a new light and stop seeing them as the obstacle, stop seeing your challenges as the thing that's holding you back and I want you to start to see those challenges and those obstacles as the gateway to the new and improved version of you, the version of you that is going to be of the greatest, greatest use to your life, to your family, to your community, to society, and ultimately, to all of mankind.

And I just want to leave you with a quote from Buckminster Fuller, which I really love and I think about all the time and this is a quote, just to give you a little context, this is something that he described on the way to commit suicide. Buckminster Fuller used to work in some industry, I can't remember what it was, I think it was in finance or mortgages or something like that. He had a family.

He lived in a nice area in Chicago, I believe on the Gold Coast and then he has some financial problems and they had to move to the poor area and he realized that he was more valuable dead than alive because he had a life insurance policy.

[0:54:20.7] So, he was going to go to Lake Michigan to essentially drown himself and so his family could benefit from his life insurance policy, and on his way to Lake Michigan, he had this experience where he said he felt like he started floating and then he heard this voice, and the voice told him, "You do not belong to you. You belong to the universe."

The voice said, "Your significance will remain forever obscure to you but you may assume that you are fulfilling your role if you apply yourself to converting your experiences to the highest advantage of others." So, he hears this voice saying this to him and it reorients his whole idea of what it means to be alive.

And then he ended up becoming this famous inventor, a Geodesic dome and a bunch of other inventions like that and he's teaching at the University of Southern Illinois and interestingly enough, you know, if you listen to the interview that I have with my father, my dad went to the university of Southern Illinois. He said, because, he had studied the work of Buckminster Fuller. and he wanted to be in proximity to him as a professor.

And so, because he wanted to study architecture. So, you could even make the argument that if Buckminster Fuller had killed himself, my father would not have been at Southern Illinois University. So, it's just interesting how these things all tie together but I love that. "You do not belong to you. You belong to the universe. Your significance will remain forever obscure to you but you may assume that you are fulfilling your role if you apply yourself to converting your experiences to the highest advantage of others."

And so, I would say the same for you is true, assume that you are fulfilling your role if you apply yourself to converting whatever experiences you're having to the highest advantage of others. In other words, being of service, helping people, being useful, add that to your filter for when you are trying to determine if I should do X, Y, or Z. Is this allowing me to convert my experiences to the highest advantage of others or not? And if it's not, it's an easy no. If it is, it's an easier yes. And that's how we can find ourselves more and more on our purpose.

[END OF DISCUSSION]

[0:56:55.8] LW: Thank you for tuning in to this solo podcast episode. I'll put the links to everything that I discussed in the show notes, which you can, of course, find at lightwatkins.com/podcast, and if you enjoyed this conversation and you found it inspiring and you're not thinking to yourself. "Wow, I'd love to hear Light interview Dr. Dre" or "I'd love to hear Light interview Oprah Winfrey." Here's how you can make those interviews happen.

You see, I reach out to my list of dream guests all the time and some of them accept but a lot of them don't accept, and that's because my podcast, while impactful, while inspiring, is still very much in its building phase. So, when a potential guest or their gatekeeper comes across my invitation to appear on my podcast, one of the first things they do to vet whether or not a show is at their level is they check the ratings and the reviews that the podcast has.

And that's why you always hear podcast hosts like me say, "Please rate the podcast, please review the podcast" Because it's a tiny little thing that's completely free, that will have a significant impact on the chances of you hearing me interview these bigger guests and it only takes 10 seconds. All you do is look at your screen, click on the name of the show, scroll down past those first five episodes, you'll see a space with five blank stars and just click the star on the right and you've left a five-star rating.

And if you want to go the extra mile and leave a review, just write one line to saying what you appreciate about the podcast. If you want to watch these interviews, you can watch my solo episodes on my YouTube channel, just go to YouTube and type in Light Watkins Podcast and you'll see the entire playlist and make sure you subscribe there as well because those gatekeepers are watching the YouTube viewer counts as well.

And if you didn't already know, I post the raw, unedited version of every podcast in my Happiness Insiders Online Community a day early. Normally, I post the episodes on Wednesdays but I post them on Tuesdays in the community and it's the raw version, which includes all the mistakes and the false starts, and the chitchat in the beginning and the end of the episode. So, if you want to listen to all of that, join my online community at the happinessinsiders.com. Not only are you going to have access to those unedited versions of the podcast, but you also have access to challenges and masterclasses for becoming the best version of you.

All right, look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with the story about someone just like me or you, taking a leap of faith and the direction of their purpose and until then, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, and 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 so much, sending you lots of love, have a great day.

[END]