

## Episode Transcript

### **TAOLC EP: 016 - Harnessing the Power of Two of my Favourite Self Improvement Books**

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Welcome to the art of living consciously podcast, a show designed for out of the box thinkers and mindset shifters, who are looking for new ways to evolve. This is an intimate container designed to uplift, inspire, and motivate you on your own growth journey. I'm your host, Dannie Reeve. As a certified BNE or Bioneuroemotion practitioner, I empower men and women to turn their conflicts into stepping stones for growth. Because when you question your own beliefs and perceptions, and take responsibility for your life, everything else follows. If you ask me, Earth is a place where souls are sent to evolve, and in this podcast, we will discuss the best tools for our evolution

Hello, my flawsome friends, welcome to episode 16. Today, I want to do something a little special to celebrate books. Because on the 23rd of April, we just celebrated World Book Day, I don't know if you knew that was a thing. But it was created in 1995 by UNESCO to promote reading, publishing and copyright. And reading is such a great thing. Books are treasures. And I know a lot of you listening to this podcast are bookworms like me. I know that because some of you reach out and share with me the books that you're reading, and the ones that I recommended on this podcast. And I know a lot of you are harnessing the power of books, in order to change and to evolve, because books do have that potential, they have that potential to spark something in you and to make you think differently, to move you into action. And I say potential, because the book in itself is not what's going to move you into action, what's going to move you into action is what you decide to do with the knowledge that you've acquired. As the great brain coach, Jim Kwick says: knowledge is not power, its potential power, it only becomes power when you use it. You can read all the books in the world, learn about all the theories in the world, and still be stuck. Because unless you put that theory to use and experience it, which is another level of learning, your level of understanding will be superficial, it will only be intellectual, I like to see things that way as well, for my clients, when they come for a session, I can take them as far as I can, I can show them a different perspective. But unless they try it on for themselves and start implementing what they have learned, they will just stay at the level of knowledge. And experience is what makes the difference. So if you think about reading a book, it's the same thing.

I will have different takeaways. When reading a book that you may have, I will pay attention to different things that you will pay attention to. And depending on what phase of my life I am at, I will also pay different attention and highlight different things from that book. Have you ever read a book once, and then years later, read it again and thought oh my god, like it's like I'm reading a different book? The book hasn't changed, but you have and so the lessons you're going to take away from it are going to be very different.

So with that in mind, my intention is not to give you a full review or summary of the books, but rather to share with you my experience of them. My takeaways and life lessons, and hopefully that will inspire your own journey. And if you haven't read those books, and want to

read them or if you have and have a different perspective. Please share that with me. I would love to know what your takeaways were. I have a small community on Instagram: it's @theartoflivingconsciously. And you're always welcome to share your impressions in a DM or even to interact with the other bookworms and lovers in that small community. So let's talk about books and experience.

First book I'm going to talk about is, 4000 weeks time management for mortals by Oliver Berkman. I first heard of this book on a podcast, and I believe the guest on this podcast was Matthew Hussey. He mentioned this book in the context of commitment. And it was a moment in my life where I was really becoming very, very aware of my commitment issues and wanting to do something about it. And so the way this book was presented was very appealing to me. And I believe that the right books come at the right moment. Basically, the idea behind this book is that as human beings, on average, we have 4000 weeks life expectancy. And when you put it in those terms, it sounds really short. What Oliver Burkeman says is that being aware of your mortality in that way, and how short your life is, is a blessing in disguise, because it makes you focus and prioritise the right things, the things that you really want, in order to lead a fulfilling life, the idea to get clear on the fact that it's impossible to do everything in life. For example, say that you want to become a really successful sports person, chances are that you're going to have to spend a lot of time training. And that means that you won't be able to become an astronaut. The idea is that committing to something that you want unavoidably means that you are going to have to say no to other options. He puts it this way, "the real measure of any time management technique is whether or not it helps you neglect the right things."

A lot of us go about our lives, as if we were immortal, as if it was never going to end. And so we end up prioritising irrelevant things, things that don't really matter to us that much. We even make choices that take us further away from what we really want to commit to. So my question to you is, if you knew that you only had one month to live, what would you prioritise? What would you make room and time for? Would you spend as much time at work? Or would you maybe spend it more with your family? Friends? Would you keep putting off that project that you really, really want to start? No, you wouldn't, you'd go and do those things, because you would be aware of the finite time ahead of you. Now I have an uncomfortable truth for you. There is a finite time for you on this planet, we are all going to die. And it's really important to remind ourselves of that, periodically.

I used to avoid thinking of death. And now I really make a point of trying to think about it more, because it helps me to make conscious decisions. Now I'm not saying it was always the case. I'm not saying that I never forget about it, because I do. But this book was a really big wake up call for me. It is one of the reasons as well, I believe that I started this podcast. And that I also decided to prioritise dating and going out and meeting people. Because lockdown has put a lot of us in a limbo of time as well. And I think a lot of us have, in a sense, realised through lockdown how precious time is and how it is important that we manage it on our own terms. If you live your life, according to Einstein Time, you create your time and you create your time through what you choose to prioritise in your life.

I am going to read you a few of the questions that Oliver Berkman asks in his book that really resonated for me, and hopefully, they'll help you as well, to start to prioritise the right things for yourself. "Where in your life or work, are you currently pursuing comfort, when

what is called for is a little discomfort? Committing to something means taking the risk that it might fail. So we naturally tend to make decisions that prioritise anxiety avoidance, procrastination, distraction, commitment, avoidance, taking on too many projects at once are all ways to maintain the illusion that you are in charge of things. So is compulsively worrying. Ask yourself, Does this choice diminish me? Stunt my growth, Or, enlarge me? Allow me to grow, choose uncomfortable enlargement over comfortable diminishment, whenever you can." Again, is the idea that in order to live a rich life, you need to take bold decisions. And that means committing to something enough that you are prepared to fail and to take the steps in order to move forward. And that means saying no to other things.

It also means living the life that you want to live, not the life that society, your parents or whoever wants you to live. It's taking responsibility for those choices. Because at the end of the day, you have 4000 weeks, so you don't have the time to lead the life that other people think is better for you. So bottom line, knowing that you're going to die is a great thing. It helps you manage your time better. Those were my main highlights of the book. But obviously, there's much more to it. It's really well written, it's witty, it's funny, and it's a refreshing perspective. It's not so much about time management, but about living a full and rich life. It's really about living fully in the present. As he says, mortality makes it impossible to ignore the absurdity of living solely for the future.

Now moving on, but still in the same line of living your life on your own terms. And making the most out of it. It's a different genre. It's more serious, it deals with family dysfunction, and emotional adulthood. I know this will speak to a lot of you because one of my most listened to episodes is the one on emotions, and also the one on people pleasing. People pleasing is a mechanism that is often rooted in childhood. And family dysfunction. The book is called adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents: How to heal from distant rejecting or self involved parents, by Lindsay Gibson. Now, this is not a book about blame. It's an extremely compassionate book. But it's also very self validating. And it helps you and gives you the tools to deal with emotionally immature interactions in a mature way. It's basically a book that will help you to re-parent yourself.

What I like about this book is that the author addresses different kinds of dysfunctions, and places them under the same umbrella term, which is emotional immaturity. So it caters to people from very different backgrounds who could have gone through more serious abuse, or maybe had parents who did give them everything they needed, but we're not present for them emotionally, in one shape or form, either because they had their own problems or because they couldn't deal with their children's emotions. So it helps you to understand yourself better to validate the way you might have felt. But also to be more compassionate, and understanding of the circumstances your parents were in maybe and how all of this came about.

I read this book, as I was going through a lot of transformation, I was doing this very in depth course, that brought up a lot of trauma for me. And so I was actually specifically looking for books on trauma. And I was drawn to a Booklist on a website by Shelena Aiyana. She is the creator of rising women and has done a lot of work on conscious relationships. I really like her work. She has a blog post called seven books for healing trauma, and recovering from a painful past. If you Google it, you will find the blog post. I will also put it in the show notes because it's a very good list of books. Out of all the books. And from the ones that hadn't

read. This is the one that stood out most for me. So I trusted my intuition and decided to get it. If I'm being honest, though, I almost returned the book because it was very triggering for me. So my mind was like this is BS. What is this anyway, and I was just really annoyed by her always saying emotionally immature, emotionally immature. And then I realised that was a trigger point for me, and that I needed to continue reading. I'm glad I did, because it has been one of the most transformational books that I have read in the last few years. And it was so pivotal for me because I did implement her advice. And it helped me to actually face situations that I was going through in my life at that point. The reason I'm saying this is that a lot of the times books that you most resist reading, or that most trigger you are actually the books that are right for you. Again, it's your mind trying to protect you from going into the unknown, and emotional maturity is allowing yourself to see beyond that, in a way it's you re-parenting yourself.

Now here are my takeaways. First she goes through kind of helping you to see what emotional immaturity looks like in a family setting. One of my realisations was as an adult I recognised a lot of these traits in me, and obviously that would make sense, right? Because that's what I was taught. And there's nothing right or wrong about that is just what it is. However, it did help me to understand how I react and to validate as well, some of the feelings that I didn't really understand about myself and where that was coming from, it also gave me the tools to start changing that, which for me was the biggest takeaway of this book. What the book does is that it helps you assess certain levels of immaturity. And let's face it, we all have certain levels of immaturity within us.

And then it will help you to see the different coping mechanisms that can arise from growing up in a certain setting. She basically refers to two types of coping mechanisms externalizers, who would tend to externalise or put all the problems outside of them, and then internalizers, who would do the opposite, think that all the problems are inside of them, and that they are solely responsible for so solving them. Now, I'm not going to go into all those details here. If you are interested, please go and get yourself a copy of the book. I am going to, however, talk about some of the takeaways for me in learning how to deal with emotionally immature interactions, and therefore to become more emotionally mature myself. As you see, we teach what we most need to learn. And this is a journey that we are all on, there's always layers that you can peel and continue to improve. I'd say it's part of knowing how to use your 4000 weeks wisely.

What was made very clear for me in this book was that the role that you tend to adopt as a child will stay with you. And you tend to interact with the people in your family, your close family members from that role that you took on, you will also take on the same role with other people in your life, because you will be reenacting the way that you acted as a child. If you listen to my people pleasing episode, you will know that when you are pleasing somebody you're trying to get them to like you, you're trying to get them to pay attention to you. And that can come from a place of needing that from one of your caretakers. And the tools that Lindsay Gibson gives you enable you to start to establish an adult relationship with those people, and not act from that place of needing the approval or for them to agree with you. Or like you. Particularly she's teaching you not to be the little girl or the little boy who has been triggered by a certain behaviour. But to step beyond that.

The first thing you need to do is to change your expectations about the other person is not about changing them or getting them to behave in a certain way, but about relating to them in a different, more mature way. In order to do that you need to focus on managing the situation rather than engaging emotionally. So your goal is to observe what is happening in a detached way, in order to be as calm and objective as possible. Think of it as if you were observing the interaction as if you were a scientist or a detective. And that includes observing your own reactions and being able to recognise when you're feeling needy, or angry or vulnerable. And just taking steps to detach, detach, detach, you can also repeat that mantra in your head and concentrate on your breath, or on the physical sensations that you're feeling. As well as observing from a sensory level, whatever is happening in the room, how the person is sitting, what temperature it is, just everything that will enable you to be in the now and be detached. And if at any point you feel yourself becoming too overwhelmed and you need some emotional distance, you can always use an excuse to go to the bathroom or pet a pet or go for a walk. Whatever, you can always come back to the situation.

Second, focus on the outcome rather than the relationship. It's to say you're not trying to get the other person as I said, to react or behave the way that you want them to. Instead, set yourself a goal and focus on the outcome. For example, instead of going into a conversation with the idea that you want your mom to apologise and see things from your perspective, you might focus on something along the lines of, I'm going to say what I want, even if my mom yells, the goal is for you to say what you want. That's the outcome that you're going to focus on. Other outcomes could be I express what I feel, even though I'm nervous, or I tell my parents that I'm not coming home for Christmas, or I ask my dad to speak nicely to my children, or I'm going to ask my sister when she can pay me back the money I lent her last year. These are all achievable goals, because you can ask people to listen, even though you can't make them understand or agree with you. You can express what you need and what you feel. And you can ask for what you want. You don't have control on how they're going to react. But you do have control on how you manage the situation. This is how Lindsay Gibson puts it, "focus on the outcome not on improving the relationship or expecting a change of heart or understanding. If you focus on the outcome, you are more likely to contact the adult inside of the person you are interacting with." Now there is a lot of sound advice in this book. And she offers very practical tools, which is also why it is one of the books I chose to talk about today. Do you feel the call to read it? Listen to your intuition and get yourself a copy.

I had planned to mention a few more books. But I shall leave that for another episode. I do have a reading list on my website. I shall put that in the show notes. And you can go and have a look at it. I like how today's reading themes complemented each other in a way. One was about managing your time better. And the other one was about managing your relationships better. Addressing both those things in a more mature and evolved way will help you to live a more fulfilling and rich life and it is my desire for you that you continue to evolve. And remember that books are tools for that evolution. But the magic doesn't happen in the book. Magic happens in your life when you apply an experience, whatever you have learned.

And there you have it for today's episode. To find out more about what I do and how I can best serve you, head over to [www.danniereeve.com](http://www.danniereeve.com) Meanwhile, why not hit that subscribe button so you can be notified When the latest episode drops in, I promise the journey will be

worth it. Thank you so much for listening. I truly appreciate you and I wish you a flawsome day that is flawed and awesome just the way we like it.