

A BETTER LIFE WITH RACHEL ROFÉ

**A CONVERSATION WITH
NISHA
MOODLEY**

**IF YOU HAVE A
CHOICE, CHOOSE
A BETTER LIFE.**

Rachel: Hello everyone. Today we're here with Nisha Moodley. Nisha is a Women's Leadership Coach and the creator of [Fierce Fabulous Free](#), [The Freedom Mastermind](#) and the Virtual Sisterhood. Inspired by the belief that the world will be set free by women who are free and sisterhood is key to a woman's freedom, Nisha creates communities of ambitious women to support them in redesigning their lives and businesses.

I invited Nisha here because she's one of the most amazing women that I know. In fact, I respect her so much that I hired her to be my personal mentor for her Freedom Mastermind. I just love the way she blends her head and her heart, her intuition and her practicality, and how she's been able to create such an incredible life for herself. Thank you so much for being here, Nisha.

Nisha: Oh Rachel, thank you. That was such a beautiful introduction. I'm so happy to be friends with you, and thank you so much for inviting me here today.

Rachel: Totally. I'm super, super excited about it. So, the intention behind A Better Life, as you know since you helped create it, is to show people if they have a choice, they can choose a better life. With that spirit, can you take a minute to share some of the things that you're most proud of in this moment, just kind of take a minute to brag?

Nisha: Yeah, sure. Gosh, like a really vulnerable one that's just the first one that came to mind is that I've been in a lot of inquiry around relationship/partnership lately and it's actually been pretty difficult. I would say the heaviest thing on my heart and mind in the last year has been that—are we in, are we out conversation and partnership. Even though there's still some inquiry around that, in this moment I feel really proud to be in a space where I feel pretty light around it, pretty ease-filled, like my eyes are opened to the experience, but my heart is also open and I feel really trusting.

That feels like a huge leap from where I might have been a couple of years ago where, I mean, I was just so desperate to get married again and have a baby and do that whole thing that I really overlooked a lot of difficult things in our relationship. It just feels good to have a really open heart and feel present and not just say that it never feels challenging, but to be openhearted around all of it and feel more compassionate and attending to my desires as well because I tended in the past to put them on the backburner.

So I'm proud of that and I'm feeling so proud about my new website that is just coming together so beautifully. Yeah, just really excited about that and proud of how it's come together visually and the level of heart and soul that has been put into it by everybody involved, so that's really exciting, too.

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Rachel: I can't wait to see it. You showed a little preview on Facebook. It looks gorgeous.

Nisha: Thank you. Yeah, I'm really excited. It feels very me, which is, I guess, how a good website should feel.

Rachel: When is it going to come out?

Nisha: It'll be out in the next two weeks, so probably by the time this podcast airs it'll already be out into the world.

Rachel: Yay! So, I know that right now that you're in a place...those are amazing brags, by the way. It's really amazing to feel ease around...I mean, a relationship is such a huge thing, especially like they say with women, it's relationships and with men, obviously it's important for relationships for men, too, but also they're usually big on more power kind of things like making their achievement kind of stuff. To have that as your main something that's so important that you feel ease around it even when it's in an uncertain place is a big deal.

Nisha: Yeah, I mean, trust is like such a relief to feel trust and not like trust that I'm going to have it exactly like I want it, but trust that no matter what happens for life. Again, I don't feel this 100% of the time, but a lot more than I ever did—just this trust that everything is and will be great.

Rachel: I know this is going to be a big question and so maybe you can't answer it right off the top of your head, but how did you come to that place where you decided to have that as a belief?

Nisha: Well, I think that it's a few things. I think part of it is just looking back on all the "bad things" that ever happened to me. I can look at those things and say that no one would ever deserve to go through that or of course, that would be painful for anyone. It's so okay that those things were painful and difficult for me, as maybe they should be. They were painful and difficult things. But to also be able to look at them and say that nothing in a way was out of place.

All of the things that I've been through in my life, and this might sound cliché because it's a saying that we say, "It made me who I am," but it's true. All of the things that have happened in my life have given me the life that I have now. They've made me into who I am. If I can look back and see that, I can imagine that going forward anything that happens, even if it's painful and difficult in the moment, ultimately will be leading me to something really great in my life.

So, just that level of life isn't supposed to be painless, but I can also feel trust even in the discomfort. So, I think that's one thing is just kind of

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having that more empowering perspective on things that have happened in the past, that there is a purpose for all of it. And I think the other thing is just I've had experiences in my life of letting go and trusting and just ending up having like really amazing, powerful, beautiful experiences that, if I hadn't trusted, I would have never had that beautiful experience.

It's like, I went through a divorce and if I had decided I'm never going to trust anyone again, I'm never going to let anybody in to my heart, I would have never had the relationship that I had after my marriage. That relationship, just like any other relationship, wasn't without its challenges, but it was like so rich and beautiful and has brought my life so many gifts.

So, just knowing like if, as humans, we lean towards pleasure and away from pain instinctively to also get the "yes," trusting isn't going to necessarily mean that there will be no pain, but it will lead me to open doors for unimaginable pleasure, pleasure that I couldn't create if I were just in a state of fear all the time.

Rachel: I love that. One of the things that I think you're so good at is just when even if you are in a painful place, you're able to feel that trust, but then also feel the pain, which is really hard to do. Can you actually talk for a minute just on how you're able to do that? I think it's easier said than done to feel whatever you're feeling.

Nisha: Yeah. I think sometimes it's switching back and forth, like really just feeling the pain. Part of it is there's pain and then there's suffering. I think this is a really helpful distinction. Pain is when we're like, "Oh my gosh, ouch, this hurts." Suffering is, "Ouch this hurts and that means that you're an asshole and I'm this and this is what it means about the world." Suffering is when we go into the story and we create a lot of resistance and like we're human, so we're all going to do that sometimes.

We're all going to lose it and get pissed or be really mired in our sadness. It's about kind of like being able to see what parts of it are just like a story that we're creating that's actually causing us more suffering. Or a resistance to just feeling the pain or just feeling sad. Sometimes when I hear people going on and on about something that's really upsetting, then I can feel like there's something there.

They're upset, they're angry, they're hurt, they're feeling something, but they're not actually feeling it. They're talking about it, but they're not actually feeling it. So I think it's allowing ourselves to bravely feel what it is that we're really feeling and strip away the stories for a moment and just allow it to be like, "This is painful. I'm upset or I'm sad or I'm angry, or whatever," just feeling the feeling.

For me, it's often just a going back and forth. I'm feeling the feeling and I'm going, "Okay," and I know it's not going to feel this way forever and I

know I'm going to have an amazing moment in my life where I know that this is leading to my growth. I know that things will get better and just kind of allowing myself to go back and forth to really allow myself to feel it and then to really remind myself that it's okay to trust that things will change, that things will improve, and also trusting myself.

I think it's not just trusting like God or some sort of divine force or just hoping or something. It's also I think trusting ourselves. Let's say somebody was in financial difficulty, they were just feeling a lot of upset or pain over their financial difficulty, and they might say to themselves, "Oh, I'm feeling the pain."

They might say, "I trust myself to actually pull myself through this, to actually do what it takes to move out of this time. I trust myself." In my experience, I don't know that I fully trust myself, but I've certainly been cultivating it over the years and I think it's really a journey, this journey of self trust. That's kind of it. I think it's for me, often just the going back and forth between fully feeling the feeling and then also leaning into the trust.

Rachel: That's such a great outlook and it kind of speaks to just who you are because you seem to do everything kind of gently with yourself, or at least you have really good exercises like you tried it. I mean, I'm sure that nobody's perfect, but I just love how you're able to be gentle with yourself. It made me think when you were talking, I've read in some books and they say that if you feel a feeling and you truly feel it, it'll go in and out of your system in, I think, seven minutes or something. Have you read that? Do you find it to be true?

Nisha: Yeah, I've heard stuff like that before. Actually, I have a close friend, she's a former client, actually, and she told me this story about how she had been terrified of flying. When we started working together, she hadn't stepped on a plane in some amount of time and when she had stepped on a plane, she had to take some prescription drug or something to kind of knock her out or deal with her anxiety or something.

She was just so terrified of flying. We started working together and she was like, "But, I want to have this lifestyle where I see the world and I can't take boats and cars all over the world all the time. So I'm going to need to figure this thing out." So she actually decided to go to this school or program for people who have a fear of flying. That was one of the things that they taught them.

They said if you just allow the feeling to be there without making a story, just noticing the sensations in your body, without spiraling into, "Oh my gosh, we're going to die!" and then visualizing the face masks falling and drowning and the whole thing that people do if they're in a plane terrified of flying—just to feel the sensations in the body, that it would pass. So she said on graduation day from this program, all these people who had gone

through this whole course got on a plane, and I think that what it was doing, it was kind of a smallish plane and the plane was going to take off and then land again. That was it; that was graduation.

They got on the plane and this one person just lost it. They went into a total panic attack and they were freaking out like, “Get me off the plane! Open the doors! I can’t even sit here!” and just got really upset. The instructor said, “Just feel the sensations. Just feel them. Forget about the story, just feel the sensation. We won’t go anywhere, but just feel the sensation.” I think it was a guy.

He just breathed and breathed and felt the sensations, like actually just felt the tingling, the this, the that, the nervousness in the belly—just felt all the sensations. And something like three minutes later, he was fine and they took off and they landed and he was fine. From literal panic attack, like maybe on the edge of a panic attack to totally calm and able to face his fear. I just thought it was so beautifully illustrative of how...like it was really just a few minutes if he had really gone into this story about it and really spiraled, I mean, he probably would have had to breathe into a paper bag.

I’m not a doctor, so I don’t know what people should do if they’re in panic attack situations, but I’m saying this is really just beautifully illustrative of how we, if we really fully feel, like you were saying, things move through us quite quickly. Usually much quicker than we think and definitely much quicker than they do if we wrap a drama around it and start telling ourselves stories about how we or other people in the world suck.

Rachel: It makes me think this is like nothing to the degree of this story, which is crazy incredible, like that’s insane to have someone just be so scared and then all of a sudden get over it. It makes me think of even just a couple days ago, I was talking to [Ginny](#), who you recommended—amazing nutritionist and she had me go on a sugar cleanse. She had sent me the sugar cleanse in advance and she told me that we might do it.

I was scheduled to talk with her on Skype later that day. I was so resistant to this freaking sugar cleanse. I went to the grocery store and I bought chocolate. I didn’t even want it, but I wanted to eat it just because I felt like it was going to be my last hurrah. So we start talking on Skype and she brings out the sugar cleanse and I’m just feeling like such a strong “no” and she’s asking me why and I’m like, “Well, I feel like I know with my blood sugar issues sometimes I get really shaky and this is going to impact my work and I’m not going to reach my goals.” I just kind of like pounded her with all my reservations for like a minute and a half and she was just letting me answer and then all of a sudden it’s like, “Cool. I’ll start tomorrow.”

Nisha: Wait, you went through all of that and then you said, “Okay. I’ll start tomorrow?”

Rachel: Yes. I'm four days in and I'm just like, "Cool."

Nisha: Lucked out.

Rachel: Totally.

Nisha: It makes me think about decision-making how sometimes we so try to make a decision but maybe what we need to do is just feel a little bit, give it a little bit more space. It's pretty amazing what happens when we give ourselves a little bit more space.

Rachel: Yeah, that's something else that you're phenomenal at that I've been working on—just not having to have that tight hold on whatever the decision is, I think is great. How do you deal with not feeling crazy anxiety when you give yourself space around something?

Nisha: Usually, I had crazy anxiety before I gave myself space—more of that or a break from that. Yeah, I think that decision-making is an interesting thing. You know, there's wisdom like one school of thought is just like you just make a decision. If you've [indiscernible 15:25] making a decision, you just make a decision and then you deal with the consequences. I think that that's totally valid and that's one way of making decisions.

Another school of thought is like take a break, give yourself some space from making your decision and then come back to it later and everything will come in its divine time. I think there's also wisdom in that. But I think that it's not always one or the other. Some people tend more to give themselves lots of space to make decisions, but they just kind of perpetually never make decisions.

And then there are other people who force decisions all the time and end up being in sort of disaster clean-up mode for a lot of their lives. So I think that it's knowing, are we prone to making rash decisions and kind of feeling not so stable with them after? In that case, maybe we can practice like what may it be like to give myself more space? For the other way, maybe it would be helpful to give ourselves a deadline.

If I've been scrambling about making a decision, it's kind of like I choose the analogy of if you've lost your keys and you're tearing your entire house apart looking for the keys, at some point you're either going to decide, "Okay, I'm going to keep going crazy looking for the keys everywhere or I'm just going to stop, take a deep breath, and take the bus or call a cab or something."

Often what happens is that mental, emotional space from having to make a decision so quickly, you walk back in the house and you go, "Oh, wait a minute. I wore my green jacket yesterday." You go in the pocket and there

are the keys. It's just amazing. So sometimes I notice that if I feel really pushed up against an edge with making a decision and I'm feeling a lot of anxiety around it, I'm just like, "Okay, it's time to either make the decision because I have no other choice or something." Like everybody's ordering dinner.

Or, "It's time to just take a deep breath and realize that I'm already in anxiety so I may as well give myself a break from that and see what happens if I come back to it in two days or a week or a month." I see that a lot with people, especially with relationships. They are desperately trying to figure out what to do about it. I was like that in my marriage, for sure, really for a couple of years, desperately trying to figure out whether to stay or go.

I just realized at one point, "I'm halfway in and halfway out of this relationship. Am I actually ready to end it? No. Okay, well if that's the case then I may as well just step fully in and give myself whatever it was—three, six months to not look at this door, to not look at this option, to not make a decision. I'm just going to settle in and devote myself to it. If that doesn't give me clarity, then we'll figure it out then."

Rachel: I love that. That's such a great explanation. Even just saying it, my whole body just feels calmer. That's great. To touch base real quick on something on what we were talking about before because it's nagging at me, I'd love to hear your take on it, about the feeling pain or feeling anything—feeling any emotion we don't want to feel and then letting it just pass. So, when you were going through your divorce or anything else that was tough in your life, do you think that if you would have just let the feelings go and feel the feelings, that it would have ended up dissolving or do you think that it's like layers of feelings or how did that work for you?

Nisha: That's a really good question. I definitely, at that time anyways with my divorce, was terrified that if I felt my feelings, they would swallow me whole, like I wouldn't be able to do any work, I wouldn't be able to do anything for indefinitely. So, I didn't. I just didn't really go there. I didn't really let myself feel that much during that time or I would give myself like, "Okay, I'm going to allow myself to feel this for ten minutes."

Then I would really shut that off. But mostly, I wasn't really letting myself feel anything because I was terrified that I would never find my way out again. A couple years later, I had been in a relationship after my marriage, we broke up, and it was incredible pain again. But I handled it very differently. That time, I actually called a couple of my girlfriends right away and one of them I said, "I need to be near you."

I actually ended up the next day renting the apartment next door to her apartment for a month just to be right beside her. I would come over to her house and I'd say, "Is it a good time?" and she'd say, "It's a good time." I

would just sit on the floor and sob and sob and sob and keep looking up at her and going, “Are you sure this isn’t too much?” and she’d go, “Nothing is too much.”

I’d keep up the sob and sob and then, you know, after like 15-minutes or something, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter, I’d be like, “Okay, okay, I need to eat now.” I’d get up and I’d feed myself and I’d go do some work and then I’d feel another wave coming and I’d need to go cry again. Now I know that’s not necessarily practical for every single person.

You can’t leave your office five times a day, but what I realized that anyways, is that when I really make space especially in the presence of a friend or friends to really feel and to have them there with me to not be lonely in it, to be really witnessed in it, it would move so much more quickly. Here’s the tricky thing: I don’t think that we can feel at all in the presence of others so that we can get over it quickly. It has to take however long it takes.

But, what I noticed is it just felt more complete. It felt like when I was working, I was able to actually focus on my work, even though I was going through heartbreak. I felt that when I was upset, I was just letting myself be upset. So I think that this idea that if I feel it, it’s going to swallow me up and I won’t be able to do anything, sure yeah, if you’re crying on the floor for an hour, you’re not working for an hour.

I got that. But, when you are working, you’re going to be way more productive because you actually don’t have this thing that’s taking up 50% or 80% of the bandwidth of your operating system. Just really, really incredible how much more space it can give us.

Rachel: Yeah, I know that you have a super strong support network with just tons of friends around you. Actually, can you take a minute just to talk about how you’re able to create that because I think it would be amazing for anybody to have someone they could go knock on their door and cry on their floor.

Nisha: I think a lot of people I talk to think that they would have to get new friends for that to happen. They don’t have it because if you don’t have it, you must feel like maybe it’s not possible or you just haven’t gone there with your current friends. One of the things that I say to people is you don’t actually necessarily need a whole new group of friends. It doesn’t mean don’t go out and make new friends.

By all means, I’m all for making new friends for our whole lives, why not? There are a lot of humans on the planet. But, one of the things is that I think just to be willing to take our conversations deeper. Anyone of us I think could agree that a lot of conversations that people have are very surface level. They’re talking about the weather or the things that are

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annoying to them—whatever it may be, the day-to-day stuff of life, but not really going into the depths.

One thing I encourage people to do, and this is really how I cultivated more depth into my friendships and new friendships with more depth is talking about how we feel about things and talking about what we want rather than what annoys us, commiserating around what annoys us or talking about the surface stuff. It's like, "Oh well, my husband is so annoying. He never wants to help with anything," then we're kind of just like complaining and commiserating on that versus, "How are you feeling about that? How are you taking that in and what do you really want?"

Having these conversations, where we're really about championing one another's desires. Rather than just sort of catching up on what's been happening, we're talking about also like where we're going. I find that my relationships that are so fulfilling in my life, like what's at the center of the relationship is that we are holding this vision for one another. I can see my friends not only in where they are in their day-to-day and how they're feeling in their hearts right now and the circumstances of their life today, but also, I'm really envisioning, holding and sharing for them in where they want to go in their lives.

I find that those relationships are so rich when we're focusing on where we're going. So for anybody who doesn't have friendships like that in their lives, what it might take is the courage to go to some of your current friends and say, "You know, I really want to have an even deeper friendship with you. I just love you so much and you've been such a great friend to me. I want us to be even better friends, even deeper friends.

Do you want that too? Let's talk about our desires for the future, our visions for the future." That's one thing. The other thing is, I think like stepping out of what we think is normal behavior in friendships a little bit. One of the ways that I see this show up is that we typically, when we think of what are the most important relationships in your life, a lot of people will say their partner and their family.

Friends often, not for everyone, but often will kind of take a lower rung on the totem pole. Now, I don't think that we need the totem pole, necessarily. I think everyone that's close in our hearts are important in our lives, but certainly our friends are what support depth and richness and growth in all of our other relationships—with our colleagues, with our partner, with our family.

I think that it makes sense. It's important to nurture those friendships. So I think another thing—is it okay for grown women to have sleepover parties? Yeah, why not? Why not? We think that we're too grown up to do things like that. We're not, so I think just also going, "Oh, well, maybe I just want to go out with my girlfriends and leave the kids at home for the day and we're going to go ice skating and the kids will come another time," or,

“Let’s have a dinner party and not just make it couples. Let me do this with my friends.”

Creating time to nurture those friendships without a bunch of other people involved is also really healthy and really helpful. Also, I think for creating new friendships, I love meeting people at places where I love to be. I love to go, for example, to dinner parties. I let my friends know that I love to go to dinner parties. I organize dinner parties and I ask people to bring new friends that I’ve never met.

If somebody was like really into, I don’t know what it would be—yoga. I’d go to a yoga class and introduce yourself to somebody the way that kids do on a playground. I know that we can get kind of approach anxiety sometimes around meeting new people, but that’s how we make new friends.

Rachel: So what do you say to somebody? I know you say, “Hi,” and then they say, “Hi,” back. How do you get to have this deep relationship with somebody? Does it take a few times after talking to them that you feel like you’re in a deep rapport with them or can you do it on the spot?

Nisha: Yeah, I mean, sometimes I’ll just strike up a conversation with somebody and sometimes it starts with one point of interest. It could be I first noticed...I don’t know, the color of their eyes, like their eyes were really super beautiful or that I love your sneakers or something. So, I might come up and say, “Hi,” and I’ll introduce myself and then just strike up a little bit of a conversation with them around, like if it’s a yoga class, for example, “Have you come to this class before?”

“Are there other teachers that you like here?” “Cool, well I’m coming to the Thursday class. I’ll see you at the Thursday class. Are you coming to that class too?” Sometimes, especially if you’re feeling a little nervous, it might take a couple times. Then invite somebody to go for tea with you or ask them a question about their life like, “So, what do you do when you’re not at yoga? Do you go to a job or do you volunteer? What are you up to?”

What’s exciting in your life right now?”—just creating a friendship out of it. When I moved, actually to San Francisco from New York, I would introduce myself and I would say, “I just moved to San Francisco. I’m trying to get to know people in the neighborhood.” The people who were really warm and reciprocated interest, then awesome, a potential new friend.

Rachel: So, have you had experiences where people weren’t necessarily warm and if so, how did you...did you just like, “Okay?”

Nisha: Totally. I’m like, “Oh, maybe they think I’m trying to pick them up or something.” I’ve had people who were pretty short with the conversation

and just seemed kind of disinterested. I would just let it go and not make it mean anything about them or me, and just be like, “Okay, well have a great day. Great talking with you. Bye,” and just let it go. I actually have a friend whose daughter said to her, “Mommy, if you want to make friends with people, you just go up and introduce yourself and you ask them how old they are.” That’s a great strategy for adults.

Then you say, “Do you want to play?” and if they say, “No,” you just say, “Okay. Bye. And you go introduce yourself to somebody else.” There’s some real wisdom in that, which is just the willingness, first of all, to just go up and say, “Hi” to somebody and to trust that if this is somebody who you’ll become a friend with, they’re probably going to be receptive to your “Hello.” They’re not going to bite your head off.

If they do bite your head off, they’re probably not somebody you’re going to be friends with, so it’s okay. That’s the other point, which is just to be resilient about it that if somebody is short with you, it doesn’t mean that they’re a mean person. Maybe they’re just having a really rough day. Maybe they’re going through something in their life or maybe they’re a little skittish around meeting new people.

It doesn’t mean anything about you. It doesn’t mean that you said the wrong thing, or put your foot in your mouth or you shouldn’t do this anymore. So I think it kind of comes back to the very first thing we were talking about which is just not making it mean something and just continuing on and trusting—again another theme, just trusting that somebody who you will become friends with will reciprocate their interest in you as well.

Rachel: When you were trying to get deeper with your friendships, I’m sure that it was vulnerable to ask. Did you ask people to go deeper or did it just happen organically?

Nisha: With older friendships?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Nisha: For me, it kind of happened organically. A lot of my older friendships, we already had a real sense of depth in the friendship. But, one of the things that I would consciously do is just notice where I would default to talking about the weather or giving just updates on life rather than really connecting in around my deeper heart and what was really going on with me. I think that was the piece—just sharing what was really going on.

What are the things that I’m really feeling alone in the shower or when I’m laying in bed at night? Those things that we often don’t tell anybody or we only tell our partner and giving the space for me to share those things with my friends to be that open and vulnerable with them.

Rachel: That's a great point. What I really like about just making sure that you have lots of friends around is that it doesn't make your partner have to be everything to you. It takes pressure off from them.

Nisha: Yeah, because, I mean when you think about it, for all of human history until recently, we lived in community. We lived in tribes, and in many parts of the world, people still live in communities. Maybe we're not all going to go and move into a commune with 20 of our dearest friends, but it just indicates that having one person be your absolute everything is so modern. If that's not flowing really easily, that's normal.

We're not designed that way. So, I think really having it so that we can bring this stuff to other people in our lives and yes, of course, we're going to bring some of it to our partner. That's part of what partnership is about, but also being willing to share what's going on in our lives with our friends for real and get that we all have stuff that we feel shame around.

Everybody's had their moment with money stuff, or relationship stuff, or food issues, or whatever it may be, or questions about their career, or feeling inadequate—we've all had that. So just getting that one step it takes to be a little bit more revealing with our friends, a little more open, it also opens the door for them to do the same and for us to have a more close friendship.

Rachel: Yeah, absolutely. What I love about what you were saying is that you see your friends also like as the visions of who they're becoming. I think when you can have those deep conversations and talk about what each other wants and their greatest desires and all this stuff, then when you see somebody in their full potential, it's just easier to not get upset by small things or whatever because you understand kind of what's going on with the person. I think that's probably where a lot of problems with surface friendships are, you know?

Nisha: Mm-hmm, exactly. That's awesome.

Rachel: I know that you've done a ton of evolution in your life as far as you went from being, was it an emotional eater first? Yeah, emotionally eating first, right?

Nisha: Yeah, emotionally eating first and for most of my life from childhood. Then when I was in my teens, early 20s—shopping. People sometimes think that I mean credit cards. I didn't get in a bunch of credit card debt. What I mean is that I would get my paycheck and spend all of it until all that was left was enough money for ramen noodles. I was just filling my house with crap, I mean just stuff.

I just got this like emotional hit every time I bought something. It was like a numbing; it was a distraction from what was going on in my life. Food was definitely a numbing agent for me, a distraction. Then it was work and that really came on strong when I started a business because I was able to kind of write off the compulsion as necessary for business. I'm starting a business; this is what start-up mode looks like.

Yes, while building a business, especially in the beginning, may require a lot of elbow grease, love and attention, it doesn't require us to go numb to the other things in our life. It doesn't require us to use work to avoid those things. That's what actually defined me as a workaholic, what distinguished my behavior as workaholism, was that I was struggling in my marriage and to avoid that, I turned myself to work. Lots of compulsions in my life.

Rachel: Now where you are, I can see you're a pretty free person. I'm curious, what are some of the mindset shifts that you had to get from workaholism and the emotional eating and the shopping to where you are now? I know you've covered some of them. Are there any other ones that kind of pop to your mind?

Nisha: So the first thing was around the emotional eating, I just realized that part of it was because I wasn't feeling fulfilled in my life. This is such a big frame actually for all of them. It was just a lack of fulfillment. Having the courage to ask what is going to create fulfillment in my life and how can I do that now? It's not a some day game. It's a today game. It's not, I'll be fulfilled once I finish all my work, once I'm a size six, once this happens, then I'll be able to be fulfilled. How can I actually create more fulfillment in my day-to-day?

I mean, we've all seen images of people who have far less than probably anybody listening to this podcast and yet have a joy. I say that not to make us feel guilty if we don't feel joy, but to remind us that we have access to levels of fulfillment that don't require outward attainment of relationship, money, you name it. So, for me it was getting into doing yoga and mediation actually that helped me out of my emotional eating.

It's just like I need to feel my life is anchored by a practice. That's what I needed in that moment. But really I see that it was about creating fulfillment. I started painting. I had an old film camera and I started taking the camera around my neighborhood just taking pictures, taking the day off on Saturday and just walking around taking pictures. Those things actually helped me get out of my emotional eating.

The same with my workaholism. I'm going to create time with my friends even though I think that I have no time. I'm going to go to this [indiscernible 37:32] class even though I think I have no time. I'm going to buy flowers for myself even though I don't think I've worked hard enough

to deserve it. So, giving myself those gifts...I would say one of the biggest things actually has been patience with myself and really looking at this as, you know, I'm 35 now, so let's say I'm a third of the way through my life (I plan on getting really old). I'm not supposed to have figured everything out yet.

I've got a long way to go. If I haven't perfected how to do this, or how to navigate this situation or whatever, I'm still struggling in this area, it's okay. I don't have to be so hard on myself and so mean to myself for not having it figured out. What I found was just that bit of kindness and patience offered to myself. I used to think that if I was kind and patient with myself that nothing would get done, but actually, I'm not apt to lie around and eat bonbons for the rest of my life.

Might I want to lie around, watch television, and eat bonbons for a few days? Yeah, but then I'd get bored. Eventually, I'd want to do something. I'd want to do something that felt important to me and meaningful. I'd want to help people. I would want to call my parents and spend time with the people I love trusting that I'm a good person, I have a good heart and I can give myself some space to not be perfect now. What I found was that patience and that space, it actually makes things move faster.

I guess for a long time, I was stuck in this mindset that I needed to be a slave driver to myself and all that created was anxiety on top of my guilt and then feeling like a failure. Feeling anxious, guilty, and like a failure for me is not super motivating. That actually drives me to want to lie on the couch and eat bonbons because why bother if I'm an anxious failure at life? But when I'm easier on myself, I find it's easier to focus.

I find that I make better decisions because I slow down a little bit more. I find that I feel a little bit more resilient and can actually learn meaningful lessons from life experiences and not just learn, "Well, that proves I suck and I shouldn't try," but empowering lessons that actually help me in the future. I think patience is such a big one. I think a way that we can cultivate that patience is just to notice how we talk to ourselves and how we talk about ourselves.

What I love to ask people is, "How would you talk to your child? If you were the most loving, grounded, well-resourced version of yourself, how would you talk to a little one? How would you talk to a little girl if you were the most grounded, well-resourced loving version of yourself?" That puts things in perspective pretty quickly. How we are talking to ourselves versus how we would talk if we were in that state and wanted to encourage a little one. Because, in fact, I'm 35-years old, I'm basically a little one. I haven't been on the planet that long. We just expect ourselves to be grown up by the time we're 12 and have it all figured out.

Rachel: You have so many amazing pieces of advice there. The ones that are popping up at me are you were saying, “I’ve only lived one third of my life so have some patience.” I think that’s such a great point. Then, also just going through and looking at yourself like a child. For sure, we’re supposed to love ourselves more than anybody. We have to be our greatest champions, so I think both of them are so great at perspective. You also touched on, when you were doing the emotional eating how you kind of asked yourself what practices would be good for you and it was about how to be more fulfilled. I’m curious, how did you know what would fulfill you?

Nisha: I just sort of noticed what was [indiscernible 41:48]. I think that we can over think this one a little bit. Sometimes I talk to people and they’ll be like, “Well, I had thought about getting into painting.” I’m like, “Cool. Just don’t ask any questions. Start there and just see how it goes.” It doesn’t have to be the hobby that’s going to be our “thing” the rest of our lives or like it doesn’t have to be perfect.

I think just also taking the frame that fulfillment was like, well, I don’t need to start a movement necessarily. I don’t need to decide that I’m going to now go and invest \$900 in a new camera. I don’t have to start a club. I can just invite my girlfriends out for dinner. I can just take my iPhone out and take pictures. I can just take one dance class and see how I like it. In a way, it was as my friend, Paula, calls it, “Following the breadcrumbs.” Just following the breadcrumbs of what it was that I wanted to do next and then next, next, next.

Rachel: Oh, I love that. I call it “follow the pleasure,” but both the same thing. I feel like I could talk to you forever, but I know we’re about to hit the hour so I would love to wrap up by asking, what would you say to somebody right now who might be inspired by you, but they’re still feeling scared to make changes in their own life? What advice would you give them?

Nisha: My advice would be to just envision the future that you really want for yourself, for your life, maybe for the world. If you’ve done that before, you might also envision if nothing changes in your life and you keep doing what you’re doing or you allow the fear to stop you from moving forward, what’s the future that you’re looking at? So, what’s the future that you’re on track for if you do absolutely nothing?

I know we’re making it all up; we don’t really know. Then, what’s the future that you really want? What I like to say to people is, “Think of what three steps could be to move you in that direction. Each step takes three minutes or less. So, three steps, each one taking three minutes or less.” For example, if you’re a person who’s like, “I hate my job, but I don’t know what I want to do. Do I want to go to grad school or do I want to get a new job?”

It could be just sending an email to your friend who is an architect and saying, “I just want to let you know I’ve been thinking about architecture as a career. Can I take you out for lunch?” Just three steps that take three minutes or less just to start the ball rolling, just to get movement—a little bit of movement. Because once you take those first steps, it creates a little bit of momentum that will start moving you naturally, even if you kept that job, for example, but it still creates a momentum that generates greater alignment in the direction of what you want.

Rachel: I love that idea because I think like you were saying, I know you said for you, you don’t get motivated by being anxious about things and I imagine most people are like that, so I think just taking less than nine minutes to do three actions would really just shake up so much energy for somebody. That’s awesome.

Nisha: Yeah. It can be so quick. Sometimes I think we look at the change and we’re like, “Oh my gosh, it’s so daunting. I don’t know where to start.” We do know where to start if we just allow ourselves to make the starting point very, very small.

Rachel: I love it. I know that if people had notebooks with them, they’re going to have taken a million notes. They’re going to replay this because this is phenomenal. Thank you so much. I would love if you could let people know where they could go to learn more about you.

Nisha: Yeah. My website is <http://nishamoodley.com>. I’m also on Twitter at [AskNisha](#). People can just search my name on Facebook. I definitely hang out on Facebook the most of any of those.

Rachel: Awesome. Again, this has been so good. I’m so excited. Thank you so much.

Nisha: Thank you, Rachel. So great to be with you today and I always love hanging out with you.

END

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