

# THE TRULY AMAZING LIFE SHOW *with Aaron Kennard*

EPISODE # 32

## TRANSFORMATIONAL 'PENNY PERSPECTIVES' FROM LIFE ENTHUSIAST LESLIE STEIN

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Aaron: Alright. I'm here with Leslie Stein. And I'm really excited to have her on the line today. She has just an infectious excitement about life and I want to really look in forward to digging into her life and what makes her so happy and just so you can welcome to the call Leslie.

Leslie: Hey. Thanks Aaron. I'm so excited to be here.

Aaron: Yeah. Well, you posted this thing on Facebook yesterday and just your enthusiasm about just even jumping on the call here. It's just, it's just infectious like, where do you get that from?

Leslie: Well, I feel like there's a little bit of me that's just no actually that way and I didn't know that it was something that everybody can feel and so, I kind of like of get came right out of me for a while. I was in the army for several years and for (inaudible) I turned it down a bit. And once I realized it was a gift to be happy and that you have to actually, just like working out, you keep your muscle strong like, you have to use your happy muscles to keep them strong. So I choose it basically every single day. I'll try to be happy today. I'm always asking myself that question.

Aaron: That is awesome. So tell me then, why? And that may be part of it but why are you so thrilled to wake up every single day?

Leslie: Gosh. There are so many reasons. I recently started doing this hundred day photo challenge. It's like a #100happydays. And, the statistics that drew me into that 71% of the people would not be able to finish the challenge of finding one happy moment every day for a

hundred days. And it's really not statistic has (inaudible) me because I realized that specifically the last couple at least 3 or 4 years, I have shifted my focus in life to really asking myself what is great about today. What's happy about today? You know, what do I love about today? And so, I would think I only get to do one photo a day, that doesn't seem enough, right? Because I find so many things.

Aaron: Yeah. So you have one photo per day of a happy moment?

Leslie: Exactly. And it could be anything from having coffee in the morning to seeing a long lost friend like, people do all kinds of stuff. So, the # that you put it in like, Instagram or Facebook like you see all sorts of cool things.

Aaron: What's the # again?

Leslie: What's that?

Aaron: What was the #?

Leslie: The #?

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: it's 100happydays

Aaron: Oh, okay.

Leslie: Yeah. And it's just really, I'm on day like 87 right now. So, I'm almost done with the hundred days and it's just a great structure and I feel like, people who feel like they don't have enough happiness in their lives so that they would want to have more should point a structure like that. That I think part of what helps me to be happy was burrowing structures from other people and making up my own structure, that kind of made my lens that I looked through where the happiness instead of where's the sadness or what structuring when thinking about your lens.

Aaron: So, the essence of, I mean, like you said, there are so many things that make life amazing but just your choice to choose to look for happiness daily like, as a conscious effort you started 4 years ago but

which you continue to add new tools and try new things daily. Is that what it is?

Leslie: Absolutely. And I think the other things that really, there's a couple of things that I've done that really shifted the way I look at the world, Aaron. And a lot of them you know, and a lot of times that I do this, I'm sort of beyond obsessed with finding money on the ground, right. And it started several years ago because I found a \$20 Bill on my walk home from work and I get a little happy then like, woo, free pedicure for me.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: And while I was getting the pedicure with about \$20 to do that, I thought, what would happen if I pick up all the money I found? And so, for a year, I dedicated myself to doing that and picked up every Penny, Nickels, Dime, whatever I found, it doesn't matter if it was a gutter or under the bus seat on the metro bus when I used to in Washington D.C. I would go under there and get it. And, I started to have this shift of realizing I have been going through life looking for \$20 Bill kind of happiness. Think of that. You know, like graduating from a program or you know, having a big birthday party like (inaudible) like 30 or 40. And so, this project helps me shift to looking for happiness in Penny sized increment because after a few months of doing it, people started knowing that I was doing it and they thought a name and the name was the Penny Project because mostly that's what you find.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: And so, that's what it the way I look at happiness.

Aaron: What led you to that project? Like, what led you to think that you have to making that shift in doing that?

Leslie: Well, for the year that I found that \$20 Bill, kind of coincided with some big shifts in my life and I had been living with a roommate. We kind of parted ways and I thought my own condo living on my own and it was a bit of a turbulent time for me and I called home a lot and my mom because we're very close and I would be crying that things weren't going well and she would say, have you met yourself? Like, you have a lot of

great things happening like, a friend of mine has taken me to the Grammys that year. She said, you went to the Grammys. How is your life not at hand? And you know, of course, you never listen to your mom, right. We always have to argue like, mom, I would know if my life was at hand.

Aaron: Well, you didn't feel like it was at hand. There was some turbulence. I mean, you didn't feel like there was a disconnect.

Leslie: Exactly. Like, and she's playing like one (inaudible) experience that I'm like, that doesn't make a life at the time.

Aaron: Yeah. That's a good, that's a really interesting insight there. I mean, and so, that goes to the point of your \$20 thing. I mean, it's like, these \$20, these experiences that we tend to strive for and want to make these memories around doesn't actually make life at hand. That's what you find out?

Leslie: Exactly. And they don't happen that often. Like, you're not going to graduate from college more than a couple of times. It makes you lucky. You graduate once and then get a couple of degrees but, there's only so many times that you can do those kind of what I call "peak \$20 Bill" moments. And so, my mom said to me in that call before I hung up on her, did it ever occur to you that life doesn't have to be a 10 every day? But then, if you have 7 plus a 7 plus a 7 and then a 10 every now and then, you actually have a life such a 10, and I said, you know, I'm not buying your new mMth. I don't know what you mean. This is stupid. I'm done with the conversation. So I went off and looked a bit more. But it was in the back of my head like, what does that mean?

Aaron: So, you didn't agree with her and do you agree with he now?

Leslie: I didn't agree with her at the time. I thought that was stupid. I don't buy your new Math. This is ridiculous. But I started thinking about it and I was about 6 or 7 Months end to picking up Penny to that point and just started thinking about this whole Penny journey right now and I thought, well, okay, so, \$20 Bill or any paper money, that's a big experience. When you find paper money, it's pretty rare. It only happens unless it's the time of the year, I've been tracking this for 8 Years now. It

only happens once a year and you are pretty excited. Paper money, that's a 10, right?

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: You find a Quarter, that's still a big deal. That's a 9. Like, (inaudible) are 8, but Pennies to me are still a 7. Like, I give a little like, woohoo, I found one. I track it all on a spreadsheet, I've been tracking every Penny from beginning of 2007 and

Aaron: And you're still doing this today?

Leslie: And I realize that, what's that?

Aaron: Are you still doing this today?

Leslie: Oh yeah. I couldn't give it up. I almost quit after the first year but the other people that I got involved with were learning all these from lessons and they were enjoying picking up money. So, we kept it going. And, what I learned that year, that my mom's Math was actually right. So, I crossed that first year. I found over \$32, mostly in Pennies. I found a \$5 Bill and a couple of \$1 Bills. So, I had a couple of peak moments, that's 10 but it was mostly Pennies. And it was more than that \$20 experience at the beginning.

Aaron: So you're saying, of this small stuff that you had earned, you'd only found \$32 and you'd only found \$20 peak experiences? I mean, of the big bills? Is that what you said?

Leslie: Well, that wasn't even including the \$20.

Aaron: Okay.

Leslie: So, I found the \$20 and that's what kind of prompts you the project but from January 1st to December 31st of that first year, outside of the \$20, I still found \$32. More than I had actually found to take off the project.

Aaron: Yeah, interesting. So, what was it that you learned from that?

Leslie: So, I learned that, I never again, I still, 7 Years had never found another \$20 Bill. So, I was living my life looking for \$20 Bills. If I had

done that for the last 7 years, I think I've been really disappointed, right? because it never has again happened.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: But, I stopped doing that and focused on the smallest increment of money I could find, right? Which is a Penny. I find them, maybe not daily but definitely weekly and by carrying my passion, other people looked for money and even though I've never found another \$20 Bill, other people in my life have. My dad even found \$250 on the ground.

Aaron: That's funny.

Leslie: So, by sharing my passion, other people gets to have these cool finds because their (inaudible) has shifted. And I find other things outside of money. I found 2 iPods, 2 wrist watches, a pair of sunglasses. I found some great stuff but none of it is what I had originally set out looking for.

Aaron: So, you ended up writing a book about this, right?

Leslie: Yeah. I actually did. It's called "Penny Perspective" and it's 34 life lessons on how to look at the world the Penny way. Like, how do you find incremental happiness, right?

Aaron: Yeah. That's fascinating. So, 34 life lessons, how you look at the world the Penny way. Is that the sub title?

Leslie: The sub title is actually, let go of happily ever after and invest in happily ever now.

Aaron: I like that.

Leslie: So, I feel like that was another kind of lesson that Penny has thought me was you know, you don't know what you're going to find tomorrow. You can't predict Penny finding. You can't assume you're going to find it in a certain place. So, all you can do is be present and open to finding whatever is there or not finding something if there's nothing there. And by doing that, like, it's hilarious. People will write to me and my gosh, we found \$4 in airport security and usually, we hate flying and this made it so much more fun.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: So, people make open and present, they found ways to have fun in places they hate. Like, how cool is that?

Aaron: That's awesome. So, it's just focusing on that positive. I love how you put that into this, I love the concept to that Penny perspective thing. The whole, it's one of the definitions that I live by on. 1 of the 12 Pillars of a truly amazing life is to succeed right now. And that success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal and it just really fits. That's what you're talking about that these, like, we tend to as a society or me personally, it was exactly like what you did. I put these big milestones that I was always trying to achieve these big things. But then, there are all these struggle and trudging along, drudgery in the middle there, right? And you hit this one goal but the goal is never even that as satisfying. You're just living your whole life in the struggle rather than, look, I'm successful today because I took one step forward towards my vision and I'm happy about it.

Leslie: That's amazing.

Aaron: I just fit so perfectly with your perspective there. What are some of the other perspectives in your book that you've come up some of those insights?

Leslie: One of my favorite ones was this whole chapter about inconvenience joy. And this happened to me when I was walking home. I used to live in Washington DC. And so, you know, you didn't drive anywhere. You always walked everywhere. And the grocery store was about 6 blocks away. And I had intended to just buy a few things. There was that weird time of that year where you need a coat in the morning but you're roasting by mid afternoon. And so, I have my big heavy coat and my little reusable grocery bag and I go to the store and of course, everything I use all the time is on sale. Like, a ridiculously good sale. So, I way more spend that I really needed or that I plan on buying I guess. When I have these 2 heave grocery bags now and a coat that's making me like, (inaudible) in the heat. When walking home and on the ground of course because I notice them all the time, I see a Penny. And my first thought is that, oh yey a Penny. My first thought is like, really universe? You're going to give me a Penny right now when I have these 2 big

bags? And I kind of roll my eyes in my mind. So, I sat down the bags, pick up the Penny, I take about 10 more steps, I find another Penny, I go through the same thing again. And that's like another block on the way, I find a couple more Pennies and this time I was like, I had this realization, I was like, you know what's so funny? I want what I want but I want it exactly when and how I want it, right? And so, but actually getting mad at the universe for giving me Pennies which is what I've been asking for every single day for the last 2 or 3 Years. But it feels inconvenient to me at this moment but it is exactly what I wanted. It was this fun realization that sometimes like, you really have to put down the baggage you're carrying. Like, I had actually physical baggage, but sometimes we have emotional baggage that blocks us from getting the things we've really wanted all along.

Aaron: That's a powerful insight. What would be an example of that? Like, from the emotional baggage standpoint. You have any thoughts on that?

Leslie: Well, I mean, for me, I would say that the place I traveled the most on my life is dating. And I'm still single, turning 40 on my next birthday and I have a cat like, it doesn't get any more cliché than that. I'm like, what am I doing wrong? I've got to be successful and happy everywhere else but I can't figure out dating. I think it's because a lot of times like I have some kind of emotional baggage or fear around being hurt or you know, I had my heart broken once or twice. So, you bring that boy with you. And so now, I look at people, I'm like, oh you couldn't possibly hurt me in the future. So, I better not deal with you now. It's kind of like, I don't want to put down those bags and risking hurt again.

Aaron: Even though this love of your life is showing up and maybe has shown up 10 times but because you've had this big baggage, you weren't willing to, it wasn't the way that you could see wanting it or.

Leslie: Exactly. Like, oh he doesn't have the job that I thought my dream guy would have or he doesn't look like my dream guy would look or you know.

Aaron: Or it's just the wrong time that you're too busy with this right now or whatever right?



Leslie: Exactly. Oh, my schedule is not open so it must not be meant to be or he's too busy or it wasn't meant to be so, all these little reasons that are easy to use as excuses but, it's really a matter of like, am I really willing to put the bags down and take the risk and say, I really like you and I want to see if this works.

Aaron: Yeah. And in that case,

Leslie: And be open to the (inaudible) or not?

Aaron: Yeah. And in that case, what you're talking about too is something that's quite deeper actually where a lot of us don't recognize that we've been carrying that baggage that is stopping us from seeing.

Leslie: Yeah.

Aaron: And the fact that you've recognized that is a huge first step that a lot of us. I mean, I know personally, there's baggage that I'm carrying that I don't even know that I'm carrying that is stopping me, that's inhibiting me and I'm kind of on a mission constantly to be uprooting those things so that I can expand my options. But, I just want to point that out because sometimes it's clear that we're carrying a baggage but other times, not so much.

Leslie: Oh, absolutely. And it's really to me it's become kind of fun and funny when I realize, I'm like, oh my gosh, I've been carrying this baggage and I didn't even know how much it was getting in my way. And so now, it's like, when somebody points something out to me or was asking me a question or catches me off guard or giving me advice that seemed out of context, I'm like, okay, where is the useful piece of that? Because everything that we encounter has something useful in it and a lot of times it's this frustrating moments that make you realize you're carrying around baggage you didn't even know you were carrying.

Aaron: Yeah. I like how you said "everything we encounter has something useful" and it goes with this quote from Napoleon Hill that has kind of always gotten me for a long time "that every adversity, there is this seed of an equal opposite advantage" and it also what led to kind of the whole, my whole feeling for the basis of kind of what I teach in the truly amazing life community that everything is conspiring for your

benefit because you can choose to look for the good in every single thing.

Leslie: Absolutely. I had a friend once had read like advanced Philosophy book and the main principle that she took away, I'm sure this mean that everything happens for the best possible reason.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: Not just any old reason, it doesn't just happen not random but everything happens for the best possible reason.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: And there's people that use that philosophy but here's what I know, when I started believing that and trying it on for size, I felt that went bad, "bad things would happen"

Aaron: Yeah, things that seemed that. Yeah.

Leslie: I would say, oh, go ahead.

Aaron: Yeah. That seemed bad on the outside.

Leslie: Yeah. Exactly. Like, you know, for instance. I got in a car accident once and it has like totaled my car and that is a pretty you know, bad thing right and so, not really fun to deal with. And I've asked myself, you know, okay, if this happens for the best possible reason, what's the possibility here? The car is already wrecked. I cannot undo that, I cannot use the law of attraction to reverse it to make my car whole again. It's not going to work so, all I can choose now is my attitude. So, I want to have a wrecked car at a bad attitude or do I want to have a wrecked car and a good attitude. So I ended up, while we were waiting for the cop calling the guy who hit me my Penny story and he had giving me like a whole change trade full of Pennies for the project and the cop came and we had our picture taken together holding the Pennies that became this great story and now use when I speak. And my car, look, I was driving a 1997 Gio Prism with no (inaudible). So it wasn't like it was the best car in the world in the world anyway. The car ended up getting so much more money from being totaled that I could have ever sold it for that it ended up being a good thing in the long run. It made me let go of this car that

really didn't suit me anymore instead of something that is so much better to suit my personality and where I am today. I ended up getting a new car that I love. And so, it was like, all of that like, none of that is would have happened if it weren't for the car accident. So when I tried on that theory of everything happens for the best possible reason, my little amendment to that is and you may not see that reason immediately. It may take a day or a week or a year for the reason to be obvious. But keep looking for it.

Aaron: Or never. I mean, you might not see it while you're alive.

Leslie: Yeah.

Aaron: Like, literally. And that doesn't change the fact that it's such a more fun life to live looking for the good than sitting there dwelling on the negatives that whole time.

Leslie: Well, I feel it got ties to what you just said about be successful today. Like, when I'm looking for the good and myself and other people and the situation, to me, that feels like success.

Aaron: Yeah. And it is success because you are looking for it's like, it's a noble thing in looking for how you can make good instead of dwelling on this negative. That's really cool. I love that insight. Love your stories on that with the car and the money and stuff. So, I want to go back a little bit because you, I think you've probably got just some cool stories in the past and I haven't heard them, haven't dug into them but I know you were in the army at one point and I don't imagine I mean, before you started Penny project and getting all these insights. Has your life always been, have you always woken up thrilled each day and then super enthusiastic about life or has it been different in the past?

Leslie: Oh no. There are definitely times. I think we all go through these you know, whenever we want to say, it's a test or a trial, whatever it is. Life happens and when you haven't built your happiness muscles, it can be kind of devastating to me at times and I can think of one particular period of my life where I graduated high school, when straight to West Point which is the military academy because a mission into the army out of there and you don't go to West Point if you're not driven and a high day personality and an over fear. And you've probably failed a whole lot.

Aaron: What drove you into going into West Point? What was that motivating factor for you at that time?

Leslie: I was drawn to the camaraderie and the idea of working like for something greater than myself service my country, being a team, like, being part of a team, doing something that really matters. And that was just amazing. So, I go off to West Point, I do my thing. I have some ups and downs you know, I failed the physical fitness exam once and you know, burst into tears because I hadn't failed anything before but you know, I got through those times. I graduated, things were good. I head off to flight school because I had chosen to aviation as my branch in the army and I struggled. Like, for whatever reason, I just could not see into, things didn't come easy in flight school as they had everywhere else in my life. So, I failed the check ride and then I failed another check ride again. After you failed 2, they send you in front of a Kernel who determines whether they're going to let you stay or if they're going to kick you out. And so, I mean, you've experienced, probably most of you listeners too. When you failed something or you've done something wrong, you're already beating yourself up worse than anyone will ever could. Like, you're already kicking you own butt for making a mistake. So, I'm standing in front of this Kernel in a meeting who's kind of determining my future. I'm either going to get like, well, try again, or I'm going to have to tell everyone I know that I bailed out.

Aaron: Did they send you on to a different program and kick you out or whatever? Exactly.

Leslie: They kick you out and send you to a different branch. Yeah. I tell people what happened. So, I'm standing there sweating, not in my stomach, (inaudible) on dry throat you know, whatever. And he sits down and he's like, you know, (inaudible) I got to tell you, we're going to let you stay on the program. I was actually, oh my gosh, it was like instant relief that I was like, thank goodness. But then he said something after that that was the biggest punch in the stomach I think I ever had in my life. And he said, I feel sorry for the unit that gets you next because you are a liability, not an asset. Now, get out of my office.

Aaron: Wow, yeah.

Leslie: I didn't know what to do with that. Like, here was this person that I respected and admired and leader telling me that I'm a liability.

Aaron: Wow.

Leslie: So, that probably put a big dark cloud over me for quite a while because I believe that, I mean, he was already, he was a kernel, I was a lieutenant. What do I know that he doesn't know? So, I left that office believing and thinking to myself over and over again, I'm a liability, not an asset. I'm a liability, not an asset. It was a good couple of years though. It took me until I hit some people that was kind of like, you know what, you're not a liability, we want having you on our unit. Your positivity makes difference to us. And, they kind of help me shake that off and realize that who I am matters and I can't let one person to (inaudible) on me hold me back.

Aaron: But, that's a really, you know, you just breezed through a couple of years. I mean, that's, a couple of years is not a short time period.

Leslie: No.

Aaron: To be living in the dark cloud of self loathing and lack of confidence. I mean, if you're thinking you're a liability and believing that, what were those 2 years like?

Leslie: Well, I (inaudible) a little bit like Jaclyn Hyde because there's a part of me that's happy and can't turn it off. Like, my inner Tigger like hikes out from place to place, you know. But then, I feel like, so when he said, you're a liability, it was like, that has to be a liability, I can't be happy maybe that's the problem. And so, even though I naturally kind of wanted to be happy, I would make myself wrong for being happy. And so it was very late, there were days that I forgot he said it and then I would remember. I would kind of be like a downward spiral. And then I forget, I kind of get happy again. So, it was kind of a Jaclyn Hyde. It was like almost like my own battle of good and evil inside of myself, which voice am I going to listen to.

Aaron: Well, because there's one voice, the truth saying that you're amazing and that's like, you love life.

Leslie: Yeah.

Aaron: And then, there's this voice, that lie, that's sitting there in complete opposition to that.

Leslie: Absolutely. And I think it's one of the best like, little story that I've heard is about, it's a Native American story I believe where a man and his grandson are sitting around the fire and the grandfather's telling the grandson about this battle that is inside of every man that there is two wolves. One wolf that is amazing, that is enlightening, goodness and love and hope and inside, every man has another wolf that's dark and angry and spiteful and mean and that battle is constantly going on. And the grandson asked the grandfather, we'll who wins the battle grandfather? And he says, whichever wolf you feed. And so, there were days that I fed that dark wolf you know. It's like, it must be true. I'm not good enough. And of course, when I'm not good enough, I slash out on other people. You're not good enough. This is not good enough. Nothing is good enough. And I wasn't necessarily super fun to be around. I'm very fortunate I have people in my life including my family that remember who I was before hearing all these kind of things, right? And so, they would kind of bring me back and help me feed the good wolf again. Like, you're awesome, we love you, you're amazing, we're so happy you're on our family and great friends and these things, I will feed that wolf and then over time I started to learn those triggers that made you feed that dark wolf. And so, once you say like, oh it's a choice, but there are certain things that make me choose the dark wolf, you start being more aware of it and awareness is like a light you know, it's like, shine light on it and like, cockroach is scattering. All of a sudden, things start going away and

Aaron: The darkness and light can't really abide together.

Leslie: No. They can't.

Aaron: So, you had people that help you remember that but it was this, that sound kind of like an epic battle and it was not literally until 2 years later that you kind of pull out of that completely or more hopefully?

Leslie: I mean, I was like, getting out of the army, getting the out of that environment probably helped just over all, you know, and there were still things like, learning about spirituality and all sorts of different things I studied and now, it's this still, I didn't know it was a choice then. I didn't

understand that I could choose not to feed the dark wolf. And so, over time, I was realizing that even that everything was a choice. You are not a victim of your emotions, you are not a victim of whatever happens to the world. It may or may not happen. You get to choose how you react to it. And so, knowing that I have that choice, and exercising the muscle. In some days you know what, I'm like feeding the dark wolf today. I need a (inaudible) day. And I just allow myself that. It's part of being human you know. Be upset, be annoyed, just don't park your car in that parking lot forever.

Aaron: Yeah. It's like, I've had these battles between, and I don't think. It's not like that battle ever ends in life. There's always going to be that negativity, that negative force there. And I've called it just truth and lies. Like the dark wolf is lies, and the good wolf is truth. And it was interesting, I was, this long note. I was writing the other day. I was really feeling oppressed by some lies. Some of these lies about myself that were just like comparison in judgement and after I had left this really great seminar with other like, entrepreneur peers and stuff and I wasn't feeling like I was living up. So these lies were kind of like getting overwhelming and I just had this little battle on paper with against the lies and so, it's funny, i like the analogy of the good wolf and the bad wolf that puts it like a more personal, I could really relate to that battle that you were going through. And when I did it, it was like, I just literally was just slayed. It was like this epic battle where I called myself out to battle against these lies and I like slayed them with the sword of the truth and it just like took them down. It was really cool. I think I might publish some of that on the blog. It was really intense. I was laughing about it afterwards but, we'll see if it ends up being published or not. But anyway, I wanted to ask you those. So when, what was it that shifted because that sounds like, that was definitely an important thing for you in your life. You needed that experience to teach you about choice and to teach you who you really are or have that battle to go through and what was it that, is there like a turning point of getting out of that like when you realized that you have a choice? Was it like slow progression out of it? What was it like to get out of? Until

Leslie: Interesting like, I heard someone say once, if you can suffer a trauma and think you can recover from that trauma in an instant. I think there's a lot of truth to that and I know that sometimes, it's a slower path.

Like, you make the choice to start moving in that direction but you're not ready to move in to it fully, yeah. And so, your baby stuff, you know, it's like, I'm going to take one step forward and okay that worked, now take a few steps and see how it does work, that 3 steps that eventually you'll pick up speed. So, I would say there's a lot of things in life that kind of shifted me that were baby stuff in that direction. But honestly, the thing that, the most drastic change in my life that I can remember was I had gone through a break up and I had kind of moved around. That was another period like, I felt you know, the dark wolf was getting fed a lot, that I'm not worthy, I'm not lovable, nobody's going to want to marry me, like, all of those voices were screaming at my head and I heard them, right? And so,

Aaron: When you say you fed that, when you say you fed them, what does that mean? Or kind of what's your picture of how do you feed them or not feed them?

Leslie: Again, I'm not a hundred percent sure that I knew it was a choice. It was like, yeah, I have been dumped and there's no other choice but to just be mopey and sad about it. And so, I didn't know that I could re-channel my thoughts effectively like, of course, that initial thing of like, nobody loves me is going to come up. And instead of like this following this train of thought blindly, now, I'm like, nobody's going to love me. I stop and I'm like, okay, where is the opposite of that true in my life? Like, my parents love me so much, they're so awesome, like my sister, best sister in the world. My trainer became my best friend. Like, you know, it's like, (inaudible) my partner and so I start, I asked myself, okay, that could very well be true but where is that not true? And that lead me more towards getting that positive wolf. And so,

Aaron: So, through that break up, you were saying like, there was something that happened there. Was that when you realized that you had a choice or was?

Leslie: Yeah. I think that something about, what happened was I took a trip to South Africa with my family and we did the Safari. And honestly, we just traveled for 36 Hours to get there. We took our first night Safari right after getting there and put our bags down and they're like, get the people going now. And so we went out and saw zebras and giraffe and



all these amazing animals and the guys were just so happy. And, I turned to my mom and I know this sounds crazy because we've been here whopping 4 Hours after traveling for 36. But, I feel like I've already gone my money's worth out of this trip. Sure, it's been 1 night Safari. And so, we just kept experiencing that day after day with these people that they appreciated everything about where they live. They appreciated to opportunity to be around tourists, for the animals, for the land and it was just, I've never been around so much gratitude in my life. Everywhere, I mean, every person was like that. And, on that trip, my sister and I, you know, we had been normal siblings, we've fought over stupid stuff and sometimes not so stupid stuff. And you know, smack each other's hands and like, we would get a little fat and it's tiring. It's tiring to be that way with people. And so, I sat down with her one night when we were on the bed and breakfast. It was after the Safari which was exhausting and before the next they go to trip. And I said, how can I be a better sister? That was when I asked her. How can I be a better sister? And, for the first time in my life I think, I was ready to hear the hard things I didn't want to hear about where I wasn't being so nice and where I was being supportive. But I opened the door for her to tell me and then for her, turned around and asked the same question. How can I be a better sister? And so I said, well, maybe this and maybe that and that was 6 years ago. And, this is not a stretch or lie. We have not one single harsh word taken with each other and say you're not one. And it was all because we were willing to say whether you need to be a better sister. You know, how can I support you better. And for some reason, I forgot in that conversation made me realize, you always have a choice. When these people choose to be happy every day, I chose out my sister to question and listen to the answer. She chose to ask back. Like, you know.

Aaron: That's truly cool.

Leslie: We all have a choice.

Aaron: So, it's like all these combination, your experience that had led you to go over there in Africa where these lessons could really sink in and really hit home. And then, you just made like, in one moment, a whole lifetime of bickering kind of heaviness between your sister has shifted completely.

Leslie: Completely. And I think the mindset that happens for me which is like, wow, even when I am not perceiving that she had my best interest in heart, she really does. Like, I started looking at her and she's amazing. I'm still lucky to have her as a sister. And when I start feeding that wolf and making that the story, now I'm like, how am I lucky to have a good day. Like, oh, I haven't heard from her for a week. And then and there's like a short text message like, hi, and that's all that is says. There's a lot of different stories that you can write about that.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: How come you don't talk to me all week? Why is your text message so short?

Aaron: It could be all the negative. Yeah.

Leslie: You know. Or you can write that says, holy crap, you're a really busy woman with a baby and a husband and a fulltime job and you still found the time to still send me a text message. How awesome is that?

Aaron: I love that exact example because it's so clearly articulates of how much of a choice it is and how we, based on our own deep perceptions in our own moods and everything we cast. All these judgments on other people's things and we can choose to be looking on the negative. We don't realize we're doing it. So, I mean, but even then, on the other side. Even if she was like, regardless of what her intent was, just for your, I mean, if you look for the positive side of it, you still, even if somebody has negative intent, you still don't have to be affected if you're looking at the positive.

Leslie: Exactly, exactly. It's that whole, like I said, be successful now. When I find the positive intent, when I write the best story that makes me happy, these people that say like, but what if it's not true? What if you're getting taken advantage? I'm like, how am I getting taken advantage of it at the moment where when I think about my sister, I love her and her to me. That doesn't feel like getting taken advantage of being taken advantage of. You know, it feels like choosing happiness. So, I'm less interested in truth and more interested in free that make life happy.

Aaron: Yeah.

Leslie: And the more you write that story, the more it comes true.

Aaron: Yeah. It's like you're more interested in making happiness your truth rather than making negativity your truth and your reality.

Leslie: Absolutely. A hundred percent.

Aaron: I mean, that reminded me of that song by the dude that happy song, what was his name? Farrell Williams or something.

Leslie: Farrell?

Aaron: Farrell. Yeah. Is that how you say that?

Leslie: Yeah.

Aaron: You know, clap along if you feel that happiness is the truth. And that's kind of you're living.

Leslie: Absolutely,.

Aaron: You've chosen to live the truth that is in the sense of what you're experiences and I just love these stories in your life and what you've just illustrated for people here. It's just such a great example of how you choose that, really refreshing to hear. I'm really, really glad that we got to chat about this stuff. Thank you so much for sharing all that.

Leslie: Oh. Thanks for having me here. I love what you're doing and I think it is a truly amazing life and sounds like, ooh, any chance I can get people to shift to that story that feels better, I will take it. So, I'm always glad to have conversations like this.

Aaron: That's so cool. I'm really glad to have you. Let's wrap up and just tell people how they can get in touch with you and learn more about you, to get your book. Can you direct people to your website or any place to get in touch with you if they want to?

Leslie: Absolutely. The easiest one is, I have a website that is just my name so, [www.lesliestein.com](http://www.lesliestein.com) and that will take you to all the links to the different things I have projects for women of leadership and I have

information about the Penny Project. You can find links to the book, buying it on Amazon and all of that right there on the website. So, I would like to be friends just to stop by and say hi on Facebook. That you can find me on Facebook to view my website and so I kind of live and breathe and share all my positive (inaudible) and everything else.

Aaron: Awesome. Thanks for sharing that. And so, for everybody listening, go to [lesliestein.com](http://lesliestein.com) and I'm going to put links to this also on this show notes in case you can't hear it right or whatever. So, if you go to [trulyamazinglife.com/podcast](http://trulyamazinglife.com/podcast) and you click on this episode, will open up link to Leslie's website and her Facebook and link to her book and everything over there. So, you can check her out and get more insights from her and I'd be curious to hear what people think about your book and those insights. I'm sure there's a ton more we talked about one of them but, I bet there's a (inaudible) really cool insights over there and that's fascinating so, awesome Leslie. Well, thank you so much and thank you everybody for listening and we'll see if you can catch on the next episode.

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*Thank you in advance!*

*- Aaron Kennard*

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