

**EPISODE 204**

*LW: "Trying to control the mind is what leads to chaos. That's why a lot of new meditators talk about monkey mind. You don't have monkey mind. What's happening is you're trying to control your thinking mind. You're trying to stop the thoughts that you are having those 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts. And the reality is that you can't stop your thoughts by thinking about not thinking because don't think as a thought. So all you're doing is you're actually adding more thoughts on top of the thoughts that are already there, which then makes you conclude that, oh, my mind is somehow especially busy, right, and unable to be controlled. And so the opportunity there is to do the opposite of what you think you should do, which is less control, least control, and ultimately no control. Stop trying to control your mind. And ironically, when you stop trying to control your mind, guess what happens? You will start to experience a more settled mind."*

**[INTRODUCTION]**

Hey friend, welcome back to The Light Watkins Show. I'm Light Watkins and I have conversations with 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've directly benefited from their work.

And the goal is very simple. It's to expose you to as many people as possible from as many backgrounds as possible who have identified what they consider to be their path in life, and to humanize them by sharing their stories. And after hearing story after story, you eventually, hopefully give yourself permission to move further in the direction of whatever feels like your path and purpose. Because what you'll see is that anyone who does that has had to overcome many of the same obstacles that you might be facing right now.

This week I'm not doing an interview actually. I have a solo episode for you, so it's just me. And I'm calling this solo episode "Five Things to Avoid Along Your Spiritual Journey".

This of course assumes that we're all on somewhat of a spiritual journey. And so if that's not your understanding, I think that if you're at least open to the idea of a spiritual journey, you'll enjoy hearing my perspective on what that means and how to think about that.

If you do believe in the idea of a spiritual journey, you'll definitely get some tangible real world, tips and tools for optimizing yours. And as some of you may know, I've been in the wellness space for decades now as a meditation teacher, as a speaker, as an author about topics like spiritual minimalism, which is a phrase that I coined to describe the inside out approach to minimalism and inspiration and, meditation, and I wrote a book about how to cultivate happiness within. So I'm drawing from many, many years of research and exposure to all aspects of the spiritual journey from the metaphysical components to Vedic knowledge, which refers to as ancient Indian knowledge to the practical and even the secular considerations that I've also been exposed to.

And I think that anyone and everyone who's open minded enough will find something of value from this solo episode that will inform their either intentional or unintentional spiritual journey. So with that said, let's get into it. Here are the five things to avoid along your spiritual journey. Enjoy.

[00:04:10] Hello there. We are back with a solo episode. So it's just me sitting here in my home office in Mexico city. And I am hearing birds in the background. I don't know if you can hear those birds, but it's really beautiful here. It's kind of this eternal spring weather here in Mexico City. And it's sunnier more often than it is not sunny. So I'm definitely living the dream down here. and it's a wonderful environment to talk about what I would like to speak about today on this solo episode, which is the five things to avoid while on your spiritual journey.

[00:04:57] Now, why would we want to avoid anything on our spiritual journey. Well, first of all, we have to acknowledge that we are even on a spiritual journey. And what that simply means is one aspect of you is the human aspect, right? Which is what most people identify with, which is representative of the facts of your life. Right.

[00:05:25] For me, I'm a black man, six foot three from Montgomery, Alabama, such and such years old. I have this many brothers and this many sisters and I do this for a living and I love doing those other things. And these are my preferences and these are my pet peeves. And all of that is a description of our humanness.

[00:05:48] Right. But there's two words to our identification, the human being, human being. So the human aspect, that's what I just listed off. But then we oftentimes don't recognize the being part and the being part is the is a description of the sort of spiritual aspect, which means there's a different part of us that's you could argue is animating the human aspect, right? The consciousness, the inner awareness. When we talk about things like the heart voice and the intuition, you could make the argument that those are umbilical cords to this spiritual aspect.

[00:06:28] And that's because a lot of times those kinds of voices with that quality of awareness are nudging us in the direction of doing the right thing. They are prompting us to speak our truth. They are encouraging us to stand up for others, you know, to help elderly people across the street, to give without expecting anything in return.

[00:06:57] So those are symptomatic of the spiritual aspect, which means they don't really satisfy the egoic desires, which could be about protection or about standing out or looking good, or my status. All of that is kind of dealt with in the human part of the equation. And so when we talk about spiritual journey, it's really about cultivating connection that we have as our human aspect with our being aspect so that we can benefit from both of those different aspects and not be sort of, heavily identified with one or the other.

[00:07:39] I don't think it's necessary to overly identify with the spiritual aspect and look at the human aspect as maybe less. Important because if it was less important, then you wouldn't be here in a human body. So the fact that you are here on this planet, on this plane of dimension, listening to this podcast, having your day to day life experiences means from a spiritual perspective means that there's not just, you know, some importance, but there's a lot of relevance to where you are, what you're experiencing, how you feel about it. What you're doing about it and all the other aspects related to your humanness.

[00:08:24] And we also want to amplify the being aspect so that we can take full advantage of it as we're riding our way through this human lifetime. It kind of just makes things a lot more manageable. We'll put it that way. I was going to use the word easier, but I wouldn't say that things get easier necessarily, but they do become a lot more manageable. And if you think about when we have a, what we call a good day versus a bad day, right? Everyone said that, Oh, today was a good day or today was a really bad day. What you're really describing when you say those words, good day versus bad day, is you're saying today was a manageable day versus it wasn't manageable, meaning it was just super chaotic. There was stuff happening around me that I had no idea what to do about it, if I should do anything about it.

[00:09:18] And so these five things to avoid are things that can ultimately cause a bad day to become a worse day. And I'm going to give you some alternative actions that can reverse that sort of bad day description in the direction of a good day and or a more manageable day.

[00:09:42] And so again, I'm choosing my language carefully here because I don't like the binary terms, good and bad anyway. But if we look at our life as a spectrum and we're kind of going between what we may call good or bad. But really it's just about feeling like we can adapt or manage and feeling like we can't adapt or manage to whatever's happening or feeling like we can even see the big picture and have a greater sense of understanding and context to what we're experiencing, which can then lead us to feel like, okay, I'm able to manage this maybe not in the immediate sense, but maybe I can choose things that will help me be in a better position than I'm in right now, down the line. That's also in the category of feeling like I can manage this. So having that broader perspective and perspective is definitely something that we can gain greater access to when we are being more intentional about our spiritual journey and what we can do to optimize for that. Okay?

[00:10:42] Before we get into the five things, though, I want to give more of an understanding of what it means to be on a spiritual journey because it's not something, it's not like a water faucet where we can turn it off and on and we can decide, okay, I'm on, I'm going to be on this, my spiritual path now versus my whatever other path there is conventional path.

[00:11:07] You're always on your spiritual journey. The question is not. Am I on my spiritual journey? The question is, am I aware of the fact that I'm on my spiritual journey? And when I'm at least aware of it, then again, I can make certain choices that can optimize for that journey versus being ignorant of it and then inadvertently making choices that makes the journey a lot more challenging. Okay?

[00:11:35] And it's very similar to our planet, the earth that we live on just on a day to day basis. Right. Wherever you are right now, maybe I'm sitting in my home office. You may be sitting, you know, in your living room or somewhere like that, or perhaps you're walking around and it seems like you're on this kind of static plane of existence. It's not particularly moving. You can see the sun kind of, you know, changing position in the sky, but not exactly in real time. And yeah, it just seems like things are just kind of staying the same.

[00:12:10] Obviously there's day and there's night, but it's happening so gradually, so slowly that we're barely aware of it happening in real time. But what's actually happening is the earth is rotating quite fast. It's literally rotating on its axis. faster than a thousand miles an hour. Okay. So the speed of sound is only 760 something miles an hour. So it's actually going faster than the speed of sound on its axis. That's not a passive amount of motion. That's actually quite significant. We don't feel it, any more than we feel like we're going fast in a car that's going, you know, 60 miles an hour until we start to hit the brakes or we start to hit the accelerator, and then we can feel it. But if it's the same 60 miles an hour the whole time, we don't feel it.

[00:13:06] If we're on a plane and we're flying in the air at 30,000 feet at 400 miles an hour. We don't feel it until the plane hits the runway and starts slamming on the brakes. And then we feel like, Oh, wow, I was going a lot faster than I realized. And not only is the earth spinning at a thousand plus miles an hour, but it's also flying around the sun at something like 66,000 miles an hour. So it's spinning on its axis a thousand miles and it's flying around the sun.

[00:13:39] Now, there's no wind and space. So we definitely don't feel that either, but we're moving very fast. Almost 100 times the speed of sound around the sun.

[00:13:49] And then the sun is also not static. The sun is in motion as well. The sun is busy flying around the center of our Milky Way galaxy, get this at almost half a million miles an hour. Okay, so the earth is rotating at 1000 miles an hour. It's flying around the sun at 66 something thousand miles an hour. The sun is flying around the center of the Milky Way, which is probably a black hole at almost half a million miles an hour.

[00:14:20] Then the Milky Way galaxy itself is also in motion. It's flying towards something that astrologers called the Great Attractor at about 1.3 million miles an hour. Okay. So again, there's a lot of motion happening we don't realize it because all we're paying attention to probably is what's in front of us right now, or some experience that we're going to be having, you know, very soon or something that just happened not that long ago.

[00:14:56] And so spiritual awareness is very much like this in the sense that there's a much broader perspective that can influence the types of experiences that we're having, that we just aren't even aware of because mostly what we're aware of is what's happening right now or what just happened or what's just about to happen.

[00:15:18] But then we can factor in things like our karma. We can factor in things like sacred spiritual contracts. We can factor in things like reincarnation and, you know, perhaps even a life in between lives and soulmates and spiritual advisors. You know, all kinds of other variables that could be having an impact on the experiences that we're having along our spiritual journey, which is why everyone's spiritual journey is relatively unique. There's no two spiritual journeys that are exactly alike. So you can't really inform your journey based on anyone else's spiritual journey. And what happened with them, right? You can have two people who on paper look like they have very similar lifestyles, but they may feel very differently inside.

[00:16:11] One person could be the happiest person that you know. The other person could be the most depressed person that you know, and it may not be based on what they experienced as children or what their parents did or where they grew up or any of those kinds of things. It could be based on something in their spiritual, you know, context. Could be based on their karma. Could be based on who they were in their last incarnation versus who they are in today's incarnation and what spiritual sacred contracts they may be working out and how they cast it their life in this lifetime, and the characters who play their parents and their siblings and their teachers and their bullies and their spouses and their children in this lifetime and what those contracts all had to say and what was the fine print in those contracts, you know, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

[00:16:59] But as with most things, there are principles that can benefit us when we understand them. And if we don't understand them, it may appear as though our life is becoming increasingly more and more chaotic. And that's what I want to speak about today are those five things to avoid when you're on your spiritual journey. So in other words, five principles that you want to adhere to as much as possible and when you break those principles or violate those principles, then you are making your spiritual journey that much more chaotic.

[00:17:31] And I don't think anybody's aiming for more chaos in life because life itself just already has enough built in chaos. And when we can really tap into that spiritual aspect, that beingness, then it allows us to feel like we're in more of a flow when it comes to just dealing with day to day life, which is, I think what most of us aspire towards is being in a sort of flow state.

[00:17:57] I don't think anybody is really aiming for perfection, but we all kind of want more of a flow state because as evidence by the fact that's something we can brag about ourselves. Oh, I was in the flow, right? That was an amazing way that I dealt with this situation. I felt like I was just in a flow. I wasn't really even thinking about it. I was just responding to it. I was adapting to the thing that happened, right? Everybody wants that. And so how do I get more of that?

[00:18:26] All right. So that brings us to our first thing we want to avoid. First thing we want to avoid is probably one of the hardest things to avoid, which is control. I love that, that cartoon that says it's like these two monks talking or something says, don't worry. Nothing's in control. And when you understand that nothing is in control, then you can let go of this illusion that you have some control over what you're experiencing. This goes down literally to even the thoughts that you're having, right?

[00:19:01] A lot of people think, well, I can just control, I can be happy by thinking about being happy, or I can be present by thinking about being present. It doesn't work like that, actually. It doesn't work like that. Because you don't control your thoughts. And this is something that was actually quite surprising for me as a meditation teacher, because I did a lot of research on how the mind works. And what I discovered was that we have something like 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts a day.

[00:19:30] And what's even more interesting is that 90 percent of those thoughts that we have on a daily basis are recycled from the day before. So not only is the mind incredibly busy because 90,000 thoughts breaks down to like three thoughts a second or something like that, but the majority, the overwhelming majority of those thoughts are recycled. They're coming from yesterday. Ninety percent of yesterday's thoughts are from the day before yesterday, and like that. It just, the most of what we're thinking about, how we're processing information, how we're dealing with our demands and pressures. It's not very unique compared to what we've done in our past.

[00:20:09] And this sounds like an unfortunate way that the mind works. But actually, if you think about it, it's very useful because, you know, for those of you who are raising children, you know, that children don't just automatically know how to brush their teeth. They don't know how to tie their shoes. They don't know that they need to look both ways before they cross the street. They don't know how to feed themselves with a spoon or fork. They don't know how to dress themselves. They don't know how to use the bathroom. They don't know how to wipe themselves. They don't know how to wash their face. They don't know how to do their hair. You have to teach children to do absolutely everything.

[00:20:47] And the way the mind and body works is that when you repeat an action enough times, your brain will start to hardwire that action. And the outcome of that action into place so that you don't have to keep relearning how to do the thing over and over for rest of your life. Right? So when they say we have 90,000 thoughts, the majority of those thoughts are just kind of automated actions and outcomes that we've been exposed to all of our life so that we don't have to relearn how to find our way to the kitchen or how to make our way to work or how a cell phone works or how our computer works. It's the same thing that happens. In fact, in your browser memorizes which websites you go to, which images are on those websites, how you type in the website. So the next time you even start to type in the website, you just type the first couple of letters. What does it do? It auto completes it. So it saves time. It's more efficient. And that's how the brain and the body work.

[00:21:50] It's more efficient to just fill in the gaps of what your mind thinks is happening based on what happened in the past. And that way you can just get on with your life and perhaps survive a lot longer. Okay. So all that to say, if you've been processing information in maybe an unsustainable way where you've been kind of creating more chaos, that doesn't just stop by reading a book or listening to a podcast about why you shouldn't create more chaos. You will still do it. Until you begin actively practicing doing the opposite.

[00:22:28] So if control can lead to chaos, even starting in the mind, trying to control the mind is what leads to chaos. That's why a lot of new meditators talk about monkey mind. You don't have monkey mind. What's happening is you're trying to control your thinking mind. You're trying to stop the thoughts that you are having those 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts. And the reality is that you can't stop your thoughts by thinking about not thinking because don't think as a thought. So all you're doing is you're actually adding more thoughts on top of the thoughts that are already there, which then makes you conclude that, oh, my mind is somehow especially busy, right, and unable to be controlled.

[00:23:16] And so the opportunity there is to do the opposite of what you think you should do, which is less control, least control, and ultimately no control. Stop trying to control your mind. And ironically, when you stop trying to control your mind, guess what happens? You will start to experience a more settled mind experience. Your mind will start to get quieter on its own. You don't have to try to make the mind fall quiet. You just want to stop controlling it. And that extends into the rest of your life. Right? That's why you can look at meditation as a simulation for life because the thing that you want to do in meditation, which is control, is also the thing you want to do in life. You're trying to control people that you're in a relationship with. Well, guess what? Nobody likes to feel controlled. Surprise, Surprise. Or you're trying to control your career path and you end up looking desperate and needy. Or you're trying to control your children and they start rebelling against you.

[00:24:26] And what very few people ultimately end up trying without being forced to, is to let go of control and instead to practice adapting to whatever is happening. Okay? So this is the primary instruction in my meditation trainings is I'm always telling people, stop trying to control your mind. You're just making it busier. Start adapting to what is happening. Okay. So create more of a free range environment for your mind. Let the mind go wherever it wants to go. And then when they start to really embody that approach, they find that their mind can settle a lot easier. And as a by product of that, they're able to rest a lot deeper. And as a by product of that, they come out of meditation and they find that there's a correlation between rest and their ability to adapt to change.

[00:25:19] So in the relationship, in the career path, as a parent, when things inevitably change, because it's all in motion, just like the solar system and the galaxy and all that, when you're able to adapt to those changes, that's where you're able to find the most flow, the most connection. You're able to find that your ability to manage life goes up. And so your sense of fulfillment, your sense of inner peace, and your sense of presence and your sense of happiness also begins to increase, which makes you available for more subtle changes and opportunities

that are also happening all around you at all times. The only thing is it's hard to see it and experience it to the degree that you can when you're not trying to control your life.

[00:26:14] And that's the opportunity, that's the spiritual opportunity. Stop controlling, get more access to the present moment. And if you want to know what's going to happen tomorrow, then you better start making yourself as present as you can today because the signs and the seeds of whatever is being planted in the future are always available to those who are able to drop into the present moment organically and naturally and rather spontaneously, not by trying to be present but by feeling relaxed and fulfilled on the inside so much that you can manage whatever's happening on the outside and you can stay in that present moment awareness state.

[00:26:58] So instead of trying to control your way to happiness, what you want to practice is adapting to change and happiness will be a natural by product of that. Okay?

[00:27:10] The second thing you want to avoid along your spiritual journey is taking things personally, there was a moment that I experienced maybe a year ago down in Mexico City. I was at this cafe. And I ran into a friend of mine, she wasn't like my best friend or anything, but she was a pretty decent friend and I ran into her. She was on a phone call and we were both at the same small cafe neighborhood cafe and I see her on the phone and you know, normally when you see your friend, even if they're on the phone, you make eye contact and you just kind of wave or acknowledge each other. Right? I wasn't expecting her to get off the phone or anything. But we made eye contact. I you know, nodded and kind of smiled and she looked as if she had no idea who I was and she kind of turned around and just continued on her phone call and I was like, wow, that was very rude. That's what I was thinking to myself. So I got my little coffee and kind of had my story around the fact that was a rude way to interact.

[00:28:11] And so cut to later that day, I see her. And she comes up and she's all warm and she's friendly and she invites me out to this event and I started to bring up the whole cafe interaction, but I thought, you know what? Maybe she was having an intense phone call. Maybe she didn't even see me like I thought she saw me. I mean, it's possible. So I just dropped it. And we departed from one another.

[00:28:40] And then the next day I see her drop jogging down the path. There's this little walking slash jogging path in my neighborhood. So she's coming down the path. I'm walking straight towards her. And as we're getting closer to each other, so it's only her and I on the path in that particular section, as she's getting closer to me, she kind of looks straight past me. She doesn't even acknowledge me. And I couldn't help it this time. I just put my arms out like what the hell is going on? And she passes me and then she turns around and she says I'm sorry. I'm not my sister.

[00:29:18] And what I came to realize is that my friend had an identical twin sister who was in town and she kind of had the same style. They both jogged, they both love coffee and they look exactly alike. And so that's why when I saw her at the coffee shop, she didn't recognize



me. She didn't know who the hell I was. And that's why she was very warm and inviting the next time. Because that was my actual friend. That wasn't her sister. So that was a situation that reminded me that you can be both right and you can still be wrong at the same time, but more so than that, it's just, it doesn't ever benefit us to take things personally. Right? Which is what I was sort of grappling with because I felt shunned by her sister who didn't know who the hell I was, you know, on two occasions.

[00:30:20] And when we do that, when we take things personally, what ends up happening is we end up getting yanked out of that precious present moment awareness, which is where we want to be because that's giving us all of the cues and the clues about what's going to be happening next. And we're now in past regret or we're in future worry, or we're in anxiety, or we're in some kind of circumstantial depression. And that's not where we can access our most authentic self. That's not where we can access our best self. That's not where we can do our best work. So we want to try to protect that present moment awareness as much as possible.

[00:31:00] And therefore we want to remind ourselves that no matter what we're experiencing, it's much more beneficial to be anchored in the present moment than it is to create a story around whatever's happened or didn't happen and use that to start taking this situation personally.

[00:31:23] And I get it. I understand completely how tempting it is to take things personally. But when you have those kinds of situations that occur, you just end up feeling foolish, you know, anyone in my past who I felt, you know, didn't see me or didn't invite me somewhere or didn't do what I thought they should have done. And I took it personally years later, I would always find out that, oh, that person was feeling insecure at that time, or that person was on drugs at that night. And that's why they dropped out. You know, they went radio silent for months at a time, or they were in some bad abusive relationship or they didn't realize that I even wanted to be a part of whatever it is that they were doing. Right?

[00:32:14] But very rarely did they do something intentionally to hurt me. Usually it was really just about themselves. They weren't even really thinking about me. And that's why they behaved the way that they behaved. You have to understand that everybody is wired for self-preservation. And if they're not doing the things that we want to do, it's because they don't have the same life experience that we have. They don't have the same awareness that we have. If they haven't been doing the same sort of spiritual practices that we have, that they haven't developed the same sort of conscious receptivity that we have. And so all of that is informing how they behave. In addition to what we talked about earlier, which is karma, spiritual contracts, reincarnation stuff, spiritual guide stuff. You don't know what these people incarnated in this plane of existence to do, to learn, to achieve. You don't even know if they're helping you. They could be helping you. By making you feel abandoned, they could be allowing you spiritually to cultivate, you know, better communication or stronger boundaries or more independence or whatever it is that you all agreed to in the spiritual realm before you incarnated here on this plane of existence, before you casted them to. If your business doesn't support it, then it's your fault so continue on as your friends, know that.

[00:33:44] Done. you may have been in front of me for awhile because ike before I left, I've said this to myself when I first said nothing is worse than what you've already been through this and you're taking it personally. Those are your teachers. Those are your mentors that are helping you to incorporate spiritually the lessons that you've come here to learn if you are being triggered in that way by them. Instead of, you know, focusing on the character flaws of your teachers. You want to start to focus more on the lessons that you have an opportunity to learn as a result of interacting with those teachers. But long story short, you can be right and you can still be wrong. So don't take things personally.

[00:34:31] Number three: Rushing. So one of the most common byproducts of listening to podcasts like this or reading spiritual books, one of my favorite and most effective spiritual books that I read years and years ago was Conversations with God, where it gave me so many answers and so much insight and so much context to some of the things that I've been feeling that you want to take as much action as possible in the direction of embodying some of these spiritual concepts. And some of these things just take a little while to sort of live your way into them, right? It's one thing to have an intellectual understanding of a spiritual concept, but it's another thing to actually live your way into that understanding, which means oftentimes that you have to get onto the other side of that understanding before you can truly embody it because, you know, there's a tendency to have a little bit more of an arrogant approach to some of these spiritual concepts like, oh, I'm the spiritual one in the room and these people are all ignorant and they're not, you know, doing the things that I do because I know better and I read this book and I study with this teacher and et cetera, et cetera.

[00:35:48] And I've been there, which is why I can articulate that. So I know what that feels like, but then eventually what'll start to happen is you'll find yourself on the other side of that, especially in relationships. If you're in a relationship with somebody and they say something crazy to you or they do something crazy to you, right?

[00:36:08] Maybe they go out and flirt with somebody else and you're like, oh my God, I can't believe that they, you know, weren't loyal and they flirted with me and they did this, and they did that with this other person. And oh my God, and oh my God. And you have all this judgment around it. What that does is it ends up attracting a similar type of situation to you.

[00:36:33] That's been my experience. The moment you start judging someone for being whatever kind of way you thought they shouldn't have been, you find yourself in their shoes. You find yourself in a very similar situation. And then, without even realizing it, you'll have an epiphany. Oh. That's what that feels like.

[00:36:54] Oh my God. I owe that person an apology. Now I see how someone could end up in this kind of situation and you start having all this empathy and you start having all this compassion for this other person that you just judged and judged. But in the process, you're embodying these understandings.

[00:37:13] And so when I say don't rush, what I'm really saying is don't rush to judgment. You know, don't rush to judgment around what you think should be happening versus what's actually happening. And instead of rushing, you're going to replace that with the understanding that whatever is happening is exactly what's supposed to be happening not for one reason, not for two reasons, but for all reasons, for any reason you can possibly come up with. That's why it's happening. And it's not only happening in real time, but it's happening perfectly. It's the perfect way for it to happen for everybody involved to get exactly what they need on a spiritual level, including you.

[00:37:53] So the opposite of rushing is to just be in the moment again, and to try as much as possible to withhold judgment, whether it's judgment around you. And how you screwed up and you shouldn't have been in this situation and all that's still judgment. And or judgment around the other person. I can't believe they did this. I can't believe they did that. How could they write all that judgment is only attracting more of that same situation to you, which is again creating more chaos in your life. So if you want to avoid that chaos, then you want to reduce the level of judgment that you are experiencing as much as you possibly can.

[00:38:41] And the way you do that, one way to do it, I should say is to just, again, focus on the lessons, keep focusing on the lessons and as much as possible, try not to focus on the character flaws of the people who are involved in that lesson.

[00:39:00] All right, let's move on. Number four. So we've talked about control. We talked about don't take things personally. We talked about, don't rush to judgment. Number four: inconsistency.

[00:39:10] So this applies mainly to your inner work, your meditation practice, your gratitude practices, even your yoga practice, right? When you are involved in your, spiritual practices, there's a tendency to treat them like extracurricular activities.

[00:39:28] And the reason why we treat them like that is because, especially in the Western society, we just don't see it as that important. It's not something that is actually moving the needle in a real world way, in a tangible way that we can be recognized for status wise. So the thing we get recognized for status wise is how much money we have, what kind of house we live in, what kind of car we drive, what our partner looks like and how they dress and where we go on vacation and all these kinds of things, very tangible things, right? Five cents related things we can see, touch, taste, smell, feel, add up. So all of these sort of ephemeral attributes and qualities and traits, you know, feeling fulfilled inside, feeling happy inside, doing things that are aligned with our spiritual aspect. You know, these kinds of things, they get prioritized by people who put in enough work, but for the most part, for the majority of society, take it or leave, it doesn't really matter that much.

[00:40:31] And so that's how the spiritual journey can feel a bit lonesome. I won't say lonely because when you're fulfilled inside, you don't feel lonely, but it can't be lonesome. You can feel like a lone wolf. Like I'm the only one in my whole family, my whole friend circle. The only

person I know who's as dedicated to these spiritual practices, everybody else is, you know, too busy or they're spending all their time watching the game or going out to clubs or drinking their pain away or binge watching TV or scrolling through social media. And here I am sitting in my bedroom, meditating and doing my five minute journal and going for these long walks, contemplative walks, and trying to be grateful and do acts of kindness and all these kinds of things that are associated with spiritual practices.

[00:41:21] And so it can be tempting just because we want to fit in because we're human and we're tribal, it's tempting to also make ourselves too busy or to adopt that sort of societal narrative that the most important things are things that can be measured and things that are related to our status.

[00:41:40] And the less important things are these other kind of airy fairy woo woo intangible things like meditation and spiritual journeys and karma and stuff like that, that really can't be measured as easily. And so when we allow that to overtake our prioritization of our spiritual practices, we end up creating chaos. So we fall inconsistent and it feels like we're kind of plateauing. It feels like we're stuck. It feels like the meditation practice isn't working anymore. The gratitude practice isn't working anymore because you have lost the momentum.

[00:42:16] It's actually the same thing in finance and in investing. You want to take the same approach with your spiritual practices as you take with your investment strategy, right? Investments happen over a period of time. They grow over a period of time with consistency and the cumulative effect, right? You keep putting in a certain amount of money and budgeting a certain amount of money every week, every month, every year, and the cumulative effect compound effect is that it's going to grow significantly. It's going to scale a lot faster than the frequency in which you're doing it, as long as you're consistent.

[00:43:00] And like that with meditation. If you're consistent, your progress in your meditation practice is going to have a compounding effect as well. Because you'll get to a point where your stress levels are outpaced by your rest levels. And as that starts to happen, you limit the amount of stress your body can retain at any given time. And the less stress you have, the deeper your sleep is going to be. The more quality rest you're going to be able to acquire with less and less effort. And eventually you get to a point where the stress goes in and it goes right back out because you now have a reliable release valve for the stress to get released. And that's what a consistent meditation practice of five, six, seven years does. And when I say consistent, I'm talking daily practice, not weekly practice, not bi weekly practice, not monthly practice, but you have to do this every single day because guess what? Stress isn't taking any days off.

[00:43:56] If some people can get that result, and they took a very scientific approach to their practice they didn't miss practices. They did it in the same kind of way, the same kind of time, et cetera, over a period of time that look at it like a science experiment. Okay. If you don't follow the same protocols that the person who got all the results followed, then how can you possibly expect to get similar results? You can't. And it's nothing wrong with the technique. Usually the error is in the application of the technique. There was some sloppiness that made

its way into the application of the technique. And as a by product of that, you got chaotic results. You got unpredictable results, mixed results. But the way you get that back on track is you start to incorporate more consistency into your practices. Very simple.

[00:44:52] And then finally, number five of the things to avoid on your spiritual journey is playing it safe. What's the opposite of playing it safe? Okay. The opposite of playing it safe is taking a leap of faith. Now we've all heard that phrase, take a leap of faith. I've used it before millions of times. I've written about it a lot. The reason why it's hard to take a leap of faith is because there is no certainty, right? It's not a leap of certainty. It's a leap of faith, which means it's a leap. Both feet have to leave the ground. And faith, which means there's a trust component to it. You're trusting that from a spiritual perspective, if I'm feeling called to move in a certain direction. Then that is going to be better for me spiritually which then translates into being better for me materially. Okay. If something is better for you spiritually, then it is inevitably going to be better for you and all the people who depend on you materially.

[00:45:52] And so I'm not suggesting that anybody go out there and bet the farm, you know, and or quit your job and. Go and try to be a circus clown or something like that, something very extreme. Taking a leap of faith can also be done in small ways. You can keep your job, you can stay in your relationship, you can, you know, do what you're doing now, but then just incorporate some small leaps of faith in the evenings, on the weekends. And even throughout the day when you're going about your day and something compels you to give someone a compliment or something compels you to help somebody in a way where it does, it's not clear that it's going to be reciprocated or something compels you to speak up and state your truth or something compels you to see the best in a situation where everybody else is focused on the worst.

[00:46:51] Those little situations are also classified as leaps of faith, right? You don't know what's going to happen when you do that. And as you embrace that way of being more and more, you may start to find that you get luckier, right? All that means is you're operating more in alignment with what you're feeling inside spiritually, because your spiritual connection is coming through you as intuition. And that's kind of like your internal GPS system. So when you're following it, You tend to arrive at the destination a lot faster and a lot more efficient than you would if you were ignoring your GPS. So from a spiritual perspective your dharmic destination is already predetermined. It's already encoded in your life, right?

[00:47:49] In other words, where you are moving towards is something that is again beneficial to you and to all of those who depend on you from a dharmic level. The thing that you're here to do, the thing that you're here to do, but the road or the pathway to it is not the linear path that you learn in school. Well, if you go and get this master's degree and get this PhD and take these three steps, then you can be a doctor, or you can be a lawyer, or you can be an engineer, right? It's very linear path, but that's not how things work spiritually.

[00:48:25] Your spiritual path may involve you getting married, you getting divorced a few years later. You losing someone that's close to you and having to deal with that level of abandonment, maybe you being abused in some way, learning from that experience, maybe

you writing a book about the abuse or about the mourning process of losing someone, going back to school, moving across the country. Going on a sabbatical giving a Ted Talk somewhere about the sabbatical experience getting on a flight and there's a lot of turbulence and the flight ends up having a semi crash landing, you survive, you're already used to being a speaker because you gave that Ted Talk that one time you have all these other experiences that have informed your perspective on life and you end up becoming a keynote speaker, giving a talk on second chances, right? And you're drawing from all these different parts of your life that a lot of them weren't things you would necessarily have chosen had it been up to you. But that was a part of it. That was a part of the journey. And so taking chances, taking leaps, betting on yourself are a way that you can stay on track, actually with whatever it is you're here to do spiritually. That's actually how you can fast track your process. And it's very important to do that.

[00:50:01] Those are the five things that we want to remember to avoid along our spiritual journey. We want to avoid control. We want to avoid taking things personally. We want to avoid rushing to judgment. We want to avoid inconsistency with our practices. And we want to avoid playing it safe.

[00:50:24] Instead of doing those things what we want to do is we want to practice adapting to change. We wanna practice not taking things personally. So treating people as if they are doing their very best. We want to take the tortoise approach instead of rushing to judgment. Instead of rushing to judgment, we want to just understand that everything is happening exactly as it should.

[00:50:54] We want to practice being more consistent and we want to make a lifestyle out of taking leaps of faith, right? So in other words, a leap of faith can't just be this isolated, action that we do on rare occasion. We want taking leaps of faith to feel like Tuesday. We want it to feel like something that we just do.

[00:51:17] And so we can practice in small ways. We can practice with. You know, giving sincere compliments. We can practice with trusting in our heart voice when it's telling us to take a left in life, instead of taking a right in life, we can practice by giving other people the benefit of the doubt and little things like that, just little ways like that.

[00:51:37] And that's how we start to feel like we're on the rails, so to speak, when it comes to our overall spiritual journey, and you'll start to boost up that the feeling tone of the being aspect and the human being equation.

[00:51:55] Again, we don't really need to focus more on the human aspect. We got that part dialed in right when you start to feel the things, the sadness the fear, the anger, the emotions. That's like your human aspect. We got that part down. And what we want to put a little bit more attention on and prioritize is our being aspect. And that's what this is really about is just giving us a bit of a roadmap for. For boosting that and supersizing our being aspect so we can actually feel like I am on as much of a spiritual journey as I am on a human journey.

[00:52:35] I'm having as much of a spiritual experience as I'm having a human experience and that's very possible when you prioritize it for long enough. It's not going to happen in a day or a week or a month. But you continue to take this approach over and over and honor these principles within yourself, then you will have the same predictable outcome as anyone else who's done that, which is you start to feel from the inside out that sense of inner peace, that sense of fulfillment, that sense of connection with something greater than yourself.

[00:53:10] These are the hallmarks of. A spiritual experience. Anyone who says I had a spiritual experience usually means they felt connected to something bigger than themselves and they felt the sense of inner peace or serenity. They felt fulfilled, meaning they didn't need another external experience to happen in order for them to feel better than how they felt on the inside.

[00:53:32] So when you can just have that going, not because you went to some yoga class, not because you sat in some meditation circle, but because you sat in a meditation circle. But you can have it going in the post office in the DMV and traffic when you're having a difficult conversation with your partner, when you can have access to that internal spiritual experience, it can inform how you show up in the next moment and the way you show up is either going to be reflective of you trying to find happiness outside of yourself, which is what breeds desperation and neediness versus you coming from a place of happiness which breeds more fulfillment and a greater sense of self.

[00:54:21] And guess what? That's attractive. That's way more attractive than neediness and desperation. Nobody wants to be around someone who's feeling needy and desperate. Everybody wants to be around the person who's got a high sense of self and who has a greater sense of fulfillment, right? That's who we're most attracted to. Those are the ones who attract more. Business opportunities. They attract more potential mates. They attract more luck into their lives, but really that luck is just a reflection of them living a more aligned life. So I hope this was simple enough and practical enough for you to find useful as I found it. And again, I thank you all for listening to my solo episodes as much as if not more than you listen to the interviews, we're going to be back next week with another interview, but I certainly enjoyed this one.

[00:55:17] And if you have any topics that you would like for me to speak about, you can always email me at [light@lightwatkins.com](mailto:light@lightwatkins.com) and I will also put that email address in the show notes. All right. Thank you very much. Enjoy your spiritual journey and I hope to connect with you again very soon.

**[END]**

Thank you for tuning into my solo episode on the five things to avoid along your spiritual journey. I'll put links to everything that I mentioned in the show notes, which you can always find at [lightwatkins.com/podcast](http://lightwatkins.com/podcast). And if you enjoyed this solo episode and you found it inspiring, and maybe you've listened to a couple of my interviews and you're thinking to yourself, wow, I'd love to hear light speak on this topic, or I'd love to hear him interview this

person. Just shoot me an email with your suggestions. I love hearing listener suggestions. My email address is [light@lightwatkins.com](mailto:light@lightwatkins.com).

And in addition to that, one very simple and easy way that you can help me directly in getting guests onto my show is to leave me a review. And that's one of the reasons why you always hear podcast hosts like me asking their listeners to rate and review the show. It's because that is how a lot of guests will gauge whether or not they're even going to come on to a podcast based on how many ratings and reviews it has, because it shows the level of engagement that the podcast has acquired. And it only takes you 10 seconds and it's free to leave a review.

All you do is you look at the screen on your device, you click on the name of the show, you scroll down past those first five episodes, you'll see a space with five blank stars. Just click the star all the way on the right. And you have left me a five star rating. And of course, if you want to go the extra mile and leave a review, feel free to write a line about what you appreciate that we're doing with this podcast. And that goes such a long way to help me out to get all of the guests that you recommend onto my show.

And if you ever want to watch these interviews on my YouTube channel, or if you want to see me doing the solo episode, just go to YouTube, type in The Light Show, and you'll see the whole playlist and make sure to subscribe there as well.

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