

Lisa: Welcome to Lisa Page LIVE Radio. Thank you so very much for being here. I'm Lisa Page, and here at Lisa Page LIVE we dive into intimate conversations about Wild Love (and I mean Love with a capital L....This big Love that lives and breathes us all), as well as *Embodied Awakening and Succulent Success*. Today my guest is Mirabai Starr. What an exquisite diving partner to be sharing a conversation with about her work, *Caravan of No Despair*.

Now, some of you may be like me - you may already be a lover of Mirabai's work. If you're new to her work then you're really in for a soul treat today. I first came across Mirabai's work many years ago when I read her exquisite translation of *Dark Night of the Soul*, and then it happened last year that our poetry was published in the same book, a book collated and edited by Andrew Harvey and J. Ramsay called [*Diamond Cutters: Visionary Poets of America, Britain and Oceana*](#).

I saw that Mirabai's poetry was in this book too and I started reading her work again. Then I came across her latest book, *Caravan of No Despair*. And really, that was I just knew I had to bring her on the show and share her with you. Reading *Caravan of No Despair*, I kid you not, totally broke me open in such a profound way. And if you haven't read it yet, you must, and I'll tell you why. My experience of *Caravan of No Despair* is that Mirabai doesn't just take you on her journey. She tells her story and it's in a way that is gritty and real and tender and courageous, but I didn't feel like I was just on her journey with her. I felt at the same time that I was journeying through my own story of love and loss and yearning and devotion and disappointment and hope and betrayal and agony and ecstasy and death and rebirth.

I really felt that her gift was to be able to write it in such a way that she could take me into the blood and bones of her own soul and of her beautiful daughter Jenny's soul, and of my own soul. And I felt that was such a gift and just speaking with others now who I know have read it, they felt the same.

Mirabai is an award-winning author and a translator of the Mystics, and she's a visionary teacher who really is passionate about the transformative power of loss and longing. And also the interconnectedness, this one wisdom, this one love, this one freedom that is at the core of all. To find out more about her work I want

to share her website straight upfront so that you've got it down if you haven't already. It's www.mirabaistarr.com.

And today, Mirabai and I are going to dive into what do you do when the dark night descends, and what it mean to hold your own feet to the fire in this sometimes messy place where spiritual practice and personal development and transfiguraion meet.

And we'll talk about your story, and when it matters and when to let it go. And how to experience both tragedy and triumph in your life as a way to embody this love you are, so that you can be remade by love, especially when all hope seems to be lost.

So welcome, Mirabai!

Mirabai: Thank you, Lisa, and thank you for that lovely introduction.

Lisa: My pleasure. Thank you so much for being here. I know that I shared with you a rather long email after I had read *Caravan of No Despair*. I only put it down to sleep, and that was because I started at five o'clock in the afternoon and at some point, I thought, Lisa, you've got to sleep...you've got to eat! And really, in all honesty, those are the only times that I put it down. It just felt like such a breaking-open that was not interruptable. So what I want to know first of all from you is - for someone who hasn't perhaps read *Caravan of No Despair* yet - if you were to share the essence of your memoir, how would you do that?

Mirabai: Well, you know, any good memoir revolves around a story. It's not like an autobiography where you just kind of follow the arc of your whole life. There's usually some kind of pivotal event that the memoir hangs on. And so even though this is a spiritual memoir, it's also a literary memoir. It's a story that's told with care and attention to language.

So the story is, in a nutshell, that the day that my first book came out, which happened to be a translation of *Dark Night of the Soul* by the sixteenth century Spanish Mystic, John of the Cross, and is very much a quintessential teaching on the transformational power of suffering, my fourteen year-old daughter, Jenny, was killed in a car accident.

So that literally these two events coincided. I had just had my first advance copy delivered to my door. You know, your first book, yay! But I was not really paying

any attention because the night before, Jenny had taken off in my car at age fourteen and disappeared and had been missing all night.

And this was the next day when the book arrived and I knew in my bones that it was bad, that she had not been found, and then half an hour after the book was delivered. I hadn't even opened it. My Mum opened the package because she was here with me. Everybody was gathered around the house waiting and trying to help. But half an hour later the police came to the door and told me that they had found her and she was gone. That she had died alone in the mountains - rolled the car. We live up in the mountains in northern New Mexico and she drove very fast down a mountain road.

So that's the way the story begins, and what it keeps circling back to. It's not just that it was my first book but that the teachings themselves of *The Dark Night of the Soul* by John of the Cross both irritated the hell out of me and saved my life as I tried to navigate that landscape of radical loss.

And of course, in telling that story I found, and see if you guys who are listening can relate, that that loss wasn't isolated. All the losses of my life came up. It's like they were all triggered by the loss of my daughter. And I've had a lot of deaths in my life, but nothing compared to the loss of my child. It was in a different universe.

Nevertheless, in attempting to tell the story of what I went through in plunging into my own dark night, I found that I had to refer to all of the other significant losses. So there were a lot of flashbacks to my crazy counter-culture childhood with early hippy parents and some other things, very bad behavior from a spiritual teacher, a self-appointed spiritual teacher, and so on. So, there's a lot of other stories within this story. How's that for a nutshell?

Lisa: Perfect! And I know that one of the workshops that you lead is teaching people how to write their story as a transformational journey. And I would imagine that the process of that writing takes them on an inner journey where they get to revisit, and explore of all the loss and the transformation that naturally happened through experiencing that.

The other thing I want to know, is for you, the writing of this, did you just wake up one day and say, "Okay, I've got to share this story"? Or, did you feel compelled

to or did you just so frikkin' NOT want to but you felt you had to? Do you know what I mean? How was it for you...?

Mirabai: Yes, yes. All of that!

Lisa: And how was that as a process and as an experience to actually write it?

Mirabai: Right. Yes, that's a beautiful question Lisa, because I had many books after *Dark Night of the Soul*, as you know, and most of my other books have been either translations of the Mystics - I translated Teresa of Avila, three books of Teresa of Avila, who was John of the Cross's mentor, his guru really. And then I did other books of other Christian mystics which was kind of ironic, and I talk about it in the book because I was born Jewish and then my background was Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi - everything but Christian!

But I did get on this train of the Christian mystics and it's been good. But this – *Caravan of No Despair* - was the first book really in my own voice. I had another book right before this one called *God of Love: A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, in which I had little vignettes of personal stories as they related specifically to the interconnected wisdom of the Abrahamic Faith. Because, as a woman, I find that personal stories are such a vital, vibrant, alive way to convey perennial wisdom teachings. I can't stand being preached at. When I open up a sort of self-help book or a book where somebody's mansplaining me, I just have no patience for it. But give me a juicy story and I'll listen to anything.

So anyway, it was time. It was time to speak in my own voice. I'd been kind of hiding behind these mystics. I mean, very happily so and with great attention to the beauty of language. It was a very creative, fertile 10 or 12 years. But I always knew, from the time that Jenny died and these two things came together, the book *The Dark Night of the Soul* and her death, that I had to tell the story eventually.

And I tried to write it a few times, actually, and it didn't work. It felt like a journal, like an anguished writer's journal. And there's nothing wrong with that, but what you said, Lisa, in your introduction was that somehow my story became your story, it became everyone's story, I hope. And that bridge between the personal and the universal couldn't happen until it was time. It had to ripen in me.

And I was finally asked to write this book, so I was compelled. Tami Simon, who founded the beautiful company Sounds True, who used to just do audio of spiritual teachers and now they do books, did an audio with me, actually did a podcast with me, and after that said, "You know what? This is a book, and I would love the chance to publish it if you're willing to let me take a look."

And so I'm someone who needs to be invited. All my books are invitations. And so I did. But here's the thing. I was writing about a transformational experience which was the stripping of my soul that happened when my daughter died, where I was just taken down. It was a deep descent and I was emptied. It was like a forest fire that swept through the landscape of my life and it all burned down to the ground.

So the transformation that I was writing about happened very gradually and very kind of organically or naturally. It wasn't like I had this big dramatic awakening.

Lisa: Epiphany?

Mirabai: Yes. It was more like *"I just showed up for the whole damned thing. I didn't turn away from it."* And little by little, that shattering became something else, you know, that phoenix that you allude to. But here's the other thing. So I wrote about a transformational experience, but the writing itself transformed me. I mean, I guess I should have expected that; I'd certainly heard about this phenomenon, and I've experienced it, that "writing can be a spiritual tool for really powerful transformation". But it really was. And just like with Jenny's death, I had to show up and I couldn't turn away from the hard stuff.

I had a friend in the very beginning tell me, "If you're going to write this memoir, you can't try to make yourself look good. Just forget about it. Be real, be authentic, be radically authentic. Be naked, be vulnerable, be funny - all these things that you are."

Lisa: Yes. Be you, right?

Mirabai: Exactly. And so by being authentic, by being me which is a little self-deprecating and a little humorous and a little irreverent and deeply devotional, I was able to be truly transformed by my experience of showing up for my story, because I didn't turn away. Just like I didn't turn away from Jenny's death and from my own unbearable suffering. I didn't turn away from the raw truth-telling as

you know, Lisa. And it seems to be that that's the alchemy; that's the transmutation of the lead into gold that made it acceptable to so many people.

Lisa: You know, something that I always return to is - Lisa, just stay in the deep waters - I'm paraphrasing, but basically, and I'll use the same language that you used in the book because when I read it, I thought Ooohh that is so true! ...That even as 'fucked up' as the situation was, (I LOVED that you were so raw in your description of that), that you somehow didn't turn away, that you just stayed with it.

That you just kept turning toward. You know, you just kept showing up. And it isn't a one step, two steps, three step process and you're free in it...Right? It's every moment that counts. It's almost like She-He, this Love, is asking you.... OK, and what about now? And what about now? And what about now? And can you stay with me now? Can you not close off, shut down, turn away? What about now can you stay open to Love?

But just as you said, you didn't turn away. You just showed up for the whole damn thing, which was, moment after moment after moment. And I think that anyone who's been through any tragedy of loss knows that you have these moments where you think it just cannot get any more excruciating than this. And then there are other moments that are less or more excruciating. *"And that your capacity to just stay with it, you know, just to show up, is exactly what is required. That's where the gold is"*. It really is.

And it's not easy, which is one of the things then that I'm called to ask you next, because you had spent an entire lifetime practising, in a sense, you know, spiritual practice. You're a bit like me, you have a background of pujas and practices and ashrams and meditation, right? And yet, when the moment comes, then what?

And so that's what I wanted to ask you. Because I just spent time with my father who, as you know, passed in November, and he never did any spiritual practice. And neither did all the people he was in care with, and my Dad had early-onset Alzheimer's. And there's something that gets stripped away with Alzheimer's and what is left is the feeling body containing the soul. That's the best way for me to describe it. That's what's left. So, that's what my Dad would respond from – His feeling body and his Soul. Not his mind. Which was such an exquisite teaching

for me. Now, he didn't spend hours in spiritual practice like me, but he was embodying that responsiveness to the moment and the next moment and the next moment.

And I know that there are people who are listening to this who might have done some spiritual practice or personal development, or who have done none. And so my question is, then, how would you guide someone to just try showing up again and again and again? What do you say to someone in order to support that process or to help them in that, especially when it's excruciating?

Mirabai: Right. Yeah, I think we're conditioned in many spiritual traditions to view spiritual practice as a kind of rigorous discipline that's kind of - what's the word I'm looking for - like, sober and serious and challenging, and that if we can just engage in that, then we will transcend the agonizing experience that we're having. And I think that's a very masculine, patriarchal model of spiritual life. And it has its place, you know, those kinds of practices and that vertical ascension beyond the forms. All of that, you know, have a place in our spiritual life. However, it's not the whole story. And *"the feminine way, I think, is much more about embodiment and being fully here in the midst of the messy human experience, and connecting and allowing our hearts to open and to sometimes break open."*

And so for me, I think my journey as a grieving mother was a very feminine one. It was messy, it was not pretty sometimes, I didn't always behave in a dignified fashion, shall we say, but it was a commitment to... Can I read a couple of passages?

Lisa: Yeah, please, absolutely.

Mirabai: This is from the chapter called Heartfulness Practice:

"With reticence at first and then with mounting courage, I dared to mourn my child. From the very beginning, I suspected that something holy was happening and that if I were to push it away, I would regret it for the rest of my life. There was this sense of urgency, as if turning from death meant turning from my child. I wanted to offer Jenny the gift of my commitment to accompany her on her journey away from me, even if to do so simply meant dedicating my heartbeat and my breath to her and paying attention. " And so, I showed up. When a feeling I did not think I could survive would threaten to engulf me, I practiced turning

toward it with the arms of my soul outstretched. And then, my heart would unclench a little and make space for the pain. Years of contemplative practice had taught me just enough to know better than to believe everything I think; how to shift from regretting the past and fearing the future to abiding with what is.” I think this, Lisa is the part you were referring to?

Lisa: Yes.

Mirabai: “So, how to shift from regretting the past and fearing the future to abiding with what is, in this case, a totally fucked up thing, the ultimate fucked up thing. I sat with that. I did not engage in this practice to prove something to myself or anyone else. I was not interested in flexing my spiritual muscles. I did it for Jenny. My willingness to stay present through the process was an act of devotion by leaning into the horror and yielding to the sorrow, by standing in the fire of emptiness and saying yes to the mystery I was honouring my daughter and expressing my ongoing love for her. It was not mere mindfulness practice; it was heartfulness practice.”

Lisa: Do you know Mirabai, when I was preparing for today, that was the very passage that came to me first, that chapter, randomly of course.

Mirabai: Really?

Lisa: Yeah, I opened it and it opened to that very page first.

Mirabei: Oh, that's funny!

Lisa: Yeah. So I really appreciate you sharing it without my paraphrasing because I think that you've answered this question that, no matter what we're practiced in, no matter what our background is, if we can just (..and I was only just speaking about this with a client yesterday), if you can just know what you're devoted to, know what am I committed to in this?

Like, when everything is just too much, if you can just know, what am I committed to in this? And as you said, you were devoted to doing it for Jenny – So knowing something as simple as, I am committed to breathing fully still? Do you know what I mean? But knowing what you're committed to gives you an anchor, I think. Do you think Mirabai?

Mirabai: That's beautiful, Lisa, yes. Spoken like a true bhakti yogini, as someone who understands the power of devotion to strip away all our opinions on the matter and stay in the land of the heart. And it's true, you mentioned it

earlier, that when we experience radical grief and this profound loss, the spiritual practices and beliefs that we used to guide us before usually don't hold up anymore, especially belief systems.

But definitely certain prescribed prayers and particular practices, not only do they often not hold up in the face of that kind of fire, but they frequently strike us as being ridiculous or even offensive. Like, how dare they, whoever 'they' is, insist that or suggest that saying the Lord's prayer or meditating on my chakras is going to fix my shattered soul?

"And so really, what I think what our souls demand in those moments of such profound sorrow is not to be fixed, but to be witnessed, to hold ourselves in a place of loving witness". And often when we experience tragedy and loss, there is an element of shame or guilt, you know, whether it's the death of a loved one or being left in a relationship, which is excruciatingly painful. I don't know of anything more painful than the ending of a relationship that we're very attached to because there's something about death that's not personal. It's so final, and it blows everything else apart. And there's much more stickiness in the end of a relationship and that kind of grief.

But whatever the loss may be, the loss of health due to a serious diagnosis, a great financial loss, loss of a home, loss of a community - all of these things are invitations to sit in the fire and allow it to transform us. But they're also spaces in which conventional tactics and methods for navigating such experiences do not really work anymore. And so, John of the Cross in *The Dark Night of the Soul* says, guess what? If those things stop working, you're not supposed to try to fill in the blanks. You're not supposed to rush in to repair the emptiness. You're actually invited to be in that empty, dark space and allow yourself to rest, really rest, and let yourself down into the arms of not knowing anything.

Lisa: Exactly. And just as you were saying that I was just feeling this piece around relaxing somehow into the 'not knowing'. Because when something dies, we have no idea - at the core of it - we just don't know! And yet, not knowing, I think, is one of the most difficult places for people to be, myself included.

For example - I don't know how this will go. Or, I don't know what to do without my loved one. That not knowing, when we can somehow learn to relax open as not knowing, then that's really where our soul, that's where love is really free,

really free to move through us in ways that certainly we would have never expected.

And I think also it speaks to, this three-step process or the puja that you're going to be doing every day, or the chants that you're going to be praying every day and the illusion that they can 'fix' something so you don't feel any pain.

For me, I now approach all practice with just a sincere understanding that it's not going to fix anything. Because I think we do that, we go to something because we want it to fix something, if instead we can somehow practice that not knowing...It transforms everything, don't you think? Then even when we approach something we don't kind of put ourselves into the false illusion that this will save us.

Mirabai: Right. It makes life deeper and richer to do those beautiful, ancient, timeless spiritual practices and they fill our hearts and they make our souls strong and beautiful, and it's not about fixing.

And I think it's such an important point, Lisa, that you made. Practicing, not knowing, then, is really what will save us when we come to those big life experiences when we are completely brought to our knees and everything we ever thought we knew about the divine, about God, about our spiritual lives, about ourselves, is taken from us. I was just thinking about all the small ways that we can practice that.

Lisa: That's what I was going to ask you. I live on the beach, so one of the ways that I practice surrender into not knowing is I lie on my back and float in the ocean. So I don't know where I am in the ocean. I don't know what's beneath me. And so some days I'm great at it, no problem, and other days I'm like, is there a shark beneath me? Am I going to bump into something...you know, right? So I was going to ask you do you have ways that you practice relaxing into that not knowing? I really believe what you're saying about stories and sharing your personal experience because I think we learn my immersion, by being with each other and hearing someone else's story.

So someone might hear "Oh, she floats on the ocean to practice. I could do that." Or maybe they have a 'thing' about bugs, so they could lie on the grass and that would be a practice of opening into not knowing if an ant is going to crawl on them. Do you know what I mean? It sounds silly, but we each have our own way. So what is it for you?

Mirabai: Wonderful question. I think that when we're talking about people's personal stories, like for any of you who are expecting me to be some kind of enlightened being, guess what? I'm very, very human and neurotic. Well, I'm a little neurotic; I'm very human. And I noticed recently, just in the last few days as a matter of fact, that I was getting very combative on Facebook. So I posted something very vulnerable and personal, which I don't often do, and in fact, it was about my daughter.

I was at the gym, I was working out and someone came into the gym and she was saying, "Anybody want a teenager, 'cos I can't stand mine anymore, You can have 'em for free!" And she was frustrated because he had a college application due and just as she was leaving the house to come to the gym he said, "Mum, I haven't printed out the thing and I need the other thing!" So she was irritated. And the person who was teaching the class said, "Yeah, you know, if you can raise a live teenager you've done great." And the conversation just was like a sword in my heart.

It's been 14 years since my 14 year-old daughter died, and I'm mostly not actively grieving anymore. But there are moments, I know a lot of you listening can relate to those triggers, where I'm triggered. And my heart breaks all over again. But in this case, I got pissed off.

So, I came home and I wrote a Facebook post. I tried to make it not 'blamy' and 'judgy' but speaking from my own experience. And 90% of the responses, and there were tons of them, were compassionate, but they all were acting like I had just lost my child and they were so sorry for me, which isn't what I was looking for, but that's okay. But then there were a few, mostly by men I just have to say, that were like trying to correct my feelings. And so what I did was, did I let those go? No. I had to defend myself with all of the negative comments. I mean, how silly of me. I'm a 55 year-old woman. My daughter's been dead for 14 years. Like, get a grip Mirabai! But no, I had to act like a rebellious adolescent and explain to them, correct them.

And then, the next day, I did another post. I can't remember what it was about...oh, asking for a photographer to volunteer to shoot and community event. So then I was criticised for daring to ask somebody to do something without pay. And so I had to go through and correct all those comments. And so there were

two days in a row I was being this feisty, rebellious, defensive adolescent, is how I saw myself, and I couldn't stop.

And so I sat with that afterwards, going, okay, that was a bit humiliating, and I showed up for my feelings of humiliation, of vulnerability, of having been ungraceful, unskilful in how I handled human relations, and unprofessional in some ways because I was so personal, (although I think that's okay).

But all of those feelings of being wrong, of not being good enough, that is such a beautiful opportunity to do this showing up practice. That is a spiritual practice in and of itself. So I didn't turn from it; I didn't beat the shit out of myself. I did a little bit, but mostly what I did was I just took my sweet little self into my own arms and said, "Tell me, what are you feeling? How is this?" I just made space for myself, and it was a truly spiritual experience for me.

Lisa: Do you know what I think is so powerful about that, and I think especially as women. I can't speak as a man because I'm a woman, but we're so conditioned to be aware of how everyone else is feeling. I think that the very act of first of all, turning toward yourself and how you're feeling is so important.

I have a phrase that I have my clients say to themselves, or to another person, when a lot of feelings come up, literally it's just saying, "Lisa, I get that you feel that. I get it." So I don't need to get why. It's just "I get that you feel that. I've got you in this, and you've got this".

Mirabai: That's great. Beautiful.

Lisa: You know what I mean? Because sometimes I do need to look at myself in the mirror and go, this is just...it's too much. And if I can just remember I get that you feel this. Then, once you've done that for yourself, it's much easier to look at an intimate partner or anyone else, or the world and go, because I get that I feel this, I get that you feel that too. And there's just that very simple of just getting it, is showing up.

But I think what you articulated that was so powerful is the practice of showing up for yourself, getting that that, not the why. So just getting that you feel like a rebellious teenager, that you feel pissed off, that you feel agonised, that you feel... whatever it is.

Mirabai: Misunderstood, yeah.

Lisa: Misunderstood, absolutely! Yeah. Because when you get it, always what's underneath arises.

Mirabai: Right.

Lisa: You know, what's really going on has a chance to arise.

Mirabai: I think that's beautiful. Also, this witnessing that then happens. So that you don't just buy into all your thoughts about it. Like, I understood that because I've practised this showing up thing that the thoughts are just thoughts and the feelings are just feelings and they're not like ultimate reality.

So I think when we buy into those things and can tell ourselves certain stories and convince ourselves of their truth, we get either very self-righteous or very self-blaming, and then we're like, lost in it.

Whereas, if we can just kind of step back and smile at ourselves through our participation in the human condition, it's much more spacious. And that space is what we're going to need when the real shit comes, which it's going to do. It has in the past and it will again.

Lisa: Yeah, and much more loving. Which leads me to ask a question about the story. Because in this new age world we do live in a world where somehow there is this messy mix of personal development and spiritual practice and transfiguration. I mean, they've kind of morphed, they're now sharing space somehow. And so you work with people to write their story and you've written your own, so when does our story matter, and when do we just let "the story" go? I think that's a really precious discernment for people.

Mirabai: Exactly. Beautifully articulated, Lisa.

Right. So I think that the magic, the alchemy, happens when we do tell our stories authentically, when we don't try to, as my friend said, make ourselves look pretty, but when we go for that vain of authenticity that's coursing in our bodies and begging for us to bear witness.

So I do a lot of writing practices, so what I do is I make a list in a notebook or on my computer of topics as writing prompts, and they're usually memories. So it might be some obscure minor memory from childhood or from yesterday, or it might be something that was a profound life-changing moment or event. So I don't judge them, I don't rate them, I just make a list of all of these memories that I would like to write about, and then I use them as prompts and I give myself a

10-minute timed writing. This is a method that I derive, really, from my teacher, Natalie Goldberg. I mean, she was literally my teacher when I was a kid. Natalie Goldberg is the author of *Writing Down the Bones*.

Lisa: You mentioned her in the book?

Mirabai: Yes. And many other books. So she's a major teacher on writing as a spiritual practice. So she has this very simple method where you just have a writing prompt and you write for a timed period, 10 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, something like that. So that's how I actually wrote my entire book. It all started with all of these timed writing practices and that is a way to practice this authentic truth-telling that I'm talking about. So as you're writing, say you're writing about your grandmother's Matzo ball soup (that's for me, I'm Jewish), I might be writing a memory of the smell of Matzo ball soup in my grandmother's kitchen and that might trigger some other thing about me now or about me then. And maybe something will arise that is uncomfortable, like the time that I was at my grandmother's house and my father showed up drunk, right? I'm making this up although it's highly possible that something like that would have happened. But wait, I've got this sweet story about grandma's Matzo ball soup; I can't ruin it with Daddy stumbling into the house, embarrassing us. But that uncomfortable feeling is information about the story that really needs to be told, and I go there. So instead of steering away from it, I steer into it. And I show up for that and allow it to do what it needs to do. Is that going to make it into the published piece? Who knows? It's none of my business. When I'm writing, I am being present for what's underneath, as you so beautifully said earlier, the surface level of experience and coming down to the deeper thing that reveals itself when we are present, as you said.

And so that's when writing practice becomes spiritual practice. Very powerful way to not only connect with what's really in our souls, but to connect with the whole of humanity, the whole of the human experience. I mean, one of the things that my tragedies have taught me, especially the death of my daughter, is that I'm not special. Like, instead of rendering me some kind of elite human because I have a dead daughter, it connected me with all of humanity.

It made me humbler. I took my rightful place at the table of humanity in a way that I maybe never had before, and as a result of that felling of interconnectedness, I

felt more welcome here on Earth, strangely, than I had ever felt, like I belong here. This is just all of us having this experience and doing the best we can to take care of each other and wake each other up and be present in a loving way when we each go through the inevitable sorrows of life.

Lisa: And they are inevitable, I think that's the thing, isn't it? There will be agony, there'll be ecstasy and they're all unavoidable.

So Mirabai, thank you so much for everything that you shared today. It's just been such a privilege and a gift to just share space and to dive into your work and to share it so that we can all turn towards how we're feeling, turn toward what life is giving us as fantastic or as agonizing as it might be feeling.

I know that you have on your website some amazing writing workshops coming up as well and other events, so I just want to encourage those of you who are listening to go to mirabaistarr.com and if you do not have *Caravan of No Despair* yet, grab it and create space for yourself to really dive into it, because it's such a transformational and exquisitely powerful book. So thank you Mirabai for being here.

Mirabai: Thank you, Lisa, for getting it so deeply. I truly feel like you're a soul sister. It's wonderful to share this time with you.

Lisa: Yes. Me too Mirabai. Thank you. Deep bow. And deep bow to all of you who are listening, whether you're listening live or to the podcast in years to come, and thank you very much from us. Bye for now.