

David Stewart

Hey, Amy. Very nice to see you today.

Amy Odell

It's great to be here. Thank you for having me.

David Stewart

I'm really excited. I'm, like a huge fan of your work. And I was so.

Amy Odell

Unbelievably flattered.

David Stewart

To have you on the end of biography. It's just fabulous. Thank you. She's amazing. And then you've done a book on Gwyneth, and you have your newsletter, Back Row, which is also super interesting. So before we get into this too much, tell us a little bit about your background.

Amy Odell

I'm a journalist. My beat is fashion and culture and I'm from Austin, Texas. It was born in 1985, so I'm about to turn 41 and worked at New York Magazine when ten. You studied journalism, which is sort of hilarious because I don't I don't know if anyone would do that nowadays. Magazine concentration. Yeah, I sort of worked through the media industry, but, you know, that's a that's a tough business.

Amy Odell

And now I'm finding a lot of enjoyment and I'd like to think some success and working for myself. So that's been great. And I guess I'm part of the creator economy now as a newsletter writer and independent journalist.

David Stewart

There's a term that you use that I, that I'd like you to help us unpack, which is the Wellness Industrial Complex. What do you mean by that?

Amy Odell

Yeah. So the wellness industry is valued according to the Global Wellness Institute, I believe it's \$6.8 trillion globally. And in researching the Gwyneth book, Gwyneth biography, I learned that that was bigger than big AG. It's bigger than big Pharma. Like you can slice and dice the numbers and see that it really outpaces other industries that I think are widely kind of viewed as evil.

Amy Odell

But I'm not sure that the wellness industrial complex. I mean, yes, there are many skeptics. I'm not sure that it's really viewed as what I like to call big wellness. So that encompasses, you

know, I think a lot of different things alternative treatments, lots of longevity treatments lately, a lot of things that are of dubious value. Supplements are a big, big one.

Amy Odell

And there are some supplements that that do have actual value for you, but many that that don't. So that's how I see the the wellness industrial complex, this massive global industry expanding rapidly. And I think really it expands things to influencers, the ones we see on Instagram and TikTok, and many celebrity influencers like Gwyneth Paltrow.

David Stewart

Let's talk about Gwyneth for a second. She was a very successful movie star and beautiful, and she sort of moved to wellness. And I mean, I think other people sort of did that in a little way, but she did in a big way.

Amy Odell

Yes. So she said that her interest in wellness came about after her father died. Her father, Bruce Paltrow, died of throat cancer before he was 60. And she was, I believe, 30 at the time of his death. And he had been ill when he died. But it was sudden because they thought he was better. She went on a 30th birthday trip with him to Italy, and then he declined very rapidly, and he died, and she was alone with him when he died.

Amy Odell

And I have a lot of sympathy for that, because my father died suddenly when I was 27 and he was 65, was shocking. So that was the great tragedy of her life. And she, you know, many people told me that she was a daddy's girl, is a daddy's girl. And she decided, as she said in many interviews, you know, that she wanted to be around for her children.

Amy Odell

She didn't want her children to have to go through that. She has two children, Apple and Moses, with Chris Martin, and she started doing her own research, which I think we hear this a lot from people nowadays. They do their own research. They don't want to listen to experts or established science. So she starts doing that and she starts experimenting with different fads.

Amy Odell

One of them is the macrobiotic diet. Do you remember, David, when it seemed like everyone was on a macrobiotic diet?

David Stewart

That didn't work out so well?

Amy Odell

No, I mean that one. That one I think is kind of faded. You know, there was like the South Beach diet and now there's like the paleo diet, all these different ones. But she sort of became known for that. And then she started becoming publicly associated with other things like cupping. She

went on a red carpet with cupping marks on her back, cupping as a treatment where they sort of put, I think I've never had it.

Amy Odell

So I'm describing it from memory, researching it, but they sort of take like hot steam with like a suction cup and they put it on your back. And I remember seeing during one of the Olympics, like a lot of the swimmers were getting it. Do you remember this? And they would sort of have like big circles. Yeah. On their backs.

Amy Odell

So she goes out with that, you know those marks on her back and people can see them because she's in a red carpet gown. Her back is exposed. And then the media published so many stories like what is cupping? This is what cupping is like. Does cupping do anything for you? The latest research that I've seen, I don't recall there being any benefit to any to your health from doing cupping, but she's doing all these things.

Amy Odell

And then she starts goop in 2008, around the time of the Great Recession, and she continues talking about her favorite wellness fads and treatments. And that's when we see her really get into pseudoscience. And the more outrageous her claims, the more audience goop would attract, because the media would pick up these inflammatory or in some cases, just kind of outrageous stories like in one issue, she said.

Amy Odell

She cited a book that she liked, in which this guy says that water has feelings. Well, the media obviously pounced at that. Gwyneth Paltrow thinks water has feelings that Sarah, etc. but it drove people over to the site and it was a good business model in a way, because, you know, hey, clicks are still clicks and people on the site might click over to the store and buy a lotion.

David Stewart

It's trolling with purpose.

Amy Odell

Yeah, but I think we don't feel like we see a lot of people doing that now.

David Stewart

Yeah.

Amy Odell

Just just because you get that's how the internet works. Controversy generates audience because it generates attention.

David Stewart

I like her cookbooks.

Amy Odell

They're great. Yes, I have one that I, I still cook from. I have the first one because I think after that or. No, no, no, I bought them for research, but I only cook from the first one because after that it was more prescriptive about diet. It was like this, you know, these recipes have no gluten and no this.

Amy Odell

I know that, and I'm not really interested in eating that way. Personally.

David Stewart

I don't like to say anything bad about people, so I'm not going to say anything about it. I just feel like.

Amy Odell

Well, I think it's a plain statement of fact that she's controversial and that she's promoted some, you know, I will say she's promoted some really questionable treatments and she's received a lot of backlash for it. And she doubled down and she kept doing it.

David Stewart

I think that she's very good at this, this thing that she does. I don't like it, but she's really good at it. And I have really mixed feelings about admiring her savvy on what she's doing. But then how it makes me feel, I just get like, oh.

Amy Odell

Because she's promoting unproven treatments.

David Stewart

I mean, I don't want to get into on its head. I don't know, going on. I mean, I know people who worked with her and it's mixed results. But I think that it's a lot some of these things appear to me to be said, and like water has feelings with a very distinct purpose of like causing me a sense of outrage.

David Stewart

Like, come on, Gwyneth, you know better. You're still saying this because.

Amy Odell

Well, I will say, I do think that she believes the things that she promotes, even if they seem crazy to us. And I talk in the book about why that is. And one expert I interviewed who is so great, Timothy Caulfield, you may want to have him on a future podcast, but he studies health misinformation and, you know, an advocate against it and tries to provide accurate information and analyze how these things spread.

Amy Odell

And he told me that there's some research that people who believe conspiracy theories have traits of narcissism, you know, and he had the caveat of like, I don't know, Gwyneth and I can't like diagnose her with that. But this is what the research shows. And it is not hard for me to imagine that someone who was, at one point in time, the world's most famous movie star and Academy Award winner at I think 26, is when she won the Oscar for Best Actress for Shakespeare in Love.

Amy Odell

But it doesn't stretch the imagination for me to think that someone like that might have narcissistic personality traits. Many, many public figures do.

David Stewart

So yeah, and narcissistic personality trait can be a positive or negative, depending on what you're like, where you want to go with it. Right. It's a belief system about the world and how you stand in the world, and it can allow you to achieve certain things. If you hold that tightly, it might not be so great for the people around you.

Amy Odell

But yeah. So I should probably explain the reason that those two things are linked. Believing in conspiracy theories and narcissistic personality is because those people believe that they alone know the truth or the solution, that other people don't know that they are special and they have their gifted to have this information.

David Stewart

Okay, I want to go to your your thoughts about aging.

Amy Odell

August 6th. I'll be 41.

David Stewart

How does it feel?

Amy Odell

How does it feel? Well, I could think that, you know, I've heard people say that your 30s are, like, really hard and like, in your 40s are, like, great. And I think I'm starting to understand that in the sense that not that it's like was necessarily easy for me to turn 40 and view myself as a 40 something, because I think that's a hurdle for a lot of people.

Amy Odell

But I've been working a while. I'm kind of established in what I'm doing. I'm very lucky. You know, I think the same is true for my husband. We love our children. There are really fun ages. My daughter is five and my son just turned eight, and you sort of make that transition, I think around age 5 or 6 from like fuss management to hanging out.

Amy Odell

So that's been really nice. My daughter starting kindergarten in the fall and I'm looking forward to all of that.

David Stewart

I want to get this right. I don't know how how old Mick Jagger is, but I think he's like early 80s, possibly.

Amy Odell

80s already. Yeah, you're right, he's 83. Oh, I didn't realize he was 83. Wow. He was born in 1943.

David Stewart

He said this thing the other day. He's like, there's absolutely nothing good about aging. Like the whole thing. It just really sucks. And you know that. I got a lot of press. How do you feel about aging? Because I disagree with Mick. I think there's definitely some downsides to this, but there's also some, at least in my experience.

David Stewart

Some like really kind of awesome upsides that one can embrace. I'm way smarter than I ever was.

David Stewart

I don't do dumb shit anymore.

Amy Odell

Right. I agree with that. Yeah.

David Stewart

You just you have a bigger hard drive. You've just, like, seen more stuff. Really. You feel you are able to sort of predict the outcome of, okay, you've met somebody and you can sort of get a sense of like, I like this person, I like this person. They're a good person or a bad person because you've just met more people, right?

David Stewart

So you're able to sort of pattern recognize these things. I find that my ability to do sort of fast, granular work is not as good as it was, but I'm able to do this other thing where I can, like, connect. Okay, this thing is happening over here. This other thing is happening over here. And I can see these two things coming together.

David Stewart

And this is, this is this is what's happening. So yeah, that's sort of a new skill that I didn't have before.

Amy Odell

Oh, I'm glad to hear you say that. Yeah. As you were saying that, I think that I, I can relate in that, you know, I'm a writer, and I think the older I get and the longer I do this one, the better I get at it. And I think that I am better at doing sort of the higher level conceptual thinking that I probably wasn't nearly as good at when I was in my 20s.

Amy Odell

Because you don't have that perspective on the world, it's kind of harder to see, I think, why a story, be it about Anna Wintour or Gwyneth Paltrow, like why it might matter what the stakes are, that kind of thing.

David Stewart

Tell me, you know, you've been covering this world for a while. Other than the the, like, explosion of wellness, what are the things you're seeing out there? What's been moving?

Amy Odell

What's been moving? Well, I cover fashion primarily. That's the primary thing I read about. And I think it's kind of fascinating to see how our habits around how we put ourselves together and how we shop. You know, the mechanism of shopping, like how that's all changing with technology and with social media being kind of the new media, the new front page.

Amy Odell

One example of that, I think, is this, and I'm curious to get your take on this, actually, is that this obsession with plastic surgery and this sort of feeling, you know, different people see certain things when they open their algorithm. I guess I used to see more of this. I used to see tons of plastic surgery content, like speculation over what celebrities have had done or, you know, people sharing their own plastic surgery stories.

Amy Odell

It's crazy to me how explosive the market for plastic surgery is.

David Stewart

What I find interesting is people talking about their own class, like the the sort of transparency around this where it used to be something like just don't ask, don't tell. And now it's much more. I had, you know, Bob the surgeon just did this and and this is how it went. This is my recovery. Oh, here, let me show you the post op photos.

David Stewart

There's something related about this to, you know, the whole topic of menopause, which is everybody talks about all the time.

Amy Odell

There's a lot. Yeah, right. The wellness industry has really glommed on to menopause. Yeah. That's true.

David Stewart

Yeah. That was actually a word you could not say on television. It was it was it was banned at one point, like, not that long, like 15 years ago. We couldn't use that word. So now it's very common for people to not only talk about menopause but HRT and their and their formulations and their protocols. And this is what I'm doing.

David Stewart

And you're seeing this. It started with women in all. So seeing this with men like very being very transparent about their party or whatever they're doing. And it's somehow seems parallel to me to the the plastic surgery discussion. Although the plastic surgery discussion does have the visual component.

Amy Odell

That's really right. You know, totally bandages. Well, I would say that I think that our exposure to, you know, do you remember when airbrushing was like a big deal? Yeah, I remember watching when I was a kid, like a 20/20 segment on airbrushing in magazines, and now we all have access to this all the time. Like if you make a video you posted to social media, you just retouch it.

Amy Odell

You put a filter on it. Same with photos, you know? And like even built into your iPhone, you can go to portrait mode, which might like kind of make it look a little bit better, right? So I think that our exposure to enhanced and a naturally perfected images obviously has never been higher. And we're also the culture right now is just so terrified of aging, like probably more than ever before.

Amy Odell

I've been watching. I know I'm behind, but I've been watching Your Friends and Neighbors The Jon Hamm Show on Apple. It's about sort of messy, late 40s, 50 ish people in a wealthy New York City suburb. And there's commentary in every episode about how, like, getting older sucks. We were never supposed to get this old. It's like people with, like, teen kids, you know, rich, but like, totally like super rich, but totally unhappy, like, constantly chasing highs, doing drugs.

Amy Odell

Yeah. I just feel like our fear of aging, it's just, like, never been more pronounced.

David Stewart

At this. I, I sort of see this other thing happening to that. There's in the same way people, there's this sense of digital perfection or even, you know, as we were speaking like surgical perfection is and I think it was the photographer Peter Lindbergh, who was was a lovely man. And he he was talking about the terror of perfection.

David Stewart

Like, it's terrifying if you think like like I really feel bad for these, like sort of 50, 60 year old movie stars. Like.

Amy Odell
Yeah.

David Stewart

There is like a limit. To what? To being able to keep yourself looking 35 like that. You can only do that. And that's going to hit that at some point. But I think that this there's something about the the embrace of analog, the embrace of humanity, which is sort of coming as this counterweight. So we have the, the, you know, the Kardashians and the, the filters and all of that, and, you know, people that are genetically really beautiful to begin with.

David Stewart

And then you and then you do this to them. But then that sort of goes with all this, sort of like what I, what I with all that, you know, there's AI, there's all this digital. What's happening is people are sort of I feel this like movement towards what I would call like sort of whole human approach to things where there's, there are certain people that put themselves out there in a very public way and they don't really care.

David Stewart

Like, this is what I look like, like, okay, this is this is my age. In the same way that people will like people like vinyl records, because it's like there's something like you have to actually touch the thing. You've got to pull it out of the sleeve. You got to put it down. And there's this human interaction with the thing versus just Spotify, maybe a playlist.

David Stewart

And I think that there's like, we see this is a bit of a leap, a leap, I realize. But like, you know, like young people in run clubs. So there's this, this like, let's be humans together. How can we be more like humans and live this more fully live experience? And I think that the in the wellness area, there's, you know, the sort of, you know, like our friend Brian Johnson who's like basically buoying a bubble, right.

David Stewart
Like.

Amy Odell
Yes.

David Stewart

Okay, Brian. Like, I like Brian, but Brian's a weirdo. Like, I don't want to live Brian's life like this. This is not a whole human experience. Right? And it's sort of part of this way of seeing the world. This in terms of and there's a like what you said, there is a fear element to this. There is we are afraid of something.

David Stewart

Therefore we're going to narrow our lives. We're going to sort of polish all the rough edges off versus this other thing that's more, you know, I'm seeing adventure clubs pop up. I'm seeing people like do these sort of things together. And it's like one of my good friends is Stacey Simms. The last thing on the planet that Stacey's going to do is like, enhance her face digitally.

David Stewart

Like that is just not happening. And there's a credibility there. It's like there's a certain invulnerability. If you if you say to the world, this is who I am, this is what I'm this is what I look like. What's the problem? Okay. Like you've sort of reduced I think it's harder for women to. I'm. I realize I'm sort of scattering around here.

David Stewart

It's definitely with a woman. Like a Madonna. Madonna can do. No. Right? Right. It's like gone over the top or she's not looking so good. Like people are always going to come after people for this. Does that make any sense? What I've said, I feel like I've, like, scattershot here.

Amy Odell

Yeah, you have a lot of ideas, but they're good ideas. But yes, I did write. I wrote a I wrote an opinion piece for the New York Times not all that long ago about about this plastic surgery craze that we're seeing and how it's really become the new status symbol. You know, I think it also ties to kind of the explosion of wealth at the upper echelon of at least American society, where, like, everyone has a Birkin, you know, maybe they have a private jet and like, the next thing they can do is get a new face, which is extremely, extremely expensive.

Amy Odell

I mean, I think Kris Jenner's surgeon, Steven Levine, I think he charges like six figures for a facelift. So you can do that. And then the fascinating thing about it is that since it's a status symbol, you know, I don't think people are thinking as much about making it look subtle, right? They want people to know that they've had work done.

Amy Odell

And I recently interviewed some people who did get facelifts for my Becker newsletter, and a number of them told me, like, I didn't want to look like I had nothing done. I wanted people to know that I had something done, which I think is really fascinating. And then it was interesting doing that story as well, because everyone I talked to said it was sort of a complete shock to get their faces changed and then look in the mirror and see a different person.

David Stewart

And I've interviewed some plastic surgeons, and one of the things that they've told me is, well, they'll say they really want people to feel more confident in how they look for whatever reason. And there's a the the reputable ones will go through. It's a long process. You can't just like, walk in and throw it on your credit card.

David Stewart

There's a real sort of, you know, there's a psychological thing that goes on. And they were saying that one of the things they warn them about is that if you do this, your friends are going to react to you differently. Now, I think that within that certain private jet echelon, it may be like like, wow, just it's a status check mark.

David Stewart

But for some other people, it may be they may get some real pushback. And I was told that you will probably lose a certain amount of your friend community because you've done this. And I thought that was kind of interesting.

Amy Odell

That's fascinating. Yeah. I'd be curious to know how that's evolving. I have heard from a friend who lives in New York City, and I live outside the city in the suburbs. But I've heard from a friend who lives there that, you know, women, once they reach their 40s, is just kind of like, when am I getting my face done?

Amy Odell

We should probably also acknowledge, like, it's major, major surgery, like the the recovery takes a year. And there's all these weird things that happen, like you go numb in certain areas of your face, or like there could be nerve damage where you look like part of your mouth is not working properly. So it's very major surgery. And some of the people I interviewed, like they had side effects, like one woman said, not to be too graphic like her.

Amy Odell

I filled with fluid and it had to be drained and like drained repeatedly and like, you know, she was still having, you know, a fair number of issues, like two months after the initial surgery. So it's not something to undertake lightly. It didn't really make me want to do it, if I'm being honest.

00:32:02:20 - 00:32:04:17

David Stewart

Yeah, I it's.

00:32:04:20 - 00:32:07:00

Amy Odell

Sounds very intense.

00:32:07:02 - 00:32:25:04

David Stewart

I've had multiple surgeries, not on my face, but to every single one. The surgeon, I'd say, well, okay. Like what's the recovery on it? I'm like, oh, you know, 6 to 8 weeks. No no no no. It's like 6 to 8 months. It's like maybe I'm a slow healer. I don't know, but these things, it's a big deal.

00:32:25:06 - 00:32:47:15

David Stewart

I think deal. I think that there's all, you know, the cultural part of it. If like I've spent, you know, you spend time in Europe, it's things are very sort of much more demure. Whereas like you go to the other and then you sort of go across the US and you have like what, like the California facelift look, plastic surgery look is very different than the New York one.

00:32:47:16 - 00:33:04:16

David Stewart

And if you go to Korea, it's, it's you know, people are very they're very young and it's very obvious what's happened in the same way that, you know, you're going to carry a balance, a bag. It's very obvious this status things you said.

00:33:04:18 - 00:33:11:12

Amy Odell

Right, right. And I had a facelift, as I put in the book, at least one, I don't know if she ever had another one.

00:33:11:12 - 00:33:13:13

David Stewart

I like that Anna eats steak for lunch.

00:33:13:13 - 00:33:32:12

Amy Odell

Every day, although I guess I could have changed since the time I did my reporting. But yes, because she's British and she has that sort of British sensibility about food. Like she would eat like lamb chops. She doesn't really drink no dessert. She would maybe have like a couple sips of white wine here and there. She's like one of the most controlled people.

00:33:32:16 - 00:33:46:00

Amy Odell

And I think energetic people like on the planet, because she was born in November 1949, so she's going to turn 77.

00:33:46:01 - 00:33:47:09

David Stewart

Yeah.

00:33:47:11 - 00:33:51:22

Amy Odell

In a few months. It's pretty remarkable.

00:33:52:00 - 00:34:06:04

David Stewart

Yeah. As we said, I've only met Anna once and she was very nice to me. She was like super polite. She know what it was. She knew about me. She was like really nice. But having read your book, this person has a force.

00:34:06:06 - 00:34:28:11

Amy Odell

She is very efficient. She gets a lot of things done. Yeah, she's just very, very efficient. And I think part of that efficiency is her personality. Like she doesn't really care to make sure that she's being polite necessarily. Like she's not afraid to be cold. If she has nothing to say, she's not going to say it. You know, one person I talked to said, she's so efficient that, like, there's not a single wasted adjective when she talks to you.

00:34:28:12 - 00:34:31:09

David Stewart

Yeah. I can't do that.

00:34:31:11 - 00:34:38:16

Amy Odell

I know, I know, I mean, you know, when you meet somebody, people have a natural inclination to fill the silence.

00:34:38:18 - 00:34:39:11

David Stewart

Yeah.

00:34:39:12 - 00:34:57:18

Amy Odell

So if you and I were meeting for the first time, let's say we went to lunch. You might ask about where I live, what I do, my husband, my kids, whatever. She doesn't do that. She just lets it, lets the silence just hang there between her and another person. And it really throws people off.

00:34:57:20 - 00:35:24:15

David Stewart

She's amazing what she does. I want to talk a little bit more about the this, you know, this wellness and beauty and aging and how these things have sort of like, sort of come together that what was the there was some peace in some. It was the Wall Street Journal the other day that talking about I think it was like 50 is no longer old or something like that, which.

00:35:24:17 - 00:35:34:10

Amy Odell

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I know what you're talking about. Yeah. I'm always thinks that like memes like 40 is the new 30 and whatever. Yeah, yeah.

00:35:34:12 - 00:36:01:16

David Stewart

I mean part of that is capacity based I think. So like I'm 67 and I just never thought like I'd be able to, like, I'd be sort of spunky at 67, but I sort of em. But like part of this also looks based. Right. So the biggest thing that's changed for me is that I look different. You know, I'm older and that's where it gets sort of confusing, right?

00:36:01:17 - 00:36:10:22

David Stewart

It's like, are we comparing capacity or are we comparing appearance? What are your thoughts on that.

00:36:11:00 - 00:36:30:14

Amy Odell

Capacity versus appearance? Yeah I think we live in an age of society. I don't have to tell you that. And I think that we could be better as a culture about extolling the virtues of aging, which is why it's great you do what you do because there's so much money to be made per year. Earlier point about the connection between beauty and wellness and longevity.

00:36:30:14 - 00:36:52:19

Amy Odell

There's so much money to be made in selling people this idea of eternal youth, whether it's the longevity movement that promises. I mean, this all intersects, right? The longevity movement that promises to extend your life by however much for makeup that makes you look a little younger, maybe, or surgery, plastic surgery or filler or Botox that erases some wrinkles that you don't like.

00:36:52:20 - 00:37:15:02

Amy Odell

So I think all of those things are connected. And I think unfortunately, and thanks in large part to technology, you know, people are discovering just so many ways to capitalize on our fear of aging and our fear of death. And it all ties into the beauty industrial complex, because that's the thing that gives age away is how you look.

00:37:15:02 - 00:37:39:15

Amy Odell

Although it's funny because going back to Timothy Caulfield, the medical misinformation expert I discussed earlier, he cited in something I read of his that, you know, people who have had plastic surgery, they look something like an average of a few years younger, like you can get the surgery, but it doesn't necessarily change. You know how like my perception of your age.

00:37:39:19 - 00:38:01:00

Amy Odell

Am I to erase some of the signs, like you might if you were, you know, wrinkles in your forehead or something? But I still perceive you basically as the age that you are. And when I read that in

his writing, I was like, that really changes kind of how I think about this. You know, personally, for myself, this was before I interviewed all these women who had facelifts and some complications that didn't seem so great to me.

00:38:01:00 - 00:38:23:01

Amy Odell

But, you know, like, you can go get the surgery, you can undergo the pain. And, you know, this sort of psychological, I don't know, adjustments of having a new face. And you can go through all this and you might really like how you look, you know, but I think it really has to be for you because, like, I'm still going to probably perceive you, you know, as, let's say you're 67, maybe I'll perceive you as 65 or 64.

00:38:23:03 - 00:38:48:20

David Stewart

We can't stop, despite what you know, David Sinclair and others have been saying at the moment, we cannot stop aging. We cannot reverse aging. You can do things to help yourself out, like you can exercise. But I think that some of the thing with the plastic surgery is it gives people a sense of agency. It's like, I can do this right, like here.

00:38:48:21 - 00:39:17:04

David Stewart

I can't, you know, actually turn back my chronological clock, but I can for enough money do this thing. And so now this gives me a sense of control in, in some way. And I, and I think that goes through the beauty. That's one of the connections to like the beauty industry and the, the wellness longevity industry is this perceived sense of control.

00:39:17:05 - 00:39:32:08

Amy Odell

Yeah, that's a great point. That's a really good point. Yeah. So you can't turn back the clock, but you can sort of reverse the signs that the clock is ticking. Yeah. Don't don't like therapists say I feel like someone some therapist once said this to me, like suffering comes from wanting things to be different from the way they are.

00:39:32:11 - 00:39:57:00

David Stewart

Yeah. Yeah. It's also, you know, that's also this sense of that's what gives us ambition, right? Like, why things not to be where we are. So that's not entirely a bad thing, but it's it's an interesting I don't know, there's something there's something about this sense of powerlessness that I think can bother people.

00:39:57:02 - 00:40:26:12

Amy Odell

Yeah. And also I think we should probably acknowledge, like a powerlessness around isms, sexism, ageism. You can't change that. That's the way our world is. And I wouldn't be surprised

if a lot of people were, you know, making these decisions about their faces or whatever else, just kind of navigating within the, you know, are messed up sort of work and sort of world culture around these things, like studies show, you know, more attract people, make more money and things like that.

00:40:26:12 - 00:40:32:00

Amy Odell

So it's, it's it's hard not to have that embedded also in our psyches.

00:40:32:00 - 00:41:04:13

David Stewart

And that's absolutely true that. Yeah, I and and I think that there could be and I think there is sort of an economic imperative to looking younger if you're looking in certain industries. And I think even in industries that are not necessarily, you know, the entertainment industry, I think you will be if you can move what people think of your age back from not a couple of years.

00:41:04:13 - 00:41:16:03

David Stewart

But if you can move it from like 60 to 50 or something, you will be more I'm, I'm sorry, you're going to be more employable. I wish that wasn't the case. Yeah, I feel it probably is the case.

00:41:16:05 - 00:41:34:23

Amy Odell

Well, I absolutely agree with you. And I mean, thinking of Anna Winter, too. Like, I can't remember the exact year she had the facelift. I want to say I was like, in the 2000, and she's 77 now, so maybe she was like in her 50s, but, you know, like she's she's leading a very superficial industry, like the most maybe superficial industry, which is fashion.

00:41:35:01 - 00:41:56:04

Amy Odell

So I think, yes, people who work in certain fields are going to feel even more pressure. And then also with someone like her, you know, she's been in her position, you know, she's not technically the editor in chief anymore, Vogue, but she's still overseeing it. She's the chief content officer for Kane and asks, so she's overseeing every publication in their portfolio, you know, and like people, a lot of people think she should step down.

00:41:56:04 - 00:42:21:03

Amy Odell

She should leave. She should let other people have a turn and she's not doing that. So I can also imagine if you're someone in that position, you know, just like wanting to keep up, you know, the appearance that like, you have this, you know, vivacity about you. And I think that she does and she, you know, I was looking just scrolling through Instagram mindlessly, as I do, and I saw a video of her wearing, like, kind of like a slightly different dress from what she normally wears.

00:42:21:03 - 00:42:33:23

Amy Odell

And she just looked so great. It's just kind of amazing. Like she continues to kind of like evolve her style and like her personal physical brand. But I think that that's just so important for someone in her position.

00:42:34:00 - 00:42:44:09

David Stewart

Yeah, yeah, 100%. And I think Anna should probably keep doing what Anna does as long as Anna wants to do it, and as long as she's good at it. And I think I.

00:42:44:09 - 00:42:44:13

Amy Odell

Think.

00:42:44:14 - 00:42:49:21

David Stewart

That's very true at the moment, you know.

00:42:50:01 - 00:43:04:06

Amy Odell

Yeah. Well what else? Like, what do you do? I don't know if you've done, like research around this, but it's like people who love to work, like who get up every day hungry to work, who love it like she loves it. It's like she's a really a workaholic. Like addicted to it. Like what? What else do you what do you.

00:43:04:06 - 00:43:06:20

David Stewart

Do for someone like that?

00:43:06:22 - 00:43:07:15

Amy Odell

Yeah.

00:43:07:16 - 00:43:38:17

David Stewart

They would have a very, very difficult time not doing that like that. The psychological like having the the lane change that would be involved there. You know, for someone actually at her level, she's so connected through like all this stuff that would, that would maintain. So she would still have all that. But I think that in general people I see this more with men ever higher performing, higher performing, and they like, love this thing.

00:43:38:17 - 00:44:02:05

David Stewart

They do. And then all of a sudden, boom, they're not, for whatever reason, can be deeply unsettling. Who am I? Where am I going? What's my sense of community? What is my. And again, this is more for men. Like what my worth in the world is based upon achievement. It's not based upon my friends. It's not the stuff.

00:44:02:05 - 00:44:12:09

David Stewart

It's this. It's this thing. And I can't do that. That becomes hard. I think women are much more relational. So.

00:44:12:11 - 00:44:22:03

David Stewart

In general. So it's I think it's easier for them to sort of change lanes. But for somebody like an Anna, I don't know.

00:44:22:05 - 00:44:28:22

Amy Odell

Yeah. I think for her it's like, why confront that like when she doesn't have to and you know, she likes it.

David Stewart

Yeah, yeah.

Amy Odell

Even though her job is not nearly as glamorous in many senses as it once was, like when she was editor chief of Vogue in like, 1990. And she had all this money to make these beautiful photoshoots, which is like, you know, how she started her career and that's like her real love and expertise. And now she's not doing that anymore.

Amy Odell

You know, she's doing like YouTube stuff like Vogue World, which is sort of a fashion variety show that airs on YouTube. Well, the Met Gala, which still has a lot of cultural cachet, but then it's like looking at metrics and managing like or overseeing social media content. Like all of that is just like, I can't imagine that's as fun.

Amy Odell

But she has, you know, as I talk about in the book, like she leaned into it, she understands it as best she can and something that I really like that she says. I mean, you could criticize this, but I think it's I found it useful, actually, for me personally, is that you have to always look forward and fashion is always about looking forward.

Amy Odell

I mean, fashion is obviously also about looking back, like when trends come back, but I think it's useful, you know, for me personally, in my work and in my career, when like everyone was getting on TikTok circa 2020, right during the pandemic, and I had this book and the biography coming out, I didn't really want to like, make videos and like, participate in that.

Amy Odell

But, you know, I think I had this quote in my head from Anna, like, you have to always look forward. You kind of have to always be one step ahead, because if you don't, you will fall behind. It's true. You just have to adapt. And so I got a ring light and I learned how to use TikTok. And I just wanted to promote my book because I had worked so hard on it that I didn't.

Amy Odell

I didn't want to leave a single sale on the table because it's so hard. It took like four years, so I did. And now, like, we're all, we're all doing this. I was like, independent journalist. Like, we all have to be making these videos, so it's good to develop that skill even though I didn't want to do it.

David Stewart

You said a few minutes left and I just want to touch on, you know, your zone of expertise is fashion, or one of your zones of expertise is fashion. And then as we one of the like things that I've seen happen over the last say, 20 years is the way age is not prescriptive to what one will wear.

David Stewart

So we're seeing this collapse of like there used to be things that like a 25 year old where a 35 year old wear and then, you know, by the time like 40, you're in sort of like especially like in women's fashion, you're in this sort of dowager sort of thing. And. Right, like, that's not it's there seems to be a more a continuity, you know, from very from older to younger.

Amy Odell

Yeah. I think that's true. I totally think that's true.

David Stewart

Do you think that's pushed? Do you think that the brands have pushed that because it makes it they can sell more of a certain thing.

Amy Odell

I do and sometime in the 20 tens. You know what I think it was was just sort of this movement towards inclusivity. And I don't know where we are with that, with AI and some of these, you know, cultural and technological changes that we're seeing now. But there was a big push to be more inclusive in that, you know, in terms of diversity, but also in terms of, you know, sort of like ethnic diversity, but also in terms of age.

Amy Odell

And do you remember when Joan Didion was in a Celine campaign?

David Stewart

It was like.

Amy Odell

CB Philo. Yeah. Phoebe Philo, the creative director of Selena at the time, who now has her own line, like she was kind of a pioneer in that, and even Debnath, Balenciaga or he's not a villain anymore. Now he's at Gucci. But he was a, I thought, a genius at doing what what we call street casting. So not just casting like perfect looking models, but just casting people, but kind of like people who are interesting, who draw you in, who have the right attitude, you know, who are going to captivate you when they're on the runway or in an ad.

Amy Odell

So I think that that's kind of what started it. And it was just I think it was sort of those creative minds, those creative geniuses who just made it cool. And I think it sort of stuck around and now, you know, thinks of social media like it's not up to, you know, the Anna Winters of the world or the heads of Hollywood movie studios to tell us who is cool, who is hot, whatever.

Amy Odell

And I follow, you know, so many influencers who are in there, you know, I don't know how old they are, 50, 60 70s who have really cool style, who make really amazing content about their love of fashion. So I think we've seen just sort of a great proliferation of that kind of imagery, and there could always be more.

Amy Odell

Don't get me wrong, like the fashion industry that like the predominant sort of model is like young, white, very, very skinny. But we have seen a lot more of that. And I do think social media and just like the ability for us to decide who we're attracted to, who we want to follow, who we want to get advice from, you know, social media put that power in our hands.

David Stewart

What would you like to leave our people with?

Amy Odell

Great question. I guess one of the things I'm like, I'm 41, so many people will have more experience in life listening to this than me, but I think the one thing that that has enabled me to kind of like, do what I do is just like being fearless and kind of like ignoring, ignoring, like the noise. And I think that people like Anna Winter and Gwyneth Paltrow have to do that as well.

Amy Odell

And Anna Wintour, I would say, is like one of the great cultural innovators of the last century, if not more. But yeah, and something else that she says is like, you can't you can't always just like look to the left and to the right at what other people are doing. And yeah, you have to be really

fearless. It was it was like not relaxing to write books about Hannah Winter and Gwyneth Paltrow.

Amy Odell

So yeah, just have to be fearless.

David Stewart

That's the word for the day. Fearless. Amy, thank you so much.

Amy Odell

Thank you for having me.

David Stewart

I really appreciate your work and I appreciate you having you on the show today.

Amy Odell

Likewise. That was a lot of fun.