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Listening to the voice of the heart - Linda Pestana

Guest: Linda Pestana

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LILOU: Hello, Linda.

LINDA: Hello, Lilou.

LILOU: How are you doing?

LINDA: I am wonderful, thank you. This is a privilege and an honor for me to be here.

LILOU: You're welcome. I heard about you through different people and I'm excited to speak of the topic of the heart because you wrote a book called 'The Voices of the Heart'. You went through this journey and I think it's an amazing journey to go through. I think it's a difficult one as well. I really support people who are going through this journey. I think a lot of people are going through it right now. So, please, can you tell me what do you mean by voices of the heart?

LINDA: Lilou, we have only one heart and that's the heart within us and I wanted to share my heart with others because it's so important to be able to come in touch with our own breath and people do believe in that, believe in the [??]. you know, which gives them life, which calls us to life.

LILOU: What did you have to go through in your own story to be able to come to this place?

LINDA: Well, I had to go through life and life experiences and you know what, it's not the experiences in life, Lilou, that we remember, though they're wonderful, don't get me wrong. We can look at births so we can look at celebrations, we remember those. But it's those moments that call us into our darkest place that help us to grow and we can use those experiences, I believe, to define us, to destroy us, strengthen us. I really chose in my heart and in my own breath to be stronger because of them. What are some of those experiences, you're asking me? I think the life experiences, Lilou. Going through loss, going through death, going through shame, going through abandonment, going through loss of divorce or in my family, that changes us. It is our hearts that make us different, brings us to those places that we can't hide if you choose to.



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LILOU: Because at some point it becomes so difficult that we can also go down into depressions and people also decide to not live anymore. So, what happened to you in that lowest, deepest place? What did you decide to go back up and breathe again, live again?

LINDA: You know, I can tell you that I have been there and I also can tell you that I'm a different person because I've been there and the choices that I have made have helped me to become the person that I am right now, Lilou and to the listeners. I know what it's like to have my nose to the grind, I know what it's like to feel like I couldn't stand up, I know what it's like not to be able to feel this on when I catch that next breath because I feel so down. But I also know that if we are willing to have our hand available for someone to help us because for so many of us, we're afraid of that. We're afraid to be vulnerable and what I found in my journey, what I have found in my heart of heart and if I might add in working with the dying, they have taught me so much about living.

LILOU: And what made that transition?

LINDA: The transition was when they would tell me I am dying and I wish that I had been happier in life, I wish that I had not been so concerned about [??], I wish I had been kinder to myself –

LILOU: So it's a realization, then? You came to a place where you said this is no longer how I want to live my life, I decide to live fully and open my heart again.

LINDA: [??] and they're asking themselves those questions, in return I was asking those questions myself and I realized that I needed to take the steps that I need to take. But the truth is, I believe the truth is that it's much easier to talk to someone about those truths and say this is what we should do, that's all fine and good. But when you have to look in the mirror and say what about you, Linda? Are you happy? Are you at peace? Are you being kind to yourself so you can be kinder to others? Because that's the truth. If we're not good to who we are and I'd listen to you so often and you so often say that Lilou that we're all co-creators and if we don't create for ourselves, that place within our heart, how can we do it for others? And so I had to come to that place inside that took me, that [??] off my body, but it also opened my heart. I came in touch with my heart and my oneness and it made me realize that I am enough, that I am kind, I am gentle and I can make a difference in our world and what I do today, I do best because you know why? Because I listen. I have to understand what people go through. All I need is to be able to be there and to take their hand because isn't that what people want?

LILOU: Yeah, to do it first to ourselves, that's what you had to do.

LINDA: It has to come back here and that's why the heart for me is such a big symbol, the heart for me is what beats and if we don't come in touch with our own rhythm, we're not in touch with the people that



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we deal with because we don't empower with our own truth because isn't truth the most important ingredient in our journeys?

LILOU: I think your gratitude is one of the most important. Being grateful, I guess, at some point you have to be grateful, too, for being alive and what you had.

LINDA: Gratitude is key and I think if I have to look at all gifts, I would have to say that also because if we can look at what we have and not look at what we don't have, you know, my own experience, Lilou, and I think it's so truth for so many people is when we're born we grow up and we take life's journey before us. We don't have instructions, we don't have a manual of how to do it but we do have the power within us which I call God, higher being, that source, that has that strength, that built in strength within us, we have that. But do we believe that? Do we believe that we can go through something? I know I didn't until one day I realized that either I look at that strength within me and trust that I am never alone, that there is a force more powerful than life itself that's gonna keep Linda going. And you know what? It did. It did. Lilou, when I had, if you give me permission to say this, when I lost my mom a few years ago, I lost my mom, my dad and my best friend. Talk about going to that place of darkness, I thought that I was not gonna be able to make it. My mom was like my hero, you know. I just admired who she was and who she stood and what she taught and all of a sudden very quickly, she was taken away from me. Massive heart attack, gone. And I had to stand and come to that place of knowing that she'd gifted me with life and now I need to choose that and I stood in front of her grave the day that she was buried, as they were burying her and I had to walk away when he padded the last piece of dirt down and I remember the words that came in my heart were 'Linda, I gifted you with life and now you need to choose it.' So help me, that experience has taken me to this moment in time. I am not the same person, Lilou. I was a kindergarten teacher, loved it, [??] it and now I'm a chaplain and I work with the terminally ill and I work with bereaved so I know what it's like and I know what it's like and I know what it's like. So I can be there in the presence of the holy and not feel this is all I have to take away because no one can take pain away. No one. It hurts. How can you take it away? But what you can do is hold them and be there and not try to take that from them so that they can feel better. That's what the society is doing today is we wanna quick fix everything and we can't do that because –

LILOU: It's a journey.

LINDA: It's a wilderness. It's a wilderness. You gotta go through it, you can't go around it, over, around or under it. I found that out and I am sitting here before you saying I am a different person today and you know that I have been through all those tunnels and I've tried to avoid it, I've tried to block it.

LILOU: How would you, to end this conversation, you know really go to the core of your message and how you feel what is important that we need to understand in life?



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LINDA: That is such a tender question. It's such a tender question but one that is so important for all of us to hear that we are born for a purpose and we're not to leave this earth until our purpose is complete. But we also can carry a backpack around with us with our past that causes us to be weighed down by guilt and shame, regret and loss, unfinished loss, and those burdens or we can allow for us to put some holes in that so that piece of our journey can come out so that we can move forward knowing that life is a gift. It's a package that is given to us, that unfolds for us everyday and we don't know what today is going to be but we do have this moment and so if we can live and breathe and honor this moment, know that we have a strength and a power within us that is greater than all goodness, that is going to move us to that next step. That's what we have to hold on to.

LILOU: Thank you so much, Linda for your testimonial and taking the time to prepare this book to make it available for lots of people. I know it takes a lot of courage to share one's story authentically. I really appreciate that. Thank you.

LINDA: Thank you. Thank you so much, Lilou.

LILOU: You're welcome.

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