

Layla: Hi everybody and welcome to Good Ancestor podcast and I'm here with Rebekah or Bex Borucki. She is the founder of BEXLIFE and the BLISSED IN wellness movement. She is a mother of 5, a TV host, a meditation and yoga guide as well as a birth doula. She has thought meditation as a profound act of self-care that can be executed effortlessly and effectively to hundreds of thousands of individuals online and in exclusive workshops and public events. Rebekah's mission is to make mental health support and stress management stools accessible to all people. I'm really excited I have 2 of her books right here with me from her very first book, *You Have 4 Minutes to Change Your Life* and her newest book *Managing the Motherload*. Both published by Hay House. Welcome to Good Ancestor podcast Rebekah.

Rebekah: Thank you. I'm so excited to be here. I'm so excited to talk to you.

Layla: I'm very excited to talk to you and I know you are, you know, I just mentioned that your book has just come out. It's literally just come out, how many weeks is it now?

Rebekah: Oh, at this point maybe a week and a half.

Layla: And how are you feeling?

Rebekah: Relieved. Glad it's over. As you'll find out soon enough.

Layla: Yeah. My time is coming, yeah. Well, I'm excited to dive into the book during this conversation and some of the things that you teach about and talk about, but before we begin, we're gonna start with our very first question, who are some of the ancestors alive or transitioned, societal or familial, who have influenced you on your journey?

Rebekah: My only ancestor that I've known that was related to me was my mother because she is adopted and I'm not connected with my biological father. So, I have lost a lot of people in my life, my biological father, my mother, my stepfather and the father who raised me. But I will say that right now at this point of my life there's one in particular that I am most connected to and that is his name is [Inaudible] [03:34] and he was my last ancestor who is born into slavery in the United States and I have, through meditation, through prayer, through action become very connected to him and he is something that I think about a lot when I'm doing my work right now. So, I have a lot of people who've influenced me, writers, living black women who I work with, but yeah, it would be [Inaudible] [04:01] and I like saying his name a lot so that he is remembered.

Layla: Yeah, the name has this energy to it. And what has that journey been like for you connecting to that ancestor?

Rebekah: It's hard to put into words because it's been a journey of really of self-discovery, of connecting to a part of me that I wasn't really connected to growing up. I grew up in a mostly white family, went to a mostly white school and I socialized very much in, white culture is the wrong word because I don't believe that that exist, but I socialized very much as a white person even though I am not white and didn't identify as such. So, it's been a journey of completion, of connecting to the wholeness of me and filling in the blanks that I was really missing in my life.

Layla: Yeah. I'm really curious to know how that is sort of rippling out to your children, we'll talk about that as well. You have 5 children, you know, they're also imagining growing up in dominant culture, white culture society around them. How is your journey connecting to your ancestor rippling out to them?

Rebekah: Well because their father is white, they are white presenting so they navigate the world basically as white people who are not ethnically white. I think that that is interesting. It's very similar to the experience that I have had because I get access to a lot of spaces and I get permission to do a lot of things and I have a lot of privilege working in this world but still that knowing and that understanding and that connection to a different ancestry, to black ancestry has kept me grounded but also it gives me the opportunity to make a lot of change and open doors that would not have been opened if I didn't have that access. So, it's the same for my children. I remind them of who they are a lot and the privilege that they hold. I had a conversation with my 8-year-old son recently who is a trans boy and he was talking about this conversation he had with kids on the bus where they were asking him if he is a girl or a boy and I said what did you say? And he said, "I'm a boy." And I said what they did say? He said, "Well, they said cool." And that was a relief but I had to explain to him that that's not always going to be the answer that he gets. It's not always gonna be cool. It's not always gonna be approval and I explained to him that a lot of people don't like us just because of where we come from, who we are, who we love, what we look like and we got into the conversation of his privilege and how he will always navigate the world appearing as a white cisgender boy or man and what responsibility that holds and how he has to always look out for our LGBTQ brothers and sisters, our black siblings, how we have to stand up and use what we know and what we feel and what's in our heart to protect, to be our brother's keeper and so many words. So we have this conversations a lot. It's always happening in our house because it has to but it's different, it's different because my kids are white presenting, yeah.

Layla: Yeah. So much of this seems to also be about something that I really has been a really important part of my journey which is self-identification. So, ability and the right and the responsibility to name ourselves, to identify ourselves, to own who we are. I know for myself and my journey it has been about sort of trying to unpick and unwrap all of these like social conditioning over who I was taught to believe I was as a black Muslim girl and woman who is in white society and what that taught me about who I thought I was and looking back now I'm like okay I can see as a child this is why I thought these things about myself. This is why I believe these things about myself but now as an adult, I'm rewriting back for myself. I

think that is such a big journey for so many of us. It sounds like your son is having to do it at a very young age.

Rebekah: Yeah and I think he is lucky for that. I think he is lucky to be able to say who he is and people see that. For me, even this morning and I was thinking about this conversation and I was thinking about how I would talk to you versus how I talk on other podcast where I'm usually interviewed by white women and that switching back and forth of trying to be acceptable because for me my whole life being white or presenting as white meant being safe or being liked or being accepted. So, even now it's really hard for me to feel comfortable because I know there are so many white people that are gonna be watching us.

Layla: Right. Right.

Rebekah: So, it's like this conscious effort to go no, like remove yourself from that feeling of having to submit to that white gaze but it's there. It's ever present. So, I wonder how much of me is really me and how much of me is me because I was taught that this is the way that I was supposed to be. And it makes me angry and resentful and it makes me mourn the kind of the life that I could have had if I was always allowed to be black. If I was always allowed to talk about my black family and my black father. It's just it's a lot. So, I don't want that for my kids. I just want them to feel really free.

Layla: I can really relate to what you were saying about that feeling of anger and resentment, that grief of if this wasn't there from the beginning who might I be now at this age. And I know for myself I really had to accept that's never gonna have happened, you know, like I can't go back and changed time and I feel very privileged to be able to say, okay, I'm actually just gonna start from ground zero and just write it for myself. I think that's so hard for so many of us who hold marginalized identities because we have never felt collectively and never been given collectively the permission to be able to do that in a way that feels empowering. We talked about the reclamation of ourselves when we have marginalized identities of being, you know, revolutionary and I think it really is. It's like those small acts of being able to say I made myself, I say who I am without any like experienced it, before maybe you've seen it in other people and you see that's an example and that's how I wanna be, but it's like so many of these unchartered territory pioneering who we want to be and how we want to be in the world.

Rebekah: And I need people though to understand and recognize that that is a dangerous thing on so many different levels like it is such a privilege to be able to say this is who I am and show up in the world and that expectation to be accepted is even a privilege. I write these books that are for everyone really I write for everyone. I write for my lens, my perspective but you know, I'm not a social justice teacher. I don't teach anti-racism. That's not my lane, right? I teach meditation and like happiness.

Layla: Right.

Rebekah: So, I go into Barnes & Noble, people pick up my book, you know, they buy it and they read it and then they follow me on social media and then there's this reckoning for them when they discover who I am whether or not they are going to be aligned with me, be my ally, be my friends or if they're gonna lash out against me. And there's almost no middle ground. So, it's a very scary thing for me to have this book come out about motherhood. That's all it's all about. So, moms are picking it up and then I have all of these white women coming into my platform in droves and then finding out who I am, what I stand for and literally attacking me like literally with meanness. Oh my gosh, so it's a wonderful thing that I get to have this big platform and do this work in the world, but I want people to recognize that it is also very vulnerable and scary thing for me because I can't help who I am like I can't help it. I tried it. Sometimes I'm like making an effort to hide it because I wanna be safe but it comes through and I know that there's a consequence. So, I wanna be in service but I also wanna stay safe.

Layla: Yes. And I really appreciate you saying that in the work of healing, right? In the work of each of us and I know you talk so much about mental health support and so I wanted to be able to talk about that as well. For me, it is about owning the parts of myself that have been taught to discard or been taught to be afraid of or have been taught are unworthy or unlikeable and that is revolutionary for me absolutely 100% and you're absolutely right. The more I show up in the world unapologetically as I am whether or not as you said whether or not I work in the area of social justice or not just by holding the identities that I hold and holding the truth that I hold that that inevitably will make me a target for attack.

Rebekah: And I see it. We see our colleagues, we see our girlfriends being--it's not just words on social media, we see the police showing up to their house. We see their children being harassed. So, it's ever present and I want people that come to my platform or any other black woman to understand that they have a responsibility to tread lightly and to listen and to have an understanding no matter what area of work they are in like I'm just teaching meditation and talking about motherhood but it's still need being about there and my family being out there and feeling very vulnerable in the process.

Layla: Right. And the fact that you are talking about motherhood and then we are talking about these other topics right now, they are not two separate things, right?

Rebekah: No.

Layla: I wrote a motherhood book and it's just about motherhood and that there is only one type of way of being a mother or only one type of identity that a mother has. So many books that are out there that claimed to be for all women are usually for white women and sort of flattened things and so how are you navigating that where it's perhaps as you said people are like picking up the book and going, oh, it's for every woman and then they open it and okay, yeah, and then they come into your platform and then they are like, oh. I was just here for the mindfulness

and the tips and the strategies and she's talking about black lives matter. I'm not here for that political stuff, you know.

Rebekah: Yeah, I get that a lot. I got that recently. I'm not here for the political stuff. Well, here's the deal and I'm gonna come from a spiritual angle because that's where I am rooted. I'm rooted in my faith and my spirituality. I believe in oneness, truly. I believe that we come from one spirit, one God, one creator. I believe that we are all siblings on this planet, all God's children, so you cannot feel something and you cannot experience joy or pain without it affecting me. So, I feel other's pain, I feel other's joy, I feel very connected so if there is mass hurt happening on this huge grand level where people are being tortured and prisoned, murdered, there's no way that you can find any amount of healing in any area of your life if you don't recognize that and if you don't participate in the dismantling of that. So when I talked about motherhood and I think that the reason why whether it would be fat people, right? Whether it be brown people, black people, disabled people, I have children that have different visual impairments, physical impairments, whatever that is the fact that I have grown up being an outsider, feeling marginalized, feeling different, that informs all of that. The way I talked to mothers is because I know what it feels like to feel alone and disconnected and in need of some help and understanding and being seen. So, my experience informs all of that and I think that it allows me to welcome people in and really to have a platform where people are relatively safe and they feel supported at least by me. Because I really do love all people but I am for the most marginalized because I believe when they are helped everyone above benefits like everyone above on that whatever that social scale benefits. So, I'm basically here for black woman in other words. Like I'm here for black women, you know, and then in that because black folks, there's an intersection into every single area so black folks are also disabled, black folks are also women, black folks are also LGBTQ, I feel like I'm just here for the black folks then I got you covered. Because no one in this world is more hated than the black woman.

Layla: Right. It's really interesting. So when I began sort of my career journey I was very much steeped in the world of I would say white women's spirituality and very dominant sort of white women personal growth, online business and if you have told me back then so, you know, this is not that long ago like 2014, 2015, 2016, if you told me then that you could talk about motherhood, have a book from Hay House that's about motherhood written by a black woman who locally speaks about issues of what it means to be black, right? And raised that that would be a book that's out in the world, my mind would be blown. Because that wasn't what we saw that this hasn't been the norm. What you're doing right now...

Rebekah: And it's still isn't. It's still isn't the norm.

Layla: It still isn't the norm and you're absolutely right in that. So, you're that pioneer, you're one of the pioneers, right? Who are doing this work and you're very much taking the arrows that come with it.

Rebekah: Yeah, you know, let's be real because I slipped in there like I slipped in undetected so I got my book from Hay House and they know I was black, right? And it's now kind of I wanna say famously, you know, it's notorious but within our circle that Hay House Mastermind that happened in May 2018 where I showed up in the room and out of 75 people I was the brownest person in the room. That's a problem because I'm super late like that's a real problem. So, I'm sitting in this room and that first day I went home and balled. I was hysterical because I didn't want to go back, I didn't want to be a part of that. I knew why it was that I was the brownest person in the room. So, it was just a year ago that Hay House wasn't doing it right. I can use one hand to name the black authors there. And they're not like are they there, they're not there, they're coming in and out because the people there are so nice but when you're the only one it feels dangerous. It feels hostile because, you know, that white supremacy is driving that whether the people are nice or well-intentioned or not.

Layla: Whether the books are helpful or the teachings are helpful or not.

Rebekah: Yeah. Yeah. I wanna ask you though being in that world of white wellness because I know that it was problematic for me, did you feel comfortable? Did you see it as a problem?

Layla: You know, what makes it slightly different for me is that I was born and grew up in the west and then I've lived in the Middle East for most of my adult life now. So because I live in a very multicultural site in my physical and real life world, I wasn't picking up on it at first because here everyone is from everywhere and the way that I understand now that I was explaining to myself why I was often the only one who looked like me was that same thing that I felt as a child, I was always the only black kid. So rather than it being why is it like this this is so weird, it was always I am the wrong one here and I am lucky to be here. Keep a check, don't point it out, don't say anything about it because I internalized it, it's that internalized oppression, I internalized it as these are the reasons that I am in some way somehow there's something wrong with me, I'm black, you know, I'm Muslim, I'm not supposed to be here. So, that's how I felt as a child. I went to Catholic schools as a child. So, I was like raised at home Muslim. We went to mass every week in school and, you know, I sang the hymns and everything I just didn't go up for communion and I remember everyone else going up for communion except me and this feeling of, you know, that shame that Brene Brown talks about every single week wash over me, everyone is looking at me because I'm the only one not standing up. so, because I had that as a child I think I just recreated that in the spaces that I was in and rather than me being able to see it as this is systematically set up so that people who look like me are not highlighted in these spaces, are not leaders in these spaces, are not seen as credible authorities in these spaces, it's actually designed that way and it's not something that personal against me. It's actually about the fact that white supremacy is a thing that exist. And that's something that I later came to understand and look back in them like now I'm just pissed off.

Rebekah: I mean I knew I had a black odd mother named Alpha, well, I still have her, she is still here. And I was 14 when she and my white mother sat down and she told me I want my children to date and marry black people and if you want to have an easier life you will date and marry a white man. So I wonder what my life would look like if I didn't have that conversation, but I was hyper aware that not that I was so much unacceptable but that there would be an easier path if I went this way. So, with like Hay House and being in that whole world I felt the same. I was like I am just lucky to be here like I'm under the radar. I wasn't keeping it a secret but it's not out in front. You know, when I got my TV show I had a 3 seasons of my own TV show and then after I got hired one of the producers asked me what I was like that question what are you? And I told them like my dad is black, my mom is Irish and they're like, wow, that's awesome. You're so ambiguously brown like that's perfect for this.

Layla: Wow.

Rebekah: It was an Asian network. It was so gross. Like that whole time I'm thinking like so this is my meal ticket and if I rock the boat here because I'm still lucky and they're giving me this chance that I was the main breadwinner of my family, you know, I got 5 kids to feed. And I'm very conscious of that. I've always talked about social and racial justice and this is another funny point because a lot of white women have been coming forward and I'm so glad you're talking about this and I'm like hey lady I've been talking about this from the very beginning. But now I'm talking about it at a different voice because I'm not talking about it for you.

Layla: Right.

Rebekah: And that's what's changed. So, I know that not talking to catering, to cuddling white women who I have nothing against except for their whiteness, the way that they subscribed to their whiteness and white supremacy, I know that not doing that has put me in a spot where I'm losing money, I am. I make less money now. So, whatever. It's like what can I do because I have to be an integrity and I don't feel that I was necessarily out of integrity but I know that I wasn't doing what I felt was necessarily right.

Layla: Right. It struck me in both what you shared about your experience and what I shared about my experience is the ways that so many of us will either consciously or unconsciously sort of be complicit and upholding white supremacy.

Rebekah: Totally.

Layla: Whether it's because that we just don't have a choice because it means that you know, it will affect things in our life and our family or because we just were not aware or we completely internalized the story in a different way than what's going on. I think that there's such a process of healing that once you've become aware of that and start to really recon with it, there's such a process of healing of self-forgiveness and again that like sort of coming to a place of defining for myself like who actually am I, what do I actually stand for, what am I like hard knows,

what am I like I will die on this, you know, on this mountain. I think we are talking about you working the background that I come from and I think so many people in that space have the privilege of not having to make choices like that. Of not having to say, you know, this is a thing that I'm willing to lose money on.

Rebekah: And they don't really not have to make the choice but they don't even have the understanding that there is a choice. They don't recognize that other people are making a choice. It took a black woman calling my butt out last year trying not to curse calling me out last year and saying to someone else she blocked me so I didn't get to see the comment but someone else relayed it to me that I did not create faith spaces for black women or my space was unsafe for black women and that killed me because no one had ever said that to me and that was my understanding what I was doing. I was like of course it's like I'm here for you and I'm saying these things but I didn't reach out to her and I spent the entire summer trying to be that person that she needed me to be. That was my mission and leaving her alone because I had done enough damage and I saw that it wasn't because of what I was doing to black women, it's because what I wasn't doing for them and that was not protecting them from the violent speech that white women were bringing into the space. Not saying no you can't say that, no we're not having this conversation, no you can't ask that question and go on and on and on I was cuddling because I was afraid. I was complicit. I was protecting myself. And I had to stop that because I wasn't really protecting myself because as all those other black women were being hurt, I was being hurt too. I was taking those swords and not recognizing it and being like a murder in my own life instead of standing up and saying no you can't say that to me, no you can't do this in my home.

Layla: Right.

Rebekah: So, it is a decision that I have to make because I've been white, right? Like I can't walk that way because I had to be accepted and seen this way but it always felt sickening to me. It never felt healing for me because I'm not. You know I can pretend or I can pass but I'm not that so I had to recognize that for myself too that this is hurting me. It hurts you too. So like drop it. It disconnects you from your sisters. It disconnects you from your humanity. So, speaking on it and waking up white women to it either directly or just by them observing, I feel like I'm doing a service for them too.

Layla: Yeah. Well, you're doing a service for mommies too.

Rebekah: Oh yeah back to that.

Layla: Managing the Motherload. So when I first met you I was like so how many kids do you have? And you're like 5. And I'm like I'm sorry what did you say? Did you say 5? Did I hear that correctly? You have 5 children and you have written a book that is not about how to perfectly mother 5 children and still look this young and youthful and have it all together. That's not what this book is about. What is this book actually about?

Rebekah:

This book is really about motherhood. It is not a parenting book and I say that in the first lines because I don't want anyone to think that I'm a parenting expert, that I have the answers. I know 5 children, the ones that came through me and those are the ones that I could speak on. But what I can speak to with some level of expertise is my journey or complete expertise is my journey through motherhood. How it's informed all the different areas of my life. How I've created and followed and found success in big dreams, in big goals. Everything that I've done that you see that has been done in the context of motherhood, you know, writing the books, having the show, building the platform like all of that was after I had 3 kids already. So, I can talk about that. I can also talk about loss and the painful relationships that I had with my parents and losing them and having to heal that after they were gone and then kind of becoming my mother in a lot of ways and having to wrestle with that like that's all in the book. And I've said in another interviews that, you know, this book wasn't something that I wanted to write. It wasn't something that I felt like I could do because when Hay House propose that I write a book about parenting or motherhood or whatever, I was in the midst of estrangement with my second oldest child and it was a really painful one and I felt like the worst mother on the planet because I didn't have the answers. So, that's what I said like I'm not writing a book about parenting, I'm gonna write a book about this and that's all in there too. The estrangement, the healing that we started when I finished writing the book, we are just on that like just on the grasp of reconnecting and it's going "well". But yeah it's a book about that. And I hope that women who are just the beginning of their motherhood journey can see themselves or their anxieties or worries in me and see that it's gonna be okay and women who are well along their motherhood journeys can see that there's a way to reclaim themselves and pursue those dreams and have that life that they want. That's sort of it is about. It's a lot of laugh and hopes and dreams.

Layla:

I love that you said everything that I've done basically like in the past has been in the context of motherhood, of me being a mother and I don't know something about that is just so profound to me because I think often we think about well I'm a mother and I'm a this and I do this and it's like no actually like this is like such a huge part of my identity now. I wasn't born a mother but I became a mother and it's such a huge part of everything else that's happening in my life. I'll say this, it's a quote that I love to say because it resonated with me so deeply, my dear, dear girlfriend Nacia Walsh and she is a doula and on-air personality, she's amazing. But Nacia Walsh was a teen mother like me and she said I was a mother before I was a woman. And that's what it was for me. I don't know anything but being a mother. I was a child and then I was a mother and I grew up with them and I made mistakes with them and everything that I've ever done as an adult woman, 18 years old and found that I was pregnant with my oldest, Winona has included them. I have to think about them first. I don't breath without thinking of 5 other people first. And that's okay because it has made me, in business it's made me efficient, compassionate, driven, all of those great things, in life, the same compassionate, loving, we are about to start our foster care journey and so

bringing more kids into the house. But yeah I just I'm a mother in every way, that's what I do. I mother my friends but I love it.

Layla:

You know, what's really interesting so I'm a mother, I have 2 kids and I have my first I think I was 24 so I was older than you, 24 years old when I had her and I remember always feeling like I'd always wanted children. I love children but I think I know that I always have this thing in the back of my mind like I'm not a real mother though and I don't know where that came from. I think it may have been this idea of but I'm not a mother like the way my mother is a mother. She is very nurturing and the thing is I had only known her as a mother. I've never known her before she was my mother, right? So, I don't know what her life was like, what her dreams were, what her personality was like pre motherhood and I saw her she has and she continues to be this way, there's me and my two younger brothers, everything that she does is about her children to this day. And now her grandchildren as well. And I really wrestled with that both as something that I aspired to and something that I resisted. So, I think I aspired to it and sort of saw it well I'm not a real mother that's why I become a mother in that way where everything that I do is about my children. But I resisted it because so much of me is about just me. It has nothing to do with my children. And so I think it was a couple of years ago that I was like, you know what and I now have 2 kids, a couple of years ago I was like I feel like a mother now and I come to that place because I had begun to define again for myself that motherhood doesn't look like this thing that it is supposed to look like that I think that every mother is like this. You know, it's about what me as an individual, I as an individual. I defined motherhood for myself that I love my kids deeply. I would do anything for them. They are the center of my world and I love myself so deeply and there was so many times where I will choose myself 9 times out of 10 over them. That it's so complex and it's so individualized, so intimate. What has that been like for you?

Rebekah:

Well, that just brought up so much for me because my mother was the opposite. She was a wonderful grandmother I'll say that but as a mother she was not nurturing. I don't think I've hugged my mother more than 4 or 5 times in my life that I can remember. She didn't say I love you. She wasn't a traditional mom in any way. She was very outdoing her own thing to the point of neglect for us. And I wanted to be the opposite of that but I didn't do the healing to figure that out. So with my first 3 children and for a lot of reasons I was in a different relationship that was very abusive and I was dealing a lot with my mental health issues but I was very distant from them. I wasn't as affectionate. I wasn't that, you know, nurturing mother because I didn't feel it was so foreign for me. I didn't know how to do that. You know, since my mother passed I've had the opportunity to see her outside of her being my mother. So, I learned about the woman that she was before. I learned about her trauma and her pain but also her joys and her interest and her talents. So, I get to see her as a whole woman and that allowed me to extend forgiveness to her and therefore to myself. So, I've been working through that. So, it's okay for me to do my own thing and that doesn't mean that I'm her. It means that I'm finding balance. But just this morning, just this morning, my son, my 8-year-old said to me we are cuddling in bed and he said you're the best mommy in the world and I said oh no I'm not. I'm not the best mommy and he

was like, why would you say that? Because you know, I don't like to bake cookies and I don't do that kind of stuff and he said but you write books. And I sat there for a moment and really thought about that like the things that I'm doing out in the world for me, they see that and that gives them permission like my oldest daughter she's entering her senior year at college, she's a biologist, she already has her job offer, she's moving to Seattle across the country next year after school. So, she's gone out of the nest effectively. And she doesn't care if I'm gonna miss her. Like she doesn't. She's just all about getting her life together, getting her money and I love that. I'm so happy that she feels like this life is her own and I hope she always feels like that even after she has children. I'm happy to move in with her and take care of the babies if she needs that. But we have to constantly do that checking in and asking again, what is my identity? Who am I? How do I wanna show up in this world? What are the lessons I wanna teach? And then be that. Don't worry about standards that were made up by other people.

Layla: It's so funny that you say it's such a cute story about this morning and you know, your child saying you're the best mommy because you write books. We were just having dinner a few hours ago and I was telling my family that the events copies of my book are arriving soon and so my daughter was like can I have a signed copy? And I was like why? This is what she says, "so when I'm older I can tell people my mommy wrote this book, my momma wrote this book." She said, "She's known around the world".

Rebekah: And that's magical.

Layla: You're absolute right though because what I was defining as, you know, her being able to say my mom is the best mom is I show up in all of these different ways the way that my mom showed up for me but it's just different, you know, what she sees as me being a good mom is me being who I am doing what I feel that I'm here to do. I think we beat up on ourselves so much as mothers not realizing that our kids are just like wanting us to be who we are because when we do we show up so much happier in the world and for them.

Rebekah: Yes. How I mother though is I've tried to at least in the last several years give my kids permission to criticize and question in a respectful way of course because I am the mom but to have those conversations about what they need and those change. So the little ones do need the cuddles. They do need me to show up at the school thing. It's really important for them but my daughter, my oldest who has said to me, you know, we missed you when you were working really hard to build your platform like we missed you. You weren't that mom. You weren't the same mom to us as you are to the little ones. Like you did do girl scouts and all that. But from the time she was 9 years old that I have pictures of her she wanted to be a scientist like I have pictures of her chemistry set with her safety goggles on and it was also important for her to see me being driven and going after what I wanted and it was just a couple months ago my girlfriend, Addie she was at my house and we were spending the day together and talking about business and I was helping her with the business plan and Winona was home from college and she was hanging out with us and just like observing me in another element other

than being her mom and Addie left and she walked over to me in the kitchen and she hugged me and she said I'm really proud of you. And it was the first time she has ever said that and I wanted to just fold down on the floor like thanks Winona because that's what's it all for, that's what's it all for. Even though I don't attach myself worth to other opinions and I talked about this in the book, it does matter to me what my kids think of me. It does matter to me how they see me and I want them to be proud of me and I want them to feel that they can do things because I showed them how.

Layla: You're making me emotional right now. And the reason that this is making me so emotional is this whole idea of good ancestor, I know I had this podcast, I got to speak to all these amazing people like yourself about what it means to be a good ancestor, so many of us are doing this work out in the world but when you ask me what does it mean for me to be a good ancestor, the place that it starts is my children and my descendants. That's where it starts for me. Everyone else in the world is just everyone else. I can't control and I don't want to control what other people think of me, how other people see me, how I'm received but what my children think of me and how the way that I affects them, influences them, inspires them, supports them, encourages them is at the end of the day that's all that matters and I know we've privately talked about how it doesn't really matter what anyone else in the world is saying as long as I've got my people with me, my partner and my children, I'm good. They love me. They know who I am. They know what my heart is and so much of what it means to me about when I talked about legacy and again like in the online business world, in the personal growth world, it's all about legacy becoming this big leader who has this huge platform, who is affecting millions of people around the world, but for me it starts with my children. Everyone else comes afterwards and everyone else I can't control how they receive that. But if I can get this right with these people then I'm really happy. And so it's very moving for me it's just got me right there.

Rebekah: It's true we've had that conversation a lot because you know, in this space no matter how strong or accomplished or whatever we seemed we are human beings and we're vulnerable to criticism and we're vulnerable to attacks or whatever, alienation and I reached out to you, you've reached out to me in different times and it is so true that it does hurt when people say things. It does hurt when people come after me but at the end of the day the people who know me love me. The people who know me and love me will also call me out and I also surround myself with those people. You know, those who'll say ahh you think your ego or you're a little narcissistic. I have those girlfriends.

Layla: We need those people.

Rebekah: Yeah, absolutely. And I'm the first one to say am I being a jerk because I wanna know. Tell me for real but they know me. They know my heart. They know how to stir me in the right direction and that's what I care about and I know every single night I go to bed snuggle with my little ones and my husband and my pets and if that's good, nothing else matters really.

Layla: And that's not to say that every night it's like that, right? I know someone--you've written two books, I've written a book, I know that there were like spaces or I'm just like you will not see me for the next few weeks. I'm gonna be living in the library writing. That's where I'm gonna be. You're gonna see me at the beginning of the day, at the end of the day but other than that but those are like pockets of time where it's clear to everyone I need to do this at this time for this reason. But I know when it's not bad and I'm consistently not showing up, it drains me not to be having those moments where I'm laughing, where we are reading a book together, where we just, you know, hanging out, I feel empty inside. And I know it affects them too. But it's so much about as you say, you know, the subtitle to your book is *A Guide to Creating More Ease and More Space and More Grace* and I think...

Rebekah: Grace is the word.

Layla: That's the biggest word I think when it comes to motherhood is grace and that self-compassion.

Rebekah: You know, you spoke right to the entire theme of the book which this starts off in the origin story, the first chapter after the introduction and I'm talking about the lesson that my mother taught me about, the faces of our life and the sequence and how it's not gonna be everything every day and sometimes you just have to honor this always, you have to honor the season that you're in. You know, the book follows the cycle of the seed from, you know, being planted and cracking open and being nourished and how so much of taking care of a plant or a garden is about nurture what you can do and then also nature, the things you can't control. It's the same with motherhood. It's the same with mothering yourself. There are so many things that we can control and then the stuff we have to let go and when I'm launching a book I'm on my phone 24 hours a day, I hate that. I'm in front of my computer I hate that. I'm doing this interviews. I love you but you know, it's like a lot. You have to be quite in another room and I have to keep telling them this is only for a short amount of time, this is what I have to do. This is gonna be chaos. There's no way to manage it. So, just let the chaos happen and in the end you'll get your mommy back.

Layla: Yeah. So, it's something that I know that you talked about a lot is mental health, your own journey with mental health. Let's talk a little bit about that because I know again for my own experiences that being a mom is really hard. And at the same time...

Rebekah: You think?

Layla: Yeah, right? And at the same time, and you said this earlier, you know, you became a woman after you became a mother, right? So, we are constantly growing into who we are becoming, right? It's a constant becoming. So, at the same time that we are becoming we are also taking care of these little beings who are also becoming and then are at different stages of childhood into adulthood and then like our own mental health as well and our partner if we have a partner

with us as well and just a relationships that we have in our lives that are important to us. It's very easy for ourselves and our mental health to take the last bit of cake, the last crumbs that are there after we've served everyone else. Can you talk a little bit about what your mental health journey has been like and the space like some of the things that you have come to realize in offering yourself that grace, you know, and being able to be with what is the reality of your mental health and what are your I guess the things that are most important to you is you continue to show up as a mother?

Rebekah:

So, I'll go briefly through the history and then I wanna bring it up to where I am now because this is the most important part. I have a very long and quite dramatic mental health history. I was first hospitalized when I was 8 years old and put on psychiatric medication for outburst which was probably an undiagnosed learning disability and something that I'm discovering now maybe even on the autism spectrum, so I had this very long mental health history, I was suicidal by the time I was 10 years old, I was put in group homes a lot of that and I struggled. When I began my spiritual journey of self-healing, of looking in more with meditation at 15 years old, I had this deep desire to control it, to not be on medication, to overcome this, you know, inner demon whatever I was dealing with, I felt like it was mind over matter, I can do this and what was really dangerous about the spiritual wellness world was that it was telling me time and time again that I could manifest this healing if I just paid on it enough or if I just meditated on it enough. I was in fact bringing in the privilege of having a stable home, of having money, you know, like all these other things and I'm like coming from this place of poverty, of marginalization and I'm going like I'm just not holy enough, I'm not spiritual enough so my practice saved my life. But I was also white knuckling it through, a large amount of my adult life because of spiritual bypassing, because I was being gaslit by the spiritual wellness community and I participated and was complicit in that as well and it took, you know, I was getting better, I was getting, I was getting better. I was using the tools and I'm such a good student like I know you are too like we just go after things, study it. So, I'm reading every book, I'm meditating, I'm so good at it, A-student but I didn't realize that it was really just killing me. It was so hard like it was wearing me down. So, it was March 8, 2019, I was on the way to school with my 16-year-old son, he was 15 then and we had this blow up fight and I was screaming and I was saying like what's wrong with you? Why are you doing this? All the most terrible wrong things, abusive things to say and by the time we got to his school he was crying, I was crying and I felt sick and that night he came home and I called him into my bedroom and he said he was sorry and I said, you know what, no that was ugly. It was a part of me that I didn't want you to see but it was a part of me that exist. It's a part of me that I'm pressing down because I was so bad to be better and be good. And that day before he came home I made an appointment with a therapist. I found a black women's therapy group. I'm so excited. I made an appointment with the therapist. I got into therapy that week. I have been anger sober I called it since March 8 and I also went on medication for the first time since adolescence and that has allowed me to remove that physical, that biological barrier that was in my way. It has allowed me to actually use the tools effectively. So, I still meditate every day. I still pray every day. I still do all the things but now they work all the way. But that was hard.

I was scared. I was scared to tell my audience. I was scared to do it and what will happen to me. So, where I am now with my mental health journey is that I am a person who has anxiety. I'm a person that's quick to get anxious. I'm a person who is prone to depression and going into that downward spiral to everything is wrong but I'm a person who can step out and see that observe and say that's not me. That's the disease. That's the illness. And I'm not yelling. I'm calm. I'm happy. I'm joyful. I'm effective. I wake up every morning excited about the day. But yeah. It's something I have to manage every day, managing the motherload is managing all of it.

Layla: All of it. I just wanna say thank you for sharing that and I also want to say and again I feel really teary eyed saying this but I also wanna say that you publicly showing your journey has actually been a huge catalyst for me in me accepting many different parts of myself that I was making wrong. So, one of the things that, you know, I was recently on a big summer vacation with my family. One, we've taken in 4 years together, we were away for a month and when we are able to step out of our ordinary life, we are able to kind of, you know, have the time to reflect and have things come to the surface and a lot of things did come to the surface for me and one of the things that I began to accept about myself is I am a person who lives with anxiety and I have been absolutely trying to suppress that side of myself forever. Ever since I had my first panic attack, I think I was 18 years old in university and then, you know, struggled with generalized anxiety and depression throughout university and then discovered Tony Robbins and the world of personal growth and was like I just need to control what I think, you know, and I can completely solve this issue, right? And so when you said that the word has been ringing in my head since you said that you said I was white knuckling my way through it and that's absolutely how it has been for me. If I just do all the things, if I just meditate, if I just do the tapping, if I just do the journaling, if I just read this next book and you know, I'm a book addict, so as many books as I can get and learn this next thing then I will completely have this under control and you sharing just your journey and you going on medication and all that has been so liberating for me and I know so liberating for many people because it gave me permission to say, you know what, I'm actually not broken.

Rebekah: No.

Layla: And I don't have a faulty wire. That's not what's going on here. I'm a person who is whole and I live with anxiety and I am prone if I'm not mindful and if I don't really prioritize myself and my mental health that I am prone to a downward spiral as well and that does not mean that I don't get to show up in the world or I don't get to be a person.

Rebekah: Or a teacher or a leader.

Layla: Right.

Rebekah: Yeah.

Layla: You know, it gave me grace absolutely to be able to and I know I shared this when I was away some of the post that I shared was, you know, I actually do wake up most mornings with anxiety. I don't know why and for so long I lived with it like if people find out this thing about me that they see me as this but actually every single morning I wake up and I'm scared and I don't know why. And I have to do all manner of things to get myself into a space where I'm finally okay. I have to get up and shower and I have to do my skin care and do my makeup. These are parts of my mental health practice, skin care, makeup, getting dressed, leaving the house. These are parts of me gathering myself back up that if people knew that about me they would know I wouldn't deserve to be where I am or doing what I'm doing or having the, you know, whatever it is that I have. And I've said you sharing that has been so healing for me so I just wanna say thank you.

Rebekah: Thank you for sharing that. I think the lesson here because Tony Robbins was my introduction into personal development. I bought his CDs.

Layla: I was given by my best friend at that time and I listened to them like they were the gospel like I listened to them on repeat all the time.

Rebekah: I bought them on a payment plan in QVC and what's so interesting about that and you know not to bring you back to white supremacy but it really...

Layla: But white supremacy.

Rebekah: But white supremacy is a sinister thing that infiltrates every single aspects of our lives including mental health, including spiritual wellness because first of all you have to look at the people delivering the message. And you have to ask yourself, where do they come from? How do they navigate this world? What are their support systems? Do they have a trust fund? Do they have a spouse that's allowing them to not work and take these spa days? Like all of these things and I was comparing myself to a white millionaire man and I'm sitting there with my house in foreclosure. I don't know how I'm gonna feed my kids. I was on food stamps. I was on public assistance, getting these CDs trying to figure out like how am I gonna fix my life and in a lot of ways it helped me. I built a career in real estate. I made a lot of money. I drove again I'm such a good student but I wasn't allowing myself the grace and the support. So meditation, meditation, friendships, girlfriends, online community, books, I needed all of those things. I need all those things to lift me up every day and I wake up the same way. So I have this beautiful friend Quentin Vennie who is a black man, who is a yoga teacher. He is actually the vice president of Yoga Alliance Foundation and I talked to him often and I called him one morning in despair probably last year and I was in a place of like thinking not about carrying it out but thinking about like it would be better if I wasn't here, you know, I was in that space. And I called him and I said it's just so hard like why do I have to wake up every morning and say the prayer and do the meditation and express gratitude like why can't it just be one day that I wake up and it's just okay. You know, like just feel normal whatever that means. And he's like because that's what we got to do. Move on, move on sis. That's all we got to do. And that really allowed me to accept all of me. And to stop ignoring my

biology. I'm not broken. I live in a human body. I wouldn't be mad at myself if I got cancer. You know, saying that like I can cure this by just spiritual means some people can, you know, God bless you but for me it was ignoring my biology to say that like I can pray this pain away when I couldn't.

Layla: Right. I love what your friend shared because I came to the same realization and I got teary just as you are saying it because I remember that feeling of why can't just one morning I just wanna wake up and that thing isn't there and then you stop making yourself wrong for the thing being there. And then it ramps up the anxiety even more and being sort of out of my normal routine in a way gave me that time and that space to be able to see that's just what you gotta do like it is who you are and it's been with me for years, you know, once I'm finally able to like go through the things that I need to do to get myself in some space, the rest of the time I'm actually fine. I'm actually okay. And it doesn't define me either. It's not that I'm just this and that's the only thing. I work with and I speak about this a lot and I have interviewed her on the show as well. I worked with a black woman mentor. Her name is Dr. Frantonia and she has taught me so much about owning all of who I am. The wholeness of all of who I am. Not just the parts that I think if I show you this then you will like me, approve with me, accept me, give me permission, but these parts like you said that the part that showed up with your child at that fight before school, that was there. And there are so many of us and we tried to suppress it, we tried to control it and we tried to make it wrong and it's a part of who we are. You know, I'm talking about it in the context of what I had learned from Dr. Frantonia I think you're teaching the same thing through managing the motherload. It's that giving ourselves that grace to be all of who we are and not making parts of ourselves wrong just because they don't fit into perfect white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal, definitions of what it means to show up how a woman is supposed to show up.

Rebekah: And just like I don't want to wake up with white skin and blonde hair or size 4 or whatever like I don't wish those things for myself because that would be a level of self-hatred that I will not accept. I can't be mad at myself for waking up with anxiety or waking up with these thoughts. You know, I'm not mad at my brown eyes. I'm not mad at my anxiety. It's all part of me.

Layla: I love that so much, absolutely. Because I've never thought of it that way. We are talking about, you know, managing the motherload. We are talking about managing our mental health in the context of motherhood and there are so many ways in which the books, the mainstream books that are thought around wellness and spirituality are about making us gaslight ourselves into we shouldn't be feeling this way. This is how to fix it.

Rebekah: Fix. Cure. I hate those words.

Layla: Right? And at the same time, you know, your other book is this wonderful book you have *4 Minutes to Change Your Life*, a meditation guide and I know that you teach meditation and you teach mindfulness, mindfulness tools, wellness tools, spiritual tools work as well, you know, but it's taking it all into context.

Rebekah: Well, meditation for me and I say this in that book is just a way of saying to yourself, hey, I see you. You're thinking-feeling person who deserves to be seen and heard and loved. I'm here for you. That's all it is. So, my meditation practice told me or allowed me to see, girl, you gotta get on some medication. I'm like this is like you gotta stop this nonsense. You know, so my meditation practice allows me to connect the truth of who I am and get the real answers and not hide. So, when I say you have 4 minutes to change your life it means if you take 4 minutes to really look at who you are to be mindful about your current situation that can change the whole trajectory of your healing journey, your relationships by just getting real and seeing yourself. It's not about fix.

Layla: No. I love that.

Rebekah: We are always becoming, right?

Layla: I love that because, you know, the snappy thing is 4 minutes to change your life like...

Rebekah: That's the trick.

Layla: It's the trick. That's the trick and it's that when we are looking for the quick fix when we think that we are broken we see a title like that and think if I meditate without, you know, for someone who hasn't read the book who is not familiar with your work, what we are used to seeing is just do this for this many minutes, this many times per week and everything is gonna shift.

Rebekah: But I will say this though about that, sorry to interrupt, but I will say that I do believe and I say this in the book that what is simple can be the most profound and I believe if you're looking at healing practice and it feels too complicated, too elevated, too heavy if the person is telling you that you have to do this one thing to get this one thing, it's not real. It has to be accessible for all or it's just not there.

Layla: Right. So one of the things that I realized as I was sort of having this reflection, this contemplation around my anxiety and how to not make it wrong, not to wake up in the morning gaslighting myself about it but what do I do so I don't stay stuck in the bed, white-knuckled and not able to move out of the bed and so I started writing down, okay, what things do I need to do in the morning that I know shift me from that to where I need to be to be able to do the things that I wanna do. And for the first time instead of writing down the things that I have seen other people say if you do these things they work, you know, if you get up and do this, this, this, get up early, exercise or do yoga practice, meditate for this many minutes, journal like those are all the things that I've tried that I have done for a while and then fallen off of I'm like what would actually consistently work and I sat and I was like, you know, on the days when things go okay this is what happens. I know that if I get up when the alarm goes off immediately it makes a huge difference already. That's not like revolutionary, you know, what I mean like

when the alarm goes off instead of staying in bed is getting myself out of the bed that will already make a big difference. If I get in the shower that will make a big difference. If I as I said put on some skin care that will make a big difference. If I put on whether it's a little makeup or a lot, do something on my face and it's not this idea like because I like makeup or that I feel like I need to cosmetically enhance myself it's actually just because when I'm putting my makeup on I listen to something usually like some standup comedy or something just to get me into the day and it's the ritual of it or the like if I'm like I really wanna do a big eye look today. It's been like playing and like making my eye a canvass and playing with colors on my face that just shifts me from oh my god I feel like I'm dying to oh this is a pretty color.

Rebekah: It's for people with anxiety. Yeah. Anxiety is a lot of ways a feeling of loss of control over your environment. So, getting control in the way of having ritual and routine is so important. My ritual is very like I have a list on the refrigerator actually it says feed dog, let the dog out, put in the laundry, empty the dehumidifier which something we have to do in New Jersey and so there's this little list of things that I do every morning and it makes me feel accomplished right off the bat. And it's so funny what you're saying because I have my little planner that I write in and this morning it says get out of bed because these things when I'm doing interviews and stuff that brings up a starting level of anxiety for me, social anxiety, so it says get out of bed, shave legs, wash hair, eat real food, keep kids alive, make it happen. That is my list for today.

Layla: I love it. I love it. Yeah. Well it's just, you know, as I was writing my list I was laughing to myself because I was like it's been so hard for me to figure out what I needed to do because I've been trying to take on everyone else's formula, everyone else's thing. But when I tuned in for myself and was like what is it that I know if I do these things they help me. It was the simplest things.

Rebekah: In my book I say this is what I do. You take it, leave it, it doesn't matter to me. I tell people even with meditation I don't actually care if you meditate. I want you to do something every day to connect with you. And made that things for you and I say this is what I do but I also give meditations and practices of mindfulness that allow people to sit with themselves and ask themselves is this for me? How do I wanna feel? And then do these things that bring about that feeling. So that's the way I goal set for my day, for my life. It's just about checking in and saying is this right?

Layla: Yeah.

Rebekah: Is this right?

Layla: It's that internal wisdom, that internal voice that when you sit and you're quite for a moment and it's always like I said the simplest thing, you need water right now. Get out of the bed when the alarm goes off.

Rebekah: It's always water. We always needed water. That's actually a better advice that I say across the board, just drink more water.

Layla: Are you dehydrated and you don't realize it, yes.

Rebekah: I screenshotted a meme I don't know what it said exactly but it was something like I stay so young and beautiful because I drink lots of water and stay in my own lane and nothing has been so real for me. Hydrate and just be calm and do what I know. That's it.

Layla: Yeah. So one of the last things I wanna talk about before we close up, this has been such an amazing conversation by the way, thank you so much. You recently posted in your stories you're babysitting your child's little Cuddlies and I said to you my daughter has the exact same ones and just a huge collection of them and you talked about how you had promised them that you would babysit them while they are at school and even though you were doing your own work, you were moving in from one room to another and you're like I'm taking them with me because when she asked me, did you babysit them all day I need to be able to say yes and be truthful about it and you talked about how you are committing to this practice of rather co-honesty. Can you tell us a little bit about that? I just thought it was such a cute thing but also like I was like really intrigued with radical honesty, where does that come from and what does that look like for you?

Rebekah: I was working with a coach for a while and we had to explore a lot. I had to come to come to reckoning about the way that I was lying in my life and I think that when we sat down and we, you know, think about what lying means we think about big lies that hurt or things that are just untrue like it's just it's not a fact but we also lie to ourselves about what we really want so that who we really are. We lie to our kids to protect them. We say little white lies that are just harmless and they'll never know but it does I think tip away the relationship and the integrity of the relationship. So, I practiced this radical type of honesty where I literally do not lie at all about anything. That means if I'm late, you know, why. It doesn't mean telling the whole story about everything like some things are just none of people's business but I don't lie about anything I don't make excuses. I don't try to back out of things. And my kid asked me to babysit the animals for the day, the pretend animals, I take them from room to room with me because it's important to her too. And I want her to at least feel the energy of me really caring about what she cares about. So when she comes home it's like yes I took care of your lovelies and I do it the way that she would because I want that energy, that trust to be built and I have noticed that since I have been doing this and not really even talking about it with my kids they have become so much more open with me. I have one kid in therapy and they invited me into a session recently and shared some big truth that were hard for me to hear and I know hard for them to say and it was the greatest blessing of my life to know that this person I love so much trust me. And I know it's because of the work that I was doing inside of me. It was all about me and that's another reason of this book I write from the perspective of motherhood versus parenting because it is about the change that you make in your life, the energy that you bring to a situation and then the real action that you

bring to a situation that changes your life and the lives around you. So, yeah I can't lie.

Layla: Well, what I love about that though is that I have seen from my own self how the work that we do behind the scenes when no one is looking and no one is aware and the choices that we are making that no one has been aware that we are grappling with as we consistently commit to doing them do stuck up to creating our character of how we wanna be in the world and then does have this ripple effect on everyone else around us. I know that even just in my relationship I have been going through a few things this year that have really taken a toll on me and he has really seen me struggle and been really supportive there but as I continue to do the work to really gather myself back to myself and be able to stand in those challenges and be true to who I am not being in the sessions where I'm crying because it hurts and I wanna be rescued and I want someone else to do it for me, he is seeing the change in how I show up for myself. And he has reflected that back to me and your energy is completely different. Even just how you show up in our relationship is different. Even the work that I'm doing is not about our relationship. Right?

Rebekah: My marriage, it's so interesting because me speaking more passionately, frankly and truthfully about the things that are most important to me and my life, black lives, trans kids has nurtured my marital relationship in ways that I did not expect and I think it also inspired him to show up in a very different way in his relationships because he is going through a lot with different family members and he is going through a lot in his personal life coming to a reckoning of his own white privilege and how he shows up in the world and how he wants to be of service and pay reparations and all that stuff like it's really changed him and it has improved his business and it's like it's crazy how being in integrity.

Layla: Right.

Rebekah: Makes everything better. And it's crazy. It's simply wild. But when you show up as you and you know, one of my motto is do the thing don't die repeat and that's the thing with anxiety like I just have to go out and do the thing and just realized it wasn't gonna kill me and just keep doing it when I show up this way, yes, I lose powers, yes people come at me, yes I lose money, but what I gained is so much more. And the more that I do it I build that courage. Courage only happens when you are afraid. You can only practice when you are afraid. So I build that courage and I keep going and going and going and now it's like come at me. I'm good. Because I know that I'm standing in my integrity and I can say that without ego like I have integrity. I'm a person you can count on. I'm here for you. And I do what I say. And I'll say, you know, what I say I'll do.

Layla: And that only comes from, he is right, that courage only comes in fear, you can't have it if you're not afraid and that it is I know for myself it is about consistently seeing myself, show up for myself where I would have previously not shown up for myself as I stuck those moments, those examples that I can look back and say okay in this scary moment that I am in right now and this moment where I feel like

falling apart I face that thing though back there and I showed up the way that I wanted to show up. So in this moment right now I can show up the way that I wanna show up too and it's absolutely made my relationship so much better. It's made the way that I show up for my children so much better because I have so much gratitude. I have so much love because I have so much more love for myself now. I have so much gratitude for myself now. I had moments when we were on our holiday where I was just like I would be sitting by myself and I would just get so overwhelmed with self-gratitude, so overwhelmed with how much I appreciated myself and how much I respected myself and how much I, you know, was like you did some things that were really hard like only, you know, how hard it was to face the things that you face. No one knows how hard it was and you did and I was moved to tears for myself and because I'm overflowing it affects everyone who was in relationship with me.

Rebekah: I mean I have a feeling of the things that you've done. I know that it was really hard and it was really big and I've seen you through and it has been very inspirational for me and it's one of the reasons why I just don't follow you and like you like I truly admire you and consider you a mentor in my life because I've seen you navigate some really tricky situations where you could have shown up in a very different way and you showed up with a lot of grace and you showed up with grace and self-respect and I love that and in respecting yourself you respect others you teach others how to show up in the world and it really is about that self-work, it really is and it makes such a difference and it's also a practice in radical truth telling for you that have the anxiety, see that message and say no. This is also true. I'm not unworthy because I have done this. You are speaking the truth to a lie.

Layla: That radical self honestly where it's like you have to interrupt that thought pattern that always runs that I am not worthy, I'm not good enough, I'm an impostor, I'm all of these things and interrupt it with but this is actually the truth of who I know myself to be and I think that's--I know for me that's a practice that I will continue to hold every single day because it's literally saving my life.

Rebekah: Oh my gosh, when your book comes out, this was all so worth it. I know you have that proof every day but it's just gonna be amazing. I cannot wait.

Layla: Well, thank you. Thank you so much. Okay. So, I just wanna say thank you very much. You have moved me to tears several times and there are gonna be many things that I know are gonna be repeating in my mind. I can't wait to go back and listen and I can't wait for everyone to hear this conversation because I think there were so many things that you said in this that just were like truth bombs that just resonated so deep in my soul. So, thank you so much for everything you brought to this conversation. Our final question, what does it mean to you to be a good ancestor?

Rebekah: I had an answer for this at the beginning that's different now.

Layla: Mmm.

Rebekah: I do. Being a good ancestor to me is being very mindful in every moment of the importance of my connection to myself, the importance of loving myself, and of being an integrity because that is I think the legacy that I was not able to inherit that I didn't see people doing that for themselves and it took a lot of rebuilding for me and a lot of not wasted time but time that I wish I could have back that I would have already learned the lesson, so I really want to show up as a whole person in all moments, good and bad and ugly and all those other words that don't make sense, to that I can give permission to the people that come after me to do the same to just love themselves fully.

Layla: Oh, you're already doing it.

Rebekah: Yeah, I'm trying.

Layla: Thank you so much Rebekah.

Rebekah: Thank you.