

Gen Y Shift Series

“Love as a Way of Life” with Ryland Engelhart (Dec. 10)

[0:00:00]

Ben: All right, everybody, welcome back to the Gen Y Shift Series. This is Ben Hart with you again and wishing you a beautiful evening, afternoon, morning, whatever this finds you in the world or if you listen to the recording later, I hope you have a smile on your face because I know this session is going to give you an even bigger one.

I'm very happy to have Ryland Engelhart on who is the co-creator of Café Gratitude in Los Angeles which is an organic vegan restaurant and that it uses the restaurant spaces as ministry to awaken love and gratitude in the community. Ryland also leads workshops and co-created an award-winning documentary called May I Be Frank, and he is a happy, loving husband living in Venice, California.

Ryland, thanks so much for being with us.

Ryland: It's my absolute pleasure. Thank you for the invitation. It's just really great to be here and to be seen and be heard and share and give what we've been given. Once you have something, all you do is share it and have lot of gratitude and a lot of love. So I'm grateful to have the space to share it, and I'm grateful that I get to share it with you. Thanks for dancing in this conversation with me.

Ben: You've got it. I'm happy to be doing it, and I'm super glad to have you on. It's fun because so many of the people that we've had on this series I've known a bit in the last few years, do various work things and reading their books and being around their projects and seeing the light they're shining. It's especially fun with Ryland here because we've been in the same extended community for a number of years since my early 20s, and I've just seem what a bright light he brings to the world. It's really, really beautiful.

I think this Café Gratitude -- and actually Ryland's father and stepmother have been mentors to me and I've seen so many people transformed through the loving power of the community that he's at the center of. So that's a blessing to share you with everybody else, my man. I'm really excited to just dive right in.

What I'd love to do actually is jump into giving people who haven't heard of Café Gratitude a bit of a back story because Café Gratitude, as you guys say, is really a school for transformation so if you could share a bit of what that looks like and how that works.

Ryland:

Beautiful, I'd love to. The way that Café Gratitude came into existence was both -- my mom actually left my father for another woman after 25 years of marriage and my father kind of fell apart. While he was in the process of rebuilding himself, he actually participated in the Landmark Forum and that was the thing that catalyzed him back into finding himself and finding the ability to rebuild his life after feeling losing his wife was losing his life. So the thing that kind of found -- he found himself again.

Through that, he then end up meeting a woman named Terces who is leading programs at Landmark at the time, and they just fell in love. Within about a year, they got married and they both come from different spiritual journeys, but they definitely their lives had been about healing and awakening and transformation and personal growth. The information had been coming from many different sources for both of them, but they knew that they wanted at that point in their life to live the rest of their 40 or 50 years on this planet really making a contribution.

They said, "All right, what we're going to do is we are going to live through our inner guidance. We are going to listen, if we hear a calling, if we have an insight to do something." Much of life we ignore those things and we beat ourselves up about it. So they just said, "All right, we're just going to live our life through inner guidance." They trusted that and the first piece of inner guidance that they collectively got was to create a transformational board game that was then named the Abounding River which the Abounding River is an expression of the abundance of life that this life is just continuously lifing. You either get with it and get in the current and you get with the flow, you're feeling the flow or you're trying to paddle upstream and you know what that feels like, it's a lot of resistance.

So they both come from this different walks life, but it was all about personal growth and transformation and freedom. So they thought, a lot of people are not going to have the access of all the courses and teachers and gurus and things that we've gone through. Why don't we distill down all the brilliance that we've learned inside of a really prayerful context which a game -- or let's make it a game where we can just give people a simple tool of when your attention is on the cup being half full then you experience fullness. And when your attention is on the cup being half empty, you are left with an experience of emptiness.

[0:05:26]

Just that simple principle of your life in the picture of your mind and where your attention is in this now moment is giving you an experience in this now moment, and that we can shift consciously our intention from moment to moment and hand select what we want to put our attention on.

So they thought, "All right, we're going to create this game. It sounds crazy, but we're going to create a transformational game." So they sat an entire year. They hired an artist, and they just created this beautiful, beautiful game over a year's period. Then they finished the game and were like, "Wow, this game is brilliant!" It's awesome. People loved it. They test run it with their friends, but they didn't know how they were going to share it with the world.

They were living in San Francisco at that time somebody chose to, "All right, why don't we do a little café where we can make the café be kind of like a gaming parlor, and people come will in and get their coffee and a juice or a scone or something, and we can ask them, we can engage them in the game and they can see the cup half full and they could leave on their day a little more inspired, a little bit more lifted and might transform how they operate through their workday or how they treat their kids, or something." So they just started.

At that same time, a friend of ours in Hawaii was super into raw food, and he said, "You guys got to try raw food for 30 days." And they had known about it, but it was kind of like something they thought they would do if they ever got sick or something. But they tried it for 30 days and felt so good. They were like, "All right, well, that's it. We are going to do a raw food transformational gaming parlor for San Francisco."

San Francisco is hip enough to handle that. And so they opened it with 12 employees. My dad was the server. Terces was in the kitchen making desserts. They were making up the food and just pretty much making stuff up every day. In a very short period of time they started getting busy and popular, and it became this thing in San Francisco. Café Gratitude was this is very unique, loving environment where people were over in their expression of love and kindness. The way that it works actually is that everything -- the whole restaurant is designed to be kind of this virtual game that they created.

The artwork on the walls are kind of eliciting or awakening, eliciting us to shift our attention to all that we have already been given and to what we love about our lives. Another unique aspect is that, the way you order food off the menu, instead of saying, "I'll have the pizza," you say, "I am passionate." And then I know that if you say that then you're actually ordering the marinara pizza. And then when I deliver that marinara pizza to you I say, "You are passionate!"

And it's this fun, playful, interactive way need to remind ourselves that we are all these divine qualities that oftentimes -- and of course people can be cynical and be like, "I don't want to be passionate. I just want to order the pizza." We don't take ourselves that seriously. We allow people to do that, but we also are playful and say, "You are passionate," because the bottom line is we didn't open a regular café just to serve people. We opened an environment that, in every expression of it, is eliciting some aspect of remembering our wholeness, remembering that were all one on this planet together, we all want the same thing that we all want to feel the presence of love, we all want to feel the presence of connection and we've just forgotten. As my dad says, we've taken too much separation medicine.

People can say, "Oh, affirmations, that's new age hoo-hah," and that's fine. Everyone is entitled to their opinions, but the reality is when you ask somebody -- well, they don't work but what do you find yourself thinking about all day? And what we're thinking about all day, we oftentimes are that way and those are all affirmations, all those thoughts that we are affirming, oftentimes are negative things -- I'm too lazy, I'm too fat, I'm too old, I'm too young, I'm too this, I don't have any experience, the right degree, I don't have the right friends -- whatever it is, those are all things that we think for a long period of time and they become ingrained in our being to where they are just true.

[0:10:08]

So then it's threatening to all those affirmations that I've been saying, "I'm not good enough. I'm not good enough." It's like the human staple thought process that oftentimes occupies our mind. So then when you say, "You are extraordinary," the affirmation that's been affirming for ten years is "I'm not enough" gets threatened by that "You are extraordinary" to people like, "Waa, that's crap" and disregard it. But that's just it's because something so new to the practice or the other affirmation that's been affirmed so long of not enoughness.

Again, the restaurant with this very unique San Francisco is definitely you find yourself a lot of like hippies and hipsters and Mendocino pot growers and a very San Francisco eclectic community would gather there. The commitment of food was above and beyond anything I've ever seen as far as every ingredient being organic, never compromising that, really working as much local farmers as possible, really having the work environment for the employees, not only be a great place to work as far as right livelihood but actually also an environment where the practice that actually besides to chop wood and carry water, getting the food to the customer's table, there's an entire philosophy and practice.

Can we practice? Can we serve people food and play restaurant and also emanate the presence of unconditional love and be grateful for all that we've been given continuously? It's easier said than done, and it's easy to be grateful and loving when everything is going well. The challenge and the work is when you have a challenging customer or you have a lost soup or you have to fire an employee, whatever they are and it really is just this amazing working organism that has all these parts that are moving together. And the devotion is can we keep our hearts open in the face of all circumstances knowing that that is the key and that the world is going to continuously have circumstances.

We're going to have challenges. The world is going to dump on us and we get to see that dump as fertilization for our greatness, for our growth instead of seeing it just as crap. That really is the fundamental practice of Café Gratitude. And just simply said, really can our life continuously be an expression of love in each and every moment? And that's really what I've say I've taken on as my devotional life practice to demonstrate and practice publicly and express it as a life path and as a way of living instead of just something I do when -- keep my friends around me but actually something that I'm giving off and I'm emanating all the time.

So the restaurant again started with 12 employees and now we've opened seven restaurants in the Bay Area and some have closed up there, and then we've opened two more in Los Angeles that are the most thriving and happening of the restaurants right now. Me and my brother got to come down to Los Angeles and open these two down here, and it's just been extraordinary just really hearing people say the culture that we've created inside of the Café Gratitude restaurants is an expression of a new culture in Los Angeles.

We've made it so accessible, and the food is so tasty, and the environments are so inviting. They feel of like a nice restaurant that no one is excluded which is a really beautiful -- I think a really important

aspect of being a business that's merging spirituality and commerce together. The idea of sacred commerce is really making sure that the commercial end of it feels commercially. Everyone feels like they're accepted and welcome and that it's a real business that everyone can really participate in and then the back door is just this beautiful presence of love and community and connection and joy that is just -- as people would say, the vibe is really high in those spaces.

[0:15:13]

Why I say that is because we're actually practicing loving each other. We were practicing as a community of staff to love and take care of one another and we're also practicing loving all of our customers. As they come in, they our priced guests. They are the people that we've been waiting for that we get to throw our lunch and dinner party for 2,000 people every day in L.A. We invite the world and whoever shows up we love them fully and we serve them fully. We send them on their way nourished bellies but also nourished in their heart and in their minds.

That was a long-winded answer.

Ben: It was a beautiful one, super rich with lots of threads that I'd love to pull out. I love it, man.

But actually, to where you just ended up there, just speaking to the number of people that come through and the community that's formed. As you're speaking I'm just thinking to all -- I know dozens of people whose lives have been deeply touched transformed through being around the Café Gratitude community, and it really does become so much more than a restaurant and than a café but really is a large, large community. It just draws people in because of the love.

I was just thinking how much I wish everyone could experience that who aren't in L.A. and aren't in the Bay Area. That brings me then to wanting to just reflect a bit on the documentary you guys put together with Frank, the May I Be Frank documentary. I actually sent out the trailer to everybody today on the emails. So those of you who got this, just check it out. It's a pretty powerful documentary, and I definitely recommend checking it out.

I love, Ryland, if you just share for a few minutes about the stories that kind of what occurred and what that's become now because it's blown up as a documentary in traveling around the world and it's just touching a lot of lives.

Ryland:

Another perfect example of really just following your heart and doing what you love to do and not worrying how the logistics will work out in your favor. May I Be Frank is a documentary film that essentially we created just through a random interaction in the café one day. This is in San Francisco and a customer came in.

For those of you that know Café Gratitude part of the gaming environment or the loving environment or the engaged community environment, we have a question of the day to engage people that are dining there. Now we are engaging them in the organic, delicious vegan food but we're also saying we're going to go a step further. We're not only going to nourish them with that food; we're also going to invite them into having a particular conversation while they're in that space and that conversation of gratitude, of giving thanks, of being grateful and listening, having a meal via space that transformation can occur. And so that question just invites people into engaging in those conversations.

So the day that we met Frank Ferrante who is the subject of May I Be Frank film is this heavy-set, Italian guy who walked in to Café Gratitude one dreary night, and he literally just came in for a cup of coffee because he was in the recovery community and gratitude is the main stay in that recovery community. We didn't have coffee because at the time it was mostly all-raw food restaurant. He just asked some question. He said, "Are you guys in recovery?" I said, "Oh, we're all recovering from something. We're not a recovery café per se."

So we ended up sitting down and talking, and I asked him the question of the day that day and the question was, "What's one thing that you want to do with your life before you die?" He was kind of struck by the question and authentically answered it. He said, "The thing that I want to do before I die is I want to fall in love one more time, and I don't think anyone will ever love me because I don't love myself" because of how basically heavy he was at that time.

Just in that moment it struck me as an opportunity to take action and just dig a little deeper with him because at that time it was maybe a year after the film, Super Size Me, came out. We had the idea of using Café Gratitude as the model of food and community and philosophy to transform someone from sickness to wellness.

[0:20:03]

The moment he said that answer to that question, I knew, wow, this is the guy. I just dove in it. I said, "Wow." Being here is strangely or what, but we had this idea, the decision of doing a documentary and filming the transformation of somebody from sickness to wellness and after you sharing about what's going on for you." He had diabetes and been on antidepressants for 10 years. He'd been clean and sober from alcohol. He'd been on prescription drugs for 10 years and just put him in really poor shape. All his relationships were in shambles with his family and such.

So we asked him and he was kind of so low, he said, "Yes." Literally, three days later, we bought a used video camera, made a boom mike with PVC pipe from Ace Hardware, forming **[0:21:07] [Indiscernible]**. We put some flash cards up on the wall and thought of different things we wanted to share with the film. We had him sign an agreement that he was going to trust us and allow us to be his coach. He said yes. We just basically went with it and with no real idea. We were new to it. We didn't know what to fear so we were just unstoppable. We just went for it.

We filmed it 4s days with some miraculous results. Then we lost in touch with Frank. He kind of went on different journey for a while and he came back. Then when he came back, I met a perfect director and editor to edit the film because we never thought we're going to teach ourselves to edit after we had chatted, after working 10 hours in the restaurant and we thought we'd go home and edit a film thinking that maybe the end-all, be-all result would be that we'd like to show it to our staff at the company, Christmas Party or something. That would be end result of the film.

There was something that was just -- I'd be in the shower and we've kind of given up on making the film which is something that would be gnawing at me. It was like my intuition saying, "Finish this project. Finish this project." We got re-inspired about it, and we found a guy to start editing it. Frank saw the first edit of it. He kind of like fallen off his healing journey. Then he saw like his healing journey and he saw that he was the guy in it. He saw that he had to continue that healing journey for this thing to continue.

It was kind of like the re-ignition of his inspiration to step back into loving himself and taking care of himself and all of his choices and his diet and his community and what he has **[0:23:11] [Indiscernible]** on doing it. His brother moved out here to California. His nephew was in jail. He came and started working at Café Gratitude. His son started working at Café Gratitude.

End-all, be-all, the film got finished. There were just so many miracles. Every time we hit a road block, we just reach out to the community and ask the community for help. "We don't know what to do at this point." We just again dived in it and supplied and supported through that it was a true expression of love. I've always seen and felt when you empty up -- when you're all in on love, all in on love comes back to you. It's like when you give yourself full, all right, I'm going for this. This is what I'm doing and I'm fully invested in it and my intention is to bring more love and healing for the world through this **[0:24:08] [Indiscernible]**.

Alanis Morrisette gave us a song for the film. Jason Mraz wrote a song for the film which is called "What Would Love Do Now?" It's like a phenomenal -- now it's kind of like a quotable question to ask ourselves when we get confronted with life challenges. What Would Love Do Now? What Would Love Do Now? What Would Love Do Now? As we finished the film and we've been touring it for about a year and a half, two years, and we've shown it's a -- I don't know exactly the count but thousands of people have seen that as we got back from New Zealand, sharing it out there at the Healthy Living Conference.

Frank is about to go to South Africa and Ireland to show the film. We actually have tomorrow -- this is confidential but we're actually meeting with -- we have a Skype tomorrow with a really amazing, successful Hollywood actress who's kind of going through some challenging times with her way and her emotional stability and saw the film and was so moved and actually has invited us the possibility of possibly her basically funding a sequel, that would be Frank taking her under his wing and nurturing her through 42 days of spiritual and physical transformation.

[0:25:39]

It just continues to open up and unfold and it's amazing because Frank is in love now. Frank does have a love of his life that he's sharing his life with. He is in the world travelling around, sharing about the possibility of transformation for all people because he was a broken, angry, depressed, Sicilian, New Yorker who had pretty much exhausted his school belt of how he could transform and grow and recreate his life and by him stepping into gratitude world by us colliding he was able to regain the compass of his life. He literally gets to travel around and share the possibilities of transformation. He's brilliant. He's amazing. I completely adore him. I still see him a couple of times a week. He comes in the café. It's just amazing really.

Ben:

It's super powerful. Really beautiful. One thing that I really appreciate as you speak, Ryland, is I have heard from you in the past is the surrendering of our expectations and kind of the egoic way of trying to make things happen whether it would be through like marketing the film or marketing Café Gratitude or setting up goals for what you want to create. I really feel in you such a surrender to kind of what wants to come through you and what is coming through you from the world.

You were talking earlier about holding a context of anything that feels like fertilizer, it really being nourishment for whatever is arising in your life and the blessings that come and to the point where once I was actually talking to Terces and she was telling me a story about you celebrating getting a parking ticket or like your car getting towed and you walked in and you said, "My car got towed" and you were kind of celebrating it as just a way to flip it on its head and see it as a beautiful blessing.

I'm just wondering if you can expand on that just how it is that you approach life in that way because I think that's one of the beautiful things about where you are coming from.

Ryland:

Beautiful. Thank you. I love that. I love that question.

It's definitely one of the tools that we practice and one of the tools that we teach in the workshop that my folks lead and then I lead. One way to describe it is generating, that we can generate any experience that we choose. Again, not to sound trite about it, but it is possible. It's challenging, and it's a massive devotion to be able to wield our consciousness, to have a crummy circumstance happen, and to be inside of an authentic celebration or authentic realization or acceptance of there's something in this that's guiding me to where I need to be.

One of the mantras that I have created for myself inside of this awareness is "Commit to what you want. Surrender and be grateful for whatever you are given," and then it starts again, "Commit to what you want. Surrender and be grateful for whatever you are given." Inside of that context in life, there's never a victim story. There's never a story of why is this happening to me? This should be different, but there's also a self-empowerment that we're a free-willed being.

It's not like just give up on life and wait for stuff to happen. No. It's jump in the game, and grab the oar and paddle, paddle, paddle like you want to get there in five minutes. But if it takes you five hours, there is

something for you to feel along the way and just really recognizing that the suffering.

[0:30:05]

I'd say most of our lives, all of our life is a resistance to what's so, to what is going on. We joke in the community like something will happen. It will be 12:00 noon, lunch rush, restaurant is packed. There's three, five ladies waiting for the ladies room and there's just one bathroom in the restaurant and the toilet overflows and then crap on the floor and water is spilling out the door, and someone is like, "Hey, Ryland, the bathroom is..." And I get to go, "Okay, great."

I get that that is not a great circumstance but in my consciousness, in my words, in my thoughts, I'm creating, "Okay, there's something great that's going to come out of this." I obviously I don't see it in this moment, but it's just wielding my consciousness in that direction. Again, it's not about being inauthentic or disregarding what's true. No, I mean, the key to all transformation. You always have to start where you are.

There's no getting around what feels authentic. And once you're also in that authentic place, you can take a breath and from a lighthearted place shift our attention. So with the film, *May I Be Frank*, it was such a beautiful continuous sharing saga of letting go because the ego is so tricky that you say, "All right." Well, there's something about love and transformation and awakening, but then your mind and your ego can get invested in "Well, I want to look good doing this." It will look really good if Frank, the subject, gets really skinny and he's really happy and tells everyone that the reason he's healthy and happy is because of these young guys. The ego wants it -- it starts to feast on being important.

So it's a very tricky thing to navigate and again it just takes a lot of serene self-awareness and really seeing where you're coming from. Are you coming from trying to get love? Are you coming from being the expression of love? We say that really there's just only two human behaviors. We're either trying to get love or we are loved and looking at where we're coming from in each of our conversation, each of our action.

So back to what I was saying about the Frank thing and giving up expectations is we'd want it to go to a particular way. We'd want Frank to be a particular way. We'd want him to heal certain wound, and he would continue to act out the wound. Again, we just have the opportunity was to let go of what we thought the journey of healing looked like.

Well, no, this slipping down and falling on our faces is -- his rejection of certain things or whatever it might have been is just an opportunity for us to surrender our egoic "It should go this way" and continue to let the expression of love hold the circumstance or hold the space being that love, the word love, we have to put another word in front of it so it could be fully defined unconditional love and really that love is the space that holds all things. Whether it's going the way you want it to go or it's going the other way, love really is that equanimity, that complete space of holding all things with complete balance, no judgment.

It's such a profound transformative tool to take on that when things are not going the way that you wanted them to go originally, to have the insight and the remembrance to surrender and know that there's something for your greater good that is emerging from whatever circumstances that are happening.

[0:34:55]

Prime example, one time I got in a car accident and hit somebody on -- I fell asleep at the wheel, banged somebody. It was a brand new like a German car, VW, like Eos or something like -- a brand new car. I smashed through the bumper, and I get out of the car and I was trying to -- I had a momentary shame and guilt and embarrassment and making myself wrong. I was just like, this is just an opportunity to be in the presence of love and to just be present and receive whatever it is to receive in this interaction.

I ended up having this long conversation with the guy that I hit and then he ended up coming to the café and then he ended up falling in love with the café. He ended up buying the Abounding River board game. He ended up buying the book, Sacred Commerce. He ended up calling me and telling me that their son was a boy. He was going to name it Ryland. It was just this amazing experience where like he'd been looking for a new sort of dietary path. It all came through. Can we use every circumstance as a possibility to strengthen our muscle of love?

It's just miraculous how many stories and experiences when that's been the community's intention as well as my personal intention, how much healing, how much transformation has continuously come through. It's a miracle.

Ben:

I love it. It's so great. One thing that just popped into my head right now is I imagine for you growing up with your father who was into spirituality at a young age and reading Course in Miracles and doing different

groups, that you're really brought up in that zone. I imagine you went through your own kind of journey into where you are now. I'm curious, as people are on their own journey because a lot of the people who are listening here are mid-20s and 30s and a big thing that's up is the idea of finding our calling or finding our purpose, finding what we're here to really be and do in the world.

Ryland: It's a great question.

Ben: It's great if you could speak about how you came into where you are now which feels like such an expression of who you're meant to be in the world.

Ryland: So good. I love this question. Yeah, wow, the who am I and what am I here to do is such a -- what a great conversation. It's beautiful because -- I'll just straight up say, it's still the most challenging thing about life, in my life is combating that voice in my head that continuously reminds me of how am I not enough and how I'm not fulfilling my life purpose.

If I was really straight about it, I will be -- I grew up around the lot of artists and musicians and really extraordinary creative people. I've suffered so much. I just wanted to be an artist. I just want to have an art that I could put on my business card, that I could identify myself with, that this is my art, this is what I do, and this is why I do it and leave me alone. I don't have to worry about not knowing what my life is for.

So it's definitely been a journey of looking at someone that feels creative and find myself engaged with a lot of amazing creative people that have sort of picked one expression of creativity that kind of defines them. On a surface egoic level, my mind, my ego wants to have something that I can identify with as this is who I am because I think it will -- there'll be more peace in my life if I know who I am as some expression. It kind of reminds me that oftentimes they say, "How are you doing?" It's kind of a funny thing, "How are you doing?" not "What are you doing?" or "How are you being?" but "How are you doing?" which doesn't really make sense.

[0:39:58]

Ultimately, my experience is I've so spent so much in my life trying to articulate what I'm up to in my life that sound impressive to other people and to describe the projects or the things that I'm working on because in social settings it's the thing that kind of we can engage over a three-minute conversation, "Okay, we got that out of the way, now we can move on."

It definitely continues to be my biggest challenge is really trusting that what my life is for is for awakening the presence of love in this present moment because you say that at a job interview or you say that to your in-laws like what my life is -- my life is for being in the presence of love. It's going like "What do you mean?" I mean right now that's what I'm up to -- what's now, what's next, what's later, what came before.

What I'm up to is being a presence, being an energetic field or force of love happening in the world because that's just what feels natural or feels like the only thing that really makes sense and speaking that into a world of form and into a world of -- well, did you learn that? Was that a college course? Are you leading work? Everyone wants a formation. Again, it makes sense because in the world there needs to be the container to which we share things.

I would say that where I get to really walk my talk is I continue to get to show up and step into -- I don't know what my life is for. I'm still sorting myself out inside of knowing that the only thing that feels like a true authentic expression is connecting with people and being able to articulate and share a vibration or a field or a language that expresses unification and a bond between people.

Café Gratitude at this time is the space that I get to express that mission. It is quite perfect for -- I call myself a restaurant reverend or a minister love and that's really what I do. I essentially walk around the restaurant. As I approach tables and connect with people, my intention is to create a micro moment of awakening or of love or of connection that feels deep or more enlivening than your typical dining experience. Can I create like drop by a table and sees an aha moment for the collective and have that spiral out into their life and into their next conversation? But again, it just comes down for me and this being my process of continuously trusting myself.

The thing that I've just so gotten recently which is so supportive as a mentor for other people as well as mentor has been mentoring me, the idea of giving full permission. When people give me full permission to be who I am and to be this just exuberant loving, vibrant being in the world, I'm so liberate, I'm so free when I can tell on myself and I can tell everyone about my insecurities or my fears.

When there's a space of full permission, that is where the healing occurred and that's where the leadership occurs when we can actually beat leaders without even knowing what we're actually -- we don't even

necessarily need to know the how we're going to get there or where we're going. We just know that we have full permission to follow our hearts, to be in the present moment to express love.

When we're in the present moment, we're the most creative beings because we're just allowing inspiration to come through. It is not our mind monitoring or trying to figure it out or trying to get it right or trying to look good for other people. We get out of the way and we're just allowing whatever this presence, this creativity, whatever is it is coming through each of us because each of us has an inherent unique gift that there is for us to share. The more and more we give ourselves permission to just share that -- I would talk to my dad and he's like, "If you write your autobiography, it's going to be called A Fool for Love."

[0:45:18]

It is. What my authentic gift is is I'm a fool for love. Wherever I am, whoever I am, the default whether anyone is around or it's just that's I default to just being as expressed and as carefree and liberated and expressing and connecting and creating a conversation of love to take place in that environment that I'm engaged in.

Ben:

I love it. As we're coming to the end here, I really want to give people who are listening in the chance to ask some questions as well. So as we always do, if you're on the phone line, go ahead and hit 1 if you have a question. On the webcast, you can type it in. I'm happy to share it here.

As people are doing that, one thing that was occurring for me, Ryland, as you're speaking then is to go into the vulnerable space that I was just remembering back to the early years of first knowing about you and knowing about Café Gratitude, how so much came up for me around you and around the community in my own self-belittlement and comparison around like the amount of love that you were able to share and who you are really standing for as love.

It brought up my egoic like, "Oh, I'm not loving enough," or "I'm not being the leader of love that I feel called to be" and all these beautiful things. It's such a beautiful healing to have that come up in your presence or another's presence and then have the healing occur where the community is really listening for all of us as love. It's such a beautiful thing how we can all hold each other with a greater listening that we often do for ourselves that calls us into it.

Ryland: I was present only before we got on the phone together that we both got to be amazing lovers and partners of Lizzie.

Lizzie, if you're listening, we love you. We're putting your business on blast.

I love the full circle of, yeah, I remember because you and Lizzie were together after me and Lizzie and I remember being kind of threatened by you and of course probably settled judgments. I'm so grateful that you've continued to walk your journey of awakening and leadership and stepping into being an ambassador of love and really articulating it and grounding it and inviting it into bringing this conversation to young people, our generation, our age.

I'm inspired by you and thrilled of who you are and who you're becoming. I'm so grateful to walk alongside of you in this journey of making a difference and ambassadoring the awakening and love and community and what we want our life to look like and really being it now and saying, "All right, this shall be." I know there's a lot of problems in the world, a lot of things that there are to mend but standing right here where you are love is and just declaring that so powerfully. It's beautiful. I love it.

Ben: Absolutely.

Ryland: And we share our last name, Ben Hart and Ryland Engelhard, so we share the heart.

Ben: Yes. God did a good job when he stamped us with the **[0:49:10]** **[Indiscernible]**. Before we go to other people's questions, one thing that occurs to me too is one thing I get a lot from some of the younger people is hint of jealousy around hosting the show or being a part of this big spiritual organization that does all this work in the world and I imagine you get that as well around you now being part of the café and being the center of community and having this movie and all these things.

I think it's so lovely what you were saying and what really rings too for me is the fulfillment of my life is not in these things as they occur. The more the amazing things happen to me outside, the more I realize how shallow they can be. It really is in being loved. The more I can connect people to the truth of who they are and the more I can just view that in my own life, that's the glory and that's the blessing.

Ryland: The best day of my life this year was Thanksgiving Day Café Gratitude watching a bunch of strangers in a room clapping to Kirtan music, singing

God's name, singing love's name, and they had no idea what they were singing. It was like 200 people in Café Gratitude. Just seeing all these random people like fully -- it was food church. It was a sad song. It was a full high holy mass. We were just serving food and singing love's name all together and clapping and serving from -- that all we want to do apparently is take care of each other and we're afraid that we won't be taken care of back so we hold back.

[0:50:38]

On that day no one was holding back, and it was just like the richest, most beautiful moment. I was sitting there arm and arm with my dad. I was just weeping. I was like, "Oh, my God!" I was just so moved by seeing people in their hearts and allowing that love to overwhelm up. It was just beautiful.

Ben: Exactly. So good. I love it. Nice, guys. Well, we got some questions coming in. So before we have to close, I want to toss a few. One that I love here is a question about inner guidance. I remember earlier you were talking about Matthew and Terces listening to their guidance with the café. The question is: How does inner guidance show up for you and what recommendations would you have for people connecting to their own?

Ryland: It's great. How did inner guidance show up for me? I do have a meditation practice where I sit in silence and breathe and listen. I would actually say that as much as I'd like to say -- I give it as a straight download every time **[0:51:55] [Indiscernible]**. Sometimes I fall asleep where I don't know that anything happened. I just feel like there's a communication go do that. It's almost like a thorn in my side that I try to ignore and I try to like say, "Oh, no, I don't."

There's a slightly different cadence or there's a slightly different way that the voice in my head or the feeling that is and I just trust it. There's a slightly different than the monkey mind of judgments, assessments, opinions. It oftentimes comes well in water. I'm taking a pee or I'm in the shower that when there's water flowing I find myself always being able to listen into and connect with my truth and my inner guidance and my higher self.

Ben: So the advice is go to the bathroom more, everybody, and --

Ryland: Drink lots of water and juice so you have good clean piss, a good clear piss. And when there's clear piss, the clear answer comes through. That's

good. I'm actually on day 8 of a cleanse. I'm doing a 21-day cleanse challenge, kind of like the Deepak Chopra's meditation challenge. We're developing it. We're going to be offering to the world in the New Year that I'm testing it out right now. So stay tuned. That will be something that we're going to be offering, a 21-day cleanse that will become mind, body and spirit practices for not just -- it's not really a diet. It's more of a 21-day challenge in shifting our lifestyle. So I'm one day through only juices so I feel pretty lightheaded. I feel light. Angels fly because they take themselves lightly.

Ben: Indeed. Cool.

Ryland: Yes.

Ben: We got another one coming in here. Let's see. So this one is about relationships saying: How do you approach challenges in your romantic relationship based on what you shared about being loved? What about when you're really shut down or triggered?

Ryland: Great. It happened yesterday. I'm married. My relationship is extraordinary and I definitely -- even just like I said, just yesterday I found myself kind of shut down, kind of short, kind of looking for what was missing, what was wrong with my wife and how she wasn't contributing enough in the house.

[0:55:11]

Again, authenticity is for me the key to the kingdom of just when the space is right just inviting an authentic conversation and authentic conversation not just like dumping your crap on another but taking responsibility for your experience as well as being authentic. I just want to have a conversation with you because I can see that I've been making you wrong for these things, and I know this is not your fault. It's my mind. I'm just creating judgment, and I just want to out myself and bring it to the light to I can turn it to light and take responsibility also includes apology and apologizing for being in judgment, being short, being disconnected.

The key to relationship is being willing to apologize that we can actually -- we're addicted to being right but the reality of it if we live a life of our righteousness, we're going to live a life alone because you can either be right or your life can work. Even if you are right, the willingness to let go of that position of righteousness to restore the presence of love and knowing that obviously if someone is engaging in some behavior that's

crazy or that you can't manage your life based being in relationship with some, it doesn't mean -- being loved doesn't mean staying through an abusive relationship.

If you can't live your life and be in a safe and comfortable relationship, love that doesn't look like staying around and being exposed to be abused. It means obviously having the conversations that you need to have from your authentic self and taking responsibility for and apologize. And if it looks like the **[0:57:37] [Indiscernible]** is the answer because someone is not willing to step into that responsibility and ownership of how their being in a relationship that there's obviously another relationship, there is another circumstance for that person to be there awakening and it doesn't have to be you.

You don't have to hold on to try to heal or fix or make someone better because that ultimately is a demonstration of lack of trust that the universe have got this thing called life. Of course, it also includes participation in it. But really the keys to it are to summarize, to take the space, to have authentic conversation and in that conversation taking full responsibility for how you've been cultivating negativity or cultivating separation or apologizing for that and then recommitting to what you committed to.

I'm committed to loving. I'm committed to accepting. I'm committed to seeing you as perfection. I'm committed to seeing you as everything that I love and want in my life. When we represence our commitment, that commitment is alive and real once we've cleaned up the crap that's underneath it. If you just try to put icing on top of a mud pie so to make it cake, you got to address the mud pie and talk about the crap and acknowledge it and take responsibility for and commit to letting it go before you can reengage a new commitment and a new promise.

Ben:

I love that. It's beautiful. That just leaves me to a great way to start wrapping things up since we're getting to the end of the hour is things like taking 100% responsibility requires such a level of self-awareness and intense commitment. I know that being around the community that's around you and the community that you have up here Bay Area with people who are all like-minded and really doing such great work in themselves becomes easier as you have resections to support people in that.

Part of the reason why we started this series was to really support people in their 20s and 30s who don't have communities like that. From that place, I'm curious and it kind of weaves me into how can people stay in

touch with you. I'm curious what you'd recommend for people in moving forward and getting more in touch with the Café Gratitude work or any other resources you'd recommend that people happen to.

Ryland:

Awesome. Well, I'm in the process of building my website which will be a resource for when we're doing -- right now I guess that's in the future. I'm building a website which will be a resource for workshops and different inspiration and reflection and sharing.

[1:00:29]

But right now, I know on the Café Gratitude website there's some workshops that my folks are scheduled to lead here in Los Angeles in the first or second month of the New Year so that's one thing. Again, the Café Gratitude. If you're in California, you can obviously come visit. It is designed to be a community so come and just experience it and introduce yourself. Just participate in that field. But as far as many people that are far away or in different places, the thing that I -- a friend of mine, his name is Mastin Kipp. He has a blog called The Daily Love which is quite a beautiful reminder and reflection of how to stay present to being the presence of love.

Really the opportunity here and what has inspired to continuously share and inspire is that we oftentimes want someone else to be the source of our joy and the beautiful thing is that as far as we're leading up to 2012 and we're down with the 21st and the Mayan calendar, the shift and The Shift Network, just really remembering that you are it. You are the source of what you're looking for.

Yes, to me it is so essential and important because it reminds us who we are when we've forgotten who we are and that's why I have a "Be Loved" tattoo on my forearms because I knew that life would be like the movie, Memento, that I would fall asleep to what I'm here to doing, what I'm about. My number one most important instructions on my forearms as my living altar and faith in myself, be on my left arm and love on my right to really reflect like that is what you signed up for and that is what you committed to sharing in the world and neat practices.

When you're in an environment, you're like, "Oh, I wish this person was here." And then think about, "Oh, what would that person bring? What way of being would that person be here?" And then the practice is, okay, now can you be that? Can I be that? Can I be that presence, that way of being, that joy, that love, that compassion, that creativity that I was wanting, yearning for in another? Can I show up and express that in my

unique way? And really recognize that the sun is shining out but you can light a candle at any moment and you get to be the sun. Boom! You got the light.

So as far as, again, we have books. There's Café Gratitude books that my folks had written that are beautiful. Again, like my friend, Mastin Kipp, who does The Daily Love. The amazing thing is right now in the world there's an emerging culture of hundreds and hundreds of people who have made their lives about being guides and supports for this emerging way of being, love and compassion and kindness and taking care of each other as the top priority of our life and making a difference.

It's amazing. There's probably more resources now than there has ever been. I mean for sure. Actually, not even a question. There is more resources than ever, ever has been especially with the way that communication is now. There's just so much rich, inspiring, beautiful information to support the remembrance that all that you're seeing over there in those communities, in those people is just really the real gift is the reflection, the remembrance that that quality that they're holding and that they're bringing, you actually embody that and you actually have that seed within you and that you can become that oak tree that you're seeing over there and you're staying over here like just an acorn. I'm just an acorn, but yeah, but you are the condition and you are the seed of that oak tree that is emerging.

[1:05:10]

It's so beautiful. There's nothing more beautiful than getting to watch people and supporting people in that emerging greatness.

Ben: Amen. It's a perfect way to end, my man.

Ryland, it's such a pleasure to have you on. I look forward to loving you more from afar, and I look forward to dancing more in person in the future. Just a great time being around your open heart. So thanks for sharing, my man.

Ryland: My absolute pleasure. Thank you so much for this opportunity. It's like this opportunity gives me the space to remember who I am because sometimes I forget. So thank you for calling me for it into expressing love and leadership and compassion and devotion and insight and inspiration into the world. I'm inspired by you, and I love you. Thank you. And thank you, everyone, for listening. You are it. All right, go.

Ben: Amen.

Ryland: Amen.

Ben: Awesome.

Ryland: All right. Beautiful.

Ben: Have a beautiful night, my man and everybody who is on the line. We'll be back next Monday with Joshua Gorman who **[1:06:25] [Indiscernible]** Generation Waking Up which is doing some beautiful, beautiful social action work in the world and lots to talk about there. Just giving you tons of love and blessings. Hoping you feel yourselves swimming in the ocean of love as you go off into the rest of your day.

Have a great week, everybody. Bye-bye.

Ryland: Bye.

[1:06:44] End of Audio

© 2012 The Shift Network. All rights reserved.