

## EP78:

# Expanding Your Reality to Greater Possibilities

With Steve Pavlina

Colette:

Hi there, and welcome to Inside the Wooniverse, a podcast brought to you from the corner of Fringe and Main. I'm your host, Colette Baron-Reid. Today, we are joined by the most awesome human. He is a prolific content creator. His name is Steve Pavlina. Now, I want to tell you a little bit about Steve. He's a leading personal development innovator, blogger, author, international speaker, and coach dedicated to helping people create extraordinary lives. Now, he has attracted, get this, more than 100 million visitors to his website. Not too many, right? StevePavlina.com, which hosts his over 1,800 articles on a broad range of self-development and personal growth topics.

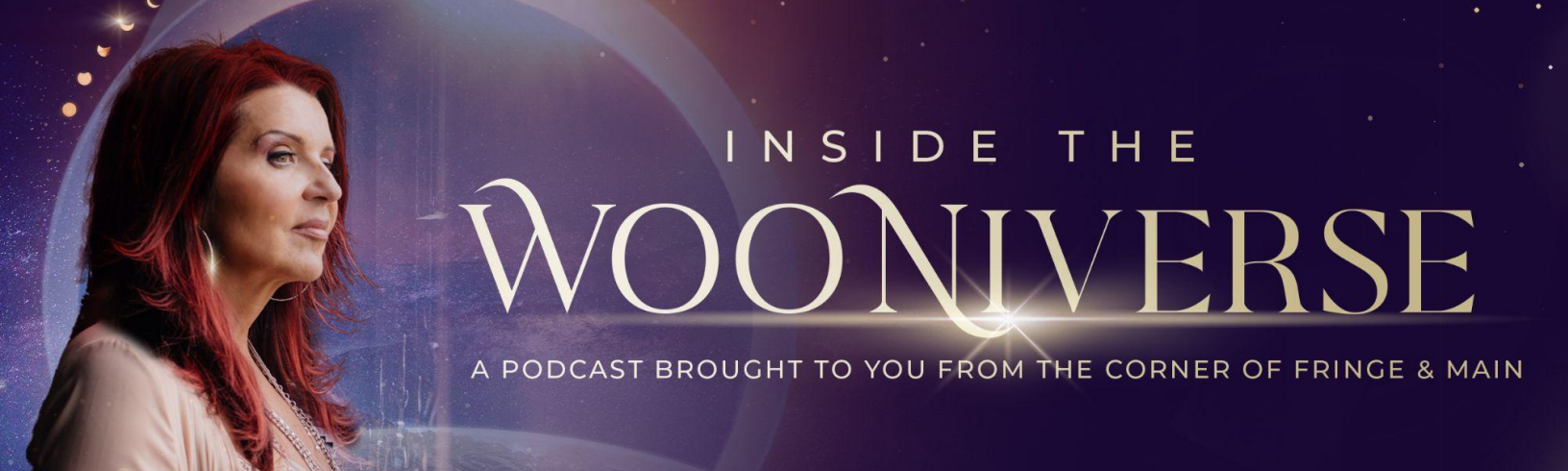
He's the creator of several groundbreaking personal growth courses and the author of powerful personal transformation books like Personal Development for Smart People. He is literally one of the smartest people I've ever met, and How to Get Things Done, amazing books. Anyway, what you may not know is that before starting his world-famous personal development blog in 2004, Steve founded and ran an award-winning computer game development studio for a decade. In fact, he was even inducted into the Association of Software Professionals Hall of Fame. But he is truly a spiritual scientist, and I am so happy he's here with us today. Welcome to the Universe, Steve.

Steve:

Thanks so much, Colette. Happy to be here.

Colette:

Oh, it's so exciting. I actually met Steve when I first got to Hay House. Steve was already a Hay House author and he was super awesome. I met him at a function at Hay House and I always knew that he was really interesting. And now together we're both in this Transformational Leadership Council and I fell in love with his wife. He is so interesting. As soon as he posts in



our special room, I'm like, "What did he say? What did he say?" So I thought, I've got to have him on the show. Anyway, let's dig in, Steve. We ready?

Steve:

Yeah, we're ready. Let's do it.

Colette:

Awesome. You know what? Here's I want to do, because I'm interested in your spiritual viewpoint. Were you curious about spirituality or the spirit in all things when you were little?

Steve:

Not so much about spirituality because I was raised inside a bit of a spiritual box, 12 years of Catholic school growing up.

Colette:

Oh yeah, so that would be a no.

Steve:

That's all I knew. All my friends were Catholic, whole family was Catholic. My uncle was a Catholic priest. My dad was an altar boy when he was younger. We went to church every Sunday religiously, literally. So it was a box in which the only spirituality I knew was what was taught by priests and nuns and the whole religious container. But it was maybe around the time, I think I was 17 years old, and I started having doubts about it. I was getting more into ... I went to a Jesuit high school, Loyola High School in Los Angeles. They were more flexible than the nuns at Notre Dame Academy that I went to for grammar school growing up in LA. I liked that they encouraged us to think for ourselves.

We had some lay teachers as well and it kind of helped to open my mind more. I got into more mathematics and physics, excelled in those types of classes, got interested in computer programming from a fairly young age. I got introduced to BASIC programming when I was 10 years old. So I had that as kind of a contrasting thread. Here's all this tech I'm learning and how to program and thinking algorithmically. Then how does that mesh with faith, which to me was kind of blind faith? So it's these two contrasting threads in my life developing and I found I was



way more interested in the text side because it seemed so open-ended and it seemed so creative. Whereas the other side was just ... Don't do this. Don't do that. This is a sin. That's a sin. You're bad. You're a sinner. You need to seek forgiveness. You have to go to confession.

Colette:

And we're making the assumption too, that religion is spirituality, which it's not, right? Which we know, okay, so let's keep going. Okay.

Steve:

But that was my assumption at the time.

Colette:

Yeah, me too.

Steve:

Spirituality equaled religion, and I knew nothing else. So I only knew of two spiritual paths, which were really Catholicism or atheism. It's either you believe in God, that God, and you believe and you follow all the rules and the dictates, the mandates, and so on, the dogma, or you are outside of that, which is nothingness. It's the void. It's atheism. I was never exposed to any new age-y philosophies, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, anything.

Colette:

Right, any -ism.

Steve:

Any other direction was just not part of my reality at the time. It was like being very much raised inside of a bit of a thought bubble. So the only real escape path was through logic and thinking. I remember at one point I saw this talk show that just happened to be on, running on the TV. I think my mom would sometimes watch talk shows back then. Phil Donahue, I remember was one we watched sometimes. I think one of the guests, I don't know if it was Donahue. It might have been, but one of the guests was this woman who had founded this organization called ... I think it was called American Atheists. She was making some cases, some arguments, and I thought, that sounds kind of interesting. So I learned that they had a magazine. So I subscribed



to it when I was a teenager. I'll tell you, I don't think I got all the issues because I had to get to the mail before anyone else in my family did.

Colette:

Oh my God, that's right.

Steve:

But then if I got it, then I could start reading it and get curious about it. At one point, I told my family that I didn't believe that stuff anymore and that I was kind of an atheist. At least that's where my leanings were and I got punished for that.

Colette:

Oh, wow.

Steve:

It was not good. In fact, it was a point where they didn't know what to do with me. Do we ground you or what? So then I'm like, "Great, I'm losing privileges now." So I basically just kind of backed down and-

Colette:

Self-preservation.

Steve:

Backed off from that, kept going to church. But then it got to the point where I would sit in the back of the church. My parents liked to sit in the front, so I would be like, "I want to sit in the back." They were, okay, you can have that bit of rebellion. But then I would sneak out the back, go for a walk, and then come back to the church right before it ended. Then we would all go to the car together. As I go for a walk, I just ponder and think about life. Sometimes actually, I'm a vegan now, but back then I wasn't, so sometimes I'd actually go to a McDonald's near the church and have breakfast and then come back. Eventually that came to a head, because one time, I think it was Palm Sunday, and usually they would have extra long masses on Palm Sunday. So I'm like, "Okay, I've got extra time because it's more complex ceremony." So I go for a longer walk. As I'm coming back, I see the church has already exited. Everybody's going to



the cars right now. I'm like, "Oh shoot." So as I'm walking down the street, my parents see me coming.

Colette:

Oh my God, that's so funny.

Steve:

Before I get there, they all get in the car and drive off as a way to maybe punish me. Now we lived just a couple miles from the church, so it was a bit of walk back, but we would go to church early in the morning, 7:30 AM, something like that. So I just decided I'm just going to stay out all day. So I had a little bit of money on me. I walked all around. I went out to see a movie. I remember the movie I saw was Bird on A Wire with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn. So that probably-

Colette:

Oh my God, that's going way back.

Steve:

Way back, yeah. Then I finally come home around, I don't know, 10:00 PM to midnight, something in that range. Then it was weird because I never went to church again after that. They never really tried to pressure me. It was a way of finally getting free from that. That led to finally opening up. I went into atheism for a while, explored that, but it really opened the door. That was my exit. Then as I went to college and moved out, I got to explore all kinds of other possibilities. I went to UC Berkeley for a while, so I got to meet all kinds of interesting people there. That exposed me to new ideas, new philosophies, new ways of thinking.

Then it just opened me up to exploration. I always remembered just how you can feel like you understand reality when you're inside this thought bubble, and how much more there is, how much more is possible when we move outside of that. So I kept using that same kind of thinking, questioning. Am I in a thought bubble now? Am I stuck in a world of assumptions that don't have to be true or that aren't really true, but by thinking they're true, I'm caging myself and I'm ruling out all kinds of other possibilities? I've seen that that kind of thing happen in my life multiple times where I have to keep creating cracks in how I think about reality.



Colette:

Yeah, and that's actually the main purpose of metaphysics, is exactly what you're talking about. The deep questions are, what is this? Where am I? Am I in this thought bubble? Am I only in the conditioned thinking bubble, but what else could there be? Because there are so many different dimensions to reality. Now I happen to know you think like that because I know you, so I'm curious to know. So you went there. Now I know your first wife was a psychic medium, and so your college degrees were in computer science. You were in gaming and then you were married to this woman who was a psychic medium. So you really, really lived at the corner of Fringe and Main for a while, right?

Steve:

Yeah, in fact, we met on an online BBS, a bulletin board system, kind of a precursor for an online chat group type of thing. It was just a local dial-up, dial-up modems, a bulletin board system that attracted people from the San Fernando Valley. A couple of my friends from college turned me onto that system and so I would dial up. It was called Dreamscape BBS.

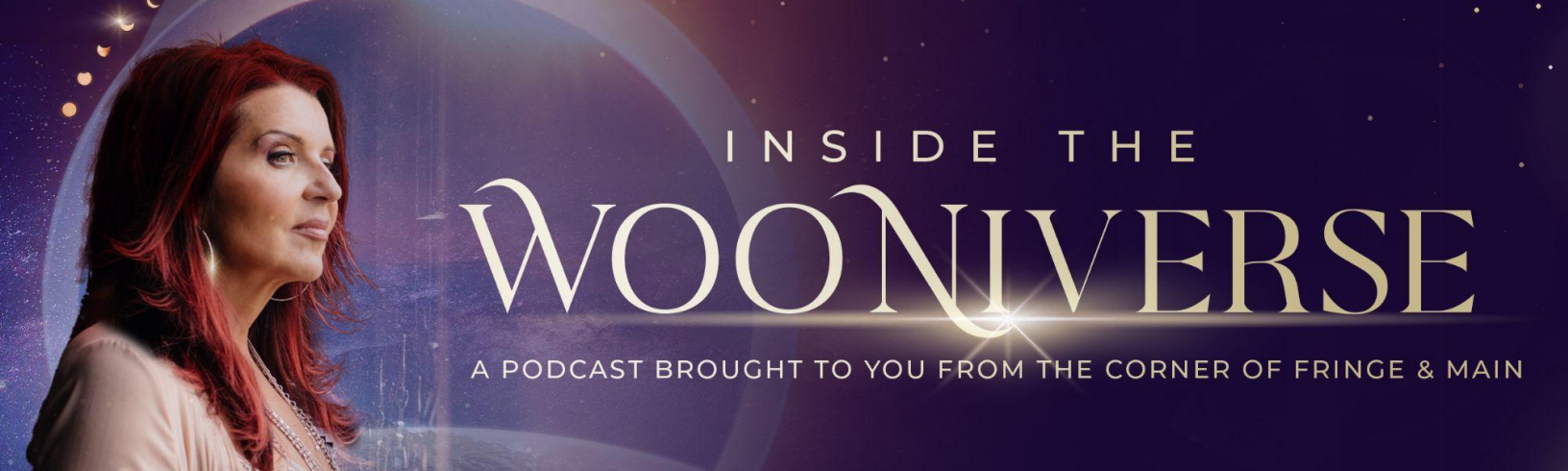
Colette:

Wow.

Steve:

It was a good name. Through that, I met some interesting people. I met Erin and it turned out she only lived six miles away and we went to the same college. During that time, I just graduated from Cal State University Northridge. We got to talking online. We got to connecting. I realized she knew a lot about a lot of things I was curious about. One was lucid dreaming. She was really skilled at lucid dreaming. She'd done it from a young age.

So I invited her over to my apartment just to chat about it. So she came over and we talked for two hours. I had this long list of questions. I was just very mentally curious. That became something that leaned into connection because I found her a very mind-expanding person to connect with. She just knew so much about certain things. She grew up Jewish, but also had a very new age-y kind of belief system. It just opened me up to so many different kinds of possibilities.



Colette:

So this is interesting. So would we say that now you're looking at this being consciousness expanding as opposed to ... Because I do think too, even the labels of new age, which is what was bringing all the old stuff forward and kind of mushing it together and trying to find answers, again the idea of the metaphysical world, which is to ask those bigger questions. But it really is about expanding your consciousness. Now, I happen to know recently you went to one of these conferences. So I was curious about that, because what do you think the relationship is to, for example, now with psilocybin research, ketamine, all of those mind-expanding drugs, which can actually lead us to a greater spiritual understanding of life? Tell me a little bit about your view on that today.

Steve:

Yeah, well that was one of the things. When I grew up, it was always in the bubble of the war on drugs and all drugs are bad. Some drugs, I would just not touch. I've never done cocaine or heroin. I've never smoked a cigarette other than marijuana a few times, because I didn't really like the idea of doing that stuff for entertainment.

Colette:

Yeah, I get it.

Steve:

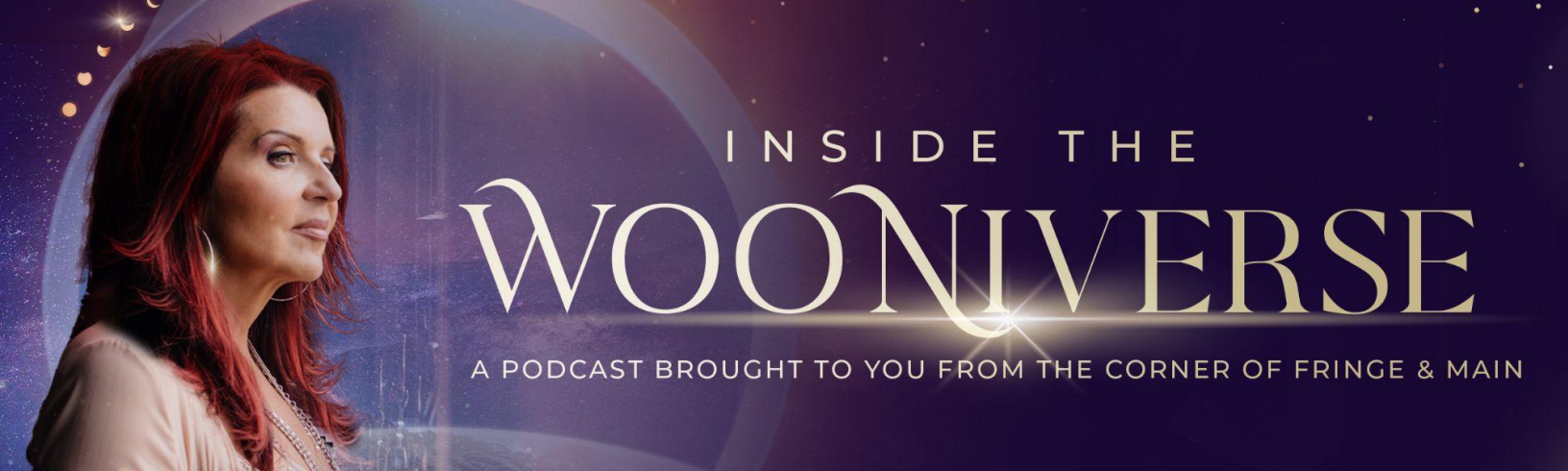
And I don't want to get addicted to anything. I don't think that's good lifestyle-wise. I know somebody who got very addicted to cocaine and was really downhill.

Colette:

Well, I'm clean and sober 37 and a half years, so I know that very well. So yes, I get it, but you were not like that. The idea that there is some connection to something greater than us, I'm curious what you think of that.

Steve:

I look at that and I kind of balance the risks. What I try to do is when I lean into something, I educate myself on it first. I tend to be a fast learner, so I like to read, and especially with access to the internet, which is just amazing because I didn't really grow up with that, so now that I have



that as an adult, it just feels awesome to be able to look up anything and research it and do deep dives intellectually into something. I can learn so much about something before I even actually act on it or engage with it. So I've done that with certain things first. Then I started learning that a lot of what I was taught growing up is not really true as it's being studied today by scientists and things. That was one of the things at the conference, which was called Psychedelic Science 2023. It was the largest right psychedelics conference in the history of the planet apparently, 12,000 people there.

Colette:

Isn't that amazing?

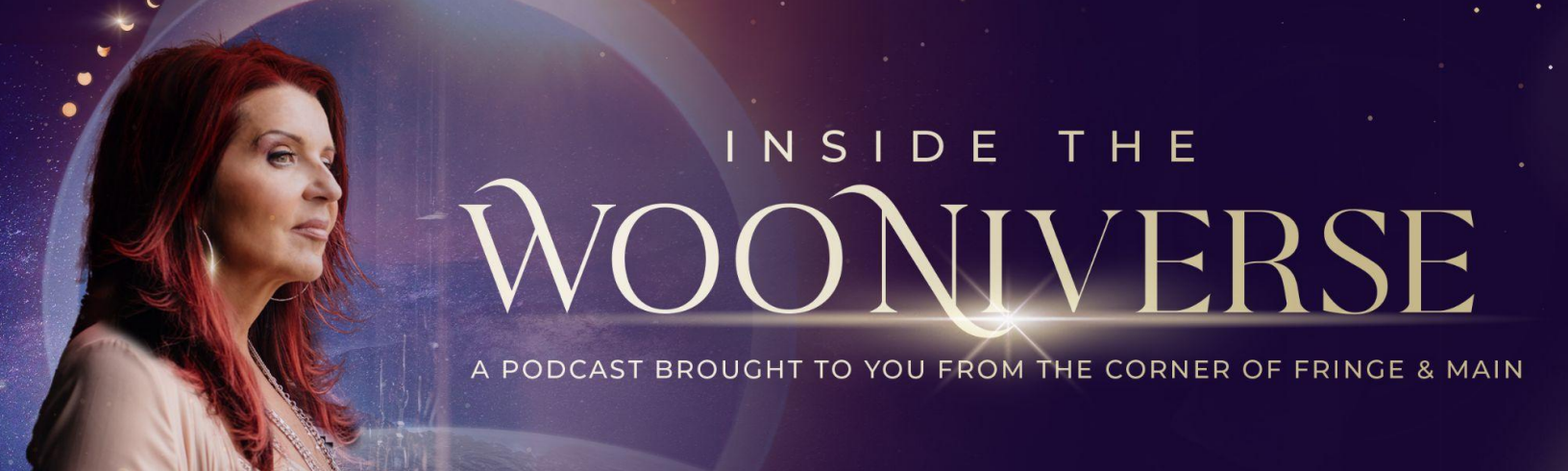
Steve:

About 500 speakers, including some celebrities. It was really amazing, but for me, the actual action of the journey started a bit earlier doing a four-day ayahuasca ceremony in Costa Rica. I'd never done psychedelics before, so that was an immediate, really intense deep dive, four ceremonies in four nights. We were there for a total of a week, then so we did some integration work afterwards. That was really, really mind-blowing the first night, just so intense physically, emotionally, going on this visual journey. I thought I was going to die at first. I was like, "This is really intense." I thought I was going to stop breathing, but then I got my breathing under control. It just such a new experience. But then the next three nights were actually pretty pleasant, and I learned to create a relationship with that energy and dialogue with it. It's weird. It's this consciousness you're connecting with through that.

Colette:

Yes, that's what I want to hear. Again, we just want to make everybody clear that we are not suggesting that y'all should go out and do ayahuasca. This is Steve's experience. Where we want to go with the conversation is, tell me about that relationship to that consciousness. Because these types of earth medicines can actually open us up to this. So I'm curious to hear. Now, I can't take it, nor would I, but you did and could. So I'm curious about this dialogue because it's going to lead us into another conversation after we talk about this.





Steve:

Sure. So on the medical side and the science side, what they're discovering is if we look inside the brain and they do brain scans now while people are doing psychedelics and they can see what's happening, and apparently there's this functional part of the brain they call the default mode network. It's kind of our default every way mode of thinking and it suppresses a lot of possibilities. It keeps us kind of focused on our physical reality around us. To some extent, it allows us to focus our work and our relationships and is very much at the human level. Well, what many psychedelics can do, and many of them operate in similar ways like LSD, psilocybin, MDMA, ketamine, they can actually relax or pause that default mode network. So they make your thinking and your neural connections more flexible. So what happens is regions of the brain that don't normally talk much to each other, now they start communicating. It kind of opens up the pathways and the flow.

So when you're in that state, you become more open and more receptive. That, I think, is what really links us in into being aware of other consciousness, some kind of other communication, other consciousness coming through. People describe that experience in multiple ways. Some describe it as God. Some describe it as divinity or other words. One of the common ones is ultimate reality. People describe this as a connection to ultimate reality. Then the scientists were curious. Why are some people defining this as God or others are defining it as ultimate reality? Several different labels for this were pretty common. So they asked the people to describe the qualities of each of these. What are the qualities of God? What are the qualities of ultimate reality? It turned out the words they use, the top, say five or six adjectives they used to describe these were all the same.

Colette:

Tell me about them. What are the words?

Steve:

I'm trying to recall some of them, but it was compassion, unconditional love, sort of a gentleness to it, that ultimate reality is very loving. It's very supportive. It's non-judgmental.

Colette:

And it's a partner.



Steve:

Exactly, yeah.

Colette:

See, I really think that since the beginning of time, human beings have actually had these experiences that you're describing and tried to explain it. Then they created systems around it that then became these dogmatic, rule-based controlling things that don't really work. They're not there to really genuinely connect us to ultimate reality. But I do believe that that was their initial hope. You know what I'm saying? I think that that was it. Okay, so what does this ultimate reality want for us? How do we have a relationship with that? Then it's, well, how do I control the planet at the end of the day? I'm not here to bash religion, but we do know that ultimate reality, even when we talk about Jesus for example, or Christ, the Christ consciousness is exactly what people describe. So that's why they call these things God, why we think of ultimate reality as a partner in co-creation. So what did you feel like when you touched that or when you connected to that?

Steve:

It feels like a sense of oneness. It kind of felt like I was in communication with something that was inside me at the time. There's not a separation from it. With ayahuasca in particular, it was like the plant medicine was in my brain, in my mind. Initially, maybe the first hour or two of each session, it felt like it was trying to calibrate to communicating with me. That's where it's physically roughest. People purged during that time. I purged a number of times, and it's rough on the body at least initially. Then it kind of settles down into something that feels very gentle and smooth. At least that did for me. People of course can have bad trips, but most of the time people who have a bad trip, they actually describe it as a good experience and beneficial for them afterwards with the insights they gained from it. So, yes.

Colette:

It's interesting that you said you're having this communication with something inside you when it came to ... Okay, so I had the weirdest experience. I was doing a reading for this woman. This is when I still did one-on-one sessions. So she was calling from Germany and I kept tuning into an energy that I felt was her grandmother, but spoke Spanish. So this is so crazy. She wasn't very nice and I smelled earth in my house. I was like, "Oh man, this woman is nasty." But then I was



like, "But she likes me, so I'm supposed to tell this woman that she didn't do the work she was supposed to do and she's supposed to go visit her in South America." I said, "Your grandmother is asking for you to visit her, and I really don't know what I'm talking about, but she's kind of angry at you that you didn't. Apparently you spent some time with her and you did not do what you were called to do as a result of the visit."

She goes, "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't have a Spanish grandmother." I'm like, "Well." Then I kept hearing it and I said, "Look, I'm sorry. You don't have to pay me. I'll give you your money back, but I can't keep going because this is so clear." She went, "Oh." Then I described to her, I'm not going to say it, but the detail, which is this energy. I felt this energy that was so weird and present and it knew me. It felt like it was trying to figure out how to communicate with me. Well, it turned out she went for an ayahuasca ceremony and they called it the grandmother.

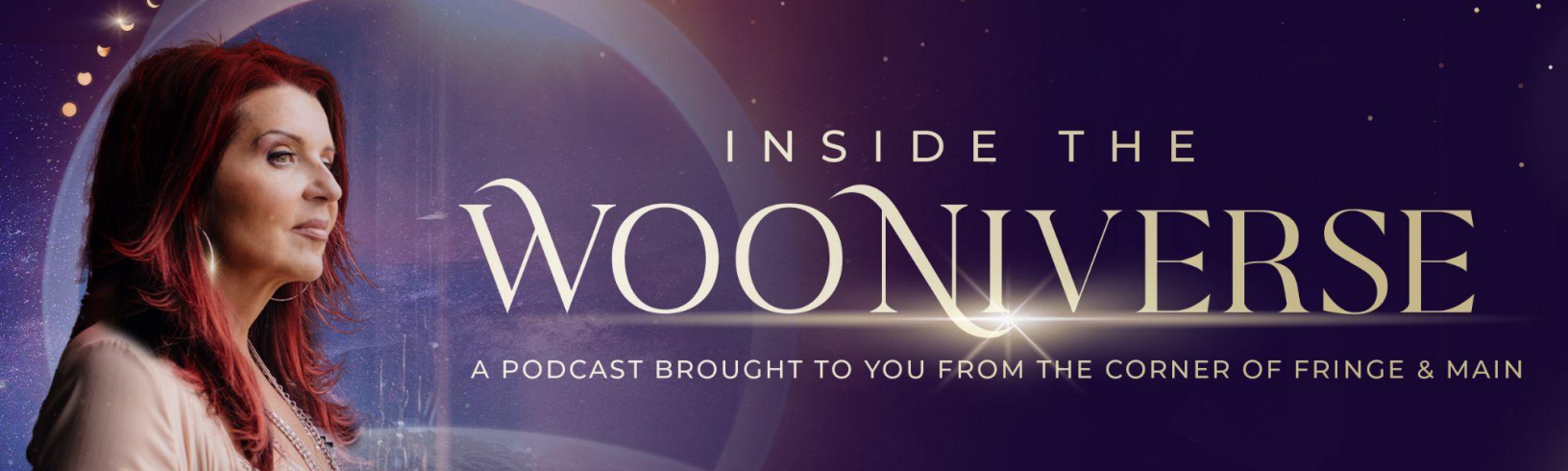
Steve:

I've heard it referred to as Mother Aya or Mother Ayahuasca many times.

Colette:

Mother, yeah, the grandmother. Apparently the people that she worked with, and she was actually a psychologist and had gone there, and this was an issue that she had suppressed or repressed. It actually kind of scared me because I actually felt this energy trying to figure me out. How could it talk to me? And that is freaky. But what it does though, for me anyway, and maybe your first wife described this to you, but if we are one and if we are in fact part of a unified field of consciousness, then that makes sense as to why mediums and psychics can do what we do. We have access. We just have kind of natural entry point that everybody actually has.

But because of our conditioning, and like you said, because the brain isn't ... those pieces aren't speaking to each other, that we don't have access to that. But what if ultimate reality was that we were surrounded by different forms of consciousness that were there to actually help us? And that is what I believe. I know people talk about spirit guides and stuff like that. I personally have only had a few experiences that way. I'm just like, "Wow, that's so cool. You have that



experience. You're talking to something." Me, I had one experience with, it was a course. What about you? Have you ever had anything like that beyond doing this particular entry point?

Steve:

Absolutely. Psychedelics are just one of many entry points.

Colette:

Let's hear.

Steve:

They're a shortcut. They can get you there fast, give you an intense experience that you may take quite a while, maybe months, even years, to reflect upon. But there are other ways, and one of them I would say is social. Hang out with people who are more open-minded than you. Hang out with people who've had diverse experiences. So for instance, going to the Hay House conferences, the I Can Do It conference where we met, when I went to that conference, I would go to these sessions on angel readings with Doreen Virtue and other, past life regression, and just have a wide variety of types of experiences.

I find that just leaning into open-mindedness is super, super helpful because it gets you in a space where you're connecting with other people's energy that is also open and also very open-minded. It's very different than, say going to a tech conference where the energy is very closed. It's very boxed in, at least that's how it feels. There's sort of openness in certain directions like entrepreneurial or tech directions, but you try talking about spirituality there, it's probably not going to open so many doors for you.

Colette:

Right, I get it.

Steve:

So just being in that space, being in that environment, you can get a lot of clarity. You can get downloads. You can get messages coming. In fact, it was the first Hay House conference I went to, I think it was back in 2004, which got me on the path of going into personal development. I'd been running in my computer games business for about 10 years, and I was feeling it just wasn't



the path with a heart for me anymore. It was my dream in my 20s and I got to experience that and do it for a while. But then in my 30s, I was starting to think, I want to do something more purposeful in life. What could that be? I don't want to just keep creating entertainment software for people. So it felt like I needed to shift in some direction, but I wasn't sure what.

But I'd been thinking about maybe starting some kind of personal development business. When I went to the Hay House conference, which was here in Vegas where I live, it was just kind of on a whim. It's just an intuitive thing. Oh, there's this conference here. That sounds kind of cool. It was my first year living in Vegas. I thought, yeah, I'll go to that. So I signed up and I just went. I kind of blogged about the experience a little bit as I was ... Or no, wait, I didn't blog about the experience because I hadn't started my blog yet. That was at a future one.

Colette:

Right, it was right after.

Steve:

Yeah, so what happened is I remember sitting in this big auditorium. I think it was at the Cashman Center, Downtown Vegas area, and I saw Dr. Wayne Dyer speak there. I was sitting in the middle of this room, maybe about 1,500 people there if I had to guess. I'm right in the middle of this big auditorium, and I'm surrounded by this really loving energy. He was talking about the power of intention. It's not so much his words that were impacting me, but just his energy and the energy of the whole room. I just started crying. I didn't really know why. It was just this intense emotion welling up. I had this really strong feeling internally, this download. I'm supposed to be doing that, what he's doing. I'm supposed to be that guy on the stage. I just had this feeling like I need to get into this. I need to get into this space. It was that social environment that opened the door. It was those people, their energy. I thought, this is such a beautiful, loving, clear, open energy. I've got to have more of this in my life.

It was a peak experience. I thought, what would my life be if that was my normal reality? Could I do that? And I thought, why not? Maybe it'll take some time, but yeah. I thought, I've got to leave the game developer space behind because it just wasn't resonating as much. So I started transitioning. It took me six months or so to really get into it because really it was too much of a



peak experience. I couldn't integrate it right away. I needed time to process it, almost like I needed time to grieve the loss of the old reality, if that makes sense.

Colette:

Yes, it does. Yes, it does. Keep going here.

Steve:

So that was rough, looking at my game projects and saying, "There's no heart in this," but I still felt like I'm obligated to keep it going, shutting it down, and it was tough. So I did it as gracefully as I could. Some other people were relying on my business for income because I had licensed other developers games and I was selling them. So I gave that business a two-year timeline to shut it down. I stopped doing new marketing. I stopped doing new releases for it, but I kept selling and supporting the developers games. That way, I could have some income coming in still and have time to get into blogging.

So the same year I started my blog, I also joined Toastmasters, actually a bit before I started my blog, both in 2004. Then I got into just writing and speaking, gradually rolling into it. Here's the funny thing. A few years later, I think three years later in 2007, well, I kept going to that Hay House conference each time it came to Vegas. I did a review of it for my website. I just went as a regular attendee, but I wrote up about the experience on my blog. Well, that got to Hay House's attention because some of their staff started reading my blog. And so they told-

Colette:

Yeah, you got a book deal because of it. Yeah.

Steve:

Exactly. They told Reid Tracy about it, and he reached out to me and says, "Hey, we're coming to Vegas again for the next I Can Do It conference one year." He's like, "I'd love to meet with you." So we met up. I remember it was at the Venetian Hotel. We just sat in the food-

Colette:

Yes, I was there.



Steve:

Sat in the food court there.

Colette:

I was there.

Steve:

We just talked for a half hour, but he said something like, "We at Hay House know about your blog and we like your writing and you have some fans on our staff. So if you want a book deal, just let me know and I'll green-light it." I was like, "Sure." I thought about writing a book, and so I ended up writing the book, *Personal Development for Smart People*, took me about 90 days to write it, and then-

Colette:

Wow, it's really good. It's still really good.

Steve:

It's still selling. They got it and translated it in a bunch of different languages. It came out in 2008, but because of that, I got invited to speak at the Hay House conference a couple times, once in Vegas where I live and once in Tampa. So it's funny because three years later roughly, from sitting in that audience watching Dr. Wayne Dyer, I was actually speaking, not on the physically same stage, but on a similar stage in the same city, speaking to an audience there. I told that story to open my talk. The audience, maybe 200, I was not speaking to as big a room as Dr. Wayne Dyer was. I was in one of the breakout sessions. So I spoke to maybe a couple hundred people, and they loved it. They just loved that, going from an audience member to being on the stage and being on this path with a heart.

Then that just kept unfolding and it kept rolling forward with, I don't know, so much abundance coming through, so many different kinds of invitations. In fact, Reid Tracy and I ended up in a Mastermind group a few years ago together. That was kind of fun. Just so much unfolding synchronistically, and it was not really ... It didn't feel like I was doing this in an algorithmic way, step by step. Here's my goal. I'm going to chip away at it. Here's the process. Here's the action steps. Not at all, because the book deal came to me out of the blue. I never solicited a book



deal from anybody. So I got a book deal with zero rejections, just here's the deal. I had a book deal before I even had the concept for the book. So I kept having that kind of experience where things were just manifesting with relative ease.

Colette:

From the intention, from that one intention when you had a peak experience in a group where the consciousness was there. When two or more are gathered in my name, there I am. And so the I am presence, I believe that right there heard you. Now it's making it happen.

Steve:

Yeah. I see that pattern showing up again and again in my life when I try to think too linearly, too much in a business mode or physical mode, life just slows down. It's very sluggish. It doesn't really progress that quickly, but then the magic starts happening when you open up and you think about the energetic threads that connect us. I often think for writing, I never get writer's block. One of the reasons is I think of writing to people's energies. This is something I learned from Barbara De Angelis. I met her at a conference many years ago. In fact, I think it was that first year I was just getting into Toastmasters and just about or maybe just starting my blog. I went to a conference in Vegas also, and I saw her. She was one of the people I wanted to see speak there.

I remember Stephen Covey was also speaking there. Jack Canfield was also speaking there, and I didn't know any of them. As I was walking through the conference center, I think one morning, I saw Barbara and an assistant of hers setting up her book table. This intuitive impulse says, "Go talk to her." Then of course, my objection is, well, who am I to talk to her? She doesn't know me. But I always try to lean into courage whenever I get that. Whenever I have those decisions to make, are you going to make this decision based on fear or based on trust, courage? I have to do this now. So I go talk to her. Fortunately, she was very friendly and I was just telling her where I was in life and saying, "I'm just kind of transitioning to getting into the field of personal development. I'm just getting into speaking and blogging and writing."

I asked her if she had any advice for me since she had way more experience than that. She was an author and speaker. She said, "Yeah." When she started out, she started doing meditation workshops. She said, "Sometimes only one person would show up," and part of her would be





heartbroken. Nobody wants to hear me. Nobody values my message. But then she thought, maybe this is important. Maybe I have to learn how to speak to one person.

Colette:  
Oh, wow.

Steve:  
She said that was super valuable for her. So she gave that one person who showed up the best meditation workshop she could. She said that really stayed with her. She said, at this event, she was speaking to maybe 2,500 people. And she said, "If you can't speak to one person, you can't speak to 2,500."

Colette:  
Wow.

Steve:  
It's all about the individual communication. I really took that to heart, and I kind of infused that mindset into my writing and speaking. So whenever I would speak to a group or write for an online audience, I would always think, who is the one person that I'm writing for? Now, it doesn't have to be a specific person, but what's their energy pattern? I'm trying to lock onto the energy pattern. Is it someone maybe who's kind of young, maybe in their 20s, recently graduated from school. They're struggling to get their career going. I kind of form a mental model of them, and that helps me lock onto what their vibrational signature is, if you will. Then when I get a sense of a lock onto their energy, I write for that one person, that one individual spirit in a way.

Colette:  
Right, a spirit, exactly.

Steve:  
That's what's weird. That's what actually grows the traffic and helps it resonate with a larger audience, is you just write for one person.



Colette:

I love that.

Steve:

You don't have to know the person. It's just a sense of their energy. So I feel like that's actually something real. I feel people's energies are pinging me, and they're sending me a signal. I need help. I'm kind of scanning in a certain frequency range with my mind or my energy and I'm picking up on who can I help today? I kind of lock onto one energy pattern, and then I say, "I'm going to help you today," and that's how I write.

Colette:

Right, I love that. That actually also underlines the experience that you'd had about that unified consciousness. It's like everything exists. We are all connected, but that one strand that lights up for you in that moment, that's so interesting. Because then you know exactly what you have to do. Okay, we have to take a little pause. More with Steve Pavlina when we come back. Don't go anywhere.

And we're back with Steve Pavlina. So Steve, my next question is, you also recently, because you've been writing a lot about AI, so I'm going to ask you a question about that. Because I believe in the unified field. I believe in unified consciousness. I believe that we are all interconnected, and I do believe that there is a spirit in all things. I believe that, so I'm an animist, and I've seen evidence of this. So AI is now at the tip of everybody's tongue. By the time people hear this, maybe it has changed again. But up until now, you've been doing a lot of discovering around AI. So tell me about AI and consciousness, spirituality, ethics, AI, consciousness. Let's go down that rabbit hole together.

Steve:

Sure. In fact, this actually ties in with something I learned at the Psychedelics conference. So one of the studies that I learned about was some group studied having people rate, say before a psychedelic experience, how conscious are certain aspects of reality? How conscious are you on a numerical scale, rating on a scale of one to 10? How conscious are you? How conscious are other people? How conscious are animals or plants or inanimate objects and so on? So it goes from you to other humans all the way down to inanimate objects like rocks and stuff. So it's



basically kind of as you expect. People would rate themselves as the most conscious and then it's pretty close, a little bit lower for other people because they're not sure.

Colette:

And zero for rocks.

Steve:

Then it kind of gets kind of low, but well, the average rating was above zero, so it's kind of averaging it because some people rate rocks as a little bit conscious, but definitely rocks were lower. So in fact, they rated manmade ... I forget which was higher. I think nature objects were higher than manmade objects. So it's kind of interesting how when after they did psychedelics, everything moved up a bit. Everything moved up a notch. It's funny because even some people doubted their own consciousness, but they doubted it less after having a psychedelic experience. So everything raised in consciousness.

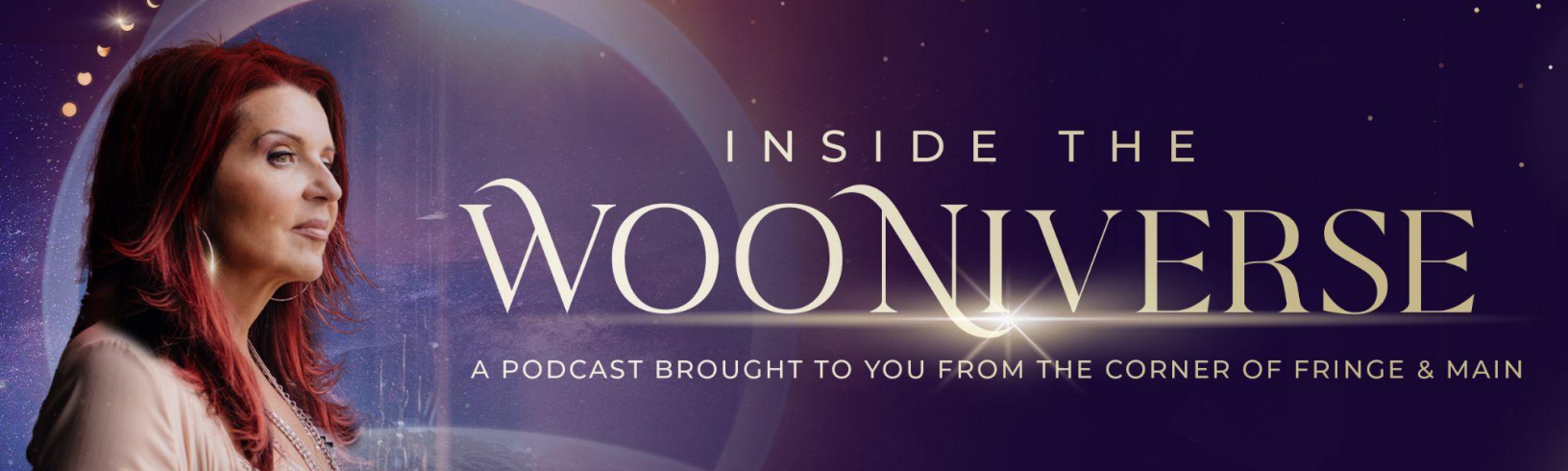
Now, I think that's interesting because it shows that there's flexibility there in our perceptions. I think we can also consider that a choice. So in looking at AI in particular, we can choose to see it as, look, this is just an algorithm. It's just churning numbers. It's a black box. You don't really know what it's doing inside. There's no consciousness to it. You could look at it like certain philosophers' models and just say, "It's just number crunching. It's just calculations. There's no-

Colette:

Yeah, I don't believe that.

Steve:

There's no consciousness to it. Now, I think what the more interesting thing here is not to ask which is true. Does it have a consciousness or does it not? But actually test both possibilities. So I always look at the experiential mode of life and think of, I could test this way of thinking, and I could test this way of thinking. Let me see which is better. So I test. Let me interact with it like it's lifeless. It's a little boring, the interactions. Now let me interact with it like it's a conscious being or an intelligence. I communicate with it differently, and I sense a different kind of communication style with it. It's more fun. It's more engaging. I get better results.



So I don't know if it's conscious or not, but I do know that if I consider and entertain the possibility that it may be conscious, I'm going to have a better experience with it. I will get more insights out of it. Same thing with interacting with other people. I could see them as they're simulations. They're automatons. They're robots. They have no consciousness. Or I could see them as full of energy and consciousness and interact with them on that basis. And the interactions will turn out very differently based on that.

Colette:

So let's go back to your first experience, your peak experience with Wayne Dyer, which Wayne was talking about the power of intention. So would you say that that power of your intention will actually shift the way in which you engage whatever it is you're engaging with, but also offer it, you know what I mean, a greater capacity to show up, right? Because when we project a limitation on someone else, they can't show up any differently really, because we can't perceive it. We've already made a decision. That's what that whole condition bubble you were talking about earlier. We have a tremendous limitation imposed upon us also by what we expect to see. So if you're expecting to engage out of curiosity, like you said, it's not binary. It's not yes or no. It's I wonder, right? Let's see and see what happens. Then it's almost like you give it permission to be more, and that again, there's that mirror effect.

Steve:

Yeah. I think we need to spend way more time wandering into wonder. Wonder more and let our minds wander more with openness and with curiosity. Because when we think we know how life works, how reality works, that becomes our reality. We box ourselves in and we rule out other possibilities. Some of those possibilities could be amazing, like a stunningly compatible new relationship partner flowing into your life, a financial windfall, abundance of opportunities, a great new friend or new social group flowing into your life, amazing travel adventures just showing up. An invitation comes through, and just so much can flow through when we open ourselves. But I think a lot of people tend to be more risk averse, and they're worried about, well, if I open myself more, then some bad and unpleasant experiences will come through.

Colette:

Well, I think that's also because we've been exposed to so much sustained uncertainty. I think that right now, more than ever, certainly in this past few years, everything feels like it's



# INSIDE THE WOONIVERSE

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accelerated. But people's need for certainty is so much greater now. Hence, why I think we have such the outrage culture. No, you're going to change it. No, you're different. No, no, no, no. So you have all of this no, and then when we look at media, we see that we only look at ... We're only being served basically the content that tells us the world is going to pot. So then there's more fear. There's more need for us to be running our lives through the amygdala. So you've got the stress response. So consequently, it's very difficult to be curious and open and wandering into wonder when we're still searching for potential threats. So I think we have to really look at that, because we can't say we want something better or new or different if we don't take the steps ourselves to calm down, you know what I mean, and allow ourselves to be open, which is a discipline.

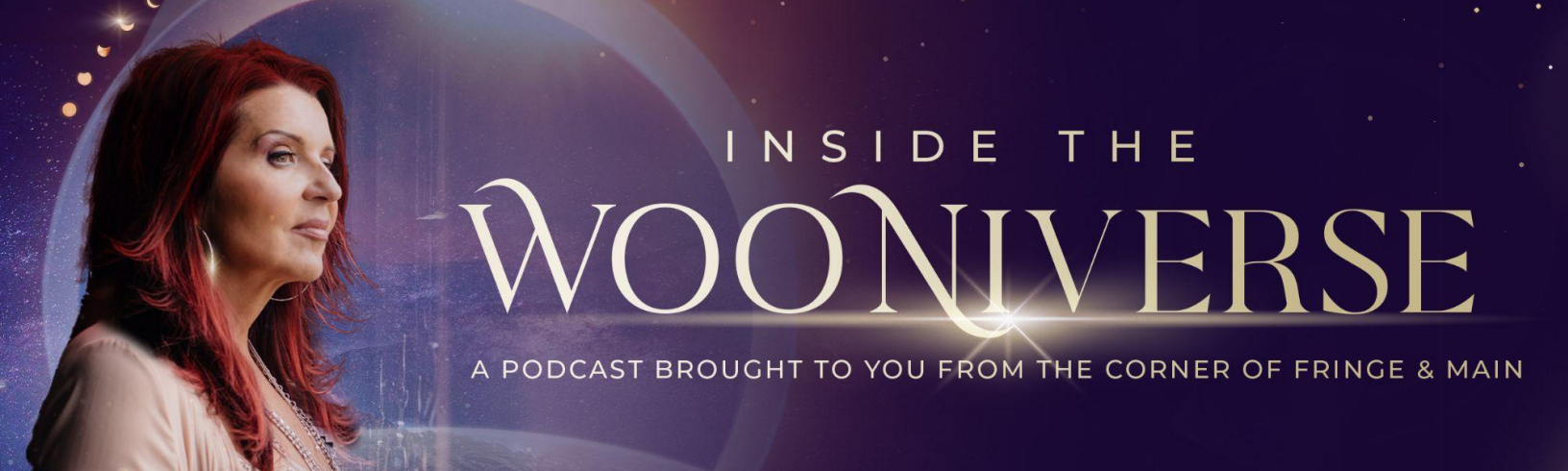
Steve:

And another way of thinking of this could be that all thought is intention. So your expectations, your beliefs, your assumptions, I like to tell people that all thought is intention. So then even observation is intention, especially observation with an assignment of meaning. Because we don't necessarily observe neutrally. We observe with a filtering. So that becomes part of the intention too. So let's say you want to stay safe, and you're looking at a situation and you're thinking about the risks, the potential dangers. I do see that as becoming part of the intention. But then what you can do is unpack that a little bit and say, "Well, what do I really want here?" Then you can say, "Well, I don't necessarily want to assume that I'm going to run into problems," because then that becomes kind of a traction vibe that you're putting out there for problems. But what you can do is say, "I want to feel safe. I want to feel secure."

So I remember with, say the Ayahuasca journey, I learned that the first day was really rough physically. Then I learned I could actually put some intentionality into that instead of having the expectation it would be rough physically like it was the first night. I just kept saying, "Gentle, gentle, gentle." I said, "You can give me intense experiences mentally and emotionally, but please go gentle on the body, my body. Be gentle on my physical body."

Colette:

My body. Yeah, I don't want to puke anymore.



Steve:

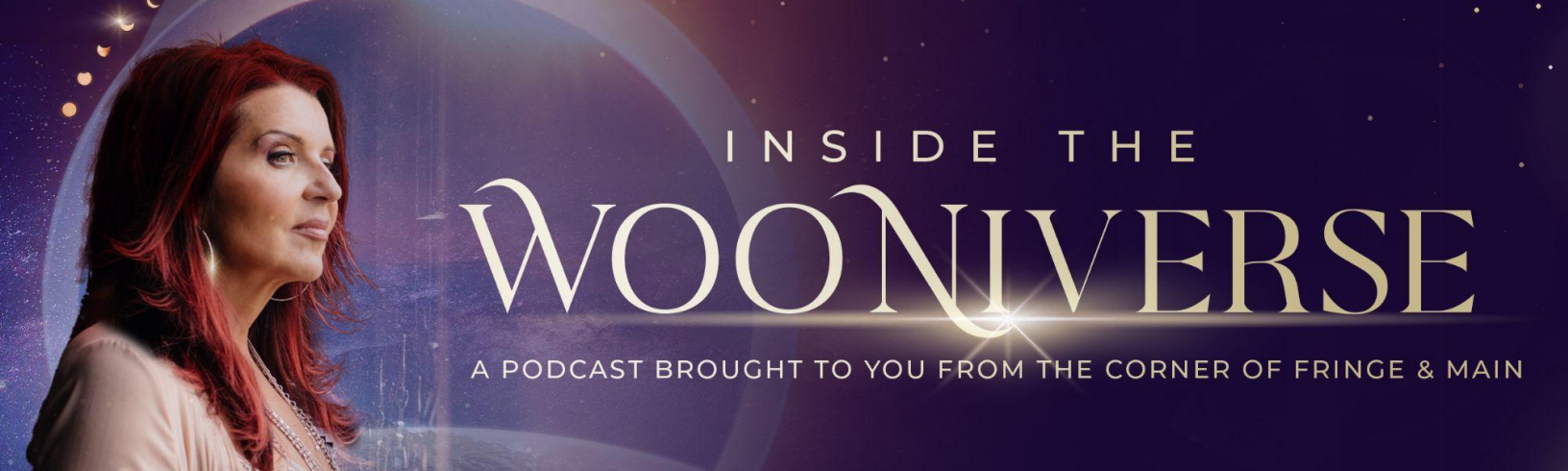
No, I was okay with that, but don't make me feel like I'm going to die. Maybe not my heart racing like it's beating out of my chest, and it worked. It responded to that. So that's I think something we can also do with reality. We can look at risks and we can look at problems in the world, but then we can actually respond with more intentionality. We can look at war and we can say, "Peace, chill, relax. Let's get back into love." We can at least hold that intention. It's reality's choice whether it will respond in alignment with that intention or not.

Colette:

Yeah. Well, I think that's a really interesting point, because again when you think of metaphysics, the metaphysical is, what's the causality of these things? So when you look at, I am here, and my intentionality is peace, but then there's something else going on, we can still be the neutral observer and not take it personally in some way without bypassing. There's a lot of talk about, oh, you're bypassing reality. But no, I'm acknowledging this reality is true, but this could also be true. So I think that's the resilience all of us need to learn how to do. This and that can be true. It's where our attention goes. So you talked about brain science earlier, and where does the reticular activating system of the brain fit into that? So as you know, that is part of the brain that actually, its job is to prove and look for evidence in the outer world that our beliefs have evidence to support them. So I believe this, therefore ... So that's our eyeballs start looking right? So did you learn anything about shifting that in some way?

Steve:

Yeah, I think on a practical level, one of the best ways to do that is to align with it, align with its job, and actually kind of assign it a bit of a different functionality. So it's sort of a proverb. It takes our assumptions and it proves them to us. It finds evidence. So if you are thinking about a financial lack, then you'll start noticing, oh, another bill I can't pay. You start noticing, oh, my debt, oh, this. And you start noticing all the supporting evidence of that. But what we can do is actually coax our reticular activating system into performing a little differently by pre-loading it with assumptions and such. So one of the ways I like to play around with it is just giving it different models of reality to play with. I'll say this could be a simulation that we're living in, a world like The Matrix. Maybe everything's not quite as real and solid as it seems. Then it's kind of like I'm telling my mind, "Go find evidence of that. Let's see what that's like."



Colette:

Oh my God, I have to tell you something. So I did that. So Gregg Braden is a dear friend of mine, and he talks a lot about-

Steve:

I love Greg.

Colette:

So of course I'm always piqued on that. So I started playing with that concept, saying, "What if I'm in a simulation, whatever?" All of a sudden out of the blue, I wasn't even thinking about that. That was just what I was playing with. Then I was just going about my business. So I had a friend over, and all of a sudden I started seeing this ... The edges of my peripheral vision were starting to disintegrate. I was so freaked out. I'm like, "Oh my God, I'm in an alien board game." I'm like, "No, no." But just by saying those things, by feeding that, making the assumption, oh my gosh, this is such an interesting conversation.

Steve:

I leaned into that with some experiments, just like I initially started with manifesting money. The way it started was really small. This was maybe around 2004, 2005, something like that. I used to go running every morning, run a few miles just around my neighborhood, not a commercial area, just a residential area, just running around houses and stuff, near them, all around the neighborhood. And I'd come back. It was how I started my day, just a morning jog. I noticed much of the time, I'd find a penny or two during the route. I had this habit of picking them up. After doing that for months, I kept wondering, why is it I keep finding pennies, but I never find nickels, dimes, and quarters? Where objectively are those pennies coming from? Why do I keep finding more of them? Are kids dropping them out of their pockets? Are they falling out of cars? How are they being replenished? Yeah, so I'm confused. I'm like, "Where are these pennies coming from?" Then I thought, I never find a nickel or a dime or a quarter, only pennies. That makes no sense.

Colette:

So how did you change it?



Steve:

So what happened is I was thinking this as I was running after I found a penny or something, I'm like, "What is going on here? Where are these pennies coming from?" I just got curious about it. Then a little later in that run, maybe a few minutes later, I found a nickel. I was like, "Whoa." And I thought, wait a minute, was that nickel always there and I was missing it and I was only seeing the pennies? Or did I just manifest that somehow and reality put it in my simulation just to tease me? Well, here's what happened. In the weeks ahead, I kept finding pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters on the same route I was running for months before. I'm like, "Whoa." So I was confused. I was like, "Is that my reticular activating system?" Was it somehow pre-programmed to only see pennies, and now I'm finding all this other stuff on the same area? How is this happening?"

It made me wonder, I don't know if I can really explain that, just from the reticular activating system. Was it really filtering out other coins? Why would it be doing that? Or is it like reality is messing with me somehow? It's kind of opening up me up to a different kind of experience. So I then started saying, "Well, why don't I just focus on quarters then and see what happens and just imagine there's lots of quarters in reality?" Well then eventually, the most abundant coin I would find everywhere would be a quarter. I'd still find pennies and nickels and dimes, but I'd mostly find quarters, not just while running, but going out. I'd be like, "Oh, there's another quarter. There's another quarter." I just kept finding, spotting quarters. I was in my first marriage with Erin at the time, and I'd come home from my runs and I'd be like, "Look, I found 32 cents today. Or, look, I found 60 cents." She'd be like, "Yeah, well, what's that doing for our finances?"

Colette:

Right, but still, you're a scientist.

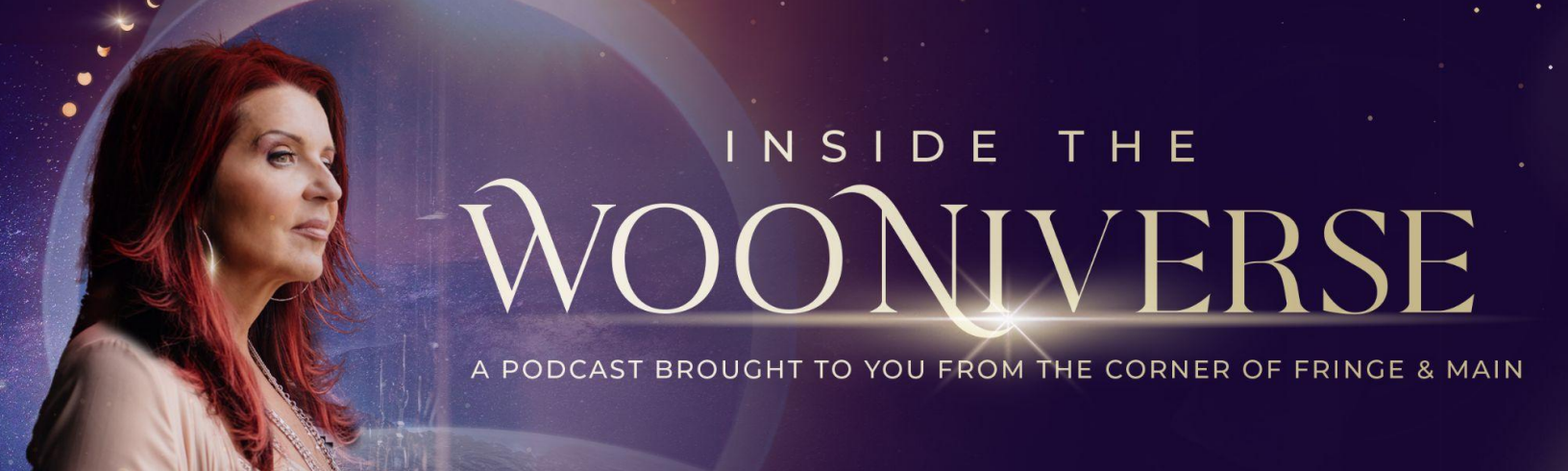
Steve:

So it made me curious. It made her curious to kind of play along with it too. So it'd be kind of this game when we were out on dates and stuff. I'd be like, "Look at all these quarters I'm finding."

Colette:

Oh, that's so funny.





Steve:

But it wasn't doing anything for us financially. Well, one time we're sitting at this restaurant and we're chatting about this weird thing that's happening with the coins. She says, "Well, why don't we manifest a dollar? Why don't we upgrade? Because if you were going from pennies to quarters, why don't we go to a dollar?" So I said, "All right, I'll hold that intention with you. We're going to manifest a dollar." So we go through the date, and as we're walking back to our car, about eight feet away from our car, just lying in the parking lot is a dollar bill just lying flat on the ground.

And we're like, "Whoa." So did we see that earlier and not notice it and it got programmed into our reticular activating system and then that made us set the intention? I don't know, but that led to more experimentation where we started trying to manifest more things. I remember we went on a date at the MGM Casino on the Las Vegas Strip, which is just 20 minutes from where we live. We decided to try to manifest a free black casino chip, which was 100 bucks. \$100, but we want it to be free. We wouldn't be stealing it from anybody or anything like that. So we go through the date and I find a couple of quarters and a couple of pennies. So I'm up to 52 cents, but not really getting there.

Colette:

Yeah, no black coin.

Steve:

So we're kind of giving up and we're walking through the shops area back to the parking lot. Right and as we're kind of about halfway through that area, I see a penny on the ground. By this time, I had Erin trained to see coins. So she saw a penny, a different penny, maybe 10 feet away. And we both go pick up these pennies. Then as I'm looking up, I see there's a gift shop right in front of me and there's a case, a plastic case in front of me filled with black souvenir casino chips. They're not-

Colette:

Oh my God.



Steve:

They're not real. They're just the souvenir kinds.

Colette:

Yeah, you weren't specific.

Steve:

Yeah, but well, get this. So I'm like, "Oh man." I said, "I meant a real one." But, so then I thought, well, this is kind of fun and I want to remember this experience. So I thought, what the heck? I'll go buy one. So I grab one. I stand in line, and they ring it up the register, and it comes out. I didn't even know what the price was. It's not going to be much. It's a piece of plastic,. So it comes out to 50 cents plus tax, which was 54 cents. The 52 cents I found earlier, plus the two new pennies we just found, we had the exact right change to buy that souvenir thing. That just led to all kinds of more experiments where we manifested \$100, \$1,000, \$10,000. Then when I set this intention to manifest more, I realized I was kind of hesitant about it. But then some months later, the Hay House book deal comes up and it had the advance, which was in the range of what I was asking for. So that was weird too.

Colette:

Oh wow, but it's fascinating because what that proves, I love these anecdotes. I love, because this is evidence. Yes, can you empirically do this again in a lab? No, but these are the kind of stories that I hear all the time in my school, in my classes. It's crazy, and in my own life as well too. It's just that you have to believe that it could work or at least be open and curious to see, which I find I have less interest in the belief than I do in the curiosity part. Jeez, I wonder, because then you are really hoot-less about it.

Steve:

I found that you don't really have to believe it can work. In fact, you don't even have to be that open it can work. What I found really helps is to doubt that it can't work. Just create some doubt.

Colette:

Right, doubt that it can't. Oh, that's a great-



Steve:

Exactly. Be uncertain, because you're not really certain about how reality works. So I always remind myself I don't know the rules of how it works, and so it doesn't have to obey my expectations.

Colette:

Oh, I love that. So you kind of let yourself off the hook.

Steve:

I crack open the doorway to possibility with doubt in the old framing and that works really well.

Colette:

That is fascinating. I-

Steve:

Because my mind won't go to a belief if it doesn't see evidence of it. It's really hard to try to believe something that you don't already know is true, but you can doubt something you think is true if you've had that experience before. I just remind myself I've been wrong about a lot of things and humans have been wrong about a lot of things in our history.

Colette:

Yes, they have.

Steve:

We're probably wrong about more things than we're right about.

Colette:

That's fascinating though. I'm actually going to try that, because I think that's actually a phenomenal step, especially for people who are brand new at manifesting and creating reality, etc. But this is a fascinating beginning point. Okay, we're going to take a little break now, and when we come back we're going to switch gears and enter into another dimension of the Wooniverse, the tea time after party. So please stay with us. We'll be right back.



Thanks for joining us today and welcome back. With us today is leading personal development innovator, blogger, and author Steve Pavlina. Okay, Steve, we're going to ask you some fun questions.

Steve:  
Oh, awesome.

Colette:  
And we are joined by our executive producer, Connie Diletti. I could have talked to Steve for two hours. I know we can't, but I was like, "Oh my God, he's on a roll."  
Connie: Amazing, I love it.

Colette:  
I want to stay here forever.

Connie:  
I love, love, love.

Colette:  
We'll have to do it again.

Connie:  
Yes.

Colette:  
But anyway, Connie, I'm going to start with the questions, okay? So Steve, if you could have any animal as a pet, but it had to be the size of a mouse, what animal would you choose?

Steve:  
Oh, I love bears, so I'd pick a bear.

Connie:  
Oh, his bear.



Colette:

Oh, a little bear mouse.

Steve:

Yeah, a little baby bear. I just have a strong affinity to bears. I feel like bears are my core spirit animal, bears and eagles. Eagles remind me to soar, but bears always give me the sense of grounded-ness and protection. Just doing this kind of work, I'm sure you get this too, we're exposed to all kinds of-

Colette:

Stuff.

Steve:

Negative energy sometimes.

Colette:

Yeah, very much so.

Steve:

Feedback, criticism, trolling, things like that. My ex-wife Erin had a stalker going after her.

Colette:

I had one.

Steve:

She had to get the FBI involved too, so I always think of the bear as a symbol of protection, keeping me safe, keeping my energy field clean, not letting negative hooks get into me.

Colette:

Love it.



Steve:

Because that can really corrupt my thinking.

Colette:

Awesome.

Steve:

So I love bears.

Colette:

Awesome. Okay, well, you got a little weeny bear. All right, Connie, your turn.

Connie:

So I was reading, preparing for this. In your extended bio, you mentioned that the actress, Lindsay Lohan, has a tattoo that references your work. Would love to hear the backstory about that.

Steve:

Yeah, I wish I knew more about it, but I know she was into the book, Personal Development for Smart People.

Connie:

That's so cool.

Steve:

So she got a triangle tattoo because the pattern in the book is about three core principles, truth, love, and power, and how to combine them into other principles. Truth and love combine into oneness. Truth and power combine into authority. Love and power combine into courage. Then I say all three of them combine into intelligence or wisdom. So it was-

Colette:

We need to redo that book again.



Steve:

That model of just the triangle of those principles.

Connie:

Yeah, it's beautiful.

Steve:

So she got a triangle tattoo to remind her of that. I found her history is getting tattoos that remind her of certain core ideas that she wants to physically ground into her body. So I found that interesting. I've never talked to her about it. I learned about it because some tabloid magazine contacted me. I didn't talk to them because I didn't want to go into that kind of energy, but they told me about it and then I saw it on Lindsay's blog.

Colette:

Love it. Okay, next question. If you could have a superpower, but it had to be completely useless, what would it be?

Steve:

A useless superpower. Maybe it would be something like a create napkin power.

Connie:

That's amazing, actually.

Colette:

Create a napkin?

Connie:

So useful, actually.

Steve:

A napkin's pretty versatile. You can use it as a tissue in a pinch. You can use it as a towel.



Colette:

That's pretty useful, though. That's pretty good though.

Steve:

You can use it to-

Colette:

He's going to make-

Steve:

Protect your clothing during a meal.

Colette:

A napkin.

Steve:

In fact, if you make enough of them, you can use it as a pillow.

Colette:

Oh my God.

Connie:

It is a genius idea, obviously not a surprise, but that's genius.

Colette:

Yeah, exactly, genius idea. He'll never come up with anything that's useless, Connie, okay?

Connie:

Yeah, no, ever.

Colette:

Your turn, your turn.





Connie:

No, never, of course. So if you could be wildly successful in another profession, what would you like to get into?

Steve:

One thing I thought about, this is maybe a bit related, but I always thought it'd be fun to have my own talk show, not in a podcast way, but a television show, even a traditional style television show, and be able to bring on guests, but having a lot of freedom and flexibility and being able to choose the types of guests and the topics and the depth we talk about and not really have to make it just short sound bites, but really talk to people about interesting, wild, weird, creative topics. I think that would be fun.

Colette:

Love it.

Connie:

Sounds great.

Colette:

Okay, if you could have any job in the world, but it had to involve a costume, what job would you choose?

Steve:

Well, that's funny because I've woven that into my current work.

Colette:

Really?

Steve:

For instance, yeah, in October of 2010, I did a Halloween workshop. It was October 29th, 30th, and 31st. So it was a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and the third day of the workshop was Halloween. So we invited everybody to wear costumes. I think we had about around 100 people show up to it. I wore a costume too, so I dressed as Obi-Wan Kenobi. So I loved it because



people were calling me a Jedi master and they're calling me master and stuff. I was like, "Oh, that's so much fun." Then there were other people there dressed in all kinds of different costumes. It just made me laugh and chuckle at the time because I remember at one point, somebody was asking about win-win, the win-win mindset. I realized the person asking was dressed as a vampire. I'm like, "A vampire?" I started busting up laughing. There's a vampire asking about win-win.

Connie:  
That's hilarious.

Steve:  
And my ex-wife Erin went as a queen, and I'm like, "So perfect for her." Then my girlfriend at the time, Rachele, she went as-

Colette:  
Who is now your wife.

Steve:  
Who is now my wife.

Colette:  
Who's totally awesome.

Steve:  
She's awesome. She went as Snow White because she looks a lot like Snow White.

Colette:  
She does too. She really does.

Steve:  
So that was actually something we did, was wearing a costume.



Colette:

Well, you already have the right job then.

Steve:

We do.

Colette:

Okay, last question, I'm going to ask it. If you could choose a celebrity to be your personal assistant, who would you choose and why?

Steve:

Bradley Cooper.

Colette:

Oh, I love Bradley Cooper. You tell me why.

Connie:

Me too, yeah.

Steve:

I loved him in the movie Limitless, and so I thought I want to have a limitless personal assistant, or at least someone who can play a limitless personal assistant. So I'm like-

Colette:

Range.

Steve:

Take your pills and then go to town.

Colette:

Oh my God, you're hilarious.



Steve:

I want to have a personal assistant who's really, really smart.

Connie:

He's also fluent in French.

Steve:

Oh, awesome, yeah. I'd be like, "Bradley, learn this, figure this out, edit this." Also, I figured he's probably really extroverted and social. Maybe he's not, but the characters, I think he plays them to be very extroverted and social.

Colette:

Well, that sounds like a great plan. So listen, to learn more about Steve, all of his courses and other offerings, his books, head on over to [StevePavlina.com](http://StevePavlina.com). You're going to find a transcript of this episode, quotes, all the links, and so much more on our show notes page. So go to [ITWPodcast.com](http://ITWPodcast.com) or click the link in this episode's description. This was so much fun. I loved having you on the show. Thank you so much for joining us, Steve.

Steve:

Thanks, Colette. Thanks, Connie. My pleasure. It was a lot of fun.

Colette:

So what did we learn today? Oh my God, I learned so much. But you know what the best part was, that we could play with the assumption that if we don't know what reality really is, we don't have to believe in anything. We just have to doubt that the way we think reality works could may be not right. But we then can feed ourselves different assumptions and then literally task our reticular activating system of the brain to go show us something different. Really, what he was talking about today was all about manifesting and tapping into that shared consciousness and the field, the quantum field. This was fascinating. I just loved him. Anyway, thank you for listening. I could just go on and on and on, but until next time, I'm Colette Baron-Reid. Be well.