

Patricia: Very good. Very good. And who is this journal for? Who's the person that you think would really be the person that would benefit from this?

Lezlie: Well, I'll tell you, you've been instrumental in this. This journal, in my mind, as it took form in my mind, was strictly for my clients. I wasn't gonna sell it at all. I was just gonna give it to my clients, because I knew this was a practice. Now, when I work with clients, there are lots of different practices that I give them, so depending on what the issues are they're dealing with, or the intentions they have, or the particular obstacles they're having in their life, there are lots of different kinds of strategies and techniques that I give them. But this was the one, this was the practice that I kept seeing so beneficial in my own life, and I started gradually saying, "This is part of the deal, if you're gonna be my client. You have to do this practice. And if you can't do this practice, then you can't be my client." Because I just knew it was so consistent with all of the other more metaphysical kinds of things I was addressing in their lives.

So I would say, "Get a little book," and I would show them mine and how I did mine, because I've got dozens of different kinds of gratitude journals. I would show them all the different kinds of gratitudes, the pretty ones, the ugly ones, the funky ones, the handmade ones. Make it fun, make it artistic if you want, or make it just simple. Just get a little brown manila, simple little booklet and do it in that.

So then they would come in, and I was kinda hesitant about asking them, 'cause the school teacher in me would wanna say, "Bring your journal in. I'm gonna look at it." But I thought, "No, don't do that. You're not a school teacher anymore, and you don't need to do that." But I would always ask, "How is your journal coming?" And you know, this is the old school teacher in me coming out. I can tell when people are lying. I could tell when students were lying to me, and I can tell when my clients are lying to me. And I would say in my head, "Oh, she's lying to me. She is not doing the journal. She's not doing it." And usually they'd 'fess up. They'd say, "Well, I was going good for a while, and then I got distracted."

So I realized I needed to do something that was gonna make it simpler, because I felt like they were making it harder than it was to do. And I was showing them mine, and my journal is a little intimidating, I would admit. If I were just beginning in this field of self-reflection and self-study, and I saw my journal, which has ... I mean, I write pages and pages sometimes in a single day. But I'm saying to people, "When you do your gratitude journal," I'm saying three minutes. Three minutes, that's it. Don't make this a big deal. 'Cause I want people to do it. I'd rather them do it just a little bit but do it consistently than write a three-page entry. A three-page entry would be overwhelming to many, many of my clients.

So they would see my little, tiny handwriting, and how it was going on for pages and pages. So for a while, I quit showing people my journal, because I thought, "Well, this isn't helping." They might be impressed with it, but it wasn't helping them in their own process. So I thought, "What can I do?" So I started ... I just would get a piece of paper, and I would write out thank and intend. Those are the first two in the process. I would just write that out, and then I would give them the paper. I would say, "There's five lines underneath thanks. There's five lines underneath intend. That's all you need to do. Go

home and copy this sheet, and that's all you need to do." They would get a little bit better then, when I would just keep reminding them, "You don't need to do very much."

That's kinda how the idea of the journal then came. This is where it was a creative, fun thing for me to think of making a little journal that would be pretty, and that would be usable ... so I wanted a hardback ... and would be a template. It would be very simple. So on one page only, we've got thank, we've got intend, we've got ask. And that's it. You don't need to write any more. You don't even need to fill up all of that. But then over on the opposing page, then we had opportunity to deal with inspirational quotation, and then if you wanna take any other notes, or put your own quotations, or do whatever you want in the white space, that's fine.

Patricia: Or draw or something.

Lezlie: Or draw. There's some people, like you-

Patricia: Me.

Lezlie: ... who said you were intimidated by the drawing thing. But there are a lot of people who got kind of ... they would see my bouquet of Tombow pens over there, and they would wanna use colored pencils. I would show them your five-year journal with the different colored ink. There's something about color. Once you bring color into the mix, it is motivating. It's uplifting.

So little by little, I began to form this idea of a journal. I knew I wanted to do ... I've always wanted LifeArt Studio to be a ... I've called it a collaborative collective, and so I knew I wanted to do a collaboration with a local artist to do the cover. And I knew I wanted to collaborate with you on doing the design. And so all of that was a creative, fun process for me. And I don't know that I had much more high ambitions for it, other than that it was gonna be a pretty version of the yellow legal pad sheet of paper that I was thrusting into people's hands. I can put this pretty little journal into their hand.

And when I did that, they liked it. They wanted to do it. They wanted to fill up the pages, and I think that's the trick. If you can just get somebody for 30 to 60 days, research actually shows that a habit takes about 62 to 65 days before it's really finally becomes instituted in you. So I thought if I could get them ... it could be appealing enough, or pleasurable, that just it was pleasurable thing to do, that it just made you feel good. And, as I say in the introduction, the research shows that when you start your day coming up with just three items to be grateful for, you've pre-programmed yourself to go through the day with an attitude of openness to the good, the true, and the beautiful. You want to look for happy things, or good things.

Patricia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lezlie: It's sort of like you're writing code for your brain, and the code is all about finding beauty and goodness in your life. And then related to that is that we know that people who are inclined toward looking for goodness in their lives are happier people. So when

I say this practice generates joy for people, that's scientifically proven. That's not woo-woo, New-Age bullshit. And we can habituate ourselves to be inclined to gratitude, and happiness follows.

Patricia: That's a great promise.

Lezlie: It's a great promise, yeah.

Patricia: And you have one section on the right-hand side too that's some little short lines that say action.

Lezlie: Yeah.

Patricia: What's that little section for?

Lezlie: Well, I'm not 100% sure that is gonna stay in the journal, but here was my original thinking about it. I, like most people, have a very chatty mind. And I have a busy life and a lot of stuff going on, and I run a business. So even when I get up in the morning, and I'm dedicated to keeping myself for the first two hours of my day free of all technology ... so there's no phone, there's no newspaper, there's no television, there's no computer, there's no technology that comes into my life for the first two hours of my being awake. And we know ... again, research says that that's a marker of high performers. They don't allow themselves to be consumed by the agenda of the world too early in the day. They let their own agenda rise up to the surface of their thinking. Still, even though I wasn't tuning in to technology, when you wake up, if you're a busy person, and if you have a busy mind, it's gonna do its thing. That's the nature of the mind is to think about things.

So I would find, even when I was doing my journaling and trying to keep myself focused on higher things that I wanna tend to at the beginning of my day, there's a part of my brain that would go, "Don't forget to call Barry. Set up an appointment with the lawyer. Get that content to Emily so she can get that on the website." So just those things. In fact, I wake up in the morning. I know it's time to get up when I'm in the middle of composing an email. That's when I know. "Okay, you better just get up and start your day, because you're already writing emails in your head."

When those things would come up, what I do in my journal, because I don't have the template, I have a page in the back of my journal that's called back burner. The back burner page for me is a dumping ground for those things that have to be done. It's the to-do list. One of the things I try to make clear to people when they're doing the intend portion of the TIA method is don't make it a to-do list. Your intend has to be attending to your higher goals and ideals. Still, I didn't wanna lose those. I didn't wanna forget those. And they would be all mixed up. The thoughts would be, "Call the AC guy," and then it would be, "Write the content for the next blog." It would be all mixed up with business, and running the house, and working on an article I was working on, and whatever.

So the back burner, the back page, my back burner page, was a place for me just to list, just bullet list. It was just a list. "Call the AC guy. Get content to Emily." And it was just enough that I would remember what that was, but it wouldn't be forgotten.

Then when I was finished with my whole morning practice, when I actually did go up to the computer to start work, I would take my back burner page then, and then that would get transferred into my calendar. So then that becomes my to-do list in my calendar.

It's cumbersome to have to turn ... oh, it's not cumbersome. But it's a distraction. You're stopping the flow of your process to turn to the back page and do that. So I thought, "Well, if I just make that little column over there in the right-hand side of the page, then they could put that list down, and that's the stuff they've got to attend to once the day gets started."

Patricia: I think it's useful. I use it.

Lezlie: Do you?

Patricia: Yeah. I definitely use it, because those thoughts, they just bombard us.

Lezlie: Yeah.

Patricia: And it is nice to just be able to put it there and then continue with what we're doing.

Lezlie: That's good to know. I have many people who have said that it's helpful in this way too. It's just that way, you calm your brain down, and your brain doesn't have ... you expend energy when you're trying to hold in memory, in short-term memory, a lot of data like that. You're expending a lot of energy. And I know, I want every bit of my precious energy to be used in creating stuff. I don't want it to be used in holding stuff, data, in short-term memory. That's like a total waste of my precious energy. So for me, it releases me from having to a tense mind.

Patricia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lezlie: And it works for me.

Patricia: Good. Works for me, too. I like it. I like it. Well, I think you've already answered this one. I asked about how long does it take, and do you have to do it every day?

Lezlie: Yeah. Good question.

Patricia: But you said that it could take as little as three minutes.

Lezlie: It could take as little as three minutes. And really that is fine. The effect of a practice like this comes from the consistency of it, not from the length or even the depth of it. You don't have to be writing profound things. It's the consistency of it. And consistency

overlaid with devotion ... so there, I'm gonna go back to that word devotion. It's a very important word for me. This to me is a radical form of self-care. You are devoting yourself to your highest purposes, to your higher self, and this is something you wanna do with love and care.

I had a friend the other day who said, "I really like myself, and I like myself so much that I'm not going to allow ... " We were talking about a problem that she was having. "I'm not gonna allow this problem to interfere with what I'm all about." And I thought, "Oh my God, that is so awesome to hear somebody say that. That was my good friend, [Nancy Bankston 00:34:15]. And she does. She's done her work I her life, and she really likes herself, and she's just bold about saying it. And because she likes herself, she can like everybody else so much more than she used to be able to.

I think that that's what this method can be a part of, is your own self-care, and it's devotion to taking care of your higher self. And it doesn't require you to move to Tibet and move into a cave in the mountains and meditate for eight hours a day. You don't have to do what the Tibet and Buddhist monks do.

Patricia: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lezlie: More power to them. I'm glad they're there doing that. But we're householders. We don't have to do that. That's the definition of a householder. It's somebody who maintains a practice but has to go on with the regular requirements of a manifest life.

So three minutes, 30 minutes, two hours. It doesn't matter. Whatever you can or want. I found that if you say three minutes, that's so liberating to people, they don't feel that ... 'cause the last thing I want this to be is cumbersome, or burdensome, or a duty like they feel they have to do. It should be a joy. It should be something you want to do, because you know it's gonna make you feel better the whole rest of the day. But time, it doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter. The effects are the same.

Patricia: Yeah.

Lezlie: Yeah.

Patricia: And it's a 90-day journal that you have, so that's your challenge you issue, to try it for 90 days and see what happens.

Lezlie: Yeah. In workshops that I do, I say 30 days. My promo material says try it for 30 days and see, but really, that's why we made it 90 days. If you do it for three months, and you think, "You know, this just doesn't work for me." And for some people, it may not. It's not the be-all and end-all. As the beautiful poet Rumi said, "There are many ways to kneel and kiss the earth. There are many paths to God. There are many techniques to liberation, and there are many practices that lead to equanimity and joy."

Boy, I'm glad you're getting this down, because that was good. That was good. That just came out of my brain.

The point I'm trying to make here is, this may not be for everybody. But there's some practice that is for you. There's some devotional practice that is for you, and it will bring you joy too, just like the TIA method does for some people. So find your own. Try this for 30 days. If it doesn't work, fine. Find another one.

Patricia: Well, that's great. I'm gonna put some information out there on my website that will show them how to go about purchasing a TIA Journal-

Lezlie: That's so great.

Patricia: And I just finished my first one, my first 90 days.

Lezlie: You need to get an award. I need to have a crown made or something, because you are the first one to finish the 90-day journal. That's awesome.

Patricia: Yeah. And it has been a great experience of doing it every day and-

Lezlie: Are you happy?

Patricia: I am very happy. I'm very happy. And much more let go than I was when I started it.

Lezlie: And you've been through a challenging last 90 days too.

Patricia: Yes. Yes, it has been pretty challenging, but yeah. It is. So I'm looking forward to starting on my next one now. So thanks for taking the time-

Lezlie: That's good. We'll have to write a blog post about the first person to complete the TIA Journal.

Patricia: Very good. Well, thanks for your time. I appreciate you telling us about the TIA Journal, and your method, and all the people I know that this is gonna help. I'm excited to share it with them.

Lezlie: Thank you.