

## How to Do the Work, Meet Your Self and Be Your Most Authentic – Dr. Nicole LePera – #1002

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to the Human Upgrade with Dave Asprey. Today, we're going to talk about a word that starts with W called the Work. We all go to work every day with a small w. There's something called the Work with a capital W, which is the work of becoming a better human, of doing deep spiritual work, of doing trauma resolution work. The stuff that's actually really hard and some jobs are tiring but they aren't difficult. There's a big difference in there. Part of my journey as a biohacker has been doing huge amounts of trauma resolution work, of just working on patterns that I have that are invisible to me by definition and becoming aware of them and then doing something about them. One of the most important things I've learned is that if you have enough energy, it's a lot easier to do the capital W Work.

So I thought, wouldn't it be cool to have a guest on the show who wrote a book called "How to Do the Work" with a capital W? The subtitles "Recognize your Patterns, Heal from your Past and Create Yourself." This is a part of biohacking. It's changed the environment around you and inside of you. So you have full control of your own biology. If there's invisible patterns running, you are not in charge of your own biology, you're not in charge of your behavior. That's why doing the work is so important. Our guest is Nicole LePera who's a Ph.D. Nicole, welcome to The Human Upgrade.

Dr. Nicole LePera:

Thank you so much for having me. Dave.

Dave:

What did you think when I reached out and said you want to be on the show? Where you're like, "Oh, this is great, or you like what? A biohacking show? What's going on here?"

Nicole:

I actually am quite familiar with your work and have been inspired by it for a long time. So I was super excited and I can understand, I think maybe the leap that it feels talking about the work healing and then obviously having a conversation about upgrading. But in my opinion, I think I would imagine you agree it really is one and the same to return to our full potential to heal allows us to then ultimately live in that fulfilling upgraded state. So I was super jazzed and I'm honored to be here with you now.

Dave:

Oh, well, thank you. It's funny because if you need healing and you don't know it, you're not going to perform very well. I was quite astounded when I was 30 and I went to a personal development retreat based on transpersonal psychology, which I was entirely unfamiliar with. A friend of mine who told me to go, I'm like, "What do you do there?" She said, "I'm not going to tell you because then you won't go. Just go." I went because I had nothing to lose. I was like, "I've already made and lost millions of dollars. I've already been married and divorced and I'm miserable." I don't know. What the heck? I'm doing everything but it's not working.

So that was my introduction to the work with the capital W and I worked to bring that into the world of biohacking because most people listening, there's a lot going on you don't know about and that you can call it healing, you can call it upgrading, I don't really care. But at a certain point when you get rid of all that stuff, you're so massively upgraded and then you wonder is there more? That's my first question for

you. I mean you're training clinical psychology at Cornell and you're a badass in your field. Is all upgrading, just healing or is there something else going on in there too?

Nicole:

I really, really love this question even to think about and even the way I describe healing often, I think a lot of times intuitively we think it's getting somewhere, getting something additional, maybe even enhanced in some way. But I like to think of it and actually the new workbook that I'm currently releasing in about a month in December, "How to Meet Yourself." I think about it and I talk about it like peeling back of layers of onion layers and very intentionally even in that workbook "How to Meet Yourself." This idea of who you even are? I think a lot of us intuitively just want to have the tools to figure out who we are, right? To reconnect with that space. Until we figure out who we're not, until we peel back and return to what I believe is our pure essence, I don't think we have access to who we are and ultimately what we're capable of. So I think about healing our journey here on earth as being a returning to all of those infinite possibilities that I truly believe have always been present, but for many different reasons.

Often based in our environments and need it safety, we've adapted and modified who we are. So the more I think that we get returned to is that space of infinite possibility. It's not actually something additional or extra at all. I actually believe inherently it's a space we all have access to though for many different environmental-based, adaptation-based reasons. We're not in connection with that space. When we're not conscious to our deeper self to what our body wants and needs to what our emotions are telling us. They all contain information in the world. When we don't feel safe to be or to express from that place, then in my opinion, we don't have access to our healing, our potential and ourself. So to simplify, it's understanding the different ways that we're not connected in the practical application for me of consciousness of learning how to build in that operational step of reconnecting first with our physical body. That in my opinion is I imagine you agree contains a wealth of information.

Dave:

Got it. So I'm getting the connect to all the information that your body physically and your emotions are giving you. This is narrow, I had to do a lot of work on because oh, anything below the neck is pretty much garbage information, so why would I pay attention to that? Unless it was bleeding or something. That's a pretty common male perspective on things. So there is the idea of sorting out what's going on in there and what it actually means. It's not automatic even in people with great childhoods and all, it just takes learning and experience. In fact, that's where some wisdom comes from and highly intuitive people are more connected and all that. But you said something at the beginning, "Figuring out who you are," and what does that even mean? Everyone's sitting here. What do you mean who I am? I am me. Go deeper with me on that. What does it mean to figure out who you really are?

Nicole:

Yeah, I think what people instinctively react from when you're absolutely right, Dave, they do say, "Well, I'm me." I think what we're describing is the habit and pattern ways, the autopilot ways that we've been showing up, the ways we go about our day, the habits we may or may not have integrated in our day that has become who we've come to know ourself as being. But I think if I asked a lot of people, well, what do you really want? What is your heart telling you? What is your passion, your purpose? Again, these are words that for a very long time I had heard, used remained like a concept in a book like you're saying a politician. I read many books of people who were like, "Yeah, I found my passion, I found my

purpose and now I'm living this fulfilled life." I couldn't really translate into an understanding of what those things actually met and lived experience because I didn't have that connection.

What I came to realize is the reason why we can't even define who we are is for a lot of us at least we're not looking internally to determine who we are. Really simply who we are is what do we think? What do we like? What are our ideas? How do we feel about particular experiences and what's of interest or of wellbeing for us? All of that is going to be different answers. So unless we're looking inside to determine how choices are resonating with us as individuals, we're going to be looking outside of ourselves. So we're not going to be able to answer who we are because in my opinion, we're not taking the moments to even ask ourselves those questions of what do we like? What do we want? What is of interest to us?

Dave:

So does that mean I can define who I am by what I like and my emotions and what's of interest to me?

Nicole:

I think that's a big aspect of it. Our emotions-

Dave:

A lot of people, they're pretty much Call of Duty in Hot Pockets.

Nicole:

Call of Duty in Hot Pockets, right. I mean, I think in terms of emotions, when we're talking about our emotional experiences of the world, there's incredible value in terms of our emotions and how we feel about certain things I think is important information from us, when I hear though like, "I'm all about Call of Duty about Hot Pocket," it's about interest again, are we engaging in actions and is that what we're interested in or are we dropped into how are we feeling? So many of us aren't even looking or are so disconnected from the feelings in our body that we are defining ourselves by how we're showing up in the world by the actions we're taking, by the Call of Duty we're always playing or the Hot Pockets we're always ingesting, but emotions actually are at the core of our being. I would call those coping mechanisms for the emotions that maybe are underlying or the discomfort that's contributing us into reacting in those habitual ways.

Dave:

That's interesting. So this is the old conversation about are you a human being or a human doing and that we're defining ourselves by what we like to do versus by how we like to feel?

Nicole:

I think the large majority of us struggle being, feeling safe enough in that self-expression of just being, I mean even going back to this concept like you're saying of little w work, I think we've learned so many different channels and outlets, many of which are validated even to this day by society that do embody the actioning, the doing as opposed to the being. I think for many different reasons based in our childhood experiences where we might not have had our needs met consistently enough or have had the safety in our environments to just be, so. To adapt, to create safety. So many of us do become identified as I once was with all of the things that we do because we don't actually feel safe enough to just be who we are. Then we do identify ourselves as the Hot Pocket loving Call of Duty playing person and we're missing out on the rest of the person beneath that.

Dave:

You mentioned safety a lot, so most people listening, unless you're listening on a subway with headphones on, not paying attention to the guy sitting next to you with a knife, you're probably pretty safe right now. So is it actually an issue of safety or is it an issue of I feel unsafe even though I am safe?

Nicole:

It's an issue of, and when it comes down to it, if we are reacting from that point of lacking safety again, whether or not it's mapping on objectively to what's happening. For a lot of us it is, and it's the memory of the similar past experience where I once was unsafe in that moment. If my body is in that nervous system reaction of a threat based response is as it is if I'm unsafe in this current moment. So it doesn't necessarily to my mind body system at least matter or I'm not mapping on at least to the reality of the safety that's present. Most of us are carrying, for some of us a lifetime of this nervous system dysregulation. We're constantly then signaling our mind the lack of safety in even an absence of a lack of a safe environment. Many of us do have safety like you're saying around us, but our bodies aren't in that safe state because we're responding, reacting to something that's very similar to a time when we actually weren't safe.

Dave:

They don't teach this in high school, they don't teach it in college. But it's such a fundamental part of being a human, which is that you can feel things that are entirely inappropriate for the situation you're in and that's fine. But what we normally do is we get a guilt or a shame response for having feelings that don't match reality and guilt and shame are also fear based. And you get kind of stuck in it. I know that when I share that with you, you're like, "Yes, that's kind of what my book's about." But with listeners, it's hard to conceptualize this unless you've done some therapy or you've done some trauma healing work. You talk about holistic psychology as a movement that's different than traditional Freudian Psychology.

I've had a great number of very experienced psychologists or psychiatrists on the show including Daniel Amen, Steven Porges, the amazing people and having you on as well. It seems like you're all circling around this holistic idea or this idea that the way we used to do therapy maybe wasn't as effective as it could be. Tell me how you went from learning therapy at a big institution where I lay on the couch and pay me a few hundred bucks and I'll see you next week and we'll do it again for 20 years. How did you shift? Was it a trauma? Was it outrage? You have to have some reason that you're doing the stuff you're doing because frankly, it's riskier to do what you're doing as a practitioner versus to toe the line.

Nicole:

Yeah, I very much came through that traditional system at the new school where I got my PhD. It was very much grounded in the gold standard here in the States, which is cognitive behavioral therapy. Really simply change the thoughts in your mind, change the impact that they have on your emotions and your reaction. I very much agree with that to some extent and devote an entire chapter in how to do the work to the power of belief of these thoughts in our mind in particular, though not once was the body and our nervous system in particular really discussed as part of the story. Then quickly from my training at the new school, I actually did go into training to become an analyst, to have a couch in Philadelphia. I thought I was going to get some more letters after my name and do that type of treatment in particular that really highlighted psychoanalytic work highlights the impact of our childhood.

So I thought, okay, I will begin to address the what I thought was the underlying causes of this deep rooted pain in our childhood through a version of talk therapy and my moment of groundbreaking destabilization, if you will. Having myself also been on the other side, the patient side of the couch. As

long as I can remember having anxiety, very much part of who I thought I was and how I imagined my life would always feel I had been on many treatment environments, been on the other side of the couch. When I was opening up my private practice, I was several years in and I started to see a theme in all the different clients I was working with, which was, "I'm stuck. I've now been seeing you, Dr. Nicole for at this point years and I have so much awareness, I know exactly what's not serving me. I even have new plans of action, we come up with them week after week, yet why can't I actually change the way that I'm acting? Why can't I break these patterns? Why are my symptoms so bad and so overwhelming?"

So for me it really was a journey in getting curious and wondering why so many of us universally are stuck. Why these this old format, this way of working isn't creating and giving these people the tools that I had been tasked with. Really began to understand that the big part of the story that was missing was the body that we're living in was all of the different messages that inflammation and dysregulation in our nervous system is sending to our mind that no amount of positive thinking was able to override that inherent dysregulation and trauma that lives in our bodies.

Dave:

So your own course of doing work on yourself in therapy showed you maybe it was lacking and that's what was your motivation?

Nicole:

So it was me seeing not only stuckness and inability to change in myself, but at this point seeing different clients that I would work with at that point in different populations having done inpatient work, having done outpatient work and seeing a universal stuckness. Again, now that I began to have language listening to other people talk about epigenetics and the nervous system and Dr. Steven Porges in particular Polyvagal theory, I started to now have new language again for why it was that were stuck, the point it is that were missing. So it was a little bit of my journey informed by the universal I think factors that were really uncovering these underlying more body-based somatic dysregulation or traumas essentially that are keeping most of us stuck well into adulthood.

Dave:

Is there an age when people generally get done with this stuff? Is there a bell curve like, "Oh, you're 55, 50% of 55 year olds are 80% done with all their traumatic crap?" Or do most people just carry it their whole lives?

Nicole:

We will bring with us and repeat the past with us until we become conscious of it to create change. We love to coast on that autopilot. It's calorically conservative for our very demanding human brain, the apparatus in and of itself. Also, it gives us a false sense of protection in the familiarity even if logically the years' worth of consequences that we've been suffering from the same pattern aren't serving us, it's predictable. We get to know what comes next. So we will coast in that autopilot in the comfort of those familiar habits and patterns until we're no longer here living this earth experience again because our brain prefers it. There's a safety and assumed safety at least in that familiarity. So until we become conscious and make new choices, which is where change happens, then in my opinion we will continue to repeat them. There's no kind of aging out of it just becomes who we are as we continue then to age.

Dave:

I feel like it might even get more stuck because there are new studies about neuronal structures over the decades and there's a lot more interconnectivity in younger people and as brains age, the connections get thicker and that's one of the sources of wisdom. But if you let them get sicker and they're full of trauma like, "Oh, look. I have ingrained trauma that you'd think would be harder to heal," but I've seen 70 and 80 year olds do the kind of transformational neurofeedback work at 40 years of Zen and it they did change overnight. So there's something going on, but I feel like it's easier to do the work in your twenties than it is to do the work in your sixties. Is that accurate or not?

Nicole:

Yeah, I would agree. I mean the neurons that fire together wire together the more we're relying on the same pattern. I mean there actually is some pruning then that happens. Though again, to speak to your point, we are neuroplastic, our minds and bodies can change until really whatever age. So there isn't as much as we like to phase out of healing and be done with it, we actually can create change at any time. So even if you are well into your decades and are seeing the remnants of these habits you've been carrying since childhood, it's never a too late curve either, which is I think really inspiring.

Dave:

It is really inspiring. I've seen people of all ages do profound healing very quickly, but it's always work. In my next book that's coming out in March of 2023, one of the big tens there is you're wired to be lazy. Your brain and your body do not want to do work with a capital or a lowercase W. Mother nature knows there could be a famine and if you waste energy then you might die. So let's just sit on the couch and eat those Hot Pockets. Don't why I'm talking about Hot Pockets one in 25 years, but they just make me laugh. So what do we do with all this stuff? We're inherently lazy. We inherently don't want to do the work and the work is scary and we're wired to avoid fear. It's the most important of all the F word even more important than the other more recreational F word. So how do you get someone who maybe is hearing this stuff to take the first step and what is the first step?

Nicole:

I'm having a giggle, Dave because I actually just had a conversation with my dad where he proclaimed, "I'm just lazy." I said-

Dave:

You should honor that.

Nicole:

I did. I said, "I honor that dad and I just want to ..." I've reframed that seeing a very similar pattern of avoiding discomfort in myself. So I said, "I hear your laziness." What I see in myself is, and that again, just to speak to this point, is a pattern of avoiding uncomfortable new things, challenging myself in new ways, experiencing new discomforts, making new choices are all going to challenge that preferred familiarity, that preferred comfort I should say in that familiarity.

So for a lot of us, again, while we do like to conserve and we might feel lazy, we like to avoid the discomfort of doing something new. So the way that I suggest we work with that is first and foremost to anticipate that new things will be uncomfortable, they'll be hard, they'll feel strenuous and they take a lot of effort that we just don't feel like our energy, that we just don't feel like we have or we don't want to expend and we can set ourselves up to work through. I call that a resistance. All of the reasons why we shouldn't do this new thing by making the new choices that we're making manageable.

Dave:

What percentage of people do you think have really early preverbal trauma that's part of their pattern?

Nicole:

I think most of us, trauma is a preverbal experience until we have the developmental maturity to narrate our life in a way that we gain access to mostly into our late teens, early twenties. Our brain is still developing up through our twenties. So most of what's happening, we don't have the cognitive or emotional maturity understanding to narrate. Just to share really quickly, while for me it wasn't a traumatic birth, actually my mother who was 42 years old when she discovered she was pregnant with me after having her own history of really deep-rooted health anxiety that was exacerbated not only when her father dropped out of a massive heart attack when my mom was in her early twenties, but when she had my sister who was 15 years older than me when I was born, who had a lot of chronic health issues in her own childhood.

So much so that my mom started to have morning symptoms of pregnancy with me. But she was 42 years old so she wouldn't have imagined that she was pregnant again after all of these years. This all was shared with me at her funeral last year where an aunt was telling a very funny story of how my mom finally spoke to her and asked her for advice because she thought she was suffering from stomach cancer. Lo and behold, to go and have a doctor's appointment to be told that, "No, that's not stomach cancer, that's a developing child inside of you." So thinking of that again, it might not even be what happened when we're being birthed though then that can be hugely traumatic. I think a lot of, "Oh my gosh, all of this anxiety my mom was sending to me a developing little human thinking I was a cancer that was going to actually be her demise." So for me-

Dave:

Huge trauma. Yeah.

Nicole:

Huge trauma, right. So I think about the imprint that had of no ill intention. She didn't even know I was going to be her little child inside of her when again, all of the cortisol, all of the stress, all of the worry was being sent to me without language, without the verbal ability to make sense of all of this. I likely had a very similar experience to you. A really deep rooted, existential right feelings of fear imprinted into my body by the time I was even born. A lot of trauma too, isn't of recall, we can't kind of pull up for me in particular, I noticed very early on that I lacked the memories that I would typically hear friends talk about of their childhood, of how Christmas was or this and that and that funny thing that happened and started to see a similar pattern when I would spend time with them not remembering certain things that were happening.

And I understand now a function of the nervous system dysregulation, the overwhelming environment, the too much cortisol consistently, my hippocampus. I was not present enough to form these memories to be able to recall them yet because I made the statement, I believe that all trauma is still imprinted in memory, in mind and body. So in real time, we can look and see how safe we feel now, how self-expressed we feel now or can we just ... Going back to the conversation around being versus doing right? Can we just be who we are in all context of our life, regardless of who we ... Do we feel fulfilled and connected to others in our relationships? Do we feel passionate and purposeful and motivated for a future that we feel like a participant in creating of? If we answer, "No," to all of that, then we can start right here and right now with where aren't we feeling fully self-expressed? Where is there maybe fear happening that's preventing us?

That then is the lived memory of what once happened. So even an absence of ... Again, I can hear, and I do think sometimes there isn't value in just rehashing, replaying the thing that happened, especially if we're only doing that from the story of our mind. If we're only narrating it unless we're dropping into our body and seeing and observing the dysregulation and then healing it by embodying a safe state, by doing some somatic work to create safety in that moment, then we're just narrating again with our mind, we're just replaying the memory or recalling and narrating the recall of the memory and we're not actually healing the memory of the trauma in our body. So we can start now observing any area in our life where we're not feeling fully connected to ourself or to others around us or to our purpose. Chances are again, there's a reason that we're not in self-expression there. That's probably fear-based the memory of the trauma that's still living in us now.

Dave:

If you were an evil corporation or politician, if you can even tell the difference between the two anymore, would you ... You're not supposed to laugh yet. If you were an evil politician or a corporation and you knew that people were walking around with a common set of traumas that made them easily programmable, how would you take advantage of it?

Nicole:

Oh, geez. I have never even thought of a take advantage of question. I think you would continue to understand that most of us are seeking outside of ourself some feeling of enoughness, of worthiness. I guess the way to take advantage of it is all the different ways that we see daily of all of the different products that were sold, ways to modify our change, who we are to seek that deep feeling of enoughness and really into infinity. We can create the thing that'll do it.

Ultimately, I think one of the reasons why we are spinning our wheels and we're amassing all of this stuff, or at least a lot of us are and we're not necessarily feeling whole and worthy again, is because we're seeking that surface level fulfillment for this deep rooted feeling that again, we didn't have or we didn't have the opportunity to create that feeling of enoughness just being who I am in that safe childhood. So there's many different ways we can exploit that by trying on the surface to generate a feeling that, again, in my opinion, can't come from things outside of us can only come from returning beautifully full circle to that whole being that we were born as.

Dave:

Do you find that when people work on their health, doing the work is easier versus when people are unhealthy doing the work?

Nicole:

I think when people find ... A word that kept popping up what I was hearing you talk to and or it has a concept and ideas, safety comes from within, just like any emotion, right? It's a self-generated space to be. So the sooner, the quicker, as we begin to establish, let me put it that way, whatever timeline it might be, safety within us, what we're really looking to do is not put the walls up, create the padded room environment where there's never a stressful experience. That's quite honestly in my opinion, that's impossible. The goal is to learn how to safely navigate any experience or find our way as quickly as possible to safety regardless of what's happening around us. It's finding that safety within. As we begin to rebuild that regulation in our nervous system, rebuild our connection to our bodies so that we make sure that it's literally getting its basic needs met so that we can navigate a stressful, changing stressful world.



Then we find that safety within and then whether or not healing gets easier, we feel more empowered because we feel more able to tolerate and cope with stress. That is our goal. We're never going to be living in a padded room and an environment where things are stress free or emotions don't happen. We need to cultivate the ability to confidently create safety regardless of what's happening around us. So does healing get easier? We get more confident in it as we learn how to tolerate more and more discomfort, more and more emotions and literally more and more of the life that will always be happening around us. That's again why I believe it. My mission mainly is to not advocate for a protected world around us. Cause I don't think that's possible to advocate, to teach people how to protect themselves by learning their limits, by finding their way to safety and by changing the environments that they can change by changing the choices that they're making,

Dave:

"Changing the environment around you." Yeah, I like that. That's definitely in that biohacking definition. That's why this is part of our conversation today. Another question for you. You talk a lot about safety, but quite often when I ask you a question you lead with, "In my opinion," why are you doing that?

Nicole:

It's funny, you picked up on that. For a very long time, I wouldn't state any of my opinions at all. I would try to speak what I thought was objective science and data and never really share kind of what I subjectively viewed it to be. So for me, I think part of it is in ownership of my thoughts, my ideas on a stance and acknowledging that there's multiple different perspectives, opinions, science data points out there depending on who's funding the study. Of course everything I'm sure is kind of somewhat known at knowledge. So for me, interestingly, I think it's a little bit of a personal part of my healing journey of an ownership that I can have my ideas and I'm allowed to share what my thoughts are and make space for someone to be in disagreements who think otherwise to out doubt, right? Call me kind of as someone or not agree with what I'm saying in whatever context that it is. Okay. So I think the bit personal and also I think it honors again the subjectivity that I believe even paints a lot of our science world.

Dave:

So knowing when and how to objectively say something versus to qualify it is I think something that all leaders in fields can pay a lot of attention to. So I like it that you're super conscious about how you're doing that because it made me think, so thank you for that.

Nicole:

Yeah, it's funny you were thinking that too. I was wondering, I was like, "Well, is there a testament? Of course stress." I was like, "Okay, my hard line is stress is bad for you to really simplify." But then as soon as I thought that, I thought, "But wait a minute, no, it's not right. Stress is important for you to develop." So then I even kind of backed myself in a corner where I'm like even the most intuitive thing I thought I could make the proclamation about, I argued away because we do need a certain amount of stress to learn how to tolerate it and to evolve and change, so.

Dave:

We do. So I'm with you there. Absolute statements are oftentimes wrong because there's one little point where it's not true. Then when we start believing absolutes, because we're intellectually lazy, and I don't mean intellectually lazy because of consciousness. I mean our brain is wired to do the easy

thinking and the easy thinking is if something is bad, you should have none of it. If something is good, you should have more of it. That's not how it works, but that's what we think and then we believe it because our brain is like, "Look how many electrons I save it with that shortcut." So that's the basis of it. So how would someone who's afraid of claiming their voice work on that, especially in the context of your book doing the work. What's the work you do to claim your voice?

Nicole:

First, acknowledge all of the different moments and it might be quite pervasive where you are not. So the reason why it's even in action, and I was so able to answer your question so emphatically, knowing what it was for me was because I discovered how watered down I allowed my voice to be. How I always had this little veter in my mind that was like, "Oh wait a minute, play this tape forward. How will this sound to this person? What might they do with what you say? How will they interpret it? How will it make them feel? If I had any indication that it would give them a unpleasant experience or belief about me, I would not say it." So the first step is noticing how often that voice is present. Chances are, whether or not, and I agree with you, sometimes it's gender or cultural.

We have all of this different direct and indirect messaging that again either creates that safe space where our ideas, whatever they might be, how crazy off the wall or our feelings, we can express them and be what they will. Or again, was it not as safe? Did we learn to suppress or to repress certain aspects of our natural curiosities, ideas, thoughts, feelings, or way of being. So the way is to first become conscious of noticing all of the different relationships, context, instances, moments, particular areas that are hard for you to be honest about. Then to create space over time to practice. First of all, we can explore maybe what the fear is. Usually we're fearing a loss of connection with this other person, a feeling of safety that goes away. If I'm interested in this relationship, I love this person. I could fear what they will think of me if I share this vulnerable piece of myself.

Then of course we have to do the hard thing, find our safe spaces if it's not that relationship that we feel comfortable sharing this aspect of our life in one of the major reasons I went online was to find a community of like-minded people who were starting to think about these things and have these tougher, more vulnerable conversations. So first, exploring how much censoring that we're doing. What are all of the moments that we're not saying what we really mean? Do we have awareness of what it is that we're afraid of? Can we do the hard thing and begin to speak our truth? Just like me again, going online was an action.

Creating this account, the holistic psychologist was an action and having a platform for my story, just like me saying, "In my opinion," is those little moments where I'm claiming my voice because my voice does matter and I don't have to water it down. I can be aware of the misunderstanding, the misinterpretation, how someone might receive what I'm saying and the impact it might have on them, hopefully positive. But I don't have to let that limit me as I once did.

Dave:

So you're talking about claiming your voice. Is there a difference in doing the work for men versus women?

Nicole:

I often go back to energy. What I believe makes us our essence at our core and we each have a different degree of masculine versus feminine energy regardless of the gender that we identify with. So in terms of healing, then what I believe healing entails, again bringing this full circle is going back to that wholeness. So it looks the same of course. I think depending on the gender that we are conditioned

around and how then we live in that, there might be areas that we want to turn up or give more light too, and areas that we can turn down or as we're healing, giving more space to different emotions, learning how to maybe if we're a woman who is a people pleaser, can't advocate for ourself, we might want to turn our voice up. If we're a man who's struggling, who's really great at turning our voice up, but we can't really turn inward and kind of connect with those more vulnerable emotions and the work will look different.

But I think if we're really just talking about we're turning to our wholeness and the steps are ultimately the same because again, in my opinion, we all exist on that spectrum. We might be more predominantly identifying with feminine energy, though there is still some masculine energy that makes us into that whole being. I think energy is in an infinite spectrum. I mean we're talking I think in the traditional way that gender is spoke about and we're minimizing into this dichotomy. But I don't think it is. I think it goes in directions that we can't even see with our human physical eyes. I think that everything is among dimensions that we might not even yet have language for.

Dave:

Oh, yeah. I see what you're saying there, right. Yeah, there's all kinds of other chakras and dimensional and-

Nicole:

Right. So we're limiting by the language. I think that though, I do think it can also then be limiting, which is why, again, at our core, returning to us using ourself for guidance, then we can be directed on which version of the journey, what we need to allow more space for, create safety so that we can express. That's when again, it gets really individualized, the different journeys that each of us are going to be on. We can ground it all with first becoming conscious of the vessel that we're in, the body that we're in, the feelings that we're living and the habits that many of us are identifying with so that we can create space for different choices.

Dave:

Okay. So at 40 years of Zen people do ... This is my neuroscience based personal development program, Five days intense work. People do a lot of work on childhood trauma and other things like that because just dropping the reactivity to that increases your performance so much mentally because the amount of free energy goes up. But people run into two kinds of trauma that I think are real. I want you to tell me your opinion on these. One of them is what I'm going to call ancestral trauma, which is, I don't know. It's in your peoples history, right? Maybe it was in your family or certainly in your people.

The most common is Jewish where there's a lot of trauma for thousands of years and you can have lots of other groups or families where that seems to happen. Then the other one that gets even more weird is people have profound, and I've had lots of these myself, just profound memories of being in a different body and speaking a different language and just whole past life things. You heal that trauma using certain trauma healing techniques and magically life gets better. I don't really know what to make of that. So let's ask you the hard question. So lineage trauma and past life trauma.

Nicole:

So lineage trauma, we'll start there because I think that's the most that can be kind of understood in terms of the epigenetics, the transmission of, and absolutely I think that it comes in our cells and mainly the way we tolerate stress in our HPA axis with the more stress that's happened over generations, even if again, we're not in close proximity, could be generations upon generations before. It's all being

translated again into this now developing fetus and their ability to tolerate stress in their environment and so on and so forth. Again, we see that in a lot of different cultures and populations where it's wired into us. So yes, we're born again with a dysregulation in our ability to tolerate stress. Of course. I'm really simplifying it though, in my opinion at least because we are neuroplastic, we can become aware of that and begin to create change and do that deep healing that in my opinion could then change the trajectory of the future generations to come and complicating, I think this journey a bit more with I think question of, well, where does this begin, right?

If we're passing on and we're kind of interconnected to all of these previous generations, is there the actual lived experience of a whole life that we've lived at a different time? I think it's really, really interesting to think about that. I believe if we really ground ourselves in the definition of what we are being on a more energetic spectrum, which I'm very much a believer of in terms of the quantum world, quantum science, energy that neither is created nor destroyed, then I think we can make a really compelling case that our unique vibrational energetic footprint could have had a physical existence in a previous time that can then complete with memories of that time where we can have the vision of clearly a time in society that isn't the now. Again, the science part of me likes to map it onto the evidence, if you will. Again, I think if at least I like to engage the science of the quantum world and energetics and I can make a case where I could see that being plausible.

Dave:

It's one of those things where I don't go looking for it, but if it comes up and it feels traumatic, you should just go ahead and heal it. Certainly in my own life, I've had some really strong things like, "Wow, that seems to be affected to me. All right, let's deal with that and some stuff that I don't think I could explain any other way," so I'm open to it, but not purely focused on it. I think people get really, really hooked on that stuff. That's super helpful. Now in "How to Meet Yourself," which is your new book by the way, [howtomeetyourself.com](http://howtomeetyourself.com) is the URL for it. Congratulations on getting a good one. What happens when someone meets themselves using the process that you have here? What do you get out of that?

Nicole:

You get interestingly, again, kind of a full circle moment is you get the opportunity to reconnect with who you really are, what you want, what's of interest, your passion, your purpose, and you get the opportunity to become and live into and upgrade its existence. I very intentionally, while the workbook is called, "How to Meet Yourself" with this idea, this emphasis on meeting the authentic self. That's what I'm referencing. Even the title of that, I very intentionally divided it into three separate sections, almost a sequential journey of pulling back those layers where we begin in the body, in the human vessel, and all the different dysregulation that we've been talking about in terms of our nervous system, peeling back the next layer of all of the inner child wounding that we're bringing in our ego that was created, this idea of who we are, repeat it in our habits and patterns, peeling back that layer to then meet who we are.

I very intentionally put it at the end, even knowing that most people that pick up the workbook want, they just want those tools. They want to flip forward to chapter, to chapter, to section three and start there. But it truly is an unfolding or appealing back of separating away all that we aren't to then have access to all that we are. Then we do become reconnected to that space of intuition, of inner guidance, that ability to drop in and gain that direction and identify what is of interest to us, what our ultimate passion and purpose will be, and how we feel the most us allowing us to just be who we are.

Then when we meet that space, in my opinion, we have the opportunity to show up vulnerably as that being. In my opinion, when we're living in what I kind of define as that coherent state of oneness, of interconnection, of ability to determine what I really want and go live in action of that, when we're in that coherence, then we can translate that coherence to our groups, our families, and our communities. So, I believe that it's like a domino effect that the world quite literally begins to change as we find ourselves reconnect with ourselves, I should say and live in that it really does send out those signals of safety to others, creating an incredible ripple effect.

Dave:

Wow. That's why this is a worthy book, to be honest. I think this is the hardest thing to write about, even probably harder than writing about forgiveness or something like that because almost every concept you're talking about is a feeling. We don't really have words for feelings that mean the same thing to the same people. So you can say, "I hate that thing," which is something I make a practice of not hating anything or saying that I hate anything. But you could say that. But your definition of hate might be very different than the person next to you. The same thing with, "I love that and no," We energetically electrically, if you read the brainwaves, these are not the same states. So our whole communication is so muddled and then you're writing a book about a practice to let you go in on all this. It's kind of a mind bending idea even to try and do that. So congratulations on achieving that because it's not easy. Not at all. But I think you did it.

Nicole:

Thank you. That really, really means a lot. It was funny enough, a running joke in my family for a very long time, which was validated in my decision to go to school forever to become a psychologist. My dad would always tease me and say, "No, Nicole, I think you just really want to be a lifetime student. Are you ever going to get out of school?" I would laugh it away, and now I'm really understanding so much truth in that and how much I enjoy. My passion, my purpose wasn't to be the therapist in the room I thought it once was. It was actually to think about and think about teaching and understanding first these concepts so that I can then communicate them understanding that there is no one universal way that we all understand something. Though, again, going back full circle, that a lot of the concepts that I am writing about and talk about daily are not new.

They've been passed on through generation and generation though I think for a lot of us, they haven't been part of an understandable dialogue or communication style to allow us to do anything with it. So hearing that, and one of, like I said, my passions now is to think of concepts in that way and to continue to work to hone my craft of communicating them so that people can take some understanding and actually actualize a game plan of action. So hearing that, that has translated for you, so excited for this workbook to live in the world on December 6th to see how and the impact that it makes for others is why I do what I do. So thank you for sharing.

Dave:

Thank you for being on the Human Upgrade Podcast. Guys, just go to the [holisticpsychologist.com](http://holisticpsychologist.com). If you want to learn more about Nicole's work, it's really cool stuff. She's not afraid to say her opinion on her Instagram and things like that as well. So someone who's in the world of biohacking and in the world of giving you more control of your biology and making it less programmable. That's why you might want to read the book. I will see you all on the next episode. If you're not following the Human Upgrade podcast on Instagram, that's where I post all the clips and stuff. Some of them make it to my main page, but not all of them. So follow me and follow that, follow Nicole, and put your algorithmic training of those

algorithms into showing you stuff that matters instead of boobs and butts. Because well, Instagram's going to show you that whether you ask for it or not. I'll see you all soon.