

#230 I've Got Me

Gitanjali Trevorrow-Seymour

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[00:00:00] **Susan:** today I am super excited to welcome Gitanjali Trevorrow-Seymour to Life Beyond The Numbers. Gitanjali, you're so welcome

I'm not sure actually. There may be competition for that, and my own isn't all that easy either, so

[00:00:25] **Gitanjali:** Truth, the truth.

[00:00:28] **Susan:** But it is quite the surname, and, and, your name as well, Gitanjali, is not a name I've come across before, and it's beautiful. It to me, it sounds like jewelry

[00:00:42] **Gitanjali:** Oh, I love that. Ah, yes, I am a little sparkly ornament in your life. it is unusual, I was born in India, I grew up in Australia, and I'm telling you, Susan, when I was a kid, I really, I just wanted to be Julie like everybody else, or Kylie, as the case was with, it was Kylie Minogue era. what isn't Kylie Minogue era, I'm just saying.

[00:01:01] **Susan:** Yeah.

[00:01:02] **Gitanjali:** and actually, I used to write on my school books when Gremlins came out and I was obsessed with Phoebe Cates. I used to write Phoebe on my school books, 'cause I'm like, "Can I just have a name that seemed normal to me. And now I'm like, "Okay, that's my name." And somebody said to me recently, they said to me, they actually said, "Yes, but what do your friends actually call you?"

And I was like, it's Gitanjali." I was like... But actually they used to call me Git or Gitty. I know. Which I didn't know until I moved here to London. That wasn't a thing in Australia. Git wasn't a thing. It wasn't. And then when I, and by that point I was Gita anyway. and then it was, Git. But so when I see my school friends or university friends, they call me Git or Gitty, I'm a bit like, "Oh, it feels weird," now that I'm, the full kit and caboodle of Gitanjali.

[00:01:54] **Susan:** Which actually it's interesting you say jewelry. the meaning of it is a song of praise, like an uplifting song. So no diamonds in there, but, Okay, so no pressure either.



[00:02:05] **Gitanjali:** No pressure. No pressure.

[00:02:09] **Susan:** song of praise, come on. hopefully we'll do some of that today, Gitanjali. And, fascinating how you and I met because I was at an event in Wales in March, and Gitanjali was one of the speakers at this event. And then I walked into a room in London a month later to another event, and Gitanjali is sitting in the audience, and we're like, "I know her from somewhere."

[00:02:38] **Gitanjali:** Are we not allowed to say what the original event was? Is

that

[00:02:40] **Susan:** don't know. I'm hearing you're not allowed to say it, so

[00:02:44] **Gitanjali:** Oh, you're allowed to say. it was a TEDx, for anybody that's listening to this. We're just not allowed to put out, any sort of, footage or anything of it until TEDx do. So who knows when people are listening to this, but hopefully the TEDx is out there, and at some point if not now, you'll be able to find it in the near future and watch it and enjoy it

[00:03:03] **Susan:** Absolutely. And if it is out by the time this comes out, I will put a link in the show notes for sure. And something I wanna come back to later, 'cause I do have a few things to talk to you first about, but the s- the next part that blows my mind about that talk is you had three words that you used, which were courage, curiosity, and possibility, and they are the words that I use to think about my coaching approach, and my approach in life really.

So that blew me away to have that connection as well, Gitanjali.

[00:03:39] **Gitanjali:** Isn't it gorgeous when there's those synergies? And I think it's really interesting 'cause those words, particularly I think curiosity and courage, are ones that I see coming out left, right, and center from people who are doing similar work to us. and I say that in the broad sense of it, but really it's about realizing the human potential, right?

It's like really unleashing that within other humans in whatever version of that it looks like to people. So curiosity and courage come out a lot. I have eight Cs 'cause, I like alliteration, and as you know, one of them is not confidence. We might get onto that, banning that C word. So when you reached out to me after we saw each other at the second event and you were like, "Oh, those are my..."



Or after the first event, wasn't it? "Those are three words that I use." And I thought it's interesting that we find a synchronicity in language when we're pointing towards truth that arrives quite simply if we let it. And, I know I made up a word possibilist, and that's maybe not the simplest of versions, but that's what I see to be true in the world as to how...

not to be true in the world, just actually the name I have for how we're designed. And so when you said all those three words are the ones I use at the end of my podcast, I just thought, yeah, it's very cool the way that we have this lexicon, this way as human beings to share truth through language that becomes consistent.

when we ha- It's so base the way that we're able to communicate how we are and who we are to other people. It's actually quite restrictive, this thing called language. So when there's words like that and I'm like, "Oh yes, that's right. That's what we're pointing towards." It's so cool

[00:05:22] **Susan:** Yes, but, and sometimes we have different meanings for the same words, or we see different things in them. and that's fascinating too, because words are art form as well, aren't they? And that's where I got the words possibilities from, was The Art of Possibility, which is that book

[00:05:41] **Gitanjali:** Ben Zander, oh, and his wife. Adore, adore.

[00:05:46] **Susan:** yeah. And-

[00:05:47] **Gitanjali:** listening to this and wish they could book Ben Zander as a speaker, please just, now reach out to me. I'm happy to be the much less, difficult to get ahold of and kind of book because version of him, in my own way.

But absolutely. I remember watching his TED Talk, ugh, I don't even know how long ago now. And everything he's ... I was just like nodding along, to the point where I'm like, "I think I may need to see a chiropractor after this," 'cause the it's oh my God, like one of those nodding dogs in the back of the car.

I'm just like, yes. Yes. That is... And he, of course, is expressing it through his experience as a conductor and what he's seen from that creative force. And, I'm bringing, my perspective, if you will, on, on what possibility actually is. But in both situations, it's... there's just something very glorious when we point to that space of possibility, that however we get there, people can feel it.



Just like that gap within themselves w- within which there is a possibility, that it's not already a given. It's not, doesn't have to be positive. It doesn't have to be n- not negative. I think

when we sat down and did like some maths homework with my son the other day, and he was doing like... anyway, it was fractions and then it was algebra, and it was like, $3x$ times minus, minus a squared or whatever. And I'm like, "Oh, wait. A minus and a minus is a positive, right? And you do that first before you do..." I'm like, I think like sometimes we get like that with our own thinking, is that, "Okay. Is it positive? Is it negative? But let me not be negative." oh, my God. It's like a maths equation doing my head in.

[00:07:32] **Susan:** A- and it, and then it multiplies

[00:07:34] **Gitanjali:** Yeah. And then you divide it by self, as in ego, and then I'm pretty sure we're gonna come up with, some amazing mathematical formula, you and I today. I did do one year of maths at university. Oh my God. And then towards the end of that year, it just started getting, not even abstract in the sense of, actual abstract maths, and I was like, "Yeah, I'm out. I'm just out." Because that mind is completely different to my mind. we're one mind, but completely different

[00:08:05] **Susan:** didn't you work in finance for many years, like in Credit Suisse or something?

[00:08:09] **Gitanjali:** well, actually, the thing that I found really interesting about that, and the reason that I actually liked things like data analysis and statistical science and maths, is because versus, I was an actress since six, I also studied philosophy, I was doing psychology, is there was an absoluteness as I saw it to it, until it started getting abstract.

But there was a, a... It was almost a relief, a security. I... It's either gonna be right or wrong. if I'm writing an essay on the nature of being through the lens of a giant whose shadow we are experiencing through form on Earth, it's like that's, it's like that's a different beast.

But actually now, it's interesting, 'cause I haven't thought about that for a while, and actually, God, that's really interesting because- Now I know that the absoluteness, as in the security, the, the assuredness is coming from me regardless of the subject. Whereas at the time I was such a people pleaser, I was such a perfectionist, I was such a get it right, and I knew there was an external way for me to be measured around that very clearly through maths and stats and data analysis. And the rest of it was, whether I was showing up for an audition or whether I was submitting a philosophy essay or that was like, ooh, now I'm on the line.



Whereas now, oh, thank goodness, and I try not to say, "If only I knew then what I know now." Because I feel like that sucks, and I don't want to say that to myself or to my children. "When I was your age, if I'd known this," I'm like, meh. that, that sense of actually now that I say it, and I haven't said that in a while, is that sense maths gave me, stats gave me that, is, oh, no, when I'm coming from a place of secure thinking, then regardless of what the subject or the circumstance is, I'm safe.

there is security. Do you know what I mean?

[00:10:13] **Susan:** And I like that you Got security. What I actually said was purity.

[00:10:22] **Gitanjali:** Oh

[00:10:24] **Susan:** However, I think it works as well. That's the thing. As you were talking, I was like, "That is fascinating," because there is that sense of security, but there's also that sense of purity that maths are often right or wrong. there is a definition.

There is, something to grasp on. Whereas when it comes to philosophy or-

[00:10:46] **Gitanjali:** I am totally, like really have to get my ears checked slash listen more carefully. because purity, I adore the word purity. And even actually as you're talking about maths, it's interesting 'cause a, a client of mine recently, she works in risk at one of the banks, and I don't know, I was talking as I often do in analogies, and I could see her go, oh."

And she had studied maths at university, and she said there's actually an imaginary number. It's, a small I that you put into an equation when you can't solve the equation,

[00:11:20] **Susan:** Oh

[00:11:20] **Gitanjali:** and it's like a holding number that unlocks the equation, and I think it is actually called the imaginary number. And she was hearing that because that's what I was pointing her in the dir- direction of, right?

there is this space within her that is going to arrive with the answer. It's invisible, et cetera. And she's like, "Oh, it's like maths." So I... listeners, if you're a maths, person, maybe you can put it in the comments. I'll go and Google it later. I think it was literally called the imaginary number.

And so actually that, even when it's like there's a purity to, to maths, it's yeah, sometimes that bit you just don't know, and there's like a holding kind of imaginary element that then unlocks the equation



[00:12:09] **Susan:** Wow. And this is Life Beyond the Numbers, so that fits so nicely

[00:12:16] **Gitanjali:** That's so cool.

[00:12:18] **Susan:** It's like a whole new equation for me to start playing with now. I've never heard that before. That's fascinating.

[00:12:26] **Gitanjali:** Yeah. It's very cool

[00:12:27] **Susan:** But maths and numbers underlie so much of the world anyway. and it's just a different form of communication as well, isn't it, often?

[00:12:37] **Gitanjali:** Yeah, I was obviously in banking for, obviously and not obviously, but, within that banking, accidental career for 15 years. as I said, I loved it at university because, the security/purity of it. security, should we just make up a new word? I like to make up new words, you know that.

[00:12:55] **Susan:** Oh, security, that's a nice

[00:12:57] **Gitanjali:** security, There was a sense of, I don't know, it's almost like the, the numbers were so big, they were so big that it just, you start to they don't sort of mean anything after a while. I don't mean to be glib about that, but I think what happens is you start to then see actually that's sort of numbers are, we're also just experiencing that through our own lens of what we think they are.

and my husband works in procurement, and he deals in, humongous contracts, with the McKinseys and the Deloittes and the EY-ies, and it's like these massive numbers. And then there's, to the title of the podcast, there's life beyond the numbers, and where does that experience actually come from?

Which I wasn't really conscious of as much in my banking career. I, as a leader, I was very interested in it from a people perspective, right? what was going on. And also for me, I was very accidentally caught up in identity and ego. Not egotistical, but ego as in, "Don't get this wrong," potentially.

your team needs you to be a good leader. really clever when we put loads of pressure on ourselves and then expect ourselves to perform well, right? Let me put more pressure on myself and then expect myself to do well. I'm yet to meet that person, who can do that. and then also for them, who are they?

at most I had 12 direct reports and, it's a bit like anyone that's got more than one child. It's like you, however consistent you think you're being as a parent or a leader, the



human being on the other side of that conversation is experiencing their own reality. we're in eight billion separate realities.

that, that was interesting to me. Not as acutely as it was when I was an actress, but it, there was a through line, which as Steve Jobs says, can join the dots backwards, which I love to do. Oh, this is why I did that, and that's why I did that. Oh, that makes sense. And then I'm like, "Okay, and here I am."

[00:14:51] **Susan:** I- I mean, isn't that life though? Because we do look ahead and go, "That's what I'm plan on doing," but, it never really works out, does it, according to the plan. But in hindsight, it makes perfect sense as if it was mapped out

[00:15:05] **Gitanjali:** I think it does and I think it doesn't. I think there, that we use hindsight and future thinking whichever way our thinking directs us. So hindsight, 20/20 hindsight. But also, I've used it and I know clients and friends, family that, that look backwards and are using it as a weapon against themselves.

"I should've done that. I could've said that. I shouldn't have said that in that meeting. I should've spoken up and said that. I wish I'd done that as a parent. I shouldn't have done that as a parent. I should've said this to my child. Why did I..." So I think we also can gloss over the fact that level of thinking, is taking us outside of this present moment.

And the future thinking as well, of "Oh, it'll go like this." And again, who have you ever met self-included, where it has, the plan has gone to plan? And I remember when, we were pregnant with... We, as if my husband was also carrying child. No, I was carrying human cell by cell. he was amazing.

anyhow, we went to these classes, these NCT classes, and here in the UK they have them. And one of the things that I will always remember is when she was talking about the birth plan, and, what do you write in there so that everyone's on the same page and, what is it that you want and how do you want it to go?

And then she said, "Please also know that this is a birth plan, but actually we should retitle it birth preference." Because that is your preferred way of having your baby. That does not mean that is how you're gonna have your baby. So that has always stayed with me as hey, this is my preference for what's gonna happen, and plan or not plan.

But actually with, there comes a lightness to that which isn't... it is taking self less seriously, and my thinking particularly for me. And it also brings a level of, from business and, I've worked with CEOs and C-suite ex- equity level partners, that are dealing with some pretty significant numbers.



So it's not about, oh, la, la, la, none of that matters. It's more actually when there's an understanding that the preference is this, there comes an adaptability and a flexibility and a presence that means you can change without having to ever use the word pivot in a PowerPoint

[00:17:29] **Susan:** our justification

[00:17:31] **Gitanjali:** Yes. Yeah.

Which is just so much more delightful.

[00:17:36] **Susan:** It is. and you used the word lighter, there is something much lighter about preference as opposed to I have to stick to this plan. And plus, you can't stick to the plan. I think you... Plans are like sticks to beat yourself with,

and actually can be limiting as well because maybe the potential is way beyond the plan.

But a preference just keeps you moving in one direction, or a direction that you prefer until you prefer something else

[00:18:10] **Gitanjali:** Exactly. and I sound a bit schizophrenic like, "Yes, but no, I prefer this. No, I prefer that." But I do think this, there is something about our ability to change our mind is a superpower, and sometimes we use it as a way to beat ourselves up. As in, "Oh, she changed her mind again," or, "Oh, I better not change my mind," or, "Don't you dare change your mind about this. You said you were gonna do da-di-dum."

And again, like anything else, we can make it up one way or t'other, which is why I'm not an optimist nor a pessimist, and that's why we're not designed that way, let alone to be a realist. Because, the realist is, where the optimist is, the glass is... I always say, it's glass half full or glass half empty, and a possibleist says, "Wrong question. The glass is full. It to be full of water and air."

[00:18:59] **Susan:** Ooh

[00:19:01] **Gitanjali:** the invisible that we can see. That's what we're designed for. That's the replenishable source. So we are always whole and complete.

It matters not whether the water is half full or half empty. Or if you're a realist and you're listening to this, here is the number of glasses that have ever existed, and here is a spreadsheet to tell you how and why they were brought into existence. I'm like, realists



also, it's very sneaky because, I just saw it so clearly during COVID, which is many years ago now, but it has really stayed with me, with an organization I was working with.

And, they were looking at budget for the leadership program and the exec coaching. And I remember their head of HR saying, "I just don't think we're gonna have the budget next year. we're gonna have to pull back on that side of things 'cause we're putting..." And this was November 2019, okay?

For anyone that remembers that time. And she said, "Because we're actually, we're funding this multimillion pound project for flexible working at home. We'd like to offer that to our employees and, it's gonna t- be a, a two-year time horizon for this project." You're laughing 'cause you can see where this is going, right?

And if I had said to her then and there- Hey, you could, you could do that for a fraction of the cost with a fraction of the people in a fraction of the time

[00:20:22] **Susan:** overnight.

[00:20:24] **Gitanjali:** She would've, laughed me out of the office and said, "Be realistic, Gitanjali." Or, we have to be realistic. It's gonna take X amount of time, X amount of resources, X amount of money."

It didn't take 24 months. It didn't take multi-millions. It didn't take multiple resources and project plans and rag statuses. it took three weeks, and they'd rolled it out across the entire company. So this is the bit where I really started to see through reality. And at the same time, I had started already studying neuroscience, and I was like, how are we creating our reality?

Like, where is that actually coming from?" And then came across, this understanding of how we're actually designed, had this massive awakening myself, and went, "Oh, wait a minute. Oh yeah, we are not optimists. We are not pessimists. We are not realists." Still sometimes a perfectionist. No.

[00:21:21] **Susan:** Pragmatist

[00:21:22] **Gitanjali:** pragmatist,

actually, the design of the system is quite simple and quite profound at the same time, and it is, what I call being a possibilist. But ultimately, it is that availability to us of something that is invisible in the glass, from which comes fresh thought and with it very pragmatic ways forward towards whatever the preference is, whatever the direction is that we then see for ourself from that space, not from, who we think we should be or



shouldn't have been or could be or would be or our parents did or our boss said or, all of the thinking that can go on that then becomes the water, right?

That then becomes like, I just need better thinking, more positive thinking. I should believe in myself more." And as I always say, just stop should-ing all over yourself. It's a filthy, dirty habit. Don't should on yourself.

[00:22:15] **Susan:** Don't should on yourself. And what came to me there as you were holding the glass up, Gitanjali has a glass of water, and it is half full, half empty, whatever way you want to look at it. But it was the space in the glass. Without leaving that space for possibility, opportunity, fresh, new thought, if we fill everything up all the time, where is the space?

[00:22:43] **Gitanjali:** And also, I think sometimes we can make that a problem. So we can say, I just don't have space in my life. I don't have time for myself," Or we attach our-- we outsource our wellbeing to things that sound good, like going to my yoga class, going to Pilates, going for a run, going for a swim, doing my ice bath, going-- seeing friends.

And that can become quite sneaky, where we go, "Okay, I haven't had space to do that." And we attach it to the concept of time. So I haven't had time for myself. I don't have time to think. I don't have a moment's break during the day. I just need to get away. I need a break. Now, if that's coming from a place of what I call possible's mind, of that really clean obviousness, that's vastly different.

That's I'm going to say no to that, because I really-- I want to go for a swim. That's different from I haven't gone for a swim, I really need a swim, I just can't deal with any of this anymore, I really need that to get through the rest of this week. the, the action is the same, but the intent-- the place from which it comes is vastly different.

And so sometimes I think we can get a bit sneaky, as in I've got too much on my plate, I've got too much going on, I don't... I, I can't squeeze in another thing. And then that's a little bit like it's going to take twenty-four months and it's going to cost this and it's going to be a team of twelve.

Because, and I'm yet to meet the person who hasn't had this experience, so let's see, maybe someone will be listening who hasn't, where you're in the shower and a thought just pops into your mind. And we use expressions like out of the blue, from nowhere. it just occurred to me too. So that didn't-- Yes, you were in the shower, so you weren't, handling a twelve-year-old and a, a, a P&L that, had a deficit or... but also that's still available then for that fresh thought to pop in.



So I think sometimes we really do ourselves a disservice where we think we need to totally quieten our mind and be really at peace and in nature. It-- and those things do facilitate it, and there's interesting science around that. It's when we believe that we need those in order to access that invisible space, that's when we can get stuck, because then when we don't have access to them, it's very easy to believe that it's hard. I can't cope. I need another framework. I need another five-step program. and that becomes hard, and you feel stuck.

And then the thing is we s- try to think our way out of it with more thinking, and that- it's Einstein that said, right? We can't solve our problems with the same level of thinking we used to create them. And, I still do this, and I see it all the time with clients and in our work. It's like we still try and do that. We still try and use this gift of thought to try and let me think my way out of it.

So that feels vastly different from that space, from that invisible, from that possible mind, from that clean clarity. to your point about curiosity and courage meaning different things. Curiosity for me is not asking better questions. That's an element of it, but it's

But being open to the possibility and curious enough to look in the direction of that invisible, that fresh thought versus, I ne- you know, and I did this. Oh, God, like I just, I would used to write out like better questions to ask myself.

I would literally say to myself, and I still sometimes do ask myself, "Why am I so stupid? what an idiot. Why am I such an idiot?" "Why am I still doing... I am such an idiot." and so then the brain, if we stay at the level of the brain, is gonna answer me. It's gonna say why I'm such an idiot. It's gonna give me a lot of proof points. in maths i- it's GIGO, right? and in it's the same. It's garbage in, garbage out. So the, the level of the data creates the level of the response. So if I'm just trying to ask myself better questions, I'm still playing at the level of that very personal thinking versus-- Which is great, and it makes you, me, it did, feel very in control 'cause I'm like, this is a shit question to ask.

What's a better question to ask myself?" And it's "Let me write that down, and every time I think this question, I'm gonna replace it with this question." And then that becomes exhausting. It's like the work

[00:27:24] **Susan:** it becomes repetitive, doesn't it? And, it's one of the things I realized after I had wanted to do a solo podcast for ages, right? Just, and kept talking myself out of it, and, "Oh, I don't know what I'd say," and blah blah blah blah blah. And I looked back one New Year's, around New Year's, I looked back over journals, and I'd been saying the same thing, thinking it was me thinking of it for the first time.



And then I realized, oh my God, it's time to think of something new. This is not helpful. It's not helpful to keep having the same thoughts over and over again. Because as we would... I don't think it was Einstein that said that, but maybe it was, it's a sign of madness if we keep having the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome.

And I think that's where coaching is so powerful, isn't it, Gitanjali? Because someone else witnesses your mind, and your thoughts, and your thinking in a way that allows you to say the stuff

[00:28:29] **Gitanjali:** And this is why actually I'm really interested in where we are now in the world with AI and coaching, and I know a lot of people that use AI as a coach and, a therapist, and very helpful. They find it very helpful. The one thing that I haven't seen, which I think is one of the most powerful things as a coach, is the power to interrupt. Because actually, no AI does that.

It waits until you've either finished typing or until you've finished speaking, and then it comes back either with a question or with a response or a solution or a framework or points you in the direction of a resource. Whereas some of the most powerful moments that have happened, with clients, and even when I'm speaking to an audience, which is still a conversation, even then I can feel it in the room because I call out what is likely to be happening in their brain, which is a, a habituated version of what I call BMW thinking, right?

Bitching, moaning, and whinging, which is, funny and oh, yeah, and the weather and, the government and the this and the that. and I just wrote a newsletter on this actually, th- that as first level, and last week it was about the next level, which is the optional extras, which is blaming, making up reasons, and worrying.

Now, what happens there is, to your point about being witnessed, is yes, the brain has a negativity bias, and if we stay at the level of the brain, which is not who we are not our brain, we are the invisible ...

and in fact, it's beautiful because within the brain there is an invisible space between neurons. It's called a synapse, right? And that's where the magic happens. That's where the connection happens, and scientists to this day can't quite explain this invisible space between neurons. They don't touch each other, but they create pathways.

all of that to say is we create, at the level of the brain, these habitual ways of thinking, patterns of thinking, and yes, we have a negativity bias. So the BMW of kind of bitching, moaning, and whinging a- feels good, right? It's oh yeah, that's rah, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah about that person or that boss or that stakeholder or that client or that regulation or



that latest piece of tech. The more insidious nature of it is, to your point about coaching, is if we don't interrupt that, then it feels real.

Because the brain loves familiarity. It needs familiarity purely just from a basic, and we always talk about saber-tooth tigers and, everyone talks about that. But actually, at the root of it all, if we stay at the level of the brain, then that takes cognitive metabolism, right? It's literally burning calories. So the least amount of energy it can expend to come up with a solution or, in this case, an, whatever it is, an approach, a, a plan, a, a way of seeing things, it will take it.

And similar to that client, that feels very realistic. That feels very real. It's like, if I was to do a solo podcast, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So if we stay at that level and we don't have someone to interrupt that pattern, then life becomes difficult. It becomes hard. We've got to, again, have better thinking, et cetera, versus where a co-

And we have it for ourselves. You don't need a coach. obviously, that's our business. get yourself a coach, people. Also, we have this space within us that pops up with this wisdom, with a knowing that isn't thinking, right? That says, "Oh, let me go back through my journals. Oh, my gosh." You didn't need a coach. Or maybe you did. But we don't need a coach to say, "Go back through your journals and look for something." If something arrives in us, again, fresh thought, that, and I'm laughing because I'm imagining, your listeners going for a shower after this.

I often say it in my keynotes. I'm like, "Please do not take a bottle of shampoo to your next HR team meeting if you're in HR." I think we all need to have a shower. A good shower to solve this problem. it's not that. We don't need that. We have it within us.

It's just from a coaching perspective, as far as I can see in, a decade of doing this work is, oh, we have, as you would know, the ability to interrupt that pattern in real time and point people back in the direction of what's available to them before that accidental, habitual, just innocent, thinking became who they think they are, and thereby what they think they're capable of, and thereby whether things feel easy or hard or overwhelming or complicated or insert adjectives here.

[00:33:13] **Susan:** And AI will not see your facial expressions if you're typing about how you're feeling or whatever. And if you get a, a question that you don't know how to answer, and you shut down the computer and go away for two days and come back, it's not going to know time has elapsed, and all of those kind of things.

So there's value, sure, but AI will never compete with the presence of another individual. AI can never have impact at the level of presence and consciousness like two humans or more humans exchanging person to person. And even if that's not for you right now, at some point, you know it is



[00:34:03] **Gitanjali:** And even if it can read facial expressions, 'cause I know they're doing, work on that, that presence that you spoke about, that's the piece, that's the invisible in the glass, right? That's the consciousness between two human beings that is invisible but is our experience of our humanity.

And I just had a call with a client actually, and, she's she w- was an actress, still acts, she's a director, she's incredible, and a producer. And that space is the space for anyone that's ever been in any form of acting or stage, is the space that is so obvious to actors which is on the stage in the moment. Even if you have a script, that is the invisible nature of what happens between you and the audience. For me from theater from age six, between you and the other actor on stage. it's the same in film. It's with you and the other person, regardless of how many lights are around, regardless of how many, sound engineers, et cetera, are there.

And it's just, it's not only for actors. It's not only... And it's not only, oh, and I used to think as an actor like, "Oh my God, it's magic." That's why I loved it. Because there was an aliveness. There was an aliveness. And I accidentally thought that was because of that only. It's oh, I come alive when I'm in that space. there's an availability to me of oh my gosh, I don't know where things are gonna go and I don't care. I'm so like... alive is just the word that, that keeps coming, well, has come to mind for a long time.

And then actually all that aliveness is available always. And when it's not, it's simply a matter of me accidentally forgetting that's how I'm designed, and that's okay. And I do it in and out of every day. It's just how fast do I catch myself in that accidental, innocent, habitual BMW thinking? How fast? that becomes the experiment. Like, how fast can I catch myself in that, using my thinking as a weapon? Not a tool.

And then more sneakily, 'cause it's invisible, is, oh, can I notice myself when I'm not? Can I notice when I'm actually here? Because when we're here, we don't notice. Because we are in flow. We're not overthinking. We're not worried about what we're saying. We're not thinking about the thing that went wrong in the last meeting. We're not worried about what our boss will say about the fact that the P&L runs this number. we're in the flow of it.

So actually, a really cool experiment is to notice when you are that, is, "Oh, I'm here. How cool. I'm here." And I'm yet to meet the person that doesn't know the difference between those two feelings. do you know when you are here in that space? Regardless of what's in front of us. Become

[00:37:24] **Susan:** And I remember I, so long ago now, I was in second year in university and we were doing interviews for the big six as it was at the time. And I was down to my final interview, and I'd gotten refused jobs along. And we'd been shown how to answer the interview questions, and it was awful, and I knew.



they were uncomfortable clothes. I was wearing a suit as well, which at 20 was like, oh. But I remember sitting on the train going for my final interview in Deloitte and thinking to myself, "I have to answer these questions as me."

So I'm in the interview and it's going really well, and the partner says to me, "Susan, where do you see yourself in five years' time?" And I heard myself say, "Do you know, I really hate that question. Could you ask me something else?" And Gitanjali, he said to me, "I'm only getting my own back. I used to hate being asked that question when I was young." Sure, and off he went and asked me something else. Who knows what it was now? I got that job, and from then on, I always loved being on the spot because of that sense of aliveness, because of that connection to me. And I didn't realize that my own thinking about, "Oh, what should I say or shouldn't I say?" is what shuts that part down

[00:38:57] **Gitanjali:** Because we believe that we're our thinking. And it's so-- And I don't say that to sound esoteric. It's that becomes identity. And so if I want a different identity, then I need to change my thinking, right? Or if my identity's at stake or something changes and, I'm no longer married, or I couldn't have children, or I lost my job. I was made redundant. And so now my identity is at stake. And so if I believe that I'm my thinking, now I need different thinking for this e-either new identity that I need to create or this fragile identity that seems to be on the rocks. Always rocked by circumstance, right? And so then this sense of insecure thinking arrives, and we don't want to feel like that.

So when we feel insecure, we lean further into control. And what that tends to look like is trying to control our thinking, staying at the level of thinking so that we, feel somehow in control of our experience versus in that moment where you were fully, completely you, trusting yourself completely in that moment, saying the thing that occurred to you clean, remember clean, like curious. Clean curiosity, I call it. Very clean curiosity. And then without attachment to outcome. and I'm half Indian, so the-- there's a phrase in the Bhagavad Gita which talks about perform thy duty or your action without regard for the fruit of your action. And so trusting that actually, oh, this is what it occurs for me to do or not do, say or not say, I'm not attached to the thing that comes after that. My only job is to stay present enough for the next moment and the next moment. So whatever comes I know that I'm designed for it.

And it's really interesting 'cause one of the, the recurring phrases that we hear from clients about really, you know, it's life-changing, it was transformational. And the way that they bring it back into language is, oh, I know that I can trust myself now, whatever comes. And that's why as much as I want to ban the word confidence, because it just means absolutely nothing anymore whatsoever, nothing. Have more co- even as a leader I used to use it as "Oh, you were really confident, well done," or, "You could have been a bit more confident in that meeting."



So my rant on confidence is very simple. I'll give you the 30-second version, is we're either waiting to be more confident to do something, being told when we have more confidence then we'll get something, or we're told we have too much confidence and we need to just take it down a notch. In all of those situations, it's near to useless.

So my suggestion is ban the word confidence. Replace it with this i- not idea, with this feeling of clean curiosity and courage. And to my point about trust, the interesting thing for me actually at the root of confidence is the etymology of it is Latin *confidere*, which means with trust. With trust.

So actually, what it is is we're not lacking confidence. I've, haven't lost my confidence down the back of the sofa with the keys, Oh, now I've gone and had baby and I've lost all my confidence, I can't get back. And I'm not saying that to mock anybody or make anybody wrong. It's just look- it's misdirection. It's a distraction, not a destination.

And so actually, when we come back to this knowing that we have this space, in that interview at 20, it's regardless of how many times we've circumnavigated the sun, wisdom does not come with age. Trust in self does not have to increase in accordance with the number of candles on a cake. We have it always and forever. And when we trust it, things tend to go very well. And when we don't, and we override it accidentally because we're coming from that place of insecure thinking, things might work out.

Generally, I find there is a level of heaviness and overwhelm and constraint and Confusion and fear that comes with it, that we can make up to be, "It's okay, I'm okay," versus, "Oh. Oh, my God. Oh, I have this space within me."

And a- again, I'm-- this isn't esoteric, this isn't theoretical. I always say, create your own possible database of, empirical data, 'cause you will see it every single day. It's not over there. It's not waiting for when, you're a certain age, or when you achieve something, or when you have more time to, dot, dot, dot. Oh, no, it's available right now. And when you notice it, create that database for yourself. If you're into it, get a Mac for a while, get a spreadsheet going. Go for it. And/or notice, and notice that aliveness, and from that place, I mean, anything, anything is possible, and it doesn't become a bumper sticker. It becomes a sense of curiosity and aliveness and lightness, which is super cool

[00:44:36] **Susan:** And then courage to take that next step.

[00:44:39] **Gitanjali:** Exactly.

[00:44:40] **Susan:** And courage, again, the etymology of that is, from the heart. So it comes back to that feeling, doesn't it? And it's not a fear-based feeling. It's a feeling of, "I got this," or some equivalent



[00:44:57] **Gitanjali:** Exactly. Exactly. And it's almost I've got me I've got

[00:45:05] **Susan:** We're in this together.

[00:45:06] **Gitanjali:** whatever happens, I am whole, I am complete. I do not need fixing. I am not broken. So whatever happens, I've- I've got me.

And I had a client once. I was, a lot of what I talk about, from the stage or with clients is around that space of the unknown, because that's-- I talk about uncertainty and change, right? And the growth that happens in the space in between. And one of the analogies I inevitably come back to is a trapeze artist, and in order to get to the other trapeze, they can't hold on with one hand, right? To that, and reach the other one. they can, but that's like, oh, you know, shoulders dislocating and a lot of discomfort.

At some point, they're in that space of the unknown. They're in that gap in between. And I was talking to her, through that and what's actually available to us in that space, and how we design for that space, and she had such an aha moment. And she knows this 'cause I reference her all the time. I saw her the other day. I'm like, "Joanna, you know I talk about this all the time." I'm like, "Ooh, what did you just see?" And she said, "Oh, I've just realized I'm my own safety net." And that is everything. Because then I can play and I can fail spectacularly, and my identity isn't at stake. It's simply I failed at that and go again.

And a friend of mine actually, who I went to drama school with, she does those trapeze now. And actually I've never seen her do it live, but the videos she posts, when she falls onto that safety net, there is a delight to it 'cause she bounces up really high, and then she scrambles off the side of it and, goes straight back up.

So when we know that we have that safety net built into the design of the system and it's not outside of us, it's not to say that things don't go wrong, as in, we don't make the money we thought we were going to or our child has a difficulty at school or, we don't get that job that we thought we would or whatever it is. It's just we know that we are designed for whatever it is that's in front of us from that space

Which is, if you were gonna design a human system, would you design it so that it was at the mercy of things outside of itself that it could never control to have an experience of wellbeing? And I don't mean wellbeing in a kind of let's bring in a wellbeing expert.

would you design it so that its experience of life was dependent on things outside of itself that it couldn't control? Or would you design it so that its experience of life came from the inside out and you don't have to look far to see the evidence of that in neuroscience. Literally, we are designing our, creating our reality in the dark, in our



head, based on very limited information that we restrict down, particularly when we're in insecure thinking.

And from an ancient wisdom perspective of oh, it is inside out, everything I am experiencing right now. And so that's either completely terrifying or completely liberating. It's oh my God, I'm completely responsible for my own experience, holy crap. And/or simultaneously,

I'm completely responsible for my own experience, holy crap. mine was more the second when I woke back up and I was like, ah. Oh. What? Oh

"Cool, let's take this out for a drive. Let's see what's possible."

[00:48:55] **Susan:** Wow. We've run over time, but I couldn't stop that conversation mid-flow or that, that was beautiful. and that, like the safety net, the trapeze artist, the letting go to grab on as well, that sense of there's ... Yeah. And I remember somebody telling me as well about skiing, that they learned to ski when falling down was fun.

And if you learned to ski when you were older, like I did, and every time you get on the skis you're petrified, you're never going to enjoy yourself. And it's a bit like that, isn't it? there's freedom in knowing, not necessarily on skis, but that we have our own safety net for ourselves, and that, that's so beautiful, Gitanjali

[00:49:47] **Gitanjali:** Thank you, my darling one. It's fun. It's fun to be alive

[00:49:50] **Susan:** Isn't it? It is. And if people would like to know more about you, The Possibilist, how

can

[00:49:58] **Gitanjali:** think the best way-- you can find me on LinkedIn, you can find me on Instagram. If you put Gitanjali Possibilist, two very simple words to spell, I'll come up. And also, I'm sure Susan will put the link in. one of the, the best ways is to join my Possibilist community, so my newsletter.

Because every week, I share something about how we are designed and our thinking and what that means with a Possibilist experiment that you can do for that week so that you've got a way of changing your own experience if you're never able to sit in an audience where I'm speaking, if you're never able to be coached by me or one of my coaches.



that's free, and that is literally designed for anyone that is wanting to create change in their life, is perhaps an overthinker, perhaps a perfectionist, perhaps a people pleaser, perhaps just doesn't want to live in that noisiness anymore. that's,

[00:51:00] **Susan:** they've been told they need more confidence and they know they don't. And they know they don't

[00:51:07] **Gitanjali:** Exactly. Yes. If you also want to join my personal mission to ban the word confidence, please, that is where we talk about it. So yes, that, that's the best place to find me, and I reply to every reply that I get to that newsletter. I read them all and, it, it truly is a joy to, have that conversation

[00:51:26] **Susan:** Wow. I feel like we scratched the surface. We also went deep, but we scratched the surface of the things we could have talked about. So this may well be continued another time. But Gitanjali, thank you so much for your time. It was wonderful to go into life beyond the numbers with you

[00:51:47] **Gitanjali:** Thank you, thank you, thank you. I look forward to more

