



010 a valedictorian reflects | spiraling with/in

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This transcript is lovingly provided in order to facilitate multidimensional communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the episode. Enjoy!

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[00:00:00] [singing bowl rings]

[00:00:14] >> PEI-LING LEE: Arriving here and now, maybe joining me in closing the eyes just for one moment, if that is safe and available to you. [silence] Turning into the inner world, the spaciousness within the self. The whole self fully present now. Noticing the breath as it is. [silence] Witnessing and observing with compassionate curiosity the inhale, the exhale, and the space in-between. [silence] Noticing where the breath is traveling within the body, the quality and rhythm of the breath. [silence] Maybe inviting the inhale and the exhale to lengthen. Gently and slowly feeling the breath expand throughout the body and beyond.

[pause]

[00:02:31] Sensing the origin of the breath, wherever that is for you. [silence] Checking in with the lungs and the heart space. Maybe the breath originates from the belly, or even from outside the body. Noticing what you notice. [silence] Noticing the sound of the breath. Maybe it's an inner hearing of sound, or the sound of the air traveling through the nostrils, or releasing on the exhale from the lungs. [silence] Like this is your first ever time in physical form. [silence] With a beginner's mind, with fresh eyes, you're simply fascinated by what it is that this body is, fascinated by how this body is.

[pause]

[00:05:03] With that listening, I invite you to notice the sounds alongside the breath that are with and within you now. [silence] What is the most distant sound that is present with you? [silence] What is the sound that is closest to your core?

[pause]

[00:05:57] Are there any sounds present that part of you might wish were not there? Welcoming any resistance to sound. [silence] Welcoming the sound itself. [silence] Can you, just for now, welcome any resistance that may be present, any judging or labeling, fixing or trying? [silence] Can you welcome what is? [silence] Welcoming any resistance and welcoming that which you may be resisting.

[pause]

[00:07:43] Zooming out the sense of self from the level of the divine, that which you are, that which include all that is and seems to be.

[pause]

[00:08:18] Welcoming all that is, with love and light, and gratitude.

[pause]

[00:08:42] I'm centering now in your core essence, your center, whatever your sense of that is in this moment, the truth of you, the sanctuary of your wholeness and divinity arriving in that space, that sense, that knowingness. [silence] Can you choose to live from here, to live from your truth, your wholeness, your divinity? [silence] Are you choosing to live from here, to be from here? [silence] Do you choose to live from here? To be from here? To be here, enjoying this presence and connection of self, of oneness, of that which is?

[pause]

[00:11:04] Now I'm writing the sound of the same goal to wash through you and seal in the benefits of this for all that is. [silence]

[00:12:14] [musical instrument plays]

[00:12:22] As you are complete, gently returning to the breath and blinking the eyes open.

[pause]

[00:12:38] Welcome. Welcome, welcome. Hello, again. I am Pei-Ling and it is such a joy to be here with you and to spiral within together. This is Spiraling With/in, a multi-dimensional container for connecting in the present moment. We get to be here connecting with each other from this space, from this place of our wholeness and our divinity, heart-to-heart, one-to-one. It's just such a blessing. There's really nothing to do. There's nothing to do and there's no agenda. [chuckles] I definitely have no agenda for this.

[00:13:38] There's something really, really wonderful and magical about just showing up empty to the present moment, and trusting that if this is where I am, if this is where we are, then this is where we are, [laughs] because as much as we can plan or prepare ahead of time, life happens in the present moment. This is the present moment, whichever present moment this happens to be for you. Maybe it's 2053 when you are listening to this. [laughs] That would be cool. In some timeline dimension that already is right now in this one quantum now moment. That's really cool.

[00:14:38] At least for me right now, what day is it? It is June 2nd, 2022. I am sitting in what was my childhood bedroom that I've since repainted and redecorated as I am joyfully and gratefully staying with my parents for these months. We are joined by, in the distance the sound of a barking puppy, Mei-Mei. She very much, her barking, inspired the meditation that we just went through. I found myself as I was inspired to sit down and record this with you and to join you in this space, her barking.

[00:15:34] Essentially, she hangs out with me most of the day but there comes a time such as this where I am guided to set her outside and to seal her away from my bedroom door, and she barks. She barks and she cries. I could wait for a perfect moment where she isn't barking and I can welcome the part that resists her barking. There's this energy that's like, "Mei-Mei shouldn't be barking, there shouldn't be barking or potentially distracting background noises when recording something like a podcast because that would be an interference." That is a frequency of interference that should not be there.

[00:16:41] Maybe you have examples of your life, even in this now moment, where is there anything in your awareness that part of you is saying, "That shouldn't be there," or, "It would be better if that weren't there"? Even that, the subtlety of comparing what is to what could be. That idea that this transmission, this connection, this communication, would be better if Mei-Mei weren't outside barking. That's a bloop, bloop, bloop mental formation. It's a comparison programming that really— I point to the forehead because that's at least where I experience those types of thoughts.

[00:17:39] Any should thought, or comparison thought. Any better or worse, right or wrong thought, it tends to be hanging out in the human brain area. If I just drop awareness from that human brain, there's maybe a foot lower down into the heart space. Suddenly, what seemed to be a do or die situation is no longer as do or die. [laughs] This is living from the mind and believing the clouds of mental formations that pass through as ultimate truth, which we can. We have the sovereign choice to live anything really as our truth.

[00:18:54] I could identify with that and create my entire reality around the idea that Mei-Mei shouldn't be barking or would be better if Mei-Mei weren't barking. That would have a whole domino effect in terms of how my experience would shift around that. It's essentially like, "What is?" In the meditation I talked about centering. What is the center from which I am pivoting or experiencing what is? I've gotten to experience over the years because I very much for the vast majority of my life, for over two decades, I live from the mind, the forebrain, the survival brain, some people call it the monkey brain.

[00:19:46] It was really just doing the best it could. The best it knew how, the best it was programmed to be. When I say best, it's a non-hierarchical best that if you can conceptualize that or sense into what by that, it's the fullest expression of its potential in that moment. Living from the mind from the intellectual, logical, analytical, reasoning mind, the judging mind, the separating mind, because that is what separation consciousness also manifests as it's the seeing things as being separate, seeing that Mei-Mei barking during this, and Mei-Mei not barking during this are two separate events. Yet, she's not barking right now.

[00:20:50] We can see that within one experience, both can coexist, that they're not actually two separate instances. That's the process of discernment, even when discerning from the intellect or thinking. Thinking it's thoughtfulness, just being full of thoughts. The way my programming used to be that I chose for it to be was really around thoughts as being the ultimate source of truth or the ultimate capacity for it. How agile and flexible. I suppose I still resonate with that of just an openness and a flexibility with thought, because then it's not actually being tied to one thought but the capacity to be expansive and receptive to a variety of thoughts.

[00:22:08] Even that though, even living from the realm of thoughts, it's like that's what I knew. That's what was familiar. That's what was comfortable for me. I was like, "This is what it means to be human." You think, you problem-solve. Oh my gosh, critical thinking. That's a skill that they have on every class school thing. It's their problem-solving ability, their critical thinking ability.

[00:22:43] I am not interested in critically thinking. Not presently. I'm really uninterested in critically thinking. Critically thinking from the place of literally being critical with thought, being criticizing, or there's criticizing and then there's that level of discernment as well of figuring out what something is, figuring out what is being communicated. Just thought in general. When living from the mind, we're living from ego, from thought programs, it can be easy to believe that without thought we no longer exist, that thought is necessary in order to be.

[00:23:59] This very much also relates to— I have an uncle who has Alzheimer's. The idea of forgetting the self, just forgetting the self, it's like who am I if I forget that I am who I am? With or without a diagnosis of Alzheimer's many people, and I've gotten to experience this too, are choosing to live from forgetting the self. By the self in this context, I mean the whole self, the divine self, the multidimensional self, the conscious self.

[00:25:04] I love this. There's an episode of Tara Brach's podcast where— What is her podcast called? It might be called Radical Compassion, or that's her book. Anyway, Tara Brach is wonderful. In one of them, she shares this anecdote that really stuck with me. If I just paraphrase it, it was essentially talking about a smoker who was in the hospital for, I think maybe for his lungs, lung surgery. The daughter was pleading the dad, please stop smoking. He

goes, "No, I'm never going to stop smoking. I'm a smoker. That's who I am." He was identifying his sense of self with being a smoker.

[00:25:57] Then he has a stroke and it affects his memory centers. Suddenly, after he has that stroke and he recovers from that, he stopped smoking. He just never smokes again. The shift was that he forgot that he identified himself as being a smoker. He forgot that he was a smoker. In forgetting that he was a smoker, the attachment to that identity was no longer energizing his experience, and allowed him essentially the blank slate of infinite possibility of being anyone. I love that anecdote because of that question of who could I be? Who am I if I forgot who I thought I was?

[00:27:07] There's that idea of living from the mind. All through school, I had a very square, rigid box of a sense of self. This was a combination of programming that I chose to incarnate with as well as just a lot of stuff that I internalized from messaging around subconsciously, the collective human consciousness. Also, just direct feedback that I was receiving from my environment, a self-fulfilling prophecy or the influence of identity being reinforced in a way. For me, that was very much academics and constantly being praised for academics. My identity became wrapped up in that.

[00:28:10] Naturally, I identified myself as being someone who just gets straight A's. Through high school and college, in moments where that was potentially— it felt like it was being threatened, that became equated with survival for me, in terms of that separation consciousness programming if I don't get an A, I'm unworthy, I'm not good enough, until I'm not even going to venture into the territory of where that's even a possibility, I'm going to work hard, because I was very much believing that hard work was necessary.

[00:29:00] I'm going to work hard and make sure, this is all from the mind and the squinty forehead, I'm going to make sure that I do everything and my power to guarantee that I uphold this sense of self. I uphold these, really values I suppose, these qualities and values that I identified with. This is all from this was all internal. Of course there were subliminal or subconscious messages or things that I was just picking up in the energetics of what was, even though I wouldn't have described it as such at the time. As I was awakening to all of my programming I would say maybe through college, it first began as me being like I've actually internalized all of these external expectations, so I saw it in that framing of some things were coming to me from the outside in rather than from the inside out.

[00:30:14] Whereas now, my perspective on it is that even there being outside and inside, it's an illusion. It's all just on. I include that which seems to be outside me as well, and it just happens to be, that was the choice of the evolutionary path, the path of remembrance that I got to experience. In creating this rigid box, this— Because to the mind, to my mind, that box was safe. I know it's not a chemical reaction, an equation. It's like an equation where I know that if I put in this plus this, then I'll get this outcome. Like I had solved the equation for grades in school and I knew what to plug in.

[00:31:09] Since I found what worked, I just kept doing it and could adapt that to different teachers, because every teacher has different expectations. I'd cracked the academic code in a way that worked for me. As "successful" as that was, I was very adept at getting A's, I was coming at it from fear. It was all through and because of fear, the fear of not getting an A, the fear of not achieving my fullest potential, because that's really— Part of what I came down to

in this programming was I'd always known from a young age that I had this vast capacity, this extraordinary potential.

[00:32:26] When people would say, or just the [inaudible] "Just try your best, just do your best." I knew that my best was getting A's, and that just happened to be the institution in which I was operating at the time. I was very much in the system. The system was like, "This is a success. This is the goal." I was like, "Okay, that's the goal." These are certain markers, getting straight A's, in high school being valedictorian. These are markers that I can then focus my Mars energy drive, because I have a lot of Mars influence in my astrological chart, my fiery focus in that direction.

[00:33:24] At the same time, there was always the speaker in me, this sense of, "What am I passionate about? I don't know what I'm passionate about." Other people seem to be lit up by things that they just know. They see that and they're like, "I'm going to do piano or baseball, that's it. I'm going to commit to baseball." There was part of me that always longed for that focus, that thing that I could just pour my heart and soul into. I got the experience of directionlessness, of feeling lost and confused, and not knowing where I was meant to be.

[00:34:22] When in actuality it's like without that thought, this goes back to the head versus the heart, and it's not even a versus, it's the head and the heart, because from the spaciousness of the heart, and I love the heart center, it's like the heart includes the mind. The heart is just big, open, vast hugs, which I love hugs. The hug include even the mind. Without the thought that I have no direction, again, it's like who am I if I forget who I am, without the thought that I have no direction, where am I? Who am I? I am here. My direction is actually here.[laughs]

[00:35:13] It's right here. It's being me. It's being now. I'm so glad that I got to box myself in. That's what I did, I boxed myself in and not just academics and grades, and the fear of potentially getting an A-minus, and how that would destroy my— It felt like it would completely destroy and obliterate my sense of self. Why did I care about myself of self? Because I was in tribal consciousness programming of needing belonging, and longing to feel acceptance from a group, the group being a peer group, but also just humanity. It's like for all of my peers to— A fall from grace, that's what it was like.

[00:36:06] I ended up not falling from grace, but I did. I chose to leap. That's what I did. Rather than it being a fall from grace, I did have— There was one year. It was my sophomore year of high school where interesting that I put my arms back in that moment. There was just an interesting energy that I put my arms behind me as I shifted into the potentiality of talking about my sophomore year of high school when I, at the under— There was an award ceremony at the end of it each year. In my sophomore year, I only got one award.

[00:36:54] That sounds however it sounds. Only got one award rather than the prior year where I had awards in multiple different departments. It was crushing for me. I was so upset. I felt like an utter failure for having only gotten one award that year. Even though I got straight A's, but I only had one award. It was this wake-up call. I was like, I have not been trying hard enough in school, I haven't been focused enough. It was like the year of 16th birthday parties, if that's any context. It was more of a friendship social development year, and in that, my academics shifted. My relationships shifted and I only got one more.

[00:38:00] It also sounds silly because it almost sounds like the way that high school Pei-Ling operated was that, back to the equation, if I plug in X, Y, and Z, I know that I'm going to get this solution. It was very much from this internal locus of control mindset of, not hacking the system, but just feeling like I had such an in-depth understanding of how academics and academic awards worked, that I was like, "Yes, of course if I do this, then there will be this outcome." I didn't start high school— I went to a different high school than middle school. Middle school is not an award time.

[00:38:52] I always got A's, but there was something that shifted for me when I went to high school where suddenly there was this level of prestige that my mind was set upon and had its eye secretly towards. I say secretly because there was a part of me, there was also judging my desire to shine. I say shine because to me at that time, that was the epitome of shining. Shining meant being at the top of the class. Shining meant getting straight A's. Shining meant wearing, wearing forest green blazers and business casual-like circle skirts. [laughs]

[00:39:40] Sweet high school Pei-Ling. I started high school with a clear— I even vocalized this. I verbalized this to my mom at least, or to my family. I was like, "I'm going to be valedictorian. I'm going to get A's. I'm going to go to an elite college." That was a top-tier school, straight A's and valedictorian. Those were my three things that I set out for myself. Little did I know at the time the power of— I didn't know anything about manifestation and conscious manifestation. Those were, I suppose, innate to me. They were innate. It was the choice and the willpower, and the focus, and the self-belief that it was possible.

[00:40:34] I just believed and I knew that it was a possible thing for me, because it was. I didn't have the expectation that those things were going to happen, but I held onto that vision. Over the course of high school, different comparison thoughts or self-judgment of, "Wow, there are so many do, do, do. They're probably going to—" I saw it as a competitive environment. Especially for something like valedictorian, there's an inherent overlay of hierarchy built into that, of this is the one standout student from this class of 400 students. That's quite a thing.

[00:41:28] Yet, I saw that and I was like, "That's me." My path to getting there in my mind was, I just focus on school, I work hard, and then it'll just be done. Then I'll be successful. Then I'll have achieved all of my brightest dreams. My future life will just be a guaranteed win because I'll be going to a great college. Then I'll study really hard. After I study really hard in college that will guarantee me a great job. Then I'll work in this great job and earn money to support and provide for my family. Then after I provide for my family, then I'll get to retire maybe when I'm 60.

[00:42:22] Then that's when I'll have this pile of money to rest upon and simply just enjoy my life. That's when I'll enjoy my life and enjoy my progeny, and the family that is expansive, and all these things. I remember when I heard myself saying that out loud, this one, two, three-step vision for my life when I was a junior. I was 17. As soon as I heard myself say that out loud, it was surfacing this subconscious programming. It was also very conscious that I had just believed and identified with for so long that I didn't realize how I didn't actually want that.

[00:43:11] It was only when I said it that I got to see it outside of myself. In high school, my sense of self was very much all in the head. Even the fact that I was so identified with academics and being intellectual or being smart, or being good at taking tests or whatever it is, it's like my entire self-worth and self-identity was wrapped up in the

forehead. Even as I'm talking about it now, there's this energy and pressure in the forebrain. Circling back to the sophomore year grades and feeling like a failure, that was my little pendulum swing, then I swung away back the other way.

[00:44:04] The next few years I got the awards that I envisioned myself getting and then was valedictorian and blah, blah, blah, blah, all the things. When I did find out my senior year that I was valedictorian, I was genuinely thrilled. I was so happy, so shocked, and surprised. It was like my dream that I had held close to my heart was coming true. It was like, wow this really happened. This thing that I imagined is now here, and then. Of course, there's an "and then". It's like, what happens when your dreams come true? I got the straight A's, I got the valedictorian, but based on the programming of what my mind had identified as a top-tier college, I had failed.

[00:45:18] Because I ended up not going to a school that was within my definition of a top tier. Even though I'd gotten into all the other schools I applied for, because I didn't get into that topest of top, tippity top tier, based on, again, the programming that my mind was identified with based on the context and the society that I chose to grow up in, the, because the environment in which we grow up is so informing the programming that we then get to deprogram. For me, that was growing up in Silicon Valley where STEM and tech, and having a Chinese Malaysian dad and an English Irish mom, and just a biracial existence, and also going to being very immersed.

[00:46:16] All of my friends had immigrant parents. Pretty much most people were Asian, either Chinese or Taiwanese, or Vietnamese, and also Cantonese. I was in a bilingual Mandarin immersion program. From preschool to 8th grade, I was learning both Mandarin and English in school full-time. That's just a primer on the context in which the programming specific to this incarnation for me came from. That's where this very work hard achievement survival mindset, that was the flavor of it for me. That was the most angry year I got to experience, it was 2015.

[00:47:23] That was the year that I graduated high school and then went to college. That year for me, it was just full of anger and bitterness, and resentment. It was like my equation broke. I thought that if I do X, Y, Z equals blah, blah, blah, then I'll get these things, but then the way that life unfolded for the college, which even, my feelings about college have changed naturally. The whole college thing, the fact that it was like this didn't actually turn out the way that I expected, there was thus resistance, going back to the meditation of welcoming resistance.

[00:48:15] I had this major resistance to what was true and present in my reality, which was, I didn't get into or got wait-listed at these seemingly top-tier schools. I am going to be giving a speech at graduation as valedictorian. The combination of those two things sparked and triggered such anxiety, and dreaded me. The shame that I felt about going to the school that I went to and chose to go to, which is Boston College, that's the university I went to. Absolutely, that's 100% where I was meant to be. That was the perfectly aligned, divinely aligned place for me to be. I'm so grateful that I got to go there.

[00:49:13] For senior year high school Pei-Ling in Silicon Valley, the prospect of being announced as being valedictorian and going to Boston College for me, I was just so deep in the shame of that. It felt like a failure to me because the prior valedictorians of the high school that I went to Harvard and MIT, and probably Cal Tech, and just blah, blah, blah, those types of schools. Here I was going to Boston College, which, zooming out to many people, Boston College is a top-tier school. It's all arbitrary and just reflective of that programming at the time. Even the

whole system of hierarchical rankings of colleges. [laughs] blah, blah, blah. I'm just clearing all of that blah, blah, la, la, la, la, la. I'm so, again, just so grateful that it triggered such intense emotion of failure for me because that was all rocket fuel. It catalyzed so much for me. Harboring all of that anger, especially when I— then I went to college and I was— It just all felt like a crapshoot to me who gets into what college and I was like, "Oh, but I know that I would thrive at any of these other colleges so why—?"

[00:50:58] It just challenged my sense of self and my self-worth, because it's like, "Okay, I know that I am capable of not just coasting in these other schools but thriving there, and yet I didn't get in." They talked about the whole how many qualified applicants blah, blah, blah, but really if I neutralize and then look at it from that level of energy and divine path and all these things. I only got into the schools that I was a vibrational match for, that I was meant to potentially go to, and those other schools simply weren't a vibrational match for me.

[00:51:51] There are infinite reasons and I don't need to know the reasons now. I don't need to know the reasons now but it very much challenged thinking mind, intellectualizing Pei-Ling because it did not make logical sense. When things don't seem to make sense, and yet they are, how do we proceed? Where do I go from there? How do I come to accept? That shift from anger to acceptance was a profound journey for me that first year of college that, "Okay, I'm angry that I'm here. I'm angry that this is where I am." I was doing a lot of comparison of why are academics so easy here?

[00:52:45] That I had this belief that college should be hard or even the college should be academically focused, and whatever academics mean. It can't be wishy-washy, soft, liberal arts, academics. Like communications was not a good enough major or something. I was like, "I'm going to do chemistry and philosophy," but even philosophy because of all the programming. I remember my dad being— I think he sent me an article being like, "No one succeeds with a philosophy major." I ended up majoring in neither of those things. I majored in international studies which was myself compromise of, "Okay, this is legitimate enough and yet it is still in the social sciences and the—" What do they call the, not the political arts. Interdisciplinary arts kind of thing.

[00:53:49] The journey from anger to acceptance. I'm so grateful for retreats. [laughs] I'm grateful for the experience of going on a retreat and getting to connect with others on a level of humaneness and wholeness and heart-centeredness. I remember I went on a treat during the winter break of my freshman year of college and that really profoundly shifted my experience because it helped me connect with similar wavelength people in the college environment. I got to be like, "Oh, wow. Here are some people that I really connect with." Having a sense of community, it can be very helpful.

[00:54:41] Also, it inspired this realization that for me college— maybe it wasn't about academics. Maybe my purpose for being a Boston College was not actually for the academics but for all the other aspects of life that I had not been engaging with while I was so focused and my self-worth was so wrapped up in academics. That was the beginning of ticking my box of, "Pei-Ling gets straight A's, Pei-Ling is good, Pei-Ling is smart, Pei-Ling does the right thing, Pei-Ling dresses a certain way, Pei-Ling doesn't drink or isn't interested in doing any drugs, or anything like that. Pei-Ling is just good and smart and perfect in her own way and blah, blah, blah."

[00:55:47] That was the beginning of the shifting of me living from within that box. Then my subsequent years in college helped me shatter that box. Did I build new boxes? I'm sure. Maybe there were some new boxes built but that original box, that birth to high school box that I had for myself going to college and getting to step outside of that and look back and be like, "Whoa, that was a narrow box that I was trapping myself in." I was choosing to experience being trapped within that box.

[00:56:33] Though I wouldn't have used that language I'd be like, "Yes, this box is just who I am. It is safe and it's comfortable and it's good and it's right." That box was as a mind box. It wasn't the heart box, but I always had the longing of heart connection. My heart was always calling to me, especially in friendship. I always thought a level of depth in my friendship.

[00:57:15] My heart was closed. In that box, it's like just as there was a box around my mind there was a box that was guarding my heart and I didn't know how to soften that.

[00:57:36] I wanted to but it seems so hard and challenging and scary, and that to me was essentially where that realization, that, "Okay, college maybe isn't about academics for me but it's about social life, friendship, even spirituality." I sought out a spiritual director my freshman year of college even though I wouldn't have self-identified as spiritual or definitely not religious.

[00:58:23] Even though I went to a Catholic high school and college, and then worked in another Catholic high school, that idea of mentorship, of guidance, and being able to talk about things like morality and ethics and life as a whole was something that I really valued. I got here through spiritual direction in college. I got to ask myself questions and also have conversations about questions like, "What does it even mean to believe in God? How can somebody believe in God and yet act and live a different way? How can you say that you love or you believe in Jesus and yet not live within or from Christ's consciousness or just love?"

[00:59:24] I'm assuming hypocrisy of that was— That was a very mind question. [laughs] All of those questions were very mind questions. They weren't heart questions but there was heart in the questions too. Anyway, [inaudible] to do. Boxes around my mind, my heart, academics, spirituality. What's present for me right now in this moment is simply this compassion that I have for all of these ages that I've gotten to experience the me's that I have been and who are fully, even the fact that they're showing up and we're communing together now. I'm so grateful that they get to be with us and to share these aspects of what I've gotten to experience with you from the place of love and that open-armed heart hug welcoming what is present.

[01:00:47] The beauty that I found in letting academics be easy for me, that was really, I would say where the beginning of, "Oh actually, it's okay if I don't work hard." That was the beginning of that for me realizing, "Okay, I don't actually have to work that hard and I'd still get A's." That was a massive discovery that I was grinding myself in high school.

[01:01:16] Even when I was in second grade, I was grinding myself for book reports and stuff, and then I discovered, "Oh, I actually don't need to grind. I can float. I can coast still get A's and have all this spacious free time to explore extracurricular activities and friendship and just explore the city and hang out and travel and enjoy the fullness of life. I'm so glad and grateful that I remembered that I was free to do that and remembered that life— I gave myself permission for life to be easy.

[01:02:10] Then I just kept letting it get easier and easier. No, that's really what happened. Even my senior year of college, when I had a moment in my fall semester where it was just the season of applying for jobs. Like, "What are you going to do after college? What are you going to do after college?" This ending looming, and then it's like, "What is the new beginning after the ending? This mind needs to know," and I was doing all my life LinkedIn informational interviews.

[01:02:39] I was always very proactive. It's actually funny and endearing to think about. I was very proactive with connections and I loved connecting with people who were already living their lives in a career that maybe I was interested in, whether it was a TV producer or— Actually I did do a lot of informational interviews with people in media.

[01:03:07] There was something there clearly that I was interested in, which is funny. The irony of me poopooing communications as a major when really that's what I do, and I enjoy. Even now, my choice to do international studies and to study things like government and UN and just war theory and game theory and economics. It was an intentional choice on my part to study the things that I wasn't going to study on my own. I saw colleges. "How do I make the most?" I very much had that. I had that belief. It's like, "College is such an investment. It is such an investment on every level. How do I make the most of this experience?"

[01:03:59] When I first went to college, in my first year, I was like, "Okay, making the most of the experience means doing the most." Even before I started my freshman year, I joined a club. There was this club called Women in Business. I contacted the people running Women in Business and I ended up getting myself a board position on the club board in my freshman year. I was just already going all in.

[01:04:32] I ended up discovering that club was not really in alignment with me and so I got to stop that. It was this really eager from fear. There was an eagerness to— and the word's coming up, it's capitalize. To capitalize on my experience because I was afraid of wasting. Wasting my time, wasting resources, wasting energy, wasting money on something that might not be worth it.

[01:05:16] That is quite a frequency to live from. The fear of wasting because it is. It's in that survival and it comes from a very valid place of people's lived experiences, whether it's my parents or my ancestors who had the bodily experience of physical not-enoughness. Like not enough food or warmth or space and feeling that and living that. We can be living from those programs without realizing that we're living from programs that didn't originate with us that aren't actually serving us anymore and I just found so much more peace in trusting or really just letting myself not do as much.

[01:06:14] "What if I'm actually only in one club and not five?" My freshman year I also wanted— That was the first time that I was interested in doing my yoga teacher training, but I was also doing all these other things plus classes and I was looking at research positions. I basically had a checklist of like, "These are the things that a successful person does in college. Then let me just like go through and do all those things." I ended up not doing all those things, which was perfect.

[01:06:49] I can tell you that I did an online magazine. I was newspaper because I did that in high school too. Even right now I'm remembering what I did in college. What I remember more is the evolution of myself rather than what I necessarily did and the people that I spent time with and the experiences that I got to have. I can tell you that those classes are not at the top of the list. Learning in classes. There were some classes. Of course, I'm thinking from the mind right now and I'm looking back and I'm like, "Okay, discerning what? Blah, blah, blah, or what's present now?"

[01:07:50] The truth is, even if I forgot all of my college experience, if I forgot in this now moment that I ever existed up until this now moment, I would still be me. That is what it is all about. All of this reflecting into the past— Yes it can be— It might not be obvious, but it's come up because it has been true to be expressed in this present moment for whatever reason. Even if you're listening to this in 2053, maybe it's a historical artifact to see, "Oh wow humans lived like that."

[01:08:35] I now get to remember that even if all of that just flew away from my memory, I would still be me because it's— all of these experiences, as we experience things— Experiences activate things within us and we integrate the energetics of it. It's like eating food. Eating food is an experience, but we hold onto the nutrients, and then we just release what we're complete with that's experiences.

[01:09:11] Memories are not something— my experience of recalling memories that seem like they're in the past. They're relevant to me because they're arising in the present and there's obviously— Wow, I say obviously. There's something here. A memory from the past arising in the present is simply information for what is here. There's something fun about that that there's like the richness in everything. That inexperience ripples out through the course of our life regardless of the element of time.

[01:10:09] I can experience something when I'm six, when I'm 16, when I'm 80, and that is rippling in all the directions which is pretty cool. Then our relationship to what that memory is and that's where we reprogramming is so cool is I get to now go to valedictorian Pei-Ling who is so anxious and felt so ashamed. I get to just wrap my arms around her and look her in the eyes and hug her and say, "You are amazing. You are amazing, you are perfect, you are whole, you are exactly where you are meant to be, and look, this is who we are.

[01:10:57] "We are joyful and at peace. We are content and we are living in easeful service. We are contributing, we are radiating truth and illuminating beauty. There's actually nothing we have to do. We just get to be as we are." Even as I say these words with her present now, 18-year-old Pei-Ling is there's this shoulder-dropping sensation, this relief, this [sigh], this amazement that like, "This is who I get to be? Wow. Wow."

[01:12:01] Reprogramming of memories of— because bringing up is one thing. It's like anyway, I could go through all the beliefs that I once believed talking about the boxes of my mind and my heart. but that point of anger to acceptance is the meaning of love. It's embracing these parts, these experiences with compassion and self-forgiveness that it's— I was showing up in my fullest divine potential at that time even if I didn't realize it. Even if I forgot that. Even if I forgot the divinity that I am, even if I chose to experience life with this inner conflict and struggle and effort, all of that gets to be included and welcomed in the beauty of what is.

[01:13:03] Because even if I was seeming to live from a box and put myself in a box and was so afraid from the mind, the survival mind, because in some ways, even the box, the physical body can be experienced as this limitation, this box of limitation. That's why I love inviting the question of, "Okay, do you end where your skin ends? Does the you that you are end where it seems like this border is defining you or separating you from that wish of outside of you?"

[01:13:53] That may sound like an abstract question but it's a very direct embodied experience. I find closing your eyes can be helpful with this. Just allowing the awareness to go to the edges of you, your sense of what your edges are. Do you even have an edge? Then when you say that there is an edge that arises, so maybe that's the border of your skin and when the eyes are closed, we're not referencing memory. We're not going into the past of where we remember our skin to be. It's going with the direct experience of right now as though you've totally forgotten who you are, what shape you are, where you are in your direct experience of now. Are there edges to you?

[01:14:59] If so, what happens when you explore those edges? What quality is present in the edge? Is it a hard edge or a soft edge? Is it fuzzy or blurry? Is there a temperature? When I tune in, there are no edges to me. I begin in the heart and I explore out. Now, which seems to be an edge as I approach it, it just keeps going and going and going beyond the walls of this room beyond this world, this earth. It's infinite. In the infinite spaciousness, I still am. I don't end where my feet touch the floor. The cool thing is that science gets to show that too, affirm that, that when we just zoom in and zoom in and zoom in and zoom in and zoom in everything is just vibration and space.

[01:16:25] It's just spaciousness and energy. We can directly experience that when we drop down, drop awareness down from the mind into the heart, into the body. I can even experience the expansiveness of the mind as well. There's just so much body underneath the head as well to explore and to experience. In that edgelessness, in that infinite space of the self, the whole self, the multidimensional self, the self that includes all of the things that seem to be around the air, the [inaudible], friends, the walls and the floor.

[01:17:33] Again, that question of resistance is, is there anything within you that you would rather not be there? Are there any boxes that you notice that are being drawn? Then if you notice the box then you notice that you are the one noticing the box and you're not only the box. Are you only that which resists? Are you only that which wishes something would be different? Or are you that which includes the one that resists or are you that which includes the energy of maybe it's pain or discomfort or whatever label you resonate with to meet sensation?

[01:18:22] Ultimately, everything just comes down to sensation whether it's a thought form or a physical [inaudible], [chuckles] it's an expression of sensation or emotion is just sensation and then it manifests as energy in different areas of the body.

[01:18:49] That direct experience of now and here, it simplifies all of that chitter chatter of the mind. It simplifies any question of, "Who am I?" or, "What do I do? Where do I go?" because all of the answers, the guidance is in the direct experience of now? I am and I am here. The way that this now moment connects to the next now moment is just like the breath. It breathes through me. It breathes through us, it breathes through the body. The next thing you know, you're in another breath. [laughs] Is like the next thing you know you're in another now moment. Here is where, once more, we'll just transition to a comfortable posture and position maybe with the eyes closed as we close out this sacred space, our time together, which is as infinite as we allow it to be. And placing one hand on the belly and one hand on the heart. Like an easeful waterfall, any energy that is in the crown, in the mind, let me glide down this waterfall, done through the spine and the heart space into the belly and the root, down through the tailbone, all the way down into the earth.

[01:21:21] And this waterfall can continue on its own flowing through the spine and the column of the south, connecting the crown with the root and gifting anything that is complete as compost into the soil, into the earth, and to the open arms receptivity of Gaia.

[pause]

[01:22:13] Maybe for you, this waterfall has a color of light associated with it or a quality of the water, maybe it's a waterfall of flowers or of mist.

[silence]

[01:22:35] Just trusting whatever is aligned in your experience now. Letting the breath soften into the touch of your own hands, into a soft chest and soft belly

[pause]

[01:23:17] connecting with your center, the center from which you experience from, the love that you are

[pause]

[01:23:41] Offering gratitude to the body, to the breath, to the divine being that you are, offering gratitude to all the guides and ancestors, spirits, and friends. All realms and dimensions who are here supporting and contributing,

illuminating, and inspiring us and all now. I'm offering gratitude to this beautiful earth star, all the elements, and creatures, all the plants, and possibilities.

[pause]

[01:25:06] Offering gratitude to loved ones and ones that are unknown.

[pause]

[01:25:32] I'm finally offering gratitude to whatever is present for you now.

[pause]

[01:26:02] Bringing awareness to attach it to the palms upon the body. [silence] Lengthening the breath, feeling the chest and belly expand. Maybe beginning to sway the spine side to side, forward and back, any way that feels yummy and nourishing right now filling into the lumbar spine, the thoracic spine and the cervical spine and the neck, this connected column, this highway of energy, this grounding cord as the bridge of heaven and earth that you are, inherently.

[pause]

[01:27:39] Now, going to stillness once more, feeling energy rising from the root all the way through the crown. This lifting energy of golden light nourishing from the ground connected with the skies above, maybe even reaching the arms up and stretching. Whenever ready, blinking the eyes open. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you, beautiful friend. I am joyful and grateful and receptive to the gift of your presence with me and with us in this spiraling space. Much love.

[singing bowl rings]

