

**EPISODE 188**

HM: *"I'm sitting there, my eyes bawling in tears, looking at Gary screaming at me, like he did every night. And that night, when everything like when pitch black silence, I saw my mind label that thing that was moving and thing going suffering being instead of asshole, Gary, suffering being my heart broke open and I'm like, wow, we're all like that. I don't want everybody to be like they're broken, they're hurting. I started crying and then he stopped yelling. Night, first time ever, he stopped yelling and he's like picture you okay. And then, quickly, my stupid mind began to say, "Oh, it would take advantage, because he thinks you're crying, because he's yelling too much. That's not why you're crying, but pretend that he upset you, so can stop *yelling*." My normal way of thinking kicked back in, but I saw something that pierced the matrix of the illusion that we live in that night and that stayed firm in my mind Like nothing else has stayed, really, in all the *years*."*

**[INTRODUCTION]**

[01:00] LW: Hey friend, welcome back to the Light Watkins Show. I'm Light Watkins and I interview ordinary folks just like you and me who've taken extraordinary leaps of faith in the direction of their path, their purpose or what they've identified as their mission in life. 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 witnessed them in action, or people who have directly benefited from their work. And today I'm in conversation with a gentleman by the name of Hector Marcel. Hector has trained in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and meditation since 1996. And he's been integrating Eastern methods into organizational change techniques and preventative mental health and wellness coaching since 1998. In other words, he is changing lives.

[01:58] And prior to all of that, Hector was really just a normal guy working as a creative while living in New York City, and initially Hector got into a business partnership with a silent partner who ended up not being so silent. He was completely dependent on his partner and it turned into this extremely toxic situation. I only mentioned this part of the story because he turned it into the most wonderful TEDx talk about how to get rid of the angry boss, but it also led to wonderful insights that Hector now teaches to other people. And he found his true path when

one night he wandered into a Buddhist center called Three Jewels in New York. Oddly enough, he was looking for his friend's apartment where he was about to go and take the edge off and have a few drinks, but instead he got turned around and ended up in the center where he would go on to study with Buddhist teachers and eventually become the head Buddhist teacher.

03:02

And the more I researched Hector's background, the more fascinated I became and the more I look forward to having him on the podcast. And I think you're also going to find Hector to be extremely relatable, accessible, funny, lighthearted and, of course, inspirational. And his social media account, which he calls the @wakeupist, it's everything. So you definitely want to follow him on Instagram. And without further ado, let us get into my conversation with Three Jewels' own Hector Marcel.

[INTERVIEW]

LW: Hector Marcel, such a pleasure having you on my podcast. I cannot wait to have this conversation.

HM [03:46]: Thanks, Light. It's actually a pleasure to meet you. I've seen you shine online and I'm excited to get to know you.

LW [03:53]: Yeah, so let's talk about your name. I know you're mixed heritage and you're from Argentina and I think grew up in Australia. Just tell me a little bit about that part of your backstory.

HM [04:04]: So I wasn't born Hector Marcel, so my real name is Marcelo Hector Geronimo.

LW: Say it slower...

HM: Marcelo Hector Geronimo Ochoa Peralta de Figurilli de Malacaria. You try and move to an Anglo-Saxon country like Australia with that and a baguette with salami in it, right. Didn't go down. Well, I don't know. I moved from Argentina to Australia, so Marcelo is my first name. So I moved to Australia from Argentina Not knowing they spoke English.

[04:33] My parents didn't know they spoke English. If they did, we didn't remember. So it was a shock to get to a country where you couldn't communicate and as soon as I'm telling people I knew what is your name, Marcelo, and so they'd go, "How's it going, Marcela." And I'm like Marcela is a girl's name, so I am Marcelo. And so they couldn't do it. It's like How are you going, Marcela.

So the next school I went to I changed it to my second name, which is Hector, so my name is Hector, and so they'd go, "How are you going, Hector." And that's okay, there's no feminine to that. So I wasn't offended. I didn't know I was going to end up being gay anyway, so that was the whole shame about it.

I don't want to be a girl, and it's okay, god.

[05:01] LW: So what are the circumstances behind the move from Argentina to Australia?

[05:19] HM: Yeah, Argentina had gone through coup after coup, and we lived near the second largest military camp in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, and so there was a lot of gunshots. I don't know if you know about the missing people that happened in the 70s. So anyone with a sort of leftist view began disappearing and they'd end up with cement shoes and in a river, and so it was this fear based environment that we grew up in. And then my dad was politically savvy. He worked for the government that he didn't want to be in that part of the government, and so he knew that something was coming for him and the other men in our town, and so he just desperately tried to get us out of there. So did my mom. They ended up having five jobs between them and they still couldn't afford to feed the four kids.

[06:07]: I remember growing up and having to hide under the bed when bullets were going across. We thought it was fun and silly to hide. I'm sure my parents were freaking out, but they tried to get us out of there in 1970 and then they couldn't, and it ended up being 1978 when we finally got out. So that was the reason that, as a kid, to me it was an adventure. I'm like it's just a playground. So that was the reason for moving to Australia and it was, Oh my God, that was a transformation for everyone.

[06:35] LW: Why Australia, though? Why not the US? Why not...

[06:39] HM: They applied to the US, Canada and Australia was the first one to say yes, and the immigration policy was just the first one. The first ones we had an interview with the first ones that invited us. The immigration policy at the time was incredible. They paid for accommodation for six months, half accommodation for the next six months and gave us training, English language training. It was really a quite a good thing. Back it didn't feel good when we first landed.

[07:06] LW: That's a pretty brave move for people to do with four kids. Do you remember any of your parents' philosophies or ideologies when you were a kid? Because I guess you would have been what eight or nine years old when that happen.

[07:19] HM: I was 10. Yeah, my mom was the pragmatic, my dad was the dreamer. Yeah, and so he was like, also very egoscentric, he could do anything. He changed his name to Vince number one, not just Vince number one. But they had hope and they believed that with hard work you could achieve anything and everything can transform for the better. My dad was a little witchy and my mom was putting up with him being a little wild and witchy, and also by witchy I mean he was like the local shaman, but not really, he just thought himself that way. The irony of me ended up running a Buddhist center as, like the resident guru doesn't go unnoticed for me in any way, because I judged him so much when I was younger. But anyway, everyone was exiting South America at the time because Pinochet was doing his thing In Chile, had just done his thing in Chile, and all over South America people are exiting. So my parents just had hope, really just had hope, and dumb, blind hope. We're pretty poor, like dirt floors. So it's this uninformed everything's possible somewhere else, and I think we just got lucky because many people went at that time and didn't have the experience that we had.

[08:38]: My dad was also pretty stubborn and the first thing he did is he completely. He had a big mustache. He had predicted his death on some Bible because I told you as a witchy. And so, as we're packing the house, they sold the house and everything. My mom finds the Bible that he had written his death date when she showed it to us, the kids, he's like your dad, said he's going to die on this day and it was the date of our flight to Australia. And for whatever reason, she thought it'd be funny for us not to tell him and see if it was going to happen. So we were all like on the joke to prove to him you're not dead. And that day he go, the day of travel, he comes out of the bathroom clean shaven like never before. His big mustache that was his iconic thing was gone and he says, "Today I am dead to the world!" but in Spanish. I have died

for Argentina. Argentina is no longer my home country. We just got taken on by another country. We will be Australian. We will not speak Spanish. When we landed he said we weren't speak Spanish here, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. He forced us to integrate fully with Australian culture, cannot have Spanish friends, cannot speak Spanish at home, which was a separate total comedy of errors, because they couldn't speak any English. At least, we went to school and, sure enough, his death occurred, really like the death of that life occurred.

[09:58]: So he was that kind of character and his sort of tenacity and playfulness made us integrate in a way that none of the other migrants that arrived at the same time integrated. And so the other migrants started ping-ponging, "Oh I miss Argentina, I'll go back", because now they had means, but then when they went there, they didn't have means. So they came back to make money and then they were lost in this bardo, this in-between state, and our family was very fortunate. We ended up all finishing school, going to university, having great careers and the rest. So, yeah, I don't know if that answered your question.

[10:31] LW: Yeah, and when you're a kid, growing up poor, you dream a lot and I'm just wondering what were you dreaming about as a young person? Teenager you know what success looked like to you, having gone through all those experiences of escaping a coup in this really corrupt country.

[10:46] HM: You didn't even know that happened. Like I'm just not playing under the bed anymore and that means my friends. And it was hard. The first three years in Australia was really difficult. I don't know if you heard me tell the story of my first words in the classroom in Australia. Did you hear that? You might have to beep somewhere in between.

[11:04]: Yeah, so when I moved to Australia and within a few days I'm put in a classroom to learn with all the other kids you know there's a bunch of migrant kids but a lot of Aussie kids, because we're right on the beach, everyone's a surfer, blonde, blue-eyed, surfing, lean and mean, and I'm like chubby around in a bobcat. I already had image problems back then. So, anyway, they put me in a classroom and in Argentina you reveal the teacher like your second mother, like the teacher's second to your mom, in terms of someone you respect. We go to their house on the weekends, everything. Be good with the teacher. When we got to Australia that's not the case, and the teacher, as soon as I sit in the classroom, just sits there and starts teaching. And I had befriended a Chilean guy next to me. I'm like you've been here longer than

me. How do I tell her I don't understand, but I want to learn, like I'm a good boy. So he tells me in his broken English, you know, he's Chilean. And put up my hand, very proud in my first meaningful words in the language of Australia. And I'm like, "Miss fuck off." And the Aussie kids are just rolling around laughing. Her face is like drops.

[12:17]: The kid next to me starts laughing and I'm like is my pronunciation that bad? Should I say it again? Like fuck off. Should I say it? She just came right at me, dragged me outside and I remember her finger like pointing my face no good, no good. It took a minute or two of her doing that before it sunk in. That kid wasn't my friend, like he's just played a joke on me. You know I'm 10. I'm deeply embarrassed.

[12:42] Now I've got the teacher against me, all the kids, and so then that was my introduction to English classroom. It was introduction to all the kids, like it was my way into all the Aussie kids who I'm like I'm gonna fight with you, and they were like you fight with him, we'll fight with you, and there's all this sign language going on and that afternoon I just got this shit kicked out of me. It was my welcome to school like bruises and bleeding and getting home and punched in the gut and kicked in the face and that was my introduction to Aussie school. So you might agree with my first words. So I don't know if that answered your question. I didn't really.

[13:20] LW: Tell me what were you thinking about for yourself even before moving to Australia. Were you thinking of? Were you creating? Were you drawing, painting, like? What was your favorite activity as a child? Playing with your siblings?

[13:32] HM: I had very little memory of that. I just happy in the moment I have drawings that I did, but it wasn't like a passion. I remember having to choose one because we had to say in school, and I wanted to be an architect, that was the first thing that came into my mind. I loved buildings, you know, want to be an architect. And then my best friend, Fabio, or his name is Fabian it's his turn to say at first, this is back in Argentina and he says I want to be a pilot. And then my teacher says what do you want to be? And I knew I want to be an architect. At least that's what I thought. I didn't know what an architect really was and I said pilot, because my friend, my best friend, said pilot. So suddenly I am given all these things to be a pilot and I'm like get airplanes and get things and I don't know none of that really landed.

[14:18]: I didn't have those kinds of dreams and when I went to Australia it was so extraordinary the things that I didn't know in Argentina that as a 10, 11 year old I did know. Suddenly I could read another language. Suddenly I was taught music. Suddenly I could swim. Suddenly I can do sports in school, and it's not just football or soccer that around that age, around 12, 13, I began dreaming to be a filmmaker. It's old make little super eight films and my best friend and I would do claymations and the rest. And so one day I was gonna be a film director. One day I could tell stories, and the stories can make people feel like I felt when I went to the cinema.

[15:04] LW: You ended up deciding to not go to university?

HM: No, I did. In the beginning, I didn't. So it was at the beginning that when we're finishing high school it's very encouraged to go and go straight to university and choose your career. I was really I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. You know, I had an old guy, old art teacher, friend of my family's, who would be my confidant. I tell him all the things I would tell my parents. And one of the things was my fear of not knowing what I wanted to be your do. And I also had all this performance issues. I couldn't read out loud. English is the second language. I had mini traumas around that. That's the language we used to do, but I just didn't know why. But I hated being forced to read out loud. I didn't think I was an academic person. And he says you don't have to decide. He gave me some example. He pulled out three glasses of wine for three different wines in front of it was doing this whole demonstration is like which one's the best wine? I'm like I don't know. How are you gonna know? I guess you have to taste them. He's like right, you should just get on an airplane. Taste what it's like to be a different person in Asia, in Australia, in America and other places, and then you can decide. You will never know what you want to be until you taste it, if you got some examples of what people are.

[16:18]: So I saved up for a couple years and I bought myself around the world ticket and I went on this epic adventure and I got so addicted to traveling that I back packed for three years, continuously at stop somewhere. I work for cash and I continue. I come back to Australia, unload, reload and continue. And that's how I got stuck in New York. In New York, I made a bunch of people that moved my heart. I never expected to stay in America. I'm Australian, I have a really cynical attitude about Americans wanting to rule the world and thinking they're number one. So I was like that kind of guy. Never will I be in the United States. But I had to stop there if I want to do this and the world tickets. And I fell in love with New York and the people here. I kept coming back here. Here I am still.

[17:02] LW: You also had a cynical attitude about religious people and spiritual...

[17:10] HM: I continue to have a cynical attitude to one stage, and they just including myself. When I hear myself say some woo-woo bullshit that doesn't apply to transcending the human condition, I judge myself. We got caught so easily in the mist of mysticism. It's attractive, it's lovely, but there's more than that. It's a pragmatic, practical transformation that we can do. And you can talk about it in fairy language. Of course people get off on that. But when I hear it from me, I'm like super cynical.

[17:41]: I went and fell in love with a girl and she was like the daughter of the pastor. So I got baptized and I did the whole knock on doors and shit. Like I tried all those things in my teens. My heart wasn't in it. I was ultimately suspicious of anyone that looks like what I look like now, because you know right, be so. I think you know. Like I ended up diving deep into the Buddhist path, and the first thing that hooked me was the Buddha said do not trust anything I say just because I said it. You have to test it like gold, you have to cut it, rub it and I don't know something else. But what he's saying is If the logic of just trusting someone, that sounds a certain way because you like the way they sound. That might be a good thing, but that's not a good reason to continue listening to them. If that's your reason, then you must listen to the next bastard that tells you something cool. And the next bastard tells you something cool and that will never let your mind work.

[18:40]: The mechanics of owning that awakening. At some point, you have to understand what you're doing to wake up. Yeah, I'm still cynical. I've always been cynical. I've tested it. I tried it had the most difficult relationship with organized systems of wellness or organized systems of religion, and I also knew that was a limitation for me. Yeah, that's in a system is a limitation, so I push myself to dive in there.

[19:11] LW: What would you say your operating life philosophy was back in your 20s, when you were running out of money in New York City.

[19:18] HM: Have you ever read Ayn Rand, The Fountainhead?

[19:20] LW: I haven't read it covered a cover, but I'm familiar.



[19:23] HM: Yeah, that was my philosophy. I had all the books in the back, but at least this woman had a philosophy that someone produces stuff in the world and they had to be valued. If you don't produce anything, you've got no value. I believed that after having my heart broken with the Baptist pastor who told me my puppy dog would not go to heaven because it does not have a soul, I'm like you're obviously stupid, you obviously don't know, I can't believe anything you ever taught me, so you're out. That's where the cynicism came from. From the Baptist. And then the Catholics was like that shall not judge. My mom was gonna be a nun that shall not judge. Like those Baptists down there. They're terrible, they're judging all the time. So here's them judging them. So this laws and problems in every organized system, but there's also wonder and power in all of them.

[20:13]: So for me I had given up at that time trusting anyone and I'm like the most pragmatic thing that I could understand, using logic and reasoning, was, is and read. It was a sense that she had something missing as I was trying really hard to make my own way. Never take more than I gave, be self-sufficient, help where I can, but it's not my responsibility to take care of someone else. It wasn't until like this whole bunch of experiences happened around the time when I met Buddhist philosophy that until then it was her. It was like I had to be a producer of something and accept my place in the ladder of I don't have the skills, I'll never be anything. I have the skills, I'll do that. And in fact it wasn't until 20 years later, when I read her again, that I saw the flaw in her philosophy. I was scared to read her because she was so potent in my mind my early 20s. So I'm not proud of it. but I was also an Amway devout when I was a teen. What are you gonna do?

[21:13] LW: What was the inspiration behind becoming a fashion photographer? Is that something you've been dabbling in for a while?

[21:21] HM: It was the only way I could get cash in New York is to assist photographers, and so I would stop over in New York and there are a bunch of photographers people like my accent. I had long flowing hair like I do now, but it was in the different places at the top. And so people thought I was like this cool Aussie thing, because I studied film and you're a little about lighting and so some of the photographers wanted the kind of lighting that I could set up. And I ended up working closely with one fashion photographer and then another, and then I started doing some gigs myself and then I ended up opening up an agency when I just represented

photographers fashion photographers and the rest and that is really lucrative and connected and dangerous.

[22:06] LW: was this the yelling boss?

[22:09] HM: Yeah, yeah, good, you talk a little bit about that. I don't know. We all have hopes right, so it's really good at that. And then this guy, Gary, says that you have a knack for connecting with clients. Do you want to go into partnership? We open up a business together, I'll set up the financial side of the business, you be the front man, you build the relationships and get us clients and we own a business together. So it's 23, 24 and I'm like most business and I thought I wasn't going to get screwed over because I'm so cynical. So I made sure I read the contract and they put percentages. I showed it to friends and they helped me. So I move over here.

[22:45]: He's like guaranteeing I was going to get a green card, guaranteeing I was going to get an apartment. And it never worked out that way and he wasn't really a partner, he just wanted someone to do the sales stuff. Once he convinced me to give up the idea of getting a green card. Any lawyer that I showed him that could get us a green card was just didn't come to par for what he's wanted. After that he's just got legal people lots of people are illegal here you'll be fine.

[23:09]: After that moment things changed and then he just became the puppet of my income, even though the business was making money. I had to go to him to get cash and it was just a stupid twenty something year old decision that I made and it's completely dependent. But it wasn't until that tragic relationship building over a year and then two I'm illegal, I can't leave the country, I can't see my parents, that my dreams started getting heavy. What if everyone died in Australia, could never see my nephew like I got dark and then I couldn't afford to live in the Europe Without begging him for money all the time. And I'm sure there was sides of my behavior that I didn't see at the time, but it felt like it was all one sided and I was basically enslaved by the situation. I put myself in the front end. We had amazing clients that we did the first cover of essence magazine. Oprah Winfrey gave us full access to herself and as the first person on the magazine, and we had some really cool clients. So it looked successful but internally I was rotting and fearful.

[24:12]: It was thanks to Gary that I had so much pressure inside of me that I began to see cracks in my outward happiness. You see, when we looked great outside, I don't think I would have ever seen that if it wasn't for him. It was harsh man and he would come every afternoon to just check on my work for the day. He'd have another business and he want to come and check on my work for the day and it was never enough. It was no matter if we had a \$50,000 client or a \$40,000 client for half a day, which was awesome. He just didn't fit his happiness. He's like you could have done better. You could have cheated them out of this, and I'm like that's now how I operate. I don't think you should cheat people. You gotta fuck them before the fuck. You gonna fuck you eventually. I'm like I don't want to live that way, Gary.

[24:56]: And so we get into the screening matches and it was around that time that a bunch of serendipitous experiences happened, when I ended up meeting what is philosophy and then developing a practice and the rest. And that's where my first trial run of Buddhist philosophy in action was. If that philosophy is true, that my mind is the main manufacturer of my reality and I understand what I'm putting into my mind through my actions of body, speech and mind, then if I can transform anything, I want to transform Gary. If it works on Gary, then this Buddhist thing I commit to following, to continue to study, and so I asked a bunch of questions once I got into the study of Buddhism. And the teacher that I met at the time gave me a set of practices and then I did them to the tee. I'm really proud of wanting to prove Buddhism wrong by doing exactly what they told me to do. To see, I couldn't get it right, Gary couldn't transform it, but it's wrong and Gary's wrong and I'm right. That's the attitude I went into this, but I did that so well. The experience was the pivot of my life.

[26:04] LW: Yeah, it changed? Was this the moment where you were going to the girls apartment but then you accidentally ended up in Three Jewels?

[26:12] HM: That's exactly it. So I was working with Gary. He was in this business. For me it seemed to function. I was famous in the photography world and the rest, and I was going to a housewarming party. And on the way there, I was just getting drunk. I was in the fashion industry. I'm twenty something and I'm having fun. I'm in New York and I'm in fashion. We just finished our big marketing party and the heads of all the advertising agencies and all the models. Everyone's desperately looking for attention and I'm the one that has the jobs. So I'm something. It can't just be something without alcohol, drugs and all the other things that come

along. So, yeah, I was doing a little bit, but there was this darkness inside of me. It was really strong.

[27:06] And so I'm heading to just another awesome night housewarming party and I'm telling my friend about this serendipitous thing that happened the other day with a Buddhist event that happened at Union Square. I'm like that was crazy, serendipitous stuff. He's like, yeah, dude, we should study Buddhism. And we look at the address and it's Tibetan Buddhist tea houses and bookstore. Oh, welcome. Like it's a party, that's our party, so let's walk in. This nun holds my hand, drags me to the end of the space, shows me a statue of Tara, and she sees that I had a housewarming gift. She's you brought a gift for Tara. This is such a weird party. So she gives my plant to Tara and then I'm trying to get out of there. I'm like wait, this isn't the place. This is a Buddhist place and I had that Buddhist experience the day before. I hope this is magic, like what the hell is going on? Too many coincidence.

[27:57]: So I started asking people in that room what's Buddhism? What's Buddhism? Nobody could give me an answer in proper Buddhist bloody method. Nobody could give me a clear answer what's Buddhist? Nobody could say anything, except this one girl. She was like 17. Her name was Aura. Her doe eyes were so brilliant and piercing. I was hypnotized by them and I wasn't attracted to her in any other way than there's something incredible behind those eyes. And she still didn't give me an answer. I got my way out of there, I went to the party next door, got trashed, went home and then I dreamt like I'd never dreamt before. This dream is like crystal clear in my head still. And Aura is in the middle of the dream and she's Hector, you found home. Home is this way. And she shows me the skyline of New York and in the center is that shop, Tibetan Buddhist Tea House, Three Jewels. It was the place at opening night that I walked in and I'm like that's too crazy. I've got to go back to that shop.

I took a book that I'd found on Buddhism that I didn't understand, and that moment was pivotal and I got to know the philosophy a little bit in a few months and then I applied it to Gary and that experience with Gary was the very first time I saw the power of our minds. And then I just wanted that for everyone and the 27 years was practicing how to recreate that in every circle of your life. There wasn't a yelling, angry, screaming thing that forced me to be in any particular way. That particular way of responding was all me and that was like the hardest pill to swallow and it could change and I could change it and Gary could still yell. Instead of igniting hatred in me, he transformed through the three months of igniting nothing in me, igniting anger in me and

to one night he ignited an unconditional love that is still there, that is impossible for an asshole to produce in someone else which proved there's nothing external that will force you to have any particular experience. The experiences we have are completely internal, independent of the things outside. They all can be fodder for your internal experience and those things we caused by what we say, think and do. And the first proof of that was Gary. I was in tears with the watching my mind label what was previously a horrible person into someone who was just suffering, and the only thing they could do to the world is yell and scream. And he must then see the world in the way he's projecting it must then see the world attacking him, because he's always attacking the world. And it broke my heart like never before because I wasn't affected by him anymore. His practice had given me enough agency and it was essentially a practice of meditation. And then it eventually offered cushion meditation where you question what's in front of you and is that really igniting that response or is that response coming from somewhere else? And there's study to be done, and I did the study and I did the practice, and that thing completely transformed.

[31:06]: And I'm sitting there, my eyes bawling in tears, looking at Gary screaming at me, like he did every night. And that night, when everything like when pitch black silence, I saw my mind label that thing that was moving and then going suffering being instead of asshole Gary, suffering being. My heart broke open and I'm like, wow, we're all like that. I don't want everybody to be like they're broken, they're hurting. So I started crying and then he stopped yelling night, first time ever, stopped yelling and he's like are you okay, Hector? You okay? And then, quickly, my stupid mind began to say oh good, take advantage, because he thinks you're crying, because he is yelling too much. That's not why you're crying, but pretend that he upset you, so can stop yelling, you know. And so my normal way of thinking, kicked back in. But I saw something that pierced the matrix of the illusion that we live in that night and that stayed firm in my mind like nothing else has stayed, really, in all the years. I'm about to approach my half life, like I was 28 when I met Buddhism. That should make me 56. I'm in my half life now. I just turned 57. Half of my life has been using this philosophy to experience, the myriad kaleidoscope of experiences we can have, and I'm enjoying the ones I'm coursing and experiencing in a way that was never available to me before. I'm no longer at the whim of external forces. I'm confidently at the whim of my internal direction.

[32:50] LW: You gave a very powerful TED talk and when I watched it I reached out to you and I said this is one of the best TED talks I've ever seen before and we'll link to it in the show notes.

But you talk about the whole story in detail you and Gary and the two truths that anger is not coming from Gary or your partner or your child, or the neighbor or the person who cuts you off in traffic, but it's coming from within you. That's where the anger comes from and because it's coming from within you, you have agency.

[33:20] HM: You can change it. That's the miracle, that's the awesome thing. If it was coming from outside, from Gary, we're all screwed. And we can wait for Gary to change his behavior for us to be happy. And unfortunately this is the human condition. The illusion that Buddhists talk about is the illusion that it is Gary who pissed you off. Of course it was Gary that pissed me off, but it wasn't Gary separate from my experience of Gary. Gary, from his own side, doesn't piss off anyone, everyone. When he screams, some people are happy. He's screaming at Hector, which means the decibels aren't producing my feelings, all the words, because my colleague is like "Good, I hope Hector gets yelled at some more, so I get his job," and it makes them happy.

How can one thing make something happy and something sad? It's not the thing, that's not radiating anything and that's the truth. Though Buddhist terms dependent origination, karma, etc or emptiness, that thing is empty of forcing a bad experience or a good experience. That's easy to hear, very difficult to apply when you're being hurt. And so that the truth, when you see that directly, when you see that by experience, no one can reap that experience away from you. There's a certainty and unshakableness that happens when you see that and you're like, damn, if I'm doing that to Gary, I'm doing that to everything else, including what I think of me. You know we all have that internal dialogue. But you're not that. You are definitely not all the stories you tell about yourself. That's what you currently are as a dependent, arising thing. You're not fixed. That way you can transform.

[35:01]: How do you transform? That's the big question. What do I do to transform? You've got to plan different courses to experience yourself of the world in a different way, and that makes complete sense to all these practices that says be kind to the world, turn the other cheek. Be kind, understand reality, like wisdom, bliss, love, compassion are all qualities that you will be forced to experience where everyone is kind to you, everyone's generous to you, and that's not why you do it, but what you do is what you experience. So if I'm angry all the time, I'm going to see the world as a place where anger exists and there's no other reality. There's no separate reality than the ones we're all projecting individually. And some people can be walking around Manhattan at exactly the same time that someone is having the most horrible experience of the

same street, the same sunlight, the same traffic noise. Someone can be pitched into the bliss of New York and someone's fixed with the rat smell and the smelling garbage and they're like this is the most terrible place in the exactly the same millisecond, coming from the same place impossible, coming from the two minds possible.

[36:09]: So then the big experience is how do you go searching on what caused that experience and create those courses so you're only ever having the highest, most blissful, meaningful experiences? That wakes up from the illusion. That's what Buddha means. Buddha means the one who woke up from that, from thinking the triggers are your problem. The fact is that the triggers are your problem.

[36:33]: LW: I think people understand how you just explained it all, but it doesn't necessarily translate to direct experience. You're not going to find a bigger advocate for meditation than me, but just for people who've never been initiated in any kind of meditation practice, why is meditation a fast track to cultivating that state, that awareness, that compassion, and what are the mechanics within meditation, from your perspective, that allow that to happen?

[37:04] HM: Meditation is the flight simulator for pilots. You shut down all the stimuli that your mind is lost in all the time. That's why we sit still and not walking around and moving around. That's why we regulate the breath and get it nice and steady, so there's nothing overactive. That's why we lower our eyelids. 80% of our attention is visual. That's why we find a quiet little corner, so there's nothing for the ears to obsess about. And so, basically, we're shutting down all the windows that the mind, the consciousness behind those senses, is obsessed about. We're just obsessed about what's happening. What do I hear, what do I see, what do I taste, what I touch? If you shut down those things, you're left with consciousness and the thing doesn't have a clue what to do without those windows.

[37:56]: That's why early meditators hate meditating because it's like I can't do it. Of course you can't do it. You've never been alone in there. The monkey's wild and all the windows are shut. The monkey is to look out the eye window and just look at that and look at that and look at that and look at that on Instagram. Shut the window. The monkey's like let's hear things. Okay, close the ears and suddenly you realize that there's something else inside of you that is interpreting all the experiences and it doesn't want to be seen. So that's for me the first thing. Once you realize that, and not scared away by that, you want to work with that monkey to settle them

down. And they'll settle down slowly and gradually through the meditation practice. Like there is a method to meditating, you can slow down that overactive consciousness who's only used to being obsessed with external things. Okay, quiet down, sit down. Once you do that, then, with that same attention that they would have paid through the eyeball and the rest, you can live scenarios to try and see whether or not Gary's an asshole or not, whether or not that person is really the source of your hatred, whether or not your job and it might be your trigger and you might need to walk away from a Gary, no problem. But the fact still stands that your reaction to the stimuli you have control over and the flight simulator of meditating and the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, which is deep in visualization, very elaborate visualizations, because the mind doesn't know the difference between what it imagines and what it sees the imprint is the same. So you sit in your meditation and you run through the argument with Gary until you find the moment where you get angry and then you slow down and rewind the cassette tape. I'm old, so you rewind the cassette tape to the moment before you got angry.

[39:47]: Gary said Hector, you're stupid. And at that moment you got angry. In your simulation no one's in there, Gary's not there, it's just you. Monkey's focused on one thing. Now Monkey's focused on the Gary scenario visualization, yeah, and you watch your internal reaction to something that's not happening, right, because you're just visualizing it. But you get wisdom out of that. I'm like, damn, I got happy when he said Hector, you're stupid. Am I stupid? I'm not stupid. So you can argue with the logic that got you angry. I'm like he can say I'm stupid today and I won't get angry. He can say because I've just worked it out on the cushion. So tonight I go over and Gary, of course, says Hector, you're stupid. And I remembered my meditation. I remembered my flight simulation. I know exactly what to do on the flight. At this point I knew that there was a bump coming, so I put the seatbelt on. Of course he says I'm stupid. Of course I feel the impulse to yell back, but because I lived it in my simulation, I'm not going to say no, Gary, you're stupid and I hate you. And then I'm deregulated. Suddenly. I've got some agency, I've got my seatbelt on and so tomorrow you go back on your cushion, you do the next thing until in the moment, off the cushion, you're living like you have done in your simulation.

[41:03] And I'm simplifying it because there's a ton of depth about trying to understand what is moving you to anger and what is moving you to happiness and what is moving you to attachment, et cetera. In the simulation you investigate that, and in the Buddhist literature there's a ton of methods and systems. There's too many lists in there, but they're very valuable to understand them. How to do the flight simulation, and so then in practice, it took me three



months to go from I hate you, Gary comes out of my mouth I hate you, Gary is in my gut and my throat but is not coming out of my mouth to I hate you, Gary is just a tightness of my belly and not even a concept of I hate you, to the tightness of my belly being a little bit of a heat whenever he says the thing, and then that heat is not even that, and then I'm free, the monkey's relaxed. Gary is going to do his thing, I don't have to do my thing and I can actually observe what's going on. And what's going on is there's a person in front of me who's broken and he's yelling at everyone. He's yelling at his wife and he's yelling at his kids and he's yelling at me. And I'm okay, I can deal with it. But his kids don't have this skill and his wife didn't have this skill and my heart broke. Gary doesn't have this skill, so he's going to continue yelling and so yelling at him isn't going to stop and I just had real compassion for the very first time ever.

And so meditation is just the flight simulator for the life you live off the cushion. We have more life off the cushion than on the cushion, but without that piece that nothing's really there to get you. You can really see how we get easily triggered and you have agency to stop the triggers. I don't know if that explained it, and usually we tell all these stories about things that are harmful to us because people are like hyper alert to all the problems. But the reality is that it's equally true for all the blissful, wonderful, loving, expansive things we live the first time we ever fall in love. That's possible again and again and again, if you know how to do the flight simulation, and then you can walk around Manhattan and be in love with absolutely everybody, even if they smell, even if this rat smells, like you could walk around in bliss, and that's really more of the power here. Yes, we can get over the triggers of negativity, but reality functions as a projection from our mental constructs and you sit on the cushion and create the most powerful constructs and you watch them come to life.

[43:27]: In the middle of the most terrible experience and I talk about it, I've been doing this meditation for a long time, habituating my mind to find the bliss and get rid of the problems, and the test of that was both when my dad passed away next to me and when my mom passed away next to me, and I was at two different levels of meditation practice at those times and the experience was remarkably different but equally peaceful in that experience. The human experience of saying goodbye to the thing that gave you birth, the thing you love deepest, and without sounding too corny or too weird, it was the most intimate, beautiful, loving experience of saying goodbye over three months to my mom, with this view that it doesn't have to be horrible death. I wish you weren't going, but you're going. So I let go the monkey, let go of the obsessive, please don't go. This is really terrible. That wasn't going to help my mom's mind. But

we only have two seconds left, a day left, we don't know. Oh my God, I'm going to love like I've never loved before because I don't know if it ends in a minute, I don't know if it ends in an hour.

[44:36]: And she had the same response. She's like I don't have a clue how long I got, but I want to tell you all these things in the last minute, and so those last minutes lasted three months and it was brilliant. Death can be this powerful, wonderful thing. It's going to happen and you decide whether it's going to be a piece of shit or it's going to be an awesome encounter with something magical. She's not here anymore. Oh my God. What a privilege. Now that you do on the cushion, love everyone before that happens to everyone. That's what you do off the cushion.

[45:07] LW: Yeah, you know it's interesting. I'm listening to you and I'm reflecting back because I was also in New York at that time. I was in the fashion industry at that time. I used to be a model with, I was with a bunch of places, agencies and things like that. It '96 to 2002.

[45:27] HM: I was like 94 to 1998.

[45:31] LW: Yeah, yeah, and then I escaped out of New York to LA because I discovered meditation and yoga in about 98. I'm just thinking back, you know, I remember Jeeva Mukti. I remember Om Yoga Studio. I was going to like these small little meditation groups. They weren't like affiliated with anyone, any kind of center or anything like that, but that's where I got introduced. And then I got the bug and I recognized that I want to do this full time and that's when I started making plans to move to LA and it took a breakup for me to go from New York to LA. I was dating a girl in Harlem and we broke up after four years, off and on, and I just couldn't, I was triggered all over the place and that was how the universe got me to finally take that leap. So talk about your experience with moving from practitioner to recognizing. Hey, I want to go a little deeper into this. Maybe I want to even facilitate or teach it and what was that process like.

[46:32] HM: Yeah, I didn't want to facilitate or teach. No, honestly, I didn't think I'd studied with Tibetan Lamas. I'd studied with Rinpoche's. I studied with Geshe Michael, the first American Geshe meaning doctorate of philosophy in the monastery. I definitely don't have that kind of mind. Plus, remember I told you I went traveling overseas because I didn't think I was an academic kind of person, can't read properly.

[46:57] I still have that story in my head. Who am I to translate Tibetan texts or interpret Sanskrit? Like what the hell am I doing? So I felt like an imposter as a practitioner. Forget that I'm a teacher. But that experience with the angry boss and transforming that and seeing that was what all the Buddhist books are about had become a realization in my mind and I just tasted it. My mind went back to misunderstanding immediately about everything else. I had this epiphany. I saw the possibility like a rip in the matrix. I had a quick look and then it closed up again and then I'm triggered across everything else. But now I know, like I've never known before, that the onus and responsibility to change, it is in me. So I became a real practitioner.

[47:44]: After that I started studying like never before. So I studied the entire curriculum of a Geshe, which is what Geshe Michael was translating at Three Jewels, and we're sending it out on cassette to prisons around the world who want to do Buddhist courses online. So it created these incredible 18 courses, which is still the foundations of Three Jewels. All we do is teach out of that, which is a literal translation of the essence of whatever Dalai Lama studies or any Rinpoche studies, like the books on logic, on reasoning, on meditation, on compassion, on death and dying, on past and future lives, on the workings of karma, on the bodhisattva Charavattara, which is the guide to the bodhisattva's way of life, like how to be a bloody do-gooder, like the logic and reasoning debate, like the wisdom emptiness, karma. So it's incredible the way that tradition codified reality. Two and a half thousand years, people nerding out on what's the nature of things and what part do we individually play? Are we stuck at being suffering humans? How can that transform? And they've got logics and recentings and practices to the coup because they're officially the Tibetans are stuck in the middle of nowhere, frozen nine months out of the year, and for a thousand years nobody reached them. They just nerded out on meditation and Buddhism. So I sunk my teeth deep into every one of those things and tried to practice them because of the experience I've had with the angry boss. And then, in the middle of that, I'm studying, I'm volunteering at Three Jewels.

[49:19]: I got a conscience, a sense of what do you call it. When your consciousness, when your conscious calls here, you're like I've got something on my conscience which is hold on. I'm studying the most transformative things from Far East Asia, from Tibet, never been seen in English before. Who the hell am I? And I got this sense of impermanence about it. I'm like I can't hold this forever and I can't be doing this while I'm illegal in the United States. That's not ethical. I can't be doing the best, goodest thing whilst lying to the government and my colleagues. So I

had this dilemma, this ethical dilemma. So I had to do like an act of truth to say I'm going to fix the illegal thing and I'm going to make my move and I'm going to stay in New York.

[50:06]: So I got a lawyer and I had money to do that and I got interrupted and got stuck in Australia for 10 years, wanting to come back and that horrible separation from the study of the community. I think that made me practice like never before. That was a trial of fire, and this is before cell phones, before internet, like maybe email had begun in '98. But it's not like I would pay \$5 a minute to try and talk to nuns and monks in New York to try and get an understanding of my practice, and so I suffered the separation which made me figure it out on my own.

[50:47]: At some point you've got to drop the learning and start the practice, because you can get lost in Eastern philosophy as an academic and nerd out and not change anything about your life. I didn't want that. I wanted more of that transforming the angry boss experience. I didn't want to be a scholar of Buddhism Go to Columbia for that, like. I'm not interested in that. I'm interested in if this thing can transform the human condition. I want to do that again.

[51:13]: So then I worked really hard. I had a career and I had a whole bunch of things happen in Australia and then I needed more. So I moved back and 10 years later and self-sponsored, and I came to get more teachings, I showed up at Three Jewels and it wasn't the same place that I'd seen. It was a little tired and Geshe Michael and the whole crew had moved to Arizona, so there wasn't that much activity. And then I was asked oh, you were one of the early students of this Geshe degree. Can you teach? I'm like no. Please, one class. And I took one class and then I just course after course, like I kept teaching and I felt obliged to give back this powerful thing that was given to me, and there wasn't a higher pleasure.

[51:58]: I was running a startup, tech startup, I was consulting and on the side I was volunteering all of my time, and from that was born this incredible community where we branded Three Jewels. We started being more like a public studio I think we were the first to offer a teacher training for meditation and then mindful opened and we were friends with Jeeva Mukti and so we had a community set up and I became the resident teacher, sort of against like I didn't plan that. I came here for more for me and it turns out that the only way you get more for you is giving it away to others. The more I gave it away to others, the more I'm feeling fulfilled and the more I'm feeling I know these things way better than I knew it on my own, because having 50 people ask you questions around how to apply karma and emptiness how does

meditation work? You suddenly have to know your shit. Internally you can know your shit, but I'm responsible for the precious real estate of another mind. I can't bullshit them. So I have to study better and it reignited my practice like never before, internalized it.

[53:02]: You know, eight years later I'm now the resident teacher and we're doing more advanced courses, because the stuff we teach in the Geshe degrees is open Buddhism and then there's much more esoteric practices which are faster and stronger and scarier, which really activate. Can you really get rid of all the limiting beliefs or are you just going to try for happy human? Do you want to try to fully awaken or do you believe in that? Do you think you can become a Buddha or do you think you're just going to be a happy human and die? And so you know, the more advanced teachings invite you to question that in a very fast and profound way.

[53:39]: So now I'm in full career of having this incredible community. We have 45,000 visits a year. We've got four of those courses happening every year. We do retreats and meditation. We're trying to give people all the experiences, but it's all the one line is exactly the same content that Dalai Lama had to be forced to study in all the Rinpoche's, but we're doing it in a way. That's the kind of it the system that I started. I don't want to just follow something and be a good Buddhist. Screw Buddhism. It's not the -ism. It can your life transform and these practices should work if you know how to practice.

[54:24] LW: You mentioned the awakening process and I know back in the early days when you first encountered this, the teacher told you that you were going to have a few phases. You're going to have the beginning phase where you'll forget everything, and then you'll have a phase where you go a bit schizophrenic with the knowledge and then you eventually internalize it. And so now you've worked with all of these people and with people who've worked with people. Can we just double click on some of these phases and talk about what does that mean? Why would we forget? How do you go schizophrenic and how does it feel like to internalize?

[55:00] HM: This stuff I think that you're referring to when my teacher gave me the practice of how to transform Gary, he said do these four things. So basically he taught me what's now called the four steps of amplifying mental imprint or karma. We're always planting karmas by what we think, say and do. That imprints something in our consciousness which creates a bias filter and then forced to see the world that way. So if you're walking around angry all the time,

you're going to see angry everywhere. If you're ready to be triggered at whatever the word is or whatever the set, then you will be triggered when that happens. So if your mind is searching for that, neuroscience tells us that anyway, neuroplasticity, the bias of seeing what you're looking for. That's all they're saying about karma. But it's imprinted in your mind by what you say and can do. So there's these techniques in the Buddhist texts that say you can do that fast. You can make a powerful imprint which gives a priority flight order to the karma, to the experience that will emerge from what you planted. Everything you plant must arise, but who prioritizes which airplane goes off first? So these four steps are one way to make that happen fast. That's the first thing he taught me. He's like know exactly what you want. I don't want an angry boss, I don't want someone yelling. Help someone else get that thing that you want, because other people want that thing and you want to imprint in your mind being helped to overcome that thing. So help out someone else, but just forget yourself and help someone else. Be selfless around everybody getting that thing, not just you. It makes it bigger, broader. Then do the thing, actually help someone do that.

And then, thirdly, rejoice, really walk around going I really did plant those things. Damn, I'm ready to fly. That's a very summarized way of saying these four Tibetan things. I didn't have anyone that had a shitty, angry boss as bad as mine. So I decided to help the future me who's another person. I'm not the future me yet. So my meditation cushion I would sit there and imagine the future Hector not getting angry, the future Hector finding peace in the moment. When Gary says Hector, you're stupid. I'm in my meditation cushion, imagining tomorrow or tonight or this afternoon, and I'm imagining his not reactive. He gets all the things I want. That's who I'm helping in my meditation. I also use his four steps for everyday life and then the phases that you go through. The only way that you're experiencing someone yelling at you is if you have imprints for being yelled at, which means you've yelled at someone in the past or wanted to. You've imprinted your mind with that. So the antidote to being yelled at is don't yell. It's self gaslighting, right, so damn it.

[57:45]: But Gary yelled at me. I want to yell at him. That's not how you stop yelling.

If yelling stopped yelling, the loudest person wouldn't be yelled at, and they usually yelled at. If war stopped war, then all the war should have stopped. If bombing stopped bombing, all the bombing should have stopped. We've bombed enough. Yelling doesn't stop yelling. Not yelling causes not yelling. So if you want Gary to stop yelling, you stop yelling mentally, verbally or in action, and not just to Gary. But you've got to stop the yelling attitude in your consciousness.

That will take time. Stop yelling and then the world will stop yelling. That's profound, easy to say. So today I'm not yelling, of course I'm going to forget. We're habit forming machines. As soon as someone yells at me, I'll yell back. I'll enjoy yelling, I'll think I'll win the argument and I'll head home and I'm like why I yelled at him? I just planted two hours of yelling in my mind, which means I must be yelled at in the future. Damn it.

That's the first phase that he said I would go through and I did. I was uncanny. I'm like why can't I decide not to yell and suddenly not yell? We can't do that. That's not how life is. We're just habit forming machines and we live by the consequences of our habits. Our habit is if someone harms me, I want to harm them back. This philosophy says you don't want to be harmed, stop wanting anyone to be harmed, even the person that harmed you. That's difficult. That's Jesus saying turn the other cheek. It sounds good on the Bible. But the consequences you are essentially guaranteeing that you're going to be harmed in the future by wanting someone else to be harmed in the present, because the imprints occur mentally, verbally or physically, body speech, your mind, your awareness is recording your thoughts.

[59:31]: I could be sitting here going you're such a nice person, I really like you, but in my mind I'm going, oh, what an idiot, stupid question. Which I'm not, by the way. I must then leave the consequences of that recorded thing, not what I said. See what I mean? Because what I said had that intention. That's the DNA of my words for me. But you would have thought Oh, how nice, Hector thinks I'm nice, Hector thinks you're an idiot. Hector has to be perceived as an idiot later, do you see it? And then I'm walking around, someone says Hector, I really think what you said was very wise. I'm like you think something totally beat, because that's what my mind has in an imprint.

[01:00:06]: So that first phase is can we stop the habit of harming for harm, creating the causes of our future suffering. And so there's this list, there's all this list. One of the lists they call the 10 virtues or the 10 non-virtues. It's no killing, no stealing. Sounds like the 10 commandments. The one that's interesting to me is stop being happy when people don't get what they want. Stop being happy when they don't get what they want, damn. And we're doing that all the time, 24-7. That's the top 10 shitty mental imprints to subtly being happy Ha, they didn't get the job because I'm better. That's a very subtle mental imprint. How do you think that's going to play out when you don't get things? It plays out and you're not getting things you want.

[01:00:51] LW: And so when your partner breaks up with you and you don't want them to find love again, or relationship to fail.

[01:00:58] HM: That's the practicality of it. So in this first phase, try not to wish bad on your ex-partner.

[01:01:02] LW: You're talking advanced level stuff now.

[01:01:06] HM: I am. That's what it takes. You want to be in the Olympics of waking up or do you just want to be walking around the edges? This is an Olympic sport. The Olympic sport requires practice. That's the cushion, the flight simulator, and then practice off the cushion. You've got to run. You've got to keep running if you want to be in the race.

[01:01:27] LW: How do you reframe it in the moment so that you know you're not adding collateral damage?

[01:01:32] HM: Well you're doing it. You are adding collateral damage to that and that. To me, is the motivator. I'm like, damn, I did two hours of screaming. I just have to leave the consequences of that screaming. So next time I'll do an hour and a half, next time I'll do an hour, next time I'll do half an hour, but by God I'm going to not scream. And sure enough, that's where that schizophrenic face that I talked about the middle. So maybe it's a month of recognizing. You planted the thing you didn't want to have the consequences of. You did that for maybe a month. You realized after you did the deed that deed will bring you harm. You have this kind of regret. That's good, that's healthy.

[01:02:10]: The most difficult phase is when it happened with Gary. You're aware, because of your meditation and your awareness, that you're yelling in the moment. So Gary will trigger me and I'll yell back. And halfway, mid sentence, I remember I don't want to yell for two hours. I don't want the consequences of yelling, I don't want to think this guy's an idiot. I'm going to stop it right now. But you're mid sentence through a scream. You're like, no, you're the... And then you stop, which makes Gary angrier. Okay, and so he'll yell loud, "What do you mean? Come on, say it"



And you're like I'm not saying a single thing. And so the energy is tight there and it feels horrible. It's a frantic phase because sometimes you break and you're like you're a freaking idiot. And then you're like I shouldn't have even said that. And so you're quiet and passive and it's uncomfortable, that phase. But eventually you get past that too. You're like I don't have to yell in the moment, so you control the lips. Big success actor. You just managed to control your lips after a month and control my lips now. But that's what it takes, that it comes out of us, the harming others.

[01:03:09] And then the next phase is more subtle. You are aware that your mind is thinking those things, but you're not saying them and you're actively saying, debating your mind, as every impulse wants to yield back until it stops. The monkey sits down, the monkey is just paying attention to what is, without wanting to lash out. Suddenly, the monkey sees a broken person in front of you and you might feel love. And so that technique of moving from I think it's unconsciously incompetent to consciously competent. That's like not knowing you don't know to knowing you don't know and suddenly to knowing. You're active. Eventually that will turn into not even knowing becomes your new habit is to walk around at peace and just look at people's dilemmas as something to help with.

[01:03:58]: This is great saying in Tibet. If someone hits you with a stick, are you angry at the stick or at the thing that wielded? And so of course you're angry at the thing that wielded. So if someone's yelling at you, are you angry at the guy yelling or the thing that's causing them to yell, which is not understanding that they must live in suffering because of their yelling? They're harming the world and themselves. So something else is moving them. Everyone wants happiness, even Gary. So suddenly I shouldn't be angry at the stick, at the messenger. I should get really focused on stopping the course of that thing. And the ultimate course of that thing was in me, my own.

[01:04:34] LW: I feel like people who haven't really embodied this are quick to label these sorts of actions that they may not understand as toxic positivity or your spy passing and all this. So let's talk a little bit about how that plays a role in the context of what you're saying.

[01:04:50] HM: I think at the beginning of the conversation I told you there's some things that I really say, that I really mean, and then I sugarcoat them. I'm not going to sugarcoat it.

LW: Okay, we have context now so we can hear it.

HM: Let your experience tell you what the answer is. Go ahead and call it toxic positivity. And it means you didn't understand what I said about the imprinting your mind, causing the bias of your reality. I'm not pretending that Gary is a nice person. I am recognizing that the anger is in me and not in Gary, even though Gary was the stick that brought the anger out in me. I'm the source of the problem because I got angry and I got frustrated and I didn't want it. I wanted a certain outcome and reality didn't match my wants and I'm angry, and I'm angry at Gary. Does that mean Gary is not an abuser or a drug? No, that doesn't mean that. It means that I'm experiencing an abuser. When did I abuse someone? Oh damn, I hate that answer.

[01:05:43]: You either take 100% responsibility for the experience you're having of life or you don't take 100% responsibility. No, one's coming to save you. You're the one that saves you. If someone was coming to save you, why would they wait this long? Why would you have to go? Oh, I have to learn a lesson. If you're all powerful and give me that lesson, give it to me in a second. You don't have to give me 20 years of suffering if you're really capable. No, that's not. The lesson is within us. You're the projector of your reality. But I don't like that reality. Someone will take advantage of me if I'm just the doormat. Oh, when have you taken advantage of someone? Because you're only going to get taken advantage of if you've taken advantage of something. Do you have that in you? Yeah, I do. It's an infinite regression of removing all negativity. It's the opposite of bypassing. It's taking the full burden of the reality you're stepping into onto yourself. There's nothing higher, there's no escape and there's total freedom. That's hard. I don't say that to everyone. I know this is probably going to create problems, but I'm getting old and I'm going to die soon, so I'm going to go with it. Honestly, my practice is now there is nothing that comes my way that offends me, that it's not my responsibility to overcome, and what forces me to do is like where have I done that to someone else in the past? And it forces me to stop doing that, because you're not walking around. You can't be walking around a forest thorny weeds and say this isn't a forest of thorny weeds, there's nothing cause these thorny weeds. I had nothing to do with this field. That is the garden of my mind. I want beautiful daffodils. You've got to plant daffodils if you want daffodils. Yeah, but this place is thorny. Well, you've got to remove the thorns if you want daffodils. You can't just let them replicate. Full responsibility for the garden of your experience and for that you've got to understand reality.

[01:07:32]: In Buddhism, realities define it that which is perceived by a valid perception. That which is perceived by a valid perception is reality. And we use this example of a pen. We say what's this? And people say it's a pen. That's a valid perception. Really is perceived and functions as a pen. But if a dog is here, this is not a pen for a dog, this is a chew toy. It is validly perceived and salivated by dogs as a chew toy, not a pen. If it was a pen, they would write with it. They don't write with it. So which is it? Which is it? It is a pen or is it a chew toy? From its own side there's more dogs than humans, there must be mostly chew toys. That's not how it works. If there's only dogs on the planet and this thing existed, it's only a chew toy. It doesn't have a nature. It's empty of being pen. It's empty of being chew toy. And here's the trick, the misunderstanding. For Westerners, it is a chew toy for those that are forced to perceive it as a chew toy, because there's something in them that can only see chew toy and there's something in others that can only see pen. Pen is coming from us, chew toy is coming from them, and it's not wishful thinking. I wish it was a diamond rod. It's not. It's a pen, I'm forced to. This is reality. Yeah, it's cylindrical and like well, is it cylindrical for the flea that's crawling on it or is it just a straight space?

[01:08:54]: There's reasoning for thinking that way and once you understand if this did have the nature of pen, it must force everything to experience pen, because it radiates pen. The fact that someone chews on it, a dog chews on it, means this ain't radiating pen. This has no nature like that. That's what no self means. No self nature of pen. No self nature of chew toy. If that's true and it's a big if, and you've got to investigate it and you've got to study it and you've got to meditate on it. If that's true and everything else is like this, then Gary's not an asshole or an incredible teacher. He's empty of being both. How did he change? I changed the seeds, he changed, and now I'm afraid that I'm going to take a big being taken advantage of by other Gary's. If I do take, get taken advantage of is taking advantage of coming this way or that way. Damn, you're locked in a fast track to awakening with that philosophy. That's what the power, that's the key to this philosophy. Screw Buddhism. Buddhists don't own wake-upism. In every tradition they've talked about that. You go read Sufi poetry. They talk about that. You talk to. You read the Jesus lines, be kind to people. You'll be forced to experience kindness. Forgive them. They don't know the pain they made. Then add pain to pain. Suddenly, being good, being just, being patient, being kind, makes sense. You'll be forced to live in a world where kindness you can't stop it. You can't stop the garden of daffodils if you planted them. If you planted them, you must reap your rewards. And then suddenly, living life is just an interesting experience of damn my mind has that in it. Damn, my mind has that in it. Awesome, my mind has that in it.

Look at the infinite possibility of being that I've produced, and then you're the center of the universe like everyone else is suddenly. Sorry, it went on.

[01:10:51] LW: It's beautiful and you're based in New York. Three jewels is in New York, so obviously people can come and study with you in person. Say, someone is living in Nashville and they really connected with what you just said and they want more. What are some of the first steps that people can take?

[01:11:08] HM: Use my smart-ass Buddhist answer. Stop someone else, get what you want. So if you want wisdom, give your wisdom away to someone else, and then maybe signing on to Three Jewels online will give you wisdom. Three jewels doesn't hold the wisdom. We can teach this method, no problem, but it won't turn on for you if you don't have the seeds for kindness. If you don't have the seeds for wisdom and that is planted by whatever you know give it away to others so they can get that experience. That's a Buddhist answer.

[01:11:36]: But in reality, we have an online studio that's free or by donation. We're a nonprofit. We've been a nonprofit for 27 years, so our mission is just to get people woke up, get people enlightened. We're really living that mission. What does that mean? If this technology functions, everyone has the power to wake up from whatever is causing them pain and experience all the things that's making them happy. So, as a nonprofit, we've got a full-on studio that teaches yoga and meditation online, free or by donation, and we do Buddhist courses on those 18 courses that a Geshe does also free or by donation. That there's an application process, because it's homeworks and quizzes and a ton of study, and so logging on to [threejewels.org](http://threejewels.org) will give you access to the in-person or the online studio. On top of that, it costs money to run a studio brick and mortar in New York, so we charge for dropping classes and we have membership. It was still reasonable and nonprofit.

[01:12:33]: We have a scholarship program for in-person or for retreats, or for meditation, teacher training or yoga teacher training or other stuff. So we gave away about 40% of everything we do last year, but we have high demands. For example, for our recent teacher training, we had over \$350,000 worth of scholarship applications. We could only afford to give away like \$80,000 worth, so about just under a third. All I'm saying is if people want access, our job is to give access right and you'll see that online, the online studio and if they want different access, apply for one of the scholarships and we can make the more heady, in-depth, long-term

courses or retreats and trainings available to people as well. Our job is it doesn't matter what you look like, where you came from, what your academic is, what your age is. If you have a consciousness, you can wake up and we can share what's worked for us.

[01:13:30] LW: You also have a prolific social media presence. Do you have a schedule that you post once a day? You hold yourself to that, or you just do it when you're inspired, or how does it work?

[01:13:40] HM: So I think that the habit-forming algorithm of social media systems is a beautiful reflection of the crappiness of our mind. Our minds do the same thing. For a little while, I started following and liking and saving things on Instagram that I don't like and wouldn't save, and suddenly Instagram thought I was a lesbian and suddenly it thought I was a sports person, and so I played around with the algorithm and it proved to me that whatever you imprint, you receive, so it creates little microcosms. So for me, I treat Instagram in particular as the garbage that it can be, and I would actually want to put some good in there. So I only use it on the toilet and, like I told you that before, right. So I only post or like other rest while I'm on the toilet. So there's no rhythm except the toilet rhythm. And not every time I'm on the toilet do I do it. Sometimes I don't. I hope that wasn't too crass an answer, but it's the real answer.

[01:14:40] LW: So when we see you post, we know that you're on a Well, Hector just got to the toilet.

[01:14:44] HM: Toilet time. That's my free time, but I really do think Instagram can be a force for good. It needs more voices like yours in there. It needs more people saying goodness is possible, because it's easy to get caught in the negativity in that system.

[01:14:58] LW: Beautiful. Well, look, man. Thank you so much. That's our time. I really appreciated hearing your perspective and your story and I'm so excited that people got to be introduced to you from my platform and hopefully they'll reach out to you and they'll give what they want to receive and all the things, and I just want to appreciate you and thank you for the ripple that you're putting out into the world and I look forward to meeting in person at some point very, very soon.

[01:15:22] HM: And what you do as well. Like I love what you do, and you're one of those voices that I think we need more of, so please keep doing it. Please stay.

[01:15:30] LW: Yeah, thank you.

[END]

Thank you for tuning in to my interview with Buddhist teacher Hector Marcel. I highly recommend following Hector on the socials @wakeupist. That's W-A-K-E-U-P-I-S-T. And of course, I'll put links to everything that Hector and I discussed in the show notes, which you can find at [lightwatkins.com/podcast](http://lightwatkins.com/podcast). And if you enjoyed this conversation and you found it inspiring and you're thinking of two or three other people that you would really love to hear me interview, here's how you can make those interviews happen. I reach out to my short list of guests all the time. Some of them accept, some of them don't, but one of the things that you can do to help me get these guests on the podcast is simply to leave a rating or review, because that's one of the ways the gatekeepers will determine whether or not a podcast is worth the time of one of the bigger guests. And it only takes 10 seconds. All you do is you look at your screen on the Apple Podcast platform, you click on the name of the show, you scroll down past the first few episodes. You'll see a space with five blank stars. Just click the star all the way on the right and you have left a five star rating. And if you want to go the extra mile. You can leave a one line testimonial about what you appreciate in these conversations and that's how you can cast a vote for those bigger podcast guests to come on to the show. Also, don't forget, you can watch these interviews on YouTube. If you ever want to put a face and a personality to a story, just go to Light Watkins Podcast on YouTube and you'll see the entire playlist.

And if you didn't already know, I post the raw, unedited version of every podcast and my Happiness Insiders online community. So if you're the type who likes to hear all the mistakes and the false starts and the chit chat in the beginning and in the end of the episodes, you can listen to all of that by joining my online community at [thehappinessinsiders.com](http://thehappinessinsiders.com). You'll also get access to my 108-Day Meditation Challenge along with other challenges and masterclasses for becoming your most authentic self.

All right, I look forward to hopefully seeing you back here next week with another story about someone just like me, just like you taking a leap of faith, betting on themselves. And until then,

keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart, keep betting on yourself as much as possible. And if no one's told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Thank you and have a great day.