

Ep #148: Trauma and Radical Self-Trust with Coco Madari

Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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Welcome to Neurodiversity Month in the Joyful Marketing world. We declare August to be the month in which we celebrate and support all the coaches in our community who fall under the neurodiversity spectrum.

That is anyone whose brains don't quite work in that straight and narrow, logical and linear, unemotional, color inside the lines, focus from nine to five sort of way. Now, I'm showcasing examples of clients of mine who created successful AF businesses with brains that don't conform to that neurotypical standard.

And I'm so proud to bring you their stories by having one of them take over my podcast for each week of this month. Today, I'm so proud to feature my client, Coco Madari. Coco is one of the youngest Black women coaches to make six figures in her business and also a gifted performance artist and activist.

I've had the honor of being her coach for two rounds of my mastermind as well as being her one-on-one coach way back in the day when I used to do one-on-one coaching. And she's just one of the fiercest, most unapologetically original minds in the coaching world. And what she's managed to create at such a young age just knocks my socks off.

And there is a dark side to her personal journey here as well. There's that of grappling with trauma as you'll hear her describe. A descendent of both slaves and slave holders. There's ancestral trauma that she speaks of as well as trauma from just earlier parts of her personal life.

And she talks about how what made her the amazing coach and entrepreneur that she is today is her history of trauma. And this is such a potent conversation and I'm going to warn you in advance, there's some adult content in the episode aside from the usual cursing that happens a lot in my podcast.

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And I know that you're going to walk away from this episode with such a different understanding of how one can relate to trauma and use it as fuel to create greater self-trust and self-love that can fuel our businesses.

Inside the Joyful Marketing community, Coco is actually going to be hosting the weekly live coaching call this Wednesday evening. If you want to be coached live by Coco personally and get access to the tools that she created to help you build your business with trauma, the time to enroll in Joyful Marketing is now. But first, here's her takeover of the podcast today.

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Coco: My name is Coco Madari. I am now 27 years old. I am living on the unceded and unsundered territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh nations, otherwise known as Vancouver, Canada. I am a business coach, I'm a performer, a singer, a dancer, a DJ, an artist, an activist.

I've been working with Simone for a year and a half now. I was working with her one-on-one last year and then this is my second round of her mastermind. And I am just so in love with Simone and will continue to grow deeper and deeper in love with her and in full gratitude of her.

And the work that she has done and the work that we've done together is so deep and so beautiful. And I've been on her podcast twice before, which I'm so proud of. The first episode I was on was episode 72, Black Coaches Talk Anti-Racist Leadership, this time last year actually.

And episode 98, How to be a Rich Anti-Capitalist. Because in my work, I started my business in October 2019. And in my first full year of business I made six figures, which totally blows my mind. I spent the first six months of 2020 having one client that I signed in March.

I had one client who I signed in December of the year before that I ended up refunding because it was just such a terrible relationship. And she would

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say things like, “You know you’re not doing anything for my mental health, right?” So it was very not good relationship and I refunded her.

And the first six months of 2020 were really, really stewing in shame in my business. And I still made six figures in 2020. So even if you are just totally beside yourself thinking that there’s no help and that you did 40 consults like me and they were all no’s and lots of experiences where you just felt like total garbage, it is still possible for you.

And so six figures in my business, I have hit 10K and 20K and 30K months. I’m going to make \$360,000 this year. And I love that number because - and I chose that number because it’s - 360 is the full circle.

And I don’t know why I wanted that number but I just loved the idea of having the fullness. I wanted to experience the fullness of everything and I have. And just the testament to me loving myself in all of my light and all of my darkness is just really reflected in the number that I chose for this year, for this year’s goal.

And that’s what I’m going to be talking about is like, your business goals and what you desire for yourself and for your business. That is the fuel that is going to give you the healing that you didn’t even think was possible and the healing you didn’t even know that your soul deeply, deeply needed.

And I’m on track to make a million dollars in the next two to three years. I’m one of the youngest Black women coaches in the world to make six figures in a year. I went from one to 18 clients in five months last year and my clients are the best.

They’re just the most incredible people who just lighten up my life just by looking at their faces and they’re doing such incredible things in the world. And they’re loving themselves so beautifully and transforming so beautifully.

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My life is just incredible. I have been living off of my business since October of 2020. I just got my own place that is right by four different beaches in my city and I get to live that beach life, working four days a week, working with people that I love, and it's just the beginning.

And I am so grateful to myself for all of the work that I put in to get here, all of the times that I did the same fucking model where I can't - the thought was I can't sign clients, or something like that. And just showing up every day even when I thought that it wasn't working, even when I wasn't confident, even when I had every reason to stop.

I had constant no's, I had people commenting on my stuff saying I shouldn't be saying this, I shouldn't be saying that. It was so brave of me and it is so brave of you to even be here, to even be doing this kind of work. It is so brave to be showing up and marketing and showing yourself, showing your vulnerability to the world and letting people hate you for it and letting them be right. And still going back to coaching, back to loving yourself.

And so that's me. And so what I want to say about trauma is that we are living in a traumatized world. It's impossible for you to be living in this world and not be traumatized. Some are more than others, some are more traumatized than others and some have benefitted from the world's current state more than others, but it's impossible not to be traumatized.

Because what my definition is, is I believe that trauma is happening when we're not living in accordance with the spiritual "waz" of nature. And when our mind is disconnected from our spirit, from our truth, and from our deep unconditional love for ourselves and for the world.

And that disconnection between mind and spirit I think is a product of evolution. Our minds evolving to a point where we thought we didn't need our souls anymore, and the mind was king over the body. And colonialism and all that stuff. So I believe that we're always going to have some sort of trauma in us and something to be processed, not only from our lifetimes,

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but from the lifetimes of our ancestors and the lifetimes of the people before us.

Maybe even the lifetimes of the animals that are living here. There is so much to process but I believe that within that processing, we're also finding truth and we're finding ourselves, we're finding a deeper, deeper love and connection.

And so I think about PTSD as your own lived experience of trauma. Your own lived experience of living in this traumatized world. And your ancestral trauma is your lived experience. And to help you get an idea of what that kind of looks like, I'm just going to tell you about my ethnicity.

So I am mixed race. My father is part Trinidadian, Portuguese, and Chinese. And I think we're from Ethiopia originally before we were taken and transported to Trinidad to be slaves. But ancestry.com says the Congo or whatever.

So I don't know, I don't really know where exactly my family is from because that history has been erased. It was whipped and beaten and burned and gaslighted out of us because with your history and with your ancestry is your power.

And people knew that. People knew that specifically about Black people because Black people were the first people in the world, all of that knowledge, all of that connection to the earth, that's scary. And that's why they took away our dancing, our drumming, anything that connected us back to our roots.

So with that erased history, what I need to do now is I need to find out for myself internally from what my body tells me, what my ancestors tell me, what spirit tells me actually happened in my ancestors' lives and in my past lives. So that's kind of fun.

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And my mom is British, German, Scottish, Eastern European and part Indigenous Canadian. Even though I didn't learn I was British until quite recently because my mom didn't want to admit it, and I was always told that we were the "good" Germans.

So just in me telling you what my ethnicity is, there is so much to unpack there. I am part Portuguese because the Portuguese were major slave traders. I'm part Indigenous because my ancestors probably raped an Indigenous woman somewhere. And I remember us trying to see if we can get Indigenous benefits growing up too, even though my mom was clearly white, and that just shows the level of white fragility and ignorance that is so present.

This wasn't just like – one of the things that I think about when I'm talking about my parents and stuff like that is they are not bad people in any way. Actually, no, they are bad people. They are bad people and they're also incredible people. And what was taught to me was just passed down. All of this is just passed down. This is not my trauma. It is their trauma. It is their grandfather's trauma. It is everyone's, and I just received it and now have the opportunity to heal it.

And I didn't know that I was British most of my life because I was told that we were the good Germans because of white fragility and shame, that denial, "We didn't do anything wrong." The gaslighting.

And I think, like, a Chinese guy got lost somewhere because I have no idea how that happened. I have no idea. But just so you can kind of understand, like, I have both the enslaved and the slaver blood in me. I have the history of both sides in me. I have everything. I have the light and the dark. But because of the world that we live in, and according to the one-drop rule, I am still Black and I still have been labelled as Black and have suffered lots of discrimination because I'm Black.

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And so, this trauma has affected me in many ways. But I think the biggest two are it has affected my ability to trust myself, others, spirit, the world, and my ability to love, to love myself, other people, and spirit.

And the reason why I cried at the beginning of this podcast is because me loving myself is such a big deal because of how much I hated myself for so long. I hated myself. And I was in relationships that reflected how much I hated myself and the amount of abuse was just so insane. And I thought I deserved it. And I'm going to talk about that.

And so, the ability to trust and the ability to love are the two magic ingredients for your success as a life coach. And those are the two things that I struggle with the most because of my trauma. Because without trust, you're stressed out about your money goals. You're not trusting that you're going to hit it. You're second-guessing what you're saying, your niche and your strategy. You're taking constant nos on consults or no consults for months to mean that the world is against you or you're not cut out for this.

Without trust, you're not trusting your natural rhythms of working, thinking that if you nap, you'll be lazy. And when you're working, you're never going to relax. The only reason I'm doing this podcast today is because I trust myself and my body wanting to do it today. I didn't want to do it yesterday. I didn't want to do it the day before. But I trusted myself that I was going to get it done.

And my brain had all sorts of things like, "you should have done it this day. You should do it the day before it's due. You should do it whenever. And you shouldn't be working on your birthday. Your birthday should look like this." But my body said, "No, no, no, today."

And so, being able to trust your natural rhythms in the way that you work is so, so, so important because you wouldn't have gotten this level of emotion and heart and deep, deep love on any other day because something happened today that really rocked me and forced me into this level of self-

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love and I would not have been able to give you all of this yesterday. And tomorrow, I don't know, but today's the day.

And also, without trust, you're going to use your past to determine what's going to happen in your future. And you won't be able to step into new belief patterns because you don't trust yourself to be nice to yourself if you fail. You won't allow yourself to be kind to yourself because you don't trust that if you're kind to yourself and you're lenient with yourself that you won't just become this lazy slob, right?

And without love, you let yourself work with clients who treat you badly. And this happened to me. You don't look at your thoughts because you think that your thoughts should be better.

Without love, without wanting to explore your thoughts so that you love yourself more, you'll be trying to explore your thoughts to fix something, to sign clients, to whatever. And that's all fine. But the level of intimacy with yourself that is possible and the kind of satisfaction with your life that you have regardless if you hit a goal, if you don't hit a goal, how much money you make, that is not there.

Without love, you might not want to take on debt or you want to hustle to pay it off quickly because you can't handle the shame of people potentially judging you or thinking you're a failure.

Without love, you hustle to make money or hit the next milestone because you think you'll be happier when debt is paid off, or you think you'll be happier when you've made six figures. You think, "I'll love myself more then."

You might not want to step out of your comfort zone or take risks because you don't trust yourself and love yourself enough to be kind to yourself if things just blow up in your fucking face. And your ability to love your clients, which is the gateway to their transformation is limited.

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So, you can kind of see how important these things are. But they are also the things that I struggled with the most and the things that were taken away from me. And I've spent so much time getting myself to this place and I want to help you to get to this place faster.

So, the first step in starting to release this trauma is to really acknowledge what happened to you. And for me, it's acknowledging the injustice that happened to me. And the injustice can happen if you are Black, if you are a woman, if you are anything, even if you are a white man, the injustice has probably happened to you.

And so, I'm going to share with you a couple of key things that happened to me that impacted my trust and my love for myself and how I got through that.

So, I began my life, first couple of years of my life, carrying a job that was unspoken, being the emotional mother of my mother, feeling the need to give and to offer advice and to be of support. And being the emotional mother of my sister, I remember when my sister was – I don't know how old she was. It was a birthday card she wrote to me. Ha-ha, birthday.

And she said, "Thank you for being my sister and my mother." That is the role that I thought I needed to play in order to receive love. I thought that I needed to comfort my mother when she was having problems with her boyfriend and I needed to defend my mother when my boyfriend was mean to her, and be her guardian.

And I am her guardian. I love her so fiercely. I loved her so fiercely that I would easily do that. But I wasn't able to be a child. And that affected my love for myself because I thought that I needed to play a role of support in order to receive love. And also even me saying this, it feels like it could easily be said like, "That didn't happen," because it was unspoken work. It was unacknowledged work. It was emotional. I think it's a lot of the work that we women do, we are told to do, and that it actually doesn't matter.

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Another thing that happened to me that was really pivotal to my entire life was when me and I think my sister, she left school grounds and my dad found out, was told, and then sat us down for what felt like hours that if we ever got a pink slip or did anything wrong at school, that he would hit us.

So, that happened. And so, one day at school, I got a pink slip. And I ended up getting in trouble and then the principal came because I was beside myself crying and he's like, "Why are you so upset that you got a pink slip?" And I said, "Because my dad's going to hit me." And then social services was called and then my mom was like, "You're going to lose your father because of this."

And so, I had to lie to social services and tell them that I lied and I was wrong and he didn't actually say that and all that stuff. So, being wrong felt like a noble thing. It felt like I needed to be wrong to keep my family together.

And that is just one example. I can't really go into all of them, but that is what ended up with me not trusting myself as much, because it felt like I needed to be wrong. And I really want to be careful here about what I share because I don't want to dishonor my parents in any way. But I do want to be honest about what happened.

When I was 13 is when my mom got physically assaulted by her boyfriend, and that was the moment where I decided I wasn't going to feel anymore. I was going to push down my feelings. I remember deciding, "I'm not going to feel anymore." Because up until that point, I was constantly crying, I was constantly upset about how my mom was being treated and how she was treating herself and it was just breaking my heart constantly.

And I decided I couldn't do it anymore, so I stopped feeling. And that's when I started to have anxiety attacks because I was just pushing everything down. It was a mix of that and having this friend in high school who would call me a nigger whenever she thought it would be good to kind of flex her power. And I never said anything because I was so afraid of her.

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She was from Kazakhstan. She said that she had cousins that would beat me up. And I didn't tell anybody about it. and that's the unspoken trauma, the unspoken work, the unspoken trauma just pushed down, the unspoken anger. The anger for how my mom was being treated, the fear of my father, wanting to please him all the time because we needed to get A-plusses and it never really ever felt good enough.

And so, all of that ended up transpiring into my relationship with my first boyfriend. And he is my total angel because he brought me to a low so deep that I am still, like, torpedoing forward because of how much – kind of like an elastic band, it's like pushing it back and back and back, the depths of hell that he took me into were so deep that I'm moving forward so fast now.

And before I really go into it, I do also want to say that another thing, like what made the abuse that was happening with my mom so, so awful to me is that when they did finally break up, I was happy and I remember, I'm like, "Oh, now my mom can love me because she is not focused on him anymore." She ended up turning on me and being mean to me and telling me that I'm doing this wrong, I'm doing that wrong, I'm lazy. I'm whatever.

And it was a mix of that and just all of my anger, all of my fury about being like, "Bitch, I raised you and you want to turn on me?" I had so much anger inside of me, so much anger from being called a nigger and I couldn't let it out because society says you can't be angry.

I ended up attracting someone who I got to be really angry with because he was just as angry. He was also in a really abusive family. And we got to be really angry together. That felt amazing. But it was also a really abusive relationship.

And the typical things happened, like cut off from family, cut off from friends, like you are my everything, all of that shit. Then it really started to get twisted when he cheated on me. And then he lied to me and told me the next day that someone had come up to him and kissed him and he

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didn't do anything. But really, he had kissed her back and all that stuff. But I didn't know that.

I didn't know that until after we had broken up. Three and a half years we were together. And this happened a couple of months in. And so, when he cheated on me, my body knew something was off. So, I started having dreams, I started having sex dreams. And I told him about this because I felt guilty, because he was very jealous and I felt guilty that I had had a sex dream, so I wanted to confess to him.

And I confessed to him and he got so upset and he said, "How could you do this to me? You're trying to get me back even though I didn't do anything wrong." And so, that's when the gaslighting really started to happen, is he really wanted to convince me that I was a cheater, I was bad, I was all this stuff. And it was really him who was all of those things.

And that was a huge theme of my life, is people being shitty and then saying I'm the shitty one. And I think that is really true for a lot of women, and especially a lot of Black women, is we're the dog that gets kicked. We're the ones that end up being the ones to blame, being the ones to shame.

And so, yes, I was in this relationship with someone who was very possessive and I was always needing to apologize to him because I was always doing something wrong to him. And I didn't trust myself. I didn't know what was right and what was wrong because of the experiences I had as a child, I didn't know what was right and what was wrong.

And so, I needed someone to tell me and I was so thankful to have someone tell me. And it felt kind of good to be told that I'm wrong so I could just apologize.

There was this one time that he said, "I will send you into a pit of darkness so deep that you'll never come out of it." And I knew he was right because he knew all my shame spots. He knew what to do to shut me up, to keep

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me around, keep me having sex with him, calling me a tease when I didn't want to have sex with him, when I first started dating him. And then I would have sex with him whenever.

And how it ended up ending was he wanted me – well, I was having constant UTIs and yeast infections because my body was telling me that there's a lot of trauma happening in your pussy. There's a lot of rape happening. There is a lot of trauma happening. And my body was like, "Stop having sex." And so, I started getting frequent UTIs. Like every month, I would have a UTI, a bladder infection.

And so, that was happening for maybe like two years. And I ended up wanting to – like I read somewhere that if you grow out your pubic hair, that would help protect against bladder infections. That was the point, it was like three and a half years, we had been fighting every single day pretty much, or multiple times a week, whatever. And I was so tired and exhausted and didn't give a shit anymore. And I ended up leaving. It was like finally just saying no and listening to my body that got me out of it.

One thing that I really want to express as well is that I got out of that, but I wasn't fully out of it, and I never will be fully out of it because when you're living in a world that is traumatized, when you're living in white supremacy, there is no, like, "We're out of the woodwork. No one's going to try to gaslight me anymore. No one's going to project on me anymore. No one's going to whatever," because, hey, we're living with a bunch of humans with all of their shit and shit's going to happen.

And so, in those experiences, I started to learn how to have my own back in them. And so, after that boyfriend, I ended up finding myself in the festival scene, which was so fun. And I ended up with this boyfriend where the relationship was way better. And he was also white. And I was pleasing him a lot and I didn't realize how much I was doing it because I wasn't aware of white supremacy at the time.

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And so, he would do things that was also like, "I own you," like spanking me when I told him not to, this energy of owning my body, not acknowledging his white privilege, saying that things aren't that big of a deal, denying having my anger towards white people and the world being suppressed to try to keep the peace.

Like, you are living with humans and we are living in a traumatized world and you only really have yourself and your own back and your own story. People are going to say that you're wrong. People are going to say that your story is wrong. People are going to say that it's like not accurate and whatever.

But here is my trauma. It's the unspoken work that I've done, the unspoken pain, the unspoken microaggressions, the unspoken macroaggressions, the unspoken ownership, the unspoken projections, the unspoken gaslighting. And it will remain unspoken unless I speak about it. And if it remains unspoken, then it stays in my body and it stays with repressed anger and I refuse to live that way.

So, my biggest transformation has been acknowledging that the things that happened to me were injustices and it wasn't me. It was them. And trusting that I am accountable for my own shit and knowing the difference in my body between when I'm being accountable for me, and when I'm trying to be wrong in order to please somebody, in order to keep the peace.

And you can kind of tell based on how it feels in your body, like whether it feels expansive and like an open chest of love for yourself, or it feels like you're kind of squishing into something.

So, having your own back and knowing the difference between when you actually make a mistake and when somebody is being shitty and thinks that you'd be a good dog to kick, that is the skill to have, just in life in general.

And so, my business has helped me to listen to my body and trust and love myself. And so, I'm going to tell you about some of the ways that my

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business has helped me and things that you might not even expect, the small steps that I took.

Setting goals has taught me so much about trust. Setting like a 10K goal for a month and then trusting that it was going to happen no matter what, learning how to coach clients how I want to coach them, like learning to just trust that whatever comes through my mouth, whether it be nice, not nice, you know, whether it is a mistake, isn't a mistake, just letting it all flow.

By business has taught me to be kind to myself when I make mistakes. It is the mirror. When you're not loving yourself, you might end up attracting clients who aren't a fit or end up not hitting your goals or whatever it is. The business is always a mirror to what is happening inside, especially if you don't want to look at it.

Ad making mistakes in my business has helped me to create pathways of truth in my body, like in consults, knowing the difference between when someone is interested and someone that really wants it but then isn't wanting to disappoint their family if they fail, or them actually not wanting it. That has taken me so many mistakes to just know the difference.

And your business helps you because you're coaching and you're going back and you're feeling the pain. If you, for example, get coached on no one is signing up for consults and letting yourself really, really own that that's a thought you're having and not shoulding yourself, you shouldn't be having this thought, you should be feeling more confident, and letting yourself get coached on it opens up everything.

It opens up memories that you've had from childhood or memories that you've had that you didn't know were still affecting you. And when you go deeper into the ancestral trauma, it gets even more wild.

I realized that why I talk to people in my marketing who aren't my people and who aren't interested in coaching who don't really want to see me is because of what has happened in the past.

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And I truly believe that if this is someone's story then it is also my story. But this is a memory that came to me in one of my meditations is when I was a slave and I got in trouble for something and then my son ended up being whooped, or whipped, because of it.

And I remember looking at the slaver, wanting them to see me, wanting them to see my eyes, and I thought, "If they see me then they'll stop." But the thing with trauma and white supremacy is there are some people that just don't want to see. They don't want to see how they've hurt you. They don't want to see how they're out of integrity. They don't want to see whatever, right?

And so, I realized that that's why my brain wants to talk to people in my marketing and convince people, because I think I'll feel safer if I can convince people who don't see me to see me. It makes so much more sense.

And it's crazy that all of this comes from having a business and having goals. Like, your business and your goals and your desire are your driving force for healing. And your memories, things that have happened to you, like me learning that being wrong makes me more noble or I can't be angry for the injustices that have happened to me and I can't speak up, all of that.

All of those memories are just keys to unlock the things that you desire because they're the only things that are standing in your way of really, really loving yourself. And your business and your goals and your desires are what you want to love yourself.

I truly believe that the reason why I am here and in my business right now with the life I have now is because of my trauma, because of the gaslighting that I've experienced in my life, and continue to experience. This isn't something that is going away. Gosh, I just found out that one of the people that I have been listening to, the music that she is creating is total cultural appropriation.

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And so, I was looking it up and I found this post of someone having these thoughts and I saw people just totally rip that person to shreds. And even that artist commented on it and was just like, “Oh, it’s so horrible that you think that this is cultural appropriation. It’s actually cultural appreciation.”

I was like, oh my god, right? So, all of that has just made me such an amazing coach because I have been taught so deeply and continue to, to doubt myself and to not believe what my body is telling me. And so, that gaslighting has made me navigate my mind in such an expert way because I’ve had to, to trust my instincts versus what my ego was saying.

My experience of white supremacy has allowed me to have such a high-level of world issues. My self-doubt has created so many pathways for me to trust myself because I’ve had to dig deeper to trust myself. And because of all of the shame and racism I’ve experienced, I have such a deeper love for all of me; my darkness and my light.

And I think that that’s where racism comes from, is that unwillingness to see the darkness. Like actually, if you’re looking at Black and white racism, it’s like white people not wanting to see dark people, not liking the things in them that they don’t want to acknowledge within themselves, that tribalness, the primalness, the connection to the Earth, they don’t want to see it. They want to continue production and all of that shit.

And my depression has helped me so much to know the difference between when I’m stewing in my feelings and when I’m feeling them. And all of this, me believing that I’m wrong and I’m doing the wrong thing has allowed me such a level of self-compassion to be like, yes, I am wrong, and I deserve love and respect and to be held with tenderness.

So, my advice to you is to keep doing what you’re doing. Keep working on your business and know that this is the path to healing all of it. Which is crazy. And to invite you to follow your shame, follow those thoughts that feel so terrible and unearth what happened beneath it so you can see it for what it is. At the end of the day, all the things that happened to me were a

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result of shame. They're results of people feeling shame in my life and not wanting to see it so then projecting it onto me.

The mistakes that I continue to make come from shame. There's nothing wrong with shame when we actually look at it, and look at the things maybe that we've done that we're ashamed of, and to pour some love on it, to love yourself in your shame, to want to see more of yourself just because. That's what I want to leave you with.

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