



LESSONS FROM LONDON

EP #60

“Do I need a life coach?” You’re listening to Episode 60, with Rhiannon Bush

Welcome to the Do I need a life coach? Podcast. We’re here to discuss the ins-and outs- of the life coaching industry and give you tools to use, to see for yourself. I’m your host, Rhiannon Bush. Mother, management consultant and a passionate, certified life coach.

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I love the English. I was fortunate enough to live there for two years in my mid-20s and I gained such beautiful lessons. Lessons I never would’ve comprehended had it not been for my time living there.

Before I got on the ridiculously long flight that it is from Tassie to London, I was told two things. The first, people told me ‘oh watch out for the whinging Poms’. The second thing they told me was that I’d get SAD. S. A. D. Seasonal Affective Disorder. Yep, it’s an actual thing because you can Google it. It’s where the weather affects your mood. And for anyone who doesn’t know, England is cold, dark (early and late in the winter) and it can be bleak and grey for months at a time. Sounds like a great time hey?! Oh but it was. It truly was and I’m about to tell you why.

This episode is a tribute to my love for England and the English people.

The first lesson. Stoicism.

- **We’ve seen it on TV recently – royalty and influential people sitting in uncomfortable pews for hours for coronations, for state funerals, for special events. Suck it up.**
- **Standing for a long period of time in high heels. Suck it up.**
- **Bad weather, stick a coat and wellies on and suck it up.**

The English don’t whinge. Actually, in my experience, they have incredible tenacity and instead of advertising it, they just carry on, hence all the paraphernalia with “keep calm and carry on”, because that’s what they do. They have a strength... an inner resolve... to get through it and get out the other side of it as quickly and without fuss as possible. Stoicism.

There’s a book called The Daily Stoic and the author - Ryan Holiday is also on YouTube. I haven’t dived down that rabbit hole but I’ve heard good things depending on how you like to receive your information. Maybe check it out?

Lesson two. Emotional fortitude.

Now... this is an interesting one because I’m all about expressing emotions. It’s natural, it’s healthy and if we don’t express these emotions, we end up becoming a pent-up ball of angst that ends up misfiring off in any and every direction. Needless to say, it’s not good. Have you experienced that? Where you snap at





your bestie for no apparent reason? Or blow up at someone over the tiniest little thing? Yep. That's what I mean.

You lack the control to stop yourself in those finite moments and then it's too late, and it's because something's been brewing for a while – hormones (yes, men you too), other stressful events, little annoyances that build up to bigger things or have a bigger impact than you originally thought, ongoing things that have been upsetting you... and then BAM! You take it out on the wrong person. This isn't a judgement, we've all been there and there's no use in giving ourselves a difficult time about it. It is important to recognise when we do it and do our best to not do it again. Because the people around us don't deserve it, and we don't deserve it when they do it to us either.

So anyway, the English pick their moments. The Royal Family at Queen Elizabeth the 2nd's funeral. Nobody cried. Even with the bagpipes. Nobody cried. Even with the angelic acapella choir hitting those really high notes, nobody cried. But do you think they would've been upset? Well I'd like to think so. I'm sure they cried.

But they had their moments in private, or where and when appropriate to process, to grieve, and to begin to heal or at least move forward in the meantime. The point is, there's a time and a place to have deeply emotional moments. These moments are not when they detract from other focal points. Nor should they be used to divert attention back to yourself when you shouldn't be the centre of attention.

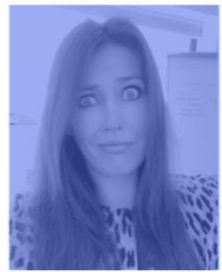
Lesson three. Nobody cares.

The tough lesson. So tough. I was a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed mid-20 something girl in a whole new country ready to make her mark on the world when I left Sydney for London. And in England, the Aussie's version of 'how's it going?' is 'you alright?'. So I'd walk past people in the office I was lucky enough to work in and people would nod their head and say 'you alright?' when walking past me, and I would stop and start diving into how I was really feeling only to have them continue walking right past me.

It took a long time for me to understand that that was their version of 'how's it going?' or 'how are you?' in Aussie speak. The difference is that when in Australia we ask 'how's it going?' or 'how are you?' it's a token gesture. An ice-breaker. A way of greeting somebody. In Australia, when we ask 'you alright' it's a much deeper intended question. It's not surface-level and superficial. That was a big point of confusion that took me a while to grasp and I remember the exact moment and exactly where I was standing when I got that lesson.

I had this lesson twice in different ways and remember the exact moment and place I was when I got it the second time. I felt like I was carrying a lot of baggage when I got to England. I was looking for a fresh start and somewhat running away from my problems. Multiple people asked me "where are you from?" and I said "Australia". They'd roll their eyes and say "obviously. Whereabouts in Australia" and I'd tell them. But if ever I started telling them more





than that, sharing a bit more of my story, I'd practically see them glaze over right in front of me.

They just didn't care. They had their own stuff to deal with and as quite an expressive person, if my eyes widened and I exhibited too much excitement or they thought I was going to get vulnerable they'd shut it down.

Now, while I don't believe this is a healthy thing and it was a major adjustment for me as someone who's content being emotional, it also created really strong boundaries and levels to friendships. Because it was clear where you stood with someone as to how much you shared. And there's a lot of power in that. When you withhold how you feel about things from people, then you show them as you choose to, on your terms, you're in complete control.

Again, I'm not sure if this is a healthy thing and since being in that environment, I know I prefer people who are as open with me as I am with them, because what I'm dealing with is real and honest opposed to restricted and controlled, but in professional environments there's definitely a place for that.

I've been in highly emotional workplaces where leadership have been open and honest about their feelings, and have been happy to support staff in the emotions they've been experiencing. It goes one of two ways and often it'll start one way and quickly cross over. The first thing that happens is that there's a safe space. People are happy to share and be honest and open. They feel that they can talk openly and express their feelings in the workplace. This creates a lovely culture full of friends and collaboration.

The second thing that happens in a highly open and emotional workplace is that there's excessive drama and toxicity. Superiors have shared too much of themselves, often with staff lower on the corporate hierarchy, and this creates a sense of favouritism or a power imbalance because the lower-level staff know too much and may use it as leverage. It gets messy, fast.

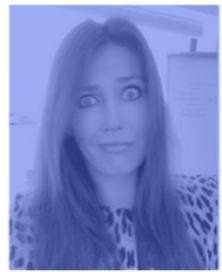
In the first type of work environment, I've seen it go from being a safe, open and inviting environment with great culture and a level of safety, to extremely volatile when the business needs to pivot or make different decisions for whatever reason, and the higher-ups have to begin cutting previously involved and included staff out. Again it goes from being positive to negative in the blink of an eye.

So what's the answer? Clear boundaries, confidential discussions and structured access to information. When you blur the boundaries of those 'in the know' everything becomes messy. To maintain professionalism amongst staff and to protect the business, people need to be trustworthy and trusted.

This is often the harder part. But in my experience, the English had clear boundaries around this. A clear delineation between what was ok to express in the workplace, and what was not.

Lesson four. Respect.





The English have a huge respect for hierarchy and protocol. I had to write letters to all our VIP guests invited to attend our tournament – complimentary everything, of course – and my boss looks at me and says “your generation just don’t know how to write”. I agree. We had to address the people by their titles, proper names and use appropriate language. The letters had to be written very traditionally and professionally.

It was a great lesson for me because I had no respect for that at all until I had to do it. And the reason I think it’s great is because it was different and it definitely forced me to write differently which changed my perspective and the way I felt about it. It was challenging and it made me question tradition – not only what it was but the validity of it.

At the end of the day does it really matter? I’d say no. But is it nice? Yes.

It’s also good to have clear expectations and an understanding of this is how it is. In those situations, you can do some inner soul-searching and discover how you feel about it, why that is and whether you agree or accept it, or not. And if not, what would you do differently or change within yourself, because you can’t change the constructs with which you’re working in.

Lesson five. Class and hierarchy.

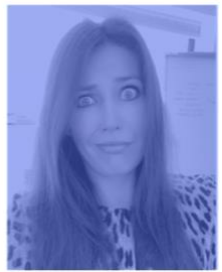
I was watching a TV show with Liz Hurley called The Royals. I loved it. And as her character, she makes a statement saying something like people need hierarchy, or that we are a hierarchial species and we love it. Something like that.

I remember it because it shocked me. I’d never thought of us that way but given most of our innate attraction to drama – villains and heroes, which plays out in almost every movie, TV show, stage show, story we know, I believe it to be true. Even my chickens are hierarchial. The biggest is the meanest and strongest, and the smallest one has a really pecked neck because they pick on her to keep her in line. It’s pretty awful actually, but the three of them eat enough and look after each other to survive. But that is within a hierarchy.

I was only thinking the other day how back in the day, whenever the ‘monarchy’ was born, how self-centred and egotistical that first monarch must have been to make others bow and refer to them as “your majesty” or “your highness” and create parades. I mean can you imagine? Commanding respect to keep people in line and to keep your power and status and control. Interesting.

But my time in England showed me that the class system still very much exists. And that it’s protected. We are hierarchical and there is an order to our society and for people to break out of their current socioeconomic or psychographic ‘band’ let’s call it, takes a combination of focus, consistency, will power, exposure and sometimes luck. It can be done, but to do it, you’ll





be fighting whole institutions and constructs designed to keep everybody exactly where they were born into.

Is it right? No. Is it fair? Absolutely not. Can you? Of course.

You can achieve anything. Anything. The exact life you choose. And that's why it's important to know the kind of life you want to live and to go after it. To enjoy it while you create it, not just when you arrive there.

What do you want? What lessons have you learned along the way that you need to remind yourself of, or that you may need to unlearn?

We have more opportunity available to us than ever before. We have people who've suffered and fought so we can succeed them and maximise the opportunities available to us because of their sacrifices. I think it was Mel Robbins who mentioned the chances of us being born is 1 in 400,000,000 or some ridiculous statistic. So by that, we are all miracles. Let's live like we're a miracle. And let's also not take it for granted.

I'll see you next week.

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Also, if there are any topics you'd like me to cover specifically about life coaching or the life coaching industry, visit rhiannonbush.com to contact me. Thanks for joining and I'll see you in the next episode of Do I Need A Life Coach?!

Please note, this transcription may not be exact.

