



Find your life's purpose to live a life of fulfilment - Rachel Kling describes how her passion for aikido transformed her life

Anu: Hello listeners Welcome back to the “**Victim 2 Victor**” podcasts. My name is Anu and I am your host. In today's podcast episode I have a very special guest. My guests name is Rachel Kling. Rachel Klean is a lifelong writer and Aikido practitioner of 20 years, and she began her career as a psychotherapist when she graduated from St. Michael's college with a clinical psychology degree in 2016. She has a master's degree of Fine Arts and creative writing from Columbia University, and she received her black belt in Aikido in 2021. Aikido is a modern Japanese martial art and Rachel's book entitled my walk on the Aikido path, a healing journey of self-discovery, was published back in April 2021. In her book, she writes about her journey and how I Aikido healed her from a mental breakdown and past trauma, listen on to discover how she managed to turn her life around to a life of compassion, peace and fulfilment. Rachel, hello, it's lovely to have you on my show. How are you today?

Rachel Kling: I'm well, thank you, thank you for having me.

Anu: I'm sure it's going to be an amazing show. Because you have so much that you can offer and so much that you can contribute towards anybody who has overcome their own traumas. And so just wanted to maybe ask you about your journey so far, and you know where you are today, if you want to share.

Rachel Kling: Well, I'll start with today. Today, I am a psychotherapist with a full driving practice in Burlington, Vermont, United States, a black belt in Aikido, I still train. And I'd live a pretty full life. That's what I do. And I write. So I write I do like Aikido. And I practice psychotherapy, which is my job. I'm very fortunate to have a job that is about healing. It's healing in itself, it heals me and heals others. And I talk about this in my book that healing others is the same as healing yourself training in Aikido is about learning to heal yourself and learning to heal people around you. And my life is very much about growth and about the next step, and what I can do to develop myself as a person. And I think none of us are all completely healed, right? It's a journey. It's ongoing, but we can grow, we can get more self-aware, and we couldn't be happier. So my life is really about helping to myself and the people around me to be happier.

Anu: That's amazing. And just I just think it's amazing. Obviously, you're a psycho therapist, because I know how powerful psychotherapy is as a treatment for PTSD and trauma. Do you want to talk more about your practice?

Rachel Kling: Yeah, so I work with a lot of trauma survivors. And I have found, you know, people have different views. There's all kinds of specific trauma therapies, there's, you know, EMDR, and there's different ways of approaching trauma. And I have found that talk therapy really works, that people want to be heard people want to tell their story. And so I listened to their story. And I have found that there is an arc to how people heal, you know, they, they start out maybe blaming themselves, almost always, you know, blaming themselves, what did I do? And then you, you kind of try and connect with them and help them find a sense of self-worth. And then at a certain point, there's people go through a very dark period, how could this happen to me? How could this happen? How can people do this to me, and then people will come out on the other side. And because I've seen that now, for five years, I can be very forward with someone says, like, can say there is a light at the end of this tunnel, you know, walk through this journey with me, I'm going to guide you through this. And I'm going to help you see that you're not only was this not your fault, but that you are a bright and beautiful person with an enormous amount to offer the world. And so that's how I approach trauma is by connecting to the inner life of someone the inner light of another person and to help to just hold that out. That they were always beautiful, always loving, always wonderful. And that when I do therapy, it's about not about what's wrong with you. It's about what happened to you, you know, people come what's wrong with me, I'm broken, I do this, I do that I can't have relationships, I can't do this. You know, I'm always showing that. You say, Well, you do have these traits maybe but that's because you didn't have an attachment to a good parental figure. That's because you have you were hurt a lot growing up. That's because you were isolated or abused or that these things that happen to us when we're not attached to or treated lovingly by the by a primary caregiver from the beginning. It really messes us up it really makes us isolates us and makes us feel bad about ourselves. And then we have a whole life to make up for where we have to heal and do this based on what someone else created for us.

Anu: It is its exhausting. And this is why I always say life is a lifelong healing journey for all of us. You know, even for people who might not have gone through, you know, the kind of trauma that a lot of sexual abuse survivors have. Everybody in a way is traumatized to a certain...

Rachel Kling: Percent 100%. Yeah. It is a traumatized society. And even if you know didn't specifically have a traumatize abusive parents, the society is traumatized, you know, there's war. And there's, you know, even what happened this year with George Floyd that happened to all of us that traumatized the whole world. Yeah, you know, it was on video, you watch that you have PTSD. So, like, God, so that's the thing, the society because of its own, its violence, and racism and sexism, and all these things. They're traumatic in themselves, and I bring into my consulting room, you know, yeah, bad things happen to you from your parents. But bad things are happening to all of us all the time. And we're constantly in a healing process. And that's why it's so important to get really strong in yourself so that you can stand up to these constant assaults that are coming out of us all the time.

Anu: Absolutely. Our inner strength is so important to them and self-awareness. Yeah. So what was it about yourself in terms of your history that led you along this amazing journey that you're on?

Rachel Kling: Well, I really just got lucky. I mean, everybody gets lucky, right? Every button this is I almost say this exactly. In my, in my book, right? You find that moment in your life where everything turns around for you, right? You find that you know, and it's a lot of things coming together, you have to be ready, you have to recognize that moment. And then, you know, it's also luck. So I was, I didn't know what would happen to me if this hadn't if I hadn't met this person. So I was in physical therapy school, and I was really not in a good way, I had just come out of a pretty profound mental breakdown, I had been in the hospital, I was up at my father's house trying to recover. And I went in to talk about low self-worth had no self-esteem at all, I was awkward. I would just wasn't easy for me to be around people. And so I went into this physical therapy program, where the other students were really mean, it was like being in a school, you know, I was in graduate school. But these were like, it was like being bullied in school yard. It was awful. And I was not physical therapy was not my thing. I'm not a science person, but I'm a dancer. And I thought, well, I have to do something. I'll try it. I went in, and it was a disaster academically, it was also disaster socially. And it turned out when I went to my professor, you know, just in tears saying, I can't I don't know what to do here. I can't do this. And she said, Well, you know, why don't you come to my Aikido class, because Aikido can help you deal with your fear and with your feelings of being broken, and you know, can help you with the healing process. And she invited me to our Quito class, and I went into her Quito class, and my world changed completely. Now. It was 20. That was about 2000. Year, 2000, proximately, 21 years ago.

Anu: Oh, wow. Amazing.

Rachel Kling: Yeah. So that was it for me, you know, everyone has something like that in their life where we hope to, you know, whether just their world turns around for them.

Anu: Absolutely. And you also mentioned about, like, a mental breakdown that you also endured as a young adult. Yeah. So I don't know how I made it through college. So I was very just awkward. It was, you know, a home was a nightmare as it is for probably many of your listeners, right? Just, I mean, I go into detail in the book, but it was, you know, physical abuse and verbal abuse and just, you know, growing up in a community where it was very isolated, a kind of a cultish sort of community where everything was condoned. It was pretty ugly upbringing. Then I went to college, and I somehow made my way like, I felt like a fraud. Basically, because I faked my way through college, I looked all great night was doing well in classes, and I've walked to all kinds of clubs. But inside I felt like a fake. I felt like this was all somebody else doing all this and nobody could really see, you know, the fraud that I was and how paint how much pain I was, I was in pain all the time. I was miserable all the time. And all people could see was this kind of person who was somewhat awkward, but really smart and really active and they couldn't see me, but I couldn't keep that up forever. Right. So I went to Columbia University for my master's degree in creative writing. And it seems impressive, just like everything else was impressive, except I couldn't do it. I lost I

guess when I started that's when my breakdown started. Just not my I lost my concentration and I couldn't tell where I was. I literally descended into psychosis. I was walking the streets of New York not knowing what was going on, you know, and I became suicidal, but I didn't even know I was suicidal. I was just kind of like, I tried to step into front of a train once without you know, I just was really suicidal. I was really depressed. And I was also my mind was cracking. I couldn't make sense of anything. And I think that was coming. I think that was just a combination where I didn't have any structure. No undergraduate school, you have structure. You have clubs, you've classes. You have homework assignments. In graduate school, you're on your own, right. They say, well, you're writing you're doing your work. But you're not you don't have any structured classes or in the evenings, everything else is up to you when you're supposed to be writing and I couldn't handle it. So what was really inside of me, that kind of feeling of brokenness kind of came into that outside of me, and that's when I became completely cut tonic and I had, I just went to a place of nothingness for six weeks.

Anu: Wow, okay. What were you doing during that six weeks?

Rachel Kling: I was in the hospital. I was in a psychiatric hospital. I got I came in my sister took me to the hospital. I was really out of it. And then I became catatonic while I was in the hospital.

Anu: Okay. And would you say you had a severe case of just hitting rock bottom?

Rachel Kling: Yeah. I would say that that was a severe case of hitting rock bottom, I don't think you can go any lower than not at a time, right? You lose yourself completely.

Anu: So how did you overcome that? That six?

Rachel Kling: Well, I came out of it. I mean, my father was there every day. But actually, my mother was there, I didn't notice and then she was the perpetrator of the abuse. And I had no really relationship to her at that time. But maybe she I don't know if she starts she got scared or something and decided suddenly that she was my mother. Okay. But my father came every day. And he brought me mango juice. And he just kind of I was apparently drinking this mango juice while I was under. And it was just first memory is he drinking this mango juice. And it's very much a metaphor for his love. And he would just come and sit with me and just devotedly bring this to me every day. And it was hard to come out of it, because it was a lot of students. And so it's kind of a guinea pig, you know, and that was really hard. But he was there. And he brought, he brought me home with him up to upstate New York. This is all spoilers. This is the first chapter of mine of my book. Sorry. But it's interesting to read about it once you've heard about it. And I kind of didn't do very much for five years. And then I decided to go to physical therapy school for no reason. It's, you know, it's like the stars aligned or something. And then I met, I met Leslie and she, she changed my life. So.

Anu: Okay, well story by such as soon...

Rachel Kling: It is quite a story. I recommend that people buy my book and read it for themselves.

Anu: Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, yeah, I actually feel like this show is going to be spoiling a lot.

Rachel Kling: Okay, it's worth doing. Its worth.

Anu: To tell us about my Aikido for those who have never come across Aikido before.

Rachel Kling: Okay, well, Aikido is a martial art, but it is different from other martial arts, it is far more enlightened. It's not about feeding an opponent. It's not about winning. It's not about sparring. It's about connecting with your partner. And when someone attacks you, rather than try to win or try to hurt them. You rather try to take that conflict and blend with it and turn it into a harmonious experience. So you're redirecting it, you blend with them, and you'll be directed. So everybody is now out of harm's way, no one is hurt and you're fine, and they're fine. And the person who's attacking you a one since they said one? Well, it's like they're temporarily insane. Or another sensei said, well, it's coming from a place of deep suffering that you could never know about. So you're assuming that the person attacking you needs compassion, and not to be you know, deep down thing. So your job is to provide compassion. So the way it was one way to explain it that it was explained to me as you're teaching your partner that violence is destructive without destroying them. So you're very skilled, you know, you centered and we learn, we learn, we treat we have techniques, and we learn and we train and you use these techniques to sort of you know, redirect so they're falling usually it's called Akemi. And they take falls we have to know how to take falls to train in Aikido. Okay, and we're redirecting the energy so that everyone feels taken care of and everyone is safe. And that's a Aikido and the idea behind Aikido is connection that we're here to connect with each other and start healing because what is suffering? Suffering is separation, this connection?

Anu: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And so does it differ a lot to the other disciplines such as Tai Chi.

Rachel Kling: Its actually has a lot in common with Tai Chi in that it has a similar energy to Tai Chi. But it doesn't. Tai Chi is missing the partner aspect of part of my kido is about relationship, right? You don't have partners in touching you have to push hands but it's Yeah, it's very, it stops there. Aikido is very expensive, and it actually has roots in judo and Jitsu because the founder Aikido was a very accomplished martial artists. But after World War Two, he wanted to change this martial art into an artist cheese. And that's where our keynote comes from. It's called what means a way of harmony. Or art of peace, different ways to translate Aikido. So he created all these techniques or all this way of practicing martial arts is that as a way of harmony, an artist peace. So that's how we practice we practice. It's about reconstruction. It's about building, it's about making relationships work and connecting with your fellow being and achieving unity. So if you're assuming that we're all spiritual beings, we're all connected at the core. Yeah, that in Aikido, which we're set, we're finding that unity where we're really all one oneness of all things. And so, that's the heart of Aikido. The heart of Aikido is our connection to one another, the heart of Aikido is doing away with contention and aggression. So Aikido is the opposite of aggression. Aikido is a way of neutralizing aggression of harmonizing with aggression. So thus dissipating it. And I suppose that that transforms into a very healing experience.

Anu:

Rachel Kling: Yeah, so I can always inherently healing me for me, and have very specific meaning because from the techniques, and my book is very much about how very specific techniques helped me understand myself and helped me come to a healing place. So talking about those techniques on the show, I can maybe a little bit but in the book, I

really get into detail. And so there are these different techniques where you are learning, for example, a given example, one of the first thing you learn is called a potassium or a tin can with some 10 content comments turn, okay, in Japanese. And so they grab your hand, your there's someone grabbing your wrist really hard, right, and it looks like very contentious, what's going to happen here, they're grabbing my best to punch them with the other hand, or they're going to grab me and pull back. But what happens is you move next to them, you stepped back and you move next to them, so that you're seeing the world from your perspective. And so it's no longer a fake. You're together, seeing the world from your perspective. And then there's all kinds of things you can do, depending on the situation, what you're learning what the situation is. But my, this was my first day and I Quito and Leslie, the person who I found in physical therapy school, said, when we do Aikido, it's a conversation, not a contest. So you're always trying to see things from the person's point of view, even if you're trying to change their mind because they're doing something on wise. That's what Aikido is. So every technique you're learning, you start out realizing how smart you are, how contentious you feel, how angry and scared you feel. And then as you practice, you connect with that person and it really transforms and so love and compassion.

Anu: Sounds amazing. And you are a black belt in Aikido.

Rachel Kling: I have a black belt in Aikido. Yes. First degree black belt.

Anu: How many years did that take for you to obtain?

Rachel Kling: That's, let's see, that took about 12 years. Okay to get there. And then I think and then I took some time away to go to graduate school for psychotherapy.

Anu: Okay. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And also just on the psychotherapy and physical therapy, what's the difference between those two forms of...

Rachel Kling: A psychotherapy is about the mind and physical therapy is about the body and of course, you know, physical therapy is very much science it's very much about biomechanics, very much about movement and you really need a grounding in science you really need to know need to know physiology you need to know chemistry need to know biology. You need to know bio biomechanics as I said, how the bones move and these are all almost some of it you need math for. Yeah, and these are all things that I have no aptitude for. But I have a lot of aptitude for helping people understand themselves.

Anu: Excellent. And I just think it goes hand in hand so the psychotherapy, physical therapy and then you Aikido.

Rachel Kling: Yes. Mind Body and that's the thing is a lot of what my book is about, in fact, the foundation of my book and the reason I wrote it, or one of the reasons is that I Aikido in psychotherapy has so much in common so right I Aikido is about healing psychotherapy is about theory I Aikido is about connection. Psychotherapy is about connection. IQ is about seeing someone in pain and trying to have compassion for them and understand them. Psychotherapy is about seeing someone in pain and helping them have compassion, helping them and have compassion for themselves, loving them having compassion for them. Aikido is about helping another person feel safe. Psychotherapy is about helping another person feel safe. So all of these things

one interact impacts the other end makes me better. Aikido makes me a better therapist. Therapy makes me a better IQs.

Anu: Yeah, so what were you doing over lockdown with Aikido? And.

Rachel Kling: We did an online Believe it or not. So we did a number of different ways depending on the teacher, right? No breakout rooms. Everybody's familiar with breakout rooms. Yeah. So in breakout rooms, you can have a partner but you're not touching, but you are connecting through the part and it's not the same. Obviously. You can't feel yeah, you're right. But you're practicing the movements, okay, and you're connecting to another person. So you're practicing, you know, speak, you're practicing eco bits. And some teachers like my, the sensei I study with now. So I got to go back and study with Leslie because she was teaching on zoom. So I got I got what it was. But my sense I did a little different where he just kind of worked on footwork. And we worked on and then he would do some explanation. And then we did a lot of kind of talking about Aikido videos. Yeah. And then some teachers do a lot of movements. And Leslie, same classes, a lot of movement, really tired at the end. And we just, it's so interesting, when you're trying to grab someone in, you're really focused, you can feel the person's energy coming at, you can really feel and if you do it right, and you connect correctly, you can feel the connection. And it's really a wonderful practice. I can't wait to get back into the dojo obviously. But it's been a wonderful experience to realize that we're connecting through our minds or minds or that way. And so it's been an interesting experience that I have had, pandemic has been, for me a learning experience, a lot of people have had a lot of loss in your life. And it's been a loss for all of us. And it's devastating. For me, I've gotten some gifts. And one of them was learning that a Aikido is something that we have, we can hold on to the world over the world over the Aikido community kept going, we went through, and we did what we had to do. And it's not the same as touching someone and, and I'll be very interested to see how it feels. But we did the best we could practice the movement. We connected with each other.

Anu: Yeah, that's so inspirational. The fact that you did not let the virus or the screens you did not let that come in between your spiritual practice.

Rachel Kling: Yeah, it was amazing. Amazing. Still amazing. Yeah.

Anu: Yeah. And it's gonna be an absolute just couldn't even imagine just actually being in the presence of somebody and sharing their energy.

Rachel Kling: Yeah. Oh, my goodness. I can't wait.

Anu: I can see I can see the passion. Yeah, so I suppose you know, if people want to obviously start practice, what would you recommend that they do?

Rachel Kling: First thing is, there's a dojo near you just type your Aikido and type in your location, and you will find one.

Anu: Okay.

Rachel Kling: And I used to say to people, they can contact me through my website, Rachel, clean author.com. Anyone who wants me to help them find an Aikido dojo, I will help them. Anyone who has more questions about Aikido, they should feel free to contact me through my website.

Anu: And I'll also write another link to your website on the description, podcast. Everybody can contact you. So yeah, let's just go back to trauma. Because we did. Obviously before the show, we did have a discussion about trauma and just you know, the sensitivity of the subjects. And I just wanted to get your views on what you feel it takes to heal from trauma.

Rachel Kling: I think that's a really good question. I think the first thing it takes is the decision to heal from trauma, the decision to say, I'm not going to let this be me, I am not going to let this when like I say to my patients, sometimes they'll say, who's in the driver's seat here? Are you going to let them decide for you how you get to live your life? Yeah. All right. Don't let them win. I mean, I said that to a patient the other day, and I was like, she said, Well, I you know, I'm feeling better. And I'm feeling you know, I'm feeling good about myself. And then I just hear his voice, oh, this is bullshit. You're full of shit. And he said, that's not your voice that's on your show. And I said, that's not your voice. That's the voice of the person. Who are you? Don't let her ruin this for you.

Anu: And I love how you are seeing it as a separate entity. It is not part of you. It's like, please, could you leave my premise?

Rachel Kling: Exactly. You decide I am worthwhile. And so that's not the end of the road, that's the beginning of the road, saying, I'm going to do this I'm going to heal, I'm going to get better. I'm not going to. And then at the path that you take is as unique as every person. My experience is that if you make that decision, you'll find your path you'll find I found a key though, I do recommend therapy, if you can find a good therapist, every therapist is not wonderful, but a lot of it is about match about Yeah, connection about relationship. But it is a very healing experience. And through it you can find your path, but find a path find a place something that gives you gives you a sense of purpose, something that you go back to something that you know, will lift you up inside, find a way to inspire yourself maybe you have a spiritual practice, maybe, you know, I tend to hesitate to say meditation and mindfulness because first of all, Meditation for trauma survivors is something that needs to be done carefully because you can get triggered, you know, right. When I talk about spiritual paths, I'm not talking about, you know, breathing, I'm talking about why are you breathing? I'm talking about what is your connection? So I obviously believe that we're all connected. I obviously believe that there's not so much of greater power, but that nature is a very spiritual, powerful force that connects us all, that we're part of nature, that there's a spiritual entity that the physical, what you see is not all there is. Yeah. And that were connected with each other. And that that, but that is love. That's what I believe. And so how do you find that place in you that is love with a capital and oh, how do you connect to that, and we connect to that? By inspiring ourselves? Some people connect to it through periods, you might play a musical instrument, you might do any kind of martial art, you might, you know, it's how you do it right? Do you do martial arts beat the hell out of somebody until they're bloody and almost dead? Do you do martial art because it helps you focus your mind and make you a better person? So everything that you're doing, every choice you make is about polishing your own spirit, making yourself a better person. As you make yourself a better person, there's no more space.

For trauma, there's no more space for people who have hurt you. Because you're uncovering your own goodness, you're teaching yourself, what a loving and wonderful person you are. So my advice is polished yourself, uncover your own goodness, and engage in activities and interactions that nourish you and support you.

Anu: That's beautiful. And it's about finding your own purpose and meaning in life like you did with your Aikido. And obviously, now that you've written a book as well, which congratulate.

Rachel Kling: Yes, yes, I've written a book to share my experience.

Anu: Yeah, can you say that was your purpose in life?

Rachel Kling: Purpose is an interesting word. It's not so much my purpose isn't writing as much as growing. Okay? Right. Yeah. So writing that book helped me grow don't know if I'm gonna write another book and might not writing that book helps me grow. Aikido helps me grow. Aikido helps me heal. I might lose my legs tomorrow, and I can't do Aikido anymore. Right. So do I stop healing? At that point is that? Do I no longer have a purpose in life at that point? What does my purpose become? It's not about purpose. It's about how do you connect to yourself, what in your life nourishes you? What in your life gives you hope, but in your life gives you a sense of feeling loved, and the ability to love others. That can be anything it can change. So it's not about what you're doing, but why you're doing it and how you're doing.

Anu: You're why he needs to know your why absolutely. Love that. So what do you think it takes to find yourself worth and to find a path which leads us to a place of healing and peace?

Rachel Kling: I think one of the things you need to do is what I said before? I think I've cut? It's kind of repetitious question from that. But the question is repetitious, but I think the thoughts that are coming to my mind are the things that I I just said, but finding self-worth is a lot about your how you relate to other people. So in my own experience, like in physical therapy school, I felt I had no sense of self-worth, and I and that was reflected in the way that people treated me. Right. And then I went to a Aikido. And it's not only that the practice itself is healing, but I was treated so well treated like I was worthwhile and finding yourself in putting yourself in situations where people are going to treat you well. Yeah, you know, seeing yourself as someone worthy of good relationships. And that's easy to say, right? Part of being a trauma survivor, a lot of times it's going from one bad relationship to another one. Finding self-worth is nourishing yourself. I'll just repeat that is because I think it's not worth that you can you can't say that too often is to your listeners, just nourish yourself, does this make me feel loved? Or does this make me feel bad? Does this make me feel good about myself? Or does this make me feel bad about myself? And then that's an easy decision?

Anu: If they are, that there's some very simple questions that you can just ask yourself, because I know, you know, when you are in that bad relationship is so difficult to see the light, but just by asking that question, you know, is this relationship serving me? You know, if it's a no, then you know, it's not healthy, it's not human, you know, it's time to try and take some action.

Rachel Kling: Right. And I want to acknowledge, you know, also being a therapist and working with while we're on the subject of that working with domestic abuse survivors, that it's not easy to leave a bad relationship, whether it's a friendship or it's a romantic relationship, or whatever relationship it is. We stay in these kinds of relationships because we feel like we're comfortable there or that's what we deserve to be or there's no nothing else that can help us. There's no one else that would want to be with us. And so finding self-worth finding healing is a process. Yeah. Right. It's our process. There's no you know, I know that that's a question that I was thinking of to address. But I want to acknowledge it. That is a process. There's no one way to find self-worth. It's a journey. It's saying, it's saying to yourself, you know, I deserve better than this. Right? I deserve better than this. And that's where therapy comes in, frankly, right? It's like someone helping you looking at you and saying, yes, you deserve better than this. And we're hoping that, that it's a therapist who can do that, no matter what their orientation, right? I do talk therapy, psychodynamic therapy, some people do cognitive therapy, all you need is a therapist who can look at you and say, you deserve better than this. You deserve what's good in your life. And then you work towards that in whatever, whatever they're offering you. Whatever it is, you're looking for, you know, whatever road you're taking, there's no one size fits all. There's only do you feel loved? Do you feel appreciated? Do you feel that someone cares about you, and sees the best in you? Right? So you're looking for people who see the best in you, and then you'll see the best thing yourself. The other thing I will say, is gratitude, not for a situation out for an abusive situation, but just an attitude. Just I know this has said before, but just a sense of gratitude for yourself, your own goodness, right? Gratitude for nature, gratitude for the fact that we're, we're all in this together. You know, just, I was at an Aikido seminar once where I said, to give up the desire to throw and replace it with gratitude. So sometimes in Aikido, you get very intense, you're like, oh, you're patting me, I'm gonna throw you I'm gonna teach you. And he says, No, no, no gratitude, have gratitude for this person, this is trusting you enough to, to come at you and appreciate what they have to offer you. And, you know, and so having a sense of awe, that, you know, this is a very big, loving universe, as bad as things can be. And that life can be big in life can be connected, and there's more to life than bad things that are happening to you. There's a whole world out there, there's more to you than the person that bad things are happening to there's a hole in our life of beauty. So just focus on making your focus large, making your focus big, saying this is not all there is there is more, there's more to me, and there's more to life.

Anu: Yeah, there's the law of abundance, we have to think.

Rachel Kling: Right.

Anu: I know, obviously been in that traumatized situation, it's so difficult to see that because you're just looking in your head. And, you know, it is all like Poor me Poor me. And you know, because my therapy is started back in 22 2010. So it took over a decade for me to even come to the state of mind. Now, you know, and it is not an overnight occurrence.

Rachel Kling: Yes. It's not overnight. It's not overnight. However, there are gifts along the way. Yeah. And that's the other thing is don't knock every little wonderful thing that happens to you. Right? That's what I mean by gratitude also, is this, you know, it's looking at the large but it's also looking at the small, little things, the sunrise, you know, looking up and seeing the pink and being like, Oh my god, what world do we live in that the sunrise is like this, you know, noticing the things in your life that bring you joy, every day, you can find something in your life to bring you joy, and then that joy expands and expands and expands until life is living. Yeah, you're living in a joyous life. Just the little things, the little things, grateful for yourself. The fact that you have been abused that you had, and you still wake up in the morning.

Anu: Yeah.

Rachel Kling: You still get up. You might not brush your teeth, but you open your eyes. You're not that. Great. Yeah. When I was working community mental health, I would be very angry with people because they you know, they talk about people who are mentally ill Well, she's not trying. And I would think I would say, well, do you want to stand in her shoes? She's trying she's standing on her two feet.

Anu: Right?

Rachel Kling: So you know, it's not about trying, it's about saying, okay, I am doing the best that I can and be grateful to yourself. We're doing the best you can you want to start with gratitude. Start with yourself. You're here you're doing the best you can do did not give up the ghosts. You didn't you know, as someone who was suicidal most of my life. You know, I'm not anymore, obviously. And I've overcome that but to recognize No, okay, you're making a decision every day to stay alive, despite the fact that people did everything in their power to destroy, you know, be grateful to yourself for that.

Anu: And because another big process for me was actually being grateful for those who had harmed me. How did you come to that? Stage of where you could actually be.

Rachel Kling: Well, I have a different I don't look at it that way. Yeah, I look at the harm that I that was done to me as a whip something that helped to shape me who I am. And I'm very grateful to be who I am so that I wouldn't be on this show. For example, I wouldn't have met you, I wouldn't you know, you're a lovely person. I'm learning a lot talking to you. I love my book, I love my Akito I wouldn't have had the joyous experience and Aikido if I hadn't been harmed. So, yeah, I'm grateful for the way that these experiences allowed me to become a better person. I'm grateful for what happened to me are grateful to this person. I'm grateful that because gratitude happens when you say, Okay, I can transform this, I can become a better person. And then you can say I'm grateful to I wouldn't want to have a life. That was any other life.

Anu: Yeah, absolutely. Yes. You go for the lesson that's come from it. Yeah. Right. For how it shaped you as the person.

Rachel Kling: To become so that I can, you know, so I can share, I can help others heal, I can help others feel like, you know, this is you can get beyond this.

Anu: Right? Yeah. And then obviously, forgiveness as well. That was another thing that I really struggle with was forgiving my perpetrators.

Rachel Kling: I have, yeah, I have a different view about forgiveness as well. Okay, a little bit different than the self-help national self-help way of talking about it. I don't think

forgiveness about forgiving a particular person because sometimes what people do is unforgivable. Right, yeah. Sometimes actions are just unforgivable. What you can come to is loving yourself. Forgiving yourself for anything you feel is your fault. Nothing that that anything is done wrong. But you can't help but think that you've done something wrong and you've been out that's how children operate. That's who we are. And fully loving yourself fully embracing your own life. And there's no space to be angry or to hate. It's just as Nelson Mandela, I believe, who said, resentment is like swallowing poison and expecting the other person to die. Yeah. Right. Yeah. But I don't focus forgiveness on the other person. I focused forgiveness on living a full life and then you turn around and say, oh, you probably suffered too. Yeah, yeah. But not that's a long way down the road. Focus on yourself. Focus on living the best life you can live. Focus on loving yourself. Focus on having the life that nurtures you that fulfills you. Now, forgiveness comes naturally because you don't have any. Yeah, to feel hate. You just that's not who you are anymore. You become a fully loving person.

Anu: And you just share love and you know, it comes out of you abundantly. Yeah, absolutely. And what an amazing way to live.

Rachel Kling: Yeah, it really is. It really is. And I think it's important to acknowledge that there are always going to be times where you feel angry at the person who hurt you. Yeah. And I think it's important to acknowledge that that's okay.

Anu: Yeah.

Rachel Kling: You know.

Anu: Healing and part.

Rachel Kling: Right. So it's and it's important. Authenticity is important, right? Oh, I forgive you. Maybe you don't, right. Authenticity is important. It's like, let forgiveness come naturally. It's organic. It's about empty space. It's about Oh, okay. I don't have room in my life for rage. That's it. I don't have room in my life for rage. I don't have room in my life for heat. I don't have room in my life for anger. That's forgiveness. It's not your you know, it's not what you did was okay. It's forgiveness. I don't have room in my life to age anymore because I'm so full of everything else.

Anu: Yeah, absolutely. I had no space for resent I have no space to hold grudges anymore. Right? And again, you know, what an amazing, joyful life that would be if we could all live that way. But.

Rachel Kling: It would be a different world for sure.

Anu: It would Yeah. Do you feel a society? You've got a lot to do with the way that we are?

Rachel Kling: Yeah. So I mean, I think it's a very traumatized society. I don't think I'm the only person or the first person to say that. And I think a couple of things about it. I think that we all suffer from trauma, because if we didn't, we wouldn't have the world that we have, right? I could go a little deeper into that but I won't name names just because I want to hold your listeners are but anyone who so if you're if you're out to hurt someone else, it's because you've been hurt if you feel like you need to be powerful over another person, is because someone was powerful over you and hurt you with being you know, with powering humbleness. These kinds of people get into positions of leadership and get into positions of power and they use their own sense of powerlessness and fear and cowardice and hurt feelings, really, to hurt other people

in big ways, big ways. And it's very unfortunate, but if we were a trauma informed society, you would say, well, you know, it's not funny when someone says Oh, Daddy, her Yeah, yeah, right? It wouldn't, we would realize that our society has to be about healing. And if our society is about healing trauma we're not going to have the kind of wars that we have, we're not going to have the hate, we're not going to have the division. And so that's one going from the bottom up is, let's talk about trauma. Let's talk about how everyone is traumatized, let's talk about how neglect is trauma. Let's talk about how emotional abuse is trauma. Let's talk about how being taught that you're less important than what you should be is trauma, right? Let's talk about not just not being cheated, like you're the center of the universe, when you ought to be as a young child. That's trauma because you raised to believe you're, you feel like you're not worth anything. Yeah, so having a nun but realizing that trauma in this society, racism is trauma, sexism is trauma, all these kinds of things that so that when I'm in the consulting room, I will often you know, talk about it from a feminist perspective. And you know, that feeling not worthy because you're not looking you don't look good enough, because you're not skinny enough. Or it's not pretty enough, that you're being traumatized by a certain way that women are supposed to be a service to men or, you know, you're being traumatized. I mean, we know that racism is trauma every day feeling like having to be hyper vigilant. That's number one on the trauma on PTSD is hyper vigilance, right? Yeah. Anytime you can be heard that people thinking bad things about you because you're different, being bullied by the society, right? What's bullying? And I'm going to talk about George Blake because that patted me so profoundly, right. If you look at that video, that's bullying, that's trauma. And watching as I said to you before the show, that's traumatizing. So, racism hurts all of us, it traumatizes all of us, it keeps us separate. And so if I had to say, one of the main things that traumatizes our society is racism. What about you know, the wall? You know, what about treating immigrants like less than being and talking about them that way? It's traumatizing. It's traumatizing to all of us. That's a big thing for me, I guess. War is traumatizing wars everywhere. What's happening in Cannes, in Africa, wars all over the world where people are being cheated? We're all human, whether we like it or not, we're connected. You might think that you can look at someone and say, you're different from me, I hate you go away, and I'm gonna hurt you. And that's going to work well for me. But in fact, you're hurting yourself. You're hurting yourself. Because you're separating yourself. And when you separate yourself, then you're disconnected. That's trauma. We're here to be together. We're here to connect.

Anu: Absolutely. So what would you suggest if somebody is experiencing any racism or any bullying at the moment? How should.

Rachel Kling: I think? Well, I think I will say this. I mean, we're getting a little political here, but that's okay. Because I think politics important? Yes. And I think we're traumatized by the political system. Yeah. Right. We're traumatized by the political system. And I think I'm a white woman and sitting here and I think it's my responsibility. If someone's being bullied or traumatized, right. I think working to change the system, it's really important. First thing we have to do is acknowledge it right. Especially in America right now, it's probably true over there as well, where you are acknowledging that this is

robbing our society from the inside out, and how dangerous and hurtful it is. So the first thing is acknowledging it just like it's important to acknowledge your own trauma, you can't heal unless you say, yeah, this happened to me. And this is not okay.

Anu: Yeah, so you have to first of all, acknowledge it. Absolutely.

Rachel Kling: And then.

Anu: Oh, no, yeah, I'm just saying, because I know it will be difficult for a lot of children. Because I know that, you know, there's a lot of racism still happening in schools around the way.

Rachel Kling: And you know, I feel like there's a best way we can do this is to do something about it systemically, right. And I think, at least education and I feel, I feel like in some schools, not all schools, but there's a lot of circumstances where bullying has become a big deal. You know, people are almost going to the extreme of saying, well, you can't do this, you're out of here. And then people are talking about cancelled culture, whatever. What people are not talking about is the federal people are really trying to look at this differently. You can say, yeah, we're all a little screwed up in the head. And when we, you know, we go to extremes and that's not okay. But you know, one of my biggest pet peeves is the word politically correct. Oh, you mean, treating people with respect? That's not right. Is that what you mean by politically correct, being respectful towards people right, that's one of my pet peeves. So just acknowledging that people are trying, right, at least I know a lot of areas where you know, I know my niece and nephew, their school, they really try they try to teach good values that teach kids to treat each other respectfully. Teach that bullying is not okay. And I feel like there's a lot of trying going on and we need to just as well acknowledging the bad stuff, we need to acknowledge the good stuff we need to acknowledge where people are really putting their hearts into really making the world a better place. That's what happened last summer. Right?

Anu: Yeah.

Rachel Kling: People are putting their hearts into it. And just as I say, well acknowledge racism, yes. But acknowledge all that we're doing about it acknowledged the fact that we are trying to love each other child's care, and it's not going to reach every corner. But all we can do is do our best.

Anu: We can. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, and I think you know, if there's more of us who are showing a lot more love than for those people who do not want to go down this route, and you want to remain in there, you know, whichever stage they're at in their lives. And I think, you know, it's all about trying to just make the world a better place and to be the change you want to see in the world.

Rachel Kling: Right. Wonderful. That brings us back to my Aikido. Right. One of the wonderful things about Aikido, is it helps you this was I got a really nasty message on Facebook came out of nowhere. Well, now I know where it came from. But when I first saw it, I thought it came out. And I you know, and it really hurt me it was like, I was doing something good. And then all of a sudden, like, you know, my strike, my heart starts pounding. I was really upset. And I thought, Okay, this person is more upset than I am. Yeah. Right. There's something about going on here that is making this person really

hurt, and really angry, really scared. And they're feeling the need to attack me. And so if we can take a Aikido and look at the way that we train, and I Aikido, this person is attacking me because they're suffering, because they feel separate, because they need love. I'm just gonna love them. Right? So if you take the out in the world, you want to do Aikido in the world, you take the stance, anytime someone is suffering, yeah, I'm going to love them. Anytime someone is behaving in an inappropriate way. I'm not going to accept the behavior, right? And I can't we don't accept the behavior, we redirect it, we get them out of the way. We say no, you can't hurt me. Sorry. Nice try. But you have to go over here instead. Now you're okay. And I'm okay. It's all right your world. So you don't let people harm you. I was talking about racism recently. You know, finding it standing up for the people who need to be stood up for Yeah, but you don't hate your enemy. You know, I'm not a Christian, but you don't, you have to have compassion for the people who are doing the hurting. That is a very controversial attitude to take that I don't think there's any other way to heal our world than to have compassion for the people who are hurting this world. I don't mean saying things some time people need to go to jail. You know, I'm not saying don't hold people accountable. That's what people get mixed up. Right? I'm not saying don't hold people accountable for the bad things that they do. I'm saying recognize that people are doing bad things. Because they don't know any better at that moment. Right at that moment, they're lost at that moment. They feel that that moment, they feel scared. This is what we train and I Aikido for is to recognize that at this moment, this person does not know any better than to attack than to be hurtful. And our job is to teach them in a loving way how to be better. And so if we could do that the world would be a very different place.

Anu: Absolutely. So everybody just needs to start by Aikido. And to learn the difficult, let me tell you, I believe that from the bottom of my heart, Yeah, I know. But I'm sure many listeners will also believe that too, because I just think it sounds like an amazing. Would you call it a practice? Yeah, rather than a sport? Yeah, just the fact that it's built on compassion and connectedness. And that's what we instil into every human being right now. You know, especially since like the COVID lockdown. We've all been in isolation, many of us will be traumatized from that. So wait, start this discipline of connecting.

Rachel Kling: I recommend it. I think it can really make a difference in the world. I think it does make the world a better place. Even its small pockets, you know, because just that I can say after 20 years of my Aikido training in this person writes this nasty thing on Facebook that really hurt me really got to me to say, this person is hurting more than that it this person is off balance. This person does not have it together. I have much my life is much better than his and I need to have compassion for him. That's what I Aikido taught me. So I'm not fighting. I'm not I mean, yeah, I'm upset about it, you know, and there's all kinds of things going on, but not you don't get thrown off balance. You don't add to the cats. When you say, Okay, this is terrible. And everybody is trying and my job is to help them try better.

Anu: Yeah. Okay, I like that one. Yeah. That's amazing. Yeah, because we've cyberbullying and just, you know, people who are currently quite negative over social media. I did

actually do a show on that as well, because there's quite a few people around me who have been affected by that. And again, you know, it's not about you. It's about them.

And I think that's important. It's important for people to acknowledge that because I know there's been a lot of cases of suicide from, you know, people who have been traumatized from whatever has been said about them on social media. And especially the younger generation now, you know, the millennial Generation X generation Zed, they are all on social media. So they're a lot more brave, you know, to the these attacks, and there's been a lot of cases of fraud going on, you know, where your friends are being, they're being conned, out of 1000s of pounds and dollars as well. Such as think it's really important to acknowledge what's going on online.

Rachel Kling: And we're traumatizing each other every day. We're traumatizing each other. And that's why we have to help each other be better people so that we don't, we don't traumatize I wrote on small thing about gratitude, where my point was that if you express a bit of appreciation to someone find some small thing, they're going to see the good in the next person than me, and you're going to be less likely to be hurting for them. So that's another thing about gratitude. You can always see some good in someone, no matter what I mean, I know that that's also controversial thing to say. But you do have some way that someone is trying, you can always see someone's pain if you look deep enough. And if you see pain, you can have compassion.

Anu: Yeah. And you know, I learned that from Dalai Lama. I mean, it was just one of his talks, because China, you know, China in India, they all kicked him out. And they basically, but he was saying about China, which is amazing the way he was saying that. All he has is love for China. The fact that you know, he suffered so much from the political crisis that he did when he was booted out, he looked at them and he speaks to them with love, and it really irritates them.

Rachel Kling: Right, because what they need is love, right? Yeah. Talk about a traumatized punchy, right? What happens when people shut you down and kill you for saying what you believe? That's trauma, but it's not just traumatizing. The person who's killed? The person who was doing it is also traumatized because they're separating themselves. Yeah. Right. When you hurt or kill another human being, you have traumatized yourself, you have done something so profoundly destructive, that doesn't just destroy the other person, it destroys you as well. And so the Dalai Lama can look at this and say, I can love people because they are hurting so bad, and they are so scared. They're so scared of losing their power. They're stealing so alone, and so cowardly inside, it's feeling such a sense of powerlessness, that they have to do this to another group of people. Right? How can I have anything but love and compassion for people who feel so scared and so separate? That to feel good about themselves? They have to hurt someone else?

Anu: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, is on. I think that's a really important topic, to end today's show on. But I do have a few questions for you. Obviously, you know, your purpose in life is growth. And I just want to know where you're going to next. What's your next venture?

Rachel Kling: That's an interesting question, because I don't know, I thought I was gonna write another book. But it wasn't perpetuate it wasn't perpetuating growth, I was just doing it to do it. And it's like, so basically, what I want to do is I want to keep training and Aikido, which is only a couple of times a week, but it's not about the training and it's like Aikido in the dojo. It's about being what we call an Aikido being and I Aikido is in my life, and sort of just trying to be a really good person. I've really enjoyed doing podcasts, if I can get on more of them to spread the word about Aikido and what it can do for our world. That is something I would want to do. I did write again, I it would be something about growth. So I don't know, specifically right now I'm living in the moment, I'm doing my practice, and I'm training and I'm trying to nourish my primary relationship with my wonderful partner of 27 years. And I know right, I like to brag about that. I try to focus on what's important. What's important to me is that relationship was important to me. It's my training, and I Aikido was important to me is my practice. And what's important to me is being a good person. And that's a full time job. So.

Anu: Oh, wow. Absolutely. And so what do you think up until now has been your greatest life lesson?

Rachel Kling: My greatest life lesson? That's an interesting question. Let me think about that for a second, I think is what I've been talking about all day is that old, the whole podcast, which is that if you want to resolve a conflict, to have compassion for the person who's being hurtful to you, or to another person, and don't stop it, you know, and the problem, you know, get in the way of the harm, but when you are stopping someone from hurting them, you're helping them because you're cutting, you're keeping them from cutting off their relationship to their own humanity. And that's the problem is that when I guess my biggest lesson for my Aikido is that when someone is being harmful, they're cutting themselves off from their own humanity. They're cutting themselves off from what connects us all. And so my biggest life lesson is that we're all connected. We're all one. And our job as human beings is to help us all see that we are all one. And we can only do that with compassion.

Anu: Wow. I love that. And the final question is, what is the one thing that you would never do again?

Rachel Kling: I would never go to physical therapy school again.

Anu: Always. But you learn so much. Right?

Rachel Kling: Right. I learned so much from being emotionally and verbally beat up.

Anu: Oh, goodness.

Rachel Kling: I would never go. But that's not why I learned I learned but it's not my thing. I am not adept at science. I shouldn't try to make a career out of science because I have no ability to really learn it and understand it, and I definitely don't enjoy it. So it's not wasn't about the people because it could be any group of people who could be wonderful. But I don't belong in a science based program.

Anu: Okay. That's about yourself. Yeah, absolutely. And it's strange in it, because I Aikido is more mental than it is physical, but there is still some physical aspects to it.

Rachel Kling: Oh, yeah, it's very aerobic. And you can't, and this is something my instructors were very adamant about still are, that if you want to Aikido to be meaningful, mentally,

and spiritually, you have to first really, really practice the physical aspect, you have to be you have to have respect for what it takes to be really skilled, you have to respect the physical practice, you cannot have one without the other. And so you're constantly practicing to improve your skill.

Anu: Yeah. Okay, and so how can listeners contact you?

Rachel Kling: Rachelklingauthor.com, you can buy my book there, first of all, and you can contact me to ask me any questions that you might have or talk to me about anything. I'm very open to engaging with other people.

Anu: How about international meaning, how can people buy your book?

Rachel Kling: Can you go on Amazon UK?

Anu: Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Rachel Kling: Yes, you can get it on Amazon. My website is actually connected to Amazon. Oh, so if you go onto my website, and you click Buy Now, it'll take you to my Amazon page.

Anu: rachelklingauthor.com and it's Kling with L and E.

Rachel Kling: Yeah, right.

Anu: Thank you so much, Rachel, you have been an absolute honor to have on my show. And you've contributed so much on just, you know, the importance of compassion, the importance of love and the importance of just self-awareness. And I think you're going to help many, many people from here on, and I wish you well, in your future careers, I know it will be a very bright future.

Rachel Kling: Okay, well, thank you very much.

Anu: Lovely thank you very much.

CLOSING: And while this episode comes to an end, do you may want to check out my book of “**Victim 2 Victor**” now available on audio and where I have shared my journey of evolving through self-help and a determination to cast off on my damaging post. My goal is to reach out to fellow survivors of abuse and provide her motivation in their lives. I hope that I can help victors transform their lives and achieve mediation in the process of discovering their true self. I also have a 12 week self-development plan which is absolutely for and aims to guide you on your journey to recovery. You can find the link in the description below. Please like this podcast and tag or share it with somebody who is going through a similar situation and may need help. I will be back with another podcast soon. Until then take care and stay empowered.

