

THE TRULY AMAZING LIFE SHOW

with Aaron Kennard

EPISODE # 1

WILLIE HOOKS SHARES WHY HE BELIEVES LIFE IS AN AMAZING GIFT

[Download Audio/View Show Notes](#)

Aaron Kennard: Welcome to the Truly Amazing Life podcast. On this show we are going to be highlighting inspiring people who are sharing insights on living a truly amazing life, and today we're really fortunate to have Willie Hooks on the line with us. Willie are you there?

Willie Hooks: I'm here. It's great to be on the podcast.

Aaron: Great. Welcome Willie. Thanks so much for being here. As an intro to everybody, Willie Hooks is a successful trainer, speaker, author, coach, consultant, and entrepreneur. He's devoted his career to sharing his knowledge to supporting his clients, and unlocking their fullest potential in order to achieve extraordinary results in all aspects of their life. Willie has been my personal coach for the past, almost five years and he's unlocked huge amounts of potential in my life. He's an incredible coach. I'm so honored to have him on the line and to be sharing his insights and wisdom with the rest of you here now. So, without further ado, let's just jump right in if you're ready here Willie.

Willie: I'm ready.

Aaron: You're ready to rock-and-roll? Willie: Absolutely.

Aaron: You're always ready. All right. So the purpose of this podcast, as I said, is we're going to discuss what it means to live a truly amazing life. And we're going to try to highlight stories. We're going to highlight stories of people who are living a truly amazing life. Willie, the way I see you is as a person that has lived and is living a truly amazing life. That's why I want you on the show. And I want to find out a little bit more about you and potentially learn some things here that maybe I haven't heard

before and to share with others some of these insights. So, let's just jump right in. And I'm just going to ask you, Willie, why do you feel that this is a truly amazing life?

Willie: Each day you wake up, think about it, each day you wake up, you have an opportunity. It's a gift. So every day is a gift. You wake up and you have the potential to go out and do the things that you want to do. The things that you feel really adds value to your life and the life of others. I mean, think of a gift. If there was a gift that you could ask the divine creator, or God for, it would be life. Let me wake up each day so that I can choose to do what I want to do that day in any way I want to do it. So life shows up for me as a gift. It shows up as this amazing gift that you can use every moment, anytime you go and do what you want to do. And that's truly extraordinary when you think of all the wonderful people that you encounter each day and your ability to touch their lives and for them to touch your life. To me it just shows up as an amazing opportunity. So, life is an amazing opportunity.

Aaron: So what makes your life, right now, what makes it so amazing to you? What is it kind of the essence of that?

Willie: I would say, you could look at life in two things. So, I'll talk about content and context. Content are the things that you're doing and having in life. Context is really your attitude and your way of being as you go and do things. And so, what makes my life truly amazing is, I wake up in this context of love and this context of support in this (inaudible) contributing. So I go, that's my context so people will experience that. My context of caring and sharing, as I now go and say, what do I do?

Aaron: So when you say you wake up in this context of love, explain that to me a little bit better? How do you wake up in that context of love?

Willie: So, before I go to sleep, first I go, hey, what did I do today that really inspired me? What did I do today that brought my life alive? How did I help others today? What knowledge do I share? In my intro, you really talked about one of my passion is sharing my knowledge and helping others. So, what I do is, I just review all that and so when I go off to sleep, I go off to sleep with, what are the things I did today that really were on-line with what I'm about or what I'm (inaudible). And then I ask

myself, what am I looking forward to tomorrow when I wake up? And so when I wake up in the

morning, I'm coming right into that space that I created the night before. So, I'm thinking about how do I share my knowledge? How do I make this day a difference for me? How do I help people? How do I go and stay in the framework of sharing my love? So, for me, sharing love is just connecting with people at a level where you're trying to support them and you see them as an extension of you, not as an enemy, not as someone to be afraid of but someone you can share and help. And so, when I wake up, I wake up in that space. And I wake up doing what I call gratitude. So, my first 20 minutes of being awake, I'm really going through what are the things I'm grateful for. And gratitude has nothing to do with the magnitude of the event. Although, if you wake up that's a significant (inaudible).

Aaron: Absolutely.

Willie: I'm grateful for waking up. I'm grateful that I'm able to get out of bed. I'm grateful that I'm able to feel my muscles and to move about. So, I do probably 20 minutes of just gratitude which puts me in the right context now to go and do the things that I want to do.

Aaron: Got you. That's awesome. So, you said that's the context and then the content is what you're doing.

Willie: What you want to do. Yes. And the things that I do...let me just kind of step back. I believe that life is a gift that we are given and that we need to take accountability for the life that we live. And so you design your life. You design your life around the things that are important to you. Like, is family important to you, then what are you doing with family? Is God important you, then what are you doing with God? What's your spiritual practice? Is your relationship with others important to you? Aaron, I know right now what's very important to you is sharing this knowledge about how to live a truly amazing life. How do you get it? See that's important to you.

Aaron: Absolutely.

Willie: So, you pick the things that are important to you and that becomes the content. Quite often, people do not pick their content, they kind of live life as followers. They're following whatever happened. I have these squirrel that live in my backyard, and I was watching the squirrels one day and they were just gathering the nuts on the ground. And so I started thinking about...I said don't live your life as a squirrel. We have the ability, we're different than squirrels. Because we have free-will, we can decide to go to another state to pick up nuts. You know, we can decide what to do...so it really led me to this notion of, we need to design our lives with what we want. The content that aligns with who we feel we are. The content that brings our spirit alive and then armed with the context of love, and support, and caring and making a contribution. Now you make sure that the content, the things that you're doing and having in live, is consistent with that whole system that you want to produce and how you want to live your life.

Aaron: Absolutely, that's awesome. That really resonates with me as I'm sure you know about that. That's kind of that baseline of what I've come to believe as that empowering, and growing, and giving, and living as the context that all the rest of our life, the enjoyment, the creation, our success is built upon. Is that kind of what you're saying?

Willie: Yeah. You just came through an experience that I think is really, you know, highlights it perfectly because you went through a battle of illness. The question is, do you live, do you go through the experience of illness as a victim, or do you go through that experience as being one of God's creation? And you connected with God and love is still going on all around you. There's still things to be grateful for. There's still things that, you still have your family, you still have your support from people, you still have God. You still have all these things that didn't leave you because you're battling illness. You go, the illness is one thing, but I still got this whole other thing that's going on in my life. The whole other thing that I believe and I feel that makes this a truly amazing life as I deal with illness, as I deal with setbacks, as I deal with these things. People keeping wanting life to show up without setbacks and challenges and I go no, there will be setbacks and challenges in life. You just can't let that overshadow everything else. You can acknowledge the setback, you're not trying to

deny it. You can say, I'm (inaudible) or I have pain in my back right now, or this business deal didn't go right the way I wanted it right now. But that doesn't mean you don't appreciate God, your kids and all the wonderful things that you have in life. So, your story is a great example of living a truly amazing life as you go through ups and downs and challenges.

Aaron: Well, I appreciate that and people obviously can see my story on my website and what not. What that is actually a good Segway(?) to...I'd like to find out more about your story on that level. How did you get to this because you lived this, your life now? I can just imagine it wasn't always like this. Was it always like this for you or was there a time...

Willie: It wasn't always like this. I grew up poor. I grew up in a farm area. I grew up working in the fields where we would be in the fields at five o'clock, not on our way there in the morning (inaudible), they're working hard because they're pushing a button on a computer. It's hard for me to relate to it. I grew up doing that. And, yes, life was a burden. I was a victim and things like that. And then it occurred to me through talking to people and seeing other people that had a different attitude because I used to think, if I could just achieve enough, then I would be happy. If I could just make enough money, I could be happy. If I could just...and then one day I was talking to a guy and he said, you know you have the wrong definition of happiness. You think happiness is a place you get to, that if you can achieve enough, you'll get happy. He said no, happiness is a place you come from. It's a context. And you get to that context by being appreciating all that you do have. So, you can achieve your way to happiness. You have to go inward and reconnect with yourself and reconnect with God and let that be the context that you live your life out of. And it is perfectly fine to pursue goals, financial goals, and other goals. It's perfectly fine to do that but that's not the essence of true happiness. That happiness comes from within. And also, you'll find that no matter what achievement you ultimately achieve, real fulfillment comes through helping others.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: And I started to realize that, you know, I looked at my life and said, you know, I do feel that sense of fulfillment when I help others that I don't get when I achieve.

Aaron: Interesting.

Willie: And I can go and close a deal but I don't get that same sense of fulfillment that I get when I'm helping somebody else, or helping someone discover who they are, helping someone expand. That's why I love coaching so much is to help people reach their own potential.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: And so he said, you know, think about it, happiness is the place you come from. If you want to have a sense of fulfillment, help more people as you help make a contribution. So a significance in contribution that allows you to have that sense of fulfillment. And I started to, well let me start to shape the content of my life so I can do more, and more, and more.

Aaron: So, how old were you when this was going to go down? Or what part of life were you in when you were starting to make this realization?

Willie: I was in my 30s. I would say moving into my 30s because prior to that it was all achievement. It was all, I got to achieve. I got to achieve. I got to make more money. I got to do all that. So, I would say, late 20s. I started to think about it but really the explosion didn't really hit me until I probably moved into my early...and went, wow. You see, by then I had a lot of success. I had a lot of achievement. I could see, wow, I got all this achievement but still, I don't have that sense of fulfillment.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: And so, having that discussion really kind of validated what I was feeling. But I kept thinking let me achieve more, let me achieve more, and it would disappear.

Aaron: So was there any particular story or one thing that made the biggest impact on leading you to shift from that achievement to getting happiness mindset to really being able to live in happiness, or live more of this truly amazing life all the time?

Willie: I think the big shift was a conversation with him. And then really taking that and looking at my own life. And getting into the truth about my own life. Taking it and looking inward and saying, wow, this seems to resonate. This seems to be one of those life principles, something that seems to (inaudible) time that if you really want to feel the sense of fulfillment, you get it by making a contribution to others. When I look through my life I could see that, you know, yes, the times that I had that sense of fulfillment, I was in fact helping others. I was, in fact, making a contribution to others. And so I went, wow, that is the principle that's with me integrating into how I live life.

Aaron: Interesting. So, what did you change from then when you made that discovery? How did it change the course of direction that you were going in life?

Willie: Well, one of the things I did and this was, you know, a lot of how we live our lives is a matter of how we think. That's why I love your poster when it talks about the quality and the power of our thinking.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: So, the shift I made was this, I declared myself successful.

Aaron: You are successful.

Willie: And I had all the evidence to say that I was successful but when you're in that mindset of I've got to have more, more, more, I was in a more, more, more. And I said, you know what, I am successful. That's no longer my priority.

Aaron: So, you declared that. What did that mean to you when you said that you are successful?

Willie: I declared I am successful. I'm not trying to prove to myself that I'm successful. I'm not trying to prove externally to anybody that I'm successful. Because a lot of my early life was about proving to myself I was successful, and proving to others because I grew up in an environment where we didn't have the things that said success. We didn't have money. And I wanted to prove to myself I could be successful. Life didn't have to be that way. I could have money. I could have a great (inaudible) and do all that. So, part of it was proving it to

myself that I could be successful, and, you know, monetarily, materialistically. And also to prove to others I could be it. And so, I just declared, it's done.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: And that's appeared. And so it no longer became the driving force behind why I did what did. It was no longer the force that drove the decisions that I made. I was now free to say, how do I want to contribute to the world? What gift do I have that I want to share with the world to make a difference? And mine was, how can I share my knowledge, my experience, my learning with people that would help them discover more of who they are and help them along their journey?

Aaron: Yes. And so from that declaration of success, that's interesting because as you know, on the truly amazing life poster that I kind of define success as, the progressive realization of a worthy goal which is what Earl Nightingale taught back in the mid-1900s. Does that resonate with you as far as declaring yourself as successful in that way? You're successful because you are working toward worthy things?

Willie: Yes. You are successful. You're achieving your goals. I think the technology...there're so many things on your poster that resonates with me. Because I think we were put here to achieve. I think achievement is very much part of the plan for us being here. It is absolutely that. And setting goals, and setting stretching goals for you, whatever they are for you and achieving them, to me is an important part of building your self-esteem and on and on. And I think that is very, very, very powerful. When I look at your post growing, I think we need to continually be growing in all the areas.

Growing spiritually. Growing in our relationship with our mate. Growing in our relationship with our kids. Growing in our relationship with others. Growing out financially.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: So, to me growth just have this multiple multiplier effect. So, growing internally but also growing externally. And that is very, very key. I think celebrating, you know, celebrating. Too often we do not celebrate

our victories, our successes. And just think about it, celebrating life. Do we celebrate life? And what a tremendous gift life is. Do we celebrate that?

Aaron: Yes. That's interesting. So, if you were to say of those 12 pillars of a truly amazing life, which one for you would stand out the most right now if you picked one?

Willie: They are beautiful. I would say for me, the one create. Because I believe that one of the missing things that people need to learn early on to truly live an amazing life is that it is their life to create. That it is a gift from God, the divine creator, that we need to take accountability to step back, get off the treadmill, because life can show up and we're on a treadmill and you just...hey, think about it, the year is almost over, right. And you look up and you go, wow, the year is over. You make a New Year's resolution and you look up and the year is over. So, I go, step off of life's treadmill. Step into that, create your life and say, what do I want in life? How do I want my relationship with God to be? How do I want to contribute to the world? How do I want my relationship with others to be? What things do I want to be doing? What things do I want to have? So, create to me is very powerful because in order to do that, you have to step off of the treadmill or life for a moment and truly say, I'm this being with all kinds of possibilities. The potential is unlimited. How do I design the life that I want to live? And then let me go and live that life? But you do have to step off and design it and create it. And then you go live it.

Aaron: So, you just can't be just running the (inaudible) of life and passively or settling for whatever is coming your way if you're going to be creating. It's like you can't be creating your life and passively living it at the same time. Is that kind of what you're saying?

Willie: Right. Right. And you need to take that step back to design. As if we said, we want to build a house. Well, first thing we do is let's design what we want the house to look like before we build it.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: We design it. Then you go and build it. And I'm saying the same analogy for life. Let me step off for a moment and step into possibility

because we miss what is possible in life. Let me step off into the possibility and if you have a wife, a husband, a mate, with them and say, let's design our life and how we want it to be. Let's design how we want our relationship to be. Let's design it. Now, once we've done that, we have a blueprint to build a house. You have a blueprint now to design your life. But yes, as you move forward, you can modify and adjust it, that's perfect. But too often, we're on somebody else's blueprint.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: And we never realize that we're building somebody else's house. We're not building our house. So, for me that would be the one that...there're so many on the poster that I love but that would be my guiding one.

Aaron: That's great.

Willie: Step back and design your life.

Aaron: That's great. And as you were mentioning earlier about the importance of goal, what I've found is, to kind of continue on that thought and this creation thing, is that you actually get energy because we are teleological beings. You actually receive energy by having a goal and without the goal, you find yourself lacking energy. Have you found the same thing?

Willie: Yes. I mean goals, if you think about it, we're continually setting goals. So, for example, if you say, I want to go to the market, you visually go to the market first in your mind and then what you're going to get when you're there. So, goal is anything we're setting in the future. So, really the key is, can we deliberately set stretching goals that lead to the big things in life. Quite often we're setting goals but it doesn't tie back to some big things. It doesn't tie back to a better quality of life. It doesn't tie back to really making a contribution. So, we can spend our time on all this activity, and activity doesn't add up to your most important thing. That's why I love the process of going through your life and saying, what's my most important goals and then let me align my activities to accomplish my most important goals. Because we can be so activity-driven, in particular, in the U.S., because our adrenalin of motion, doing things, being in movement is so high that we don't realize

that quite often all that activity is not leading us to where we really want to go.

Aaron: Yes. It's so easy to fall back into that. Even when you do have a worthy goal, you start acting on it and all of a sudden you find yourself caught up in the activity. And I've found on that note that I need to bring myself back to why every single morning which is why I actually created that poster in the first place. Was I wanted to remind myself to remember the true reason why I'm doing everything because it's so easy to get caught up in the activity of things even when they start out for these great reasons, right?

Willie: Oh, yes. You can get off track before you know it. So, having a plan, having a goal, getting clear on what you want, and then keeping yourself on track is a totally different challenge. That's why I love coaching, helping people stay on track toward achieving their goals and helping them to get to where they want to go.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: So having a picture of (inaudible), a poster is a great way as that morning ritual, and that daily ritual to say, OK, let me get back on track.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: It's beautiful.

Aaron: That's great. Well, Willie, it's been such a pleasure to talk to you here today and to discuss more of your experiences in life. And what I'd like to do is before we wrap up here is to finish off with one question and that would be, what would be the number one most important thing you would tell our listeners here in order to help them start living a truly amazing life today?

Willie: Yes. I would say, start with a gratitude list. Start writing down in a journal all the things that you're happy with and you're happy about, and don't worry about the magnitude. So, for example, the fact that you woke up. The fact that you can walk. The fact that you can talk. Add all those things that you're grateful for. The fact that you can look out your window and see a flower, or you have a blade of grass. Everything that you have that you're happy for. What I'm trying to do is to get you to

build a list that you can then use every night, every morning, as part of your gratitude practice. A lot of people have heard about the law of attraction.

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: To activate the law of attraction, which just says, you move toward...you get more of what you think about, right?

Aaron: Yes.

Willie: It's a gratitude list. So, if you have this gratitude list, you start off and you read every morning then you set yourself up to draw more of those kinds of feelings into you. So, start your mornings off with gratitude. Write in your gratitude journal. Build that journal every day. Say, I'm going to add two or three more things to my attitude journal and make it as long as possible. And you'll find that it just sets you up for more success. It activates the law of attraction.

Aaron: Awesome. That is fantastic advice. I couldn't agree more. That's the thing that really changed my life, I would say is learning to express gratitude for literally everything. And I would just finish with saying, it's obvious to say thank you for the good things in our life but to actually learn to express gratitude for every single thing that's showing up in our lives can be super powerful and impactful. Well, Willie, it's been a pleasure. I really, really appreciate you coming on the line today and talking with me. For those of you out there, if you want to get in contact with Willie, he's a coach, he's amazing, he can really impact your life. If you ever want to chat with him, or reach out to him, feel free to email him. He actually gave me his email address. It's jtehooks@aol.com. If you want to email him and reach out to him after this podcast, go ahead and do that. Just put truly amazing life in the subject. And also, you can go to Amazon.com and search for Willie Hooks and you can find his latest book, 12 Strategies for Success, which is fantastic. It encapsulates all the principles that he teaches that he's learned over his whole life so far, and that he's been teaching with great success with many people, myself included. And I highly recommend that book. Check it out on Amazon.com. Like I said, it's, 12 Strategies for Success, Willie Hooks. And with that, thanks again Willie and we will

catch you guys on the next podcast.

The Truly Amazing Life Podcast showcases inspiring people who live a Truly Amazing Life.

They share their transformational stories and key insights that enabled them to start living a life full of passion, love, fulfilment, and joy.

Subscribe on iTunes

Subscribe via RSS feed

It would help tremendously if you would leave an honest review of the show on iTunes. The reviews on iTunes are largely responsible for new people finding and benefiting from these interviews.

Thank you in advance!

- Aaron Kennard