



EP83:

Be the Calm or Be the Storm

With Captain Sandy Yawn

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, and joining us today, oh my God, I'm so excited, is a renowned super yacht captain with over 30 years of international maritime experience, Captain Sandy Yawn.

Captain Sandy is a leader and businesswoman who broke through the proverbial glass ceiling to achieve the highest status in an industry where women at the helm are rare. Not only has she earned distinguished and heroic accolades from the Superyacht Society, but for the last 15 years, and I'm sure you all already know this, she's been a series lead on Bravo's hit TV show Below Deck, and more recently, she's become a member of the Hay House family. Yippee.

Captain Sandy:

Yay.

Colette:

Her book is called Be the Calm or Be the Storm, and we are so lucky to have her here with us today. Welcome to the Wooniverse, Captain Sandy.

Captain Sandy:

Thank you for inviting me. I am just blown away that I'm here, because for so many years I was the storm before I learned how to be the calm. I'm just happy to sit here with another Hay House author and banter.

Colette:

Yes, and we have many things in common, which we will touch on today. Anyway, listen, we love to have a good backstory, and I want to start at the beginning. Let me ask you about



relationship between you and your higher power. When you were a kid, did you have a sense that there was more?

Captain Sandy:

Yes. I was in second grade. We were forced to go to church just to get out of our parents' hair, it wasn't to get close to God. It was like, "Go, let us have a Sunday." It was a Southern Baptist church in Florida. I remember going to this Sunday school, which I loathed and didn't know why, and then this lady prayed with me and I felt a presence. I'll never forget the feeling I got when I walked away. I think that was my very first connection with a higher power. I'm sure it lived in me until I was in second grade, and then I knew in that moment there was something bigger than me that made me feel safe.

Colette:

You know what's wild? I think about grade two, in Canada that's second grade, I'm seven years old, and that was when I first saw my Scottish nanny, Mrs. Kelly, read playing cards like she was a psychic. But I remember also at Sunday school. We were Anglicans and I had to go to Sunday school too, but I loved it. And somebody prayed with me too, it was very similar. It was seven years of age when I really got that there was something greater. And for me, it showed up also with Mrs. Kelly, with the card readings, because I could see the energy shift, but it was at Sunday school for me as well. Then I really got into church because I thought, "Ooh, something really amazing is here." I'd look at the halos around the saints in the church because I saw auras around everybody and then I just thought that meant everybody was holy. But anyways, this show's about you, not me, but it's just interesting that we both had the seven-year-old-

Captain Sandy:

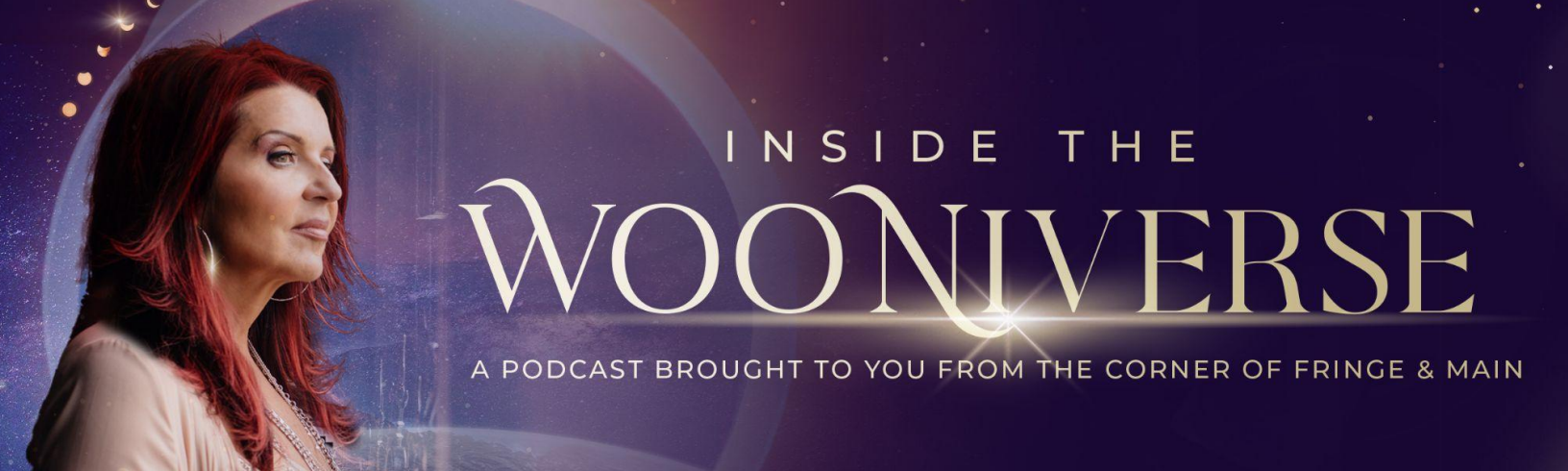
What a gift, but that's such a gift.

Colette:

Well, I'd rather be a super yacht captain some days.

Captain Sandy:

Yes, that's fascinating, but that's such an awesome gift. I didn't have that experience, yours sounds amazing. I didn't continue to go to church. In fact, after that experience, it was like,



"Wow," I felt so safe, I didn't need to go back. I played in the ditch with my cousin because we didn't want to go to Sunday school. We played through Sunday school and then got back on the bus. But I did have that feeling, but then I felt like, "Yes, I could conquer the world." It was really fascinating.

Colette:

Ooh. Let's talk about that, because I really believe that when we are finally touched by spirit, that is true. That because we are made of that Source energy, with a capital S, spirit, higher power, it's in us. I love that you said that, I could conquer the world. That's exactly what I was looking for, is that sense of beyond. Me, I kept going back because I thought I'd find something there, and that's also typical, we look for something outside of ourselves to connect us to spirit, but you can find it in a ditch and through play. Knowing that I could conquer the world, that's amazing. When did you start fantasizing about being a boat captain? Because that's a very specific thing to grow up and do.

Captain Sandy:

I never really did fantasize about it, because I grew up with an alcoholic mother. Addiction ran rapid in my family, my uncle, it was a chaotic life. Because I never really felt safe because I saw what addiction does to a family, that my safe place was in my soul, in my spirit and playing as a child. I just always felt like I was meant for something more, but not on a conscious level. I can't explain it.

Colette:

I get it.

Captain Sandy:

I traversed through life, and then at the age of 13 was the first time I had my first experience with drugs and alcohol. That's when I got on that merry-go-round. Then at the age of 17 is when multiple arrests, jails, institutions at that point, where I learned that there was a 12-step program and I didn't have to live that way anymore, but I never lost. I felt unworthy to look at the sky, it was really weird, when I started using. I never felt worthy to look at the clouds anymore. I couldn't look up. It was wild, I didn't feel worthy.



Then after I was introduced to the 12-step program through the court system, it wasn't by choice, I then knew that there was a way out of this addiction that grabbed a hold of my spirit and dimmed my light and made me feel unworthy. I felt hopeless and I felt all those things that I never felt as a kid. Well, I was still a kid at that point, but yeah. Then I knew, and then at the age of 25 is when all those years in between, chaos, destruction, jails, institutions, that 25 years young I realized that I wanted off that merry-go-round. That day, August 29th, 1989 was when I felt worthy to look at the sky again. It was just like that. My little light turned back on. It was awesome.

Colette:

Isn't that something? We obviously share this, I got clean and sober when I was 26, when I hit bottom. I would say I hit bottom, because actually I got clean and sober January 2nd, 1986 and I was in my 27th year, even though I was still 26. I understand what you mean about not being worthy to look at the sky. I think a lot of people could identify with this, even if they aren't addicts, about feeling that low sense of self-worth given that our society has become so polarized and so unsafe and uncertain, and then so many restrictions imposed upon people and ideas about who we're supposed to be, and Instagram, look at these kids who can't be like that, these fake looking lives that no one can actually meet. I really get that low self-worth is such a huge, huge way to hit bottom, and then not being able to look at the sky and then being able to look at the sky. Yeah, that's an amazing moment.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

Did you have any dreams or was it that you just found yourself around boats? Was there an affinity for water or was it just that you were spiraling out and then one day at 25 you got clean and sober and then life began to open up for you? Obviously, I believe this is your destiny. I believe your destiny came to get you, because I believe that happens to us in 12-step programs.

Captain Sandy:

Yes.



Colette:

I've been clean and sober 37 and a half years. I know exactly what you ... Right?

Captain Sandy:

Yes, yes.

Colette:

It comes for you. You can't actually decide.

Captain Sandy:

Right, exactly.

Colette:

Tell me how it came for you, and what recovery did. Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah. Water was always a connection, I'm a Pisces. I grew up in Florida, we were always at the beach, water skiing, we had small boats. Back and forth, my parents divorced very young, I think I was seven or eight years old, and summers with my dad on the lake in Florida and then the beach. But yeah, I was in addiction. Honestly, what I wanted when I was using was live in Key West in flip-flops, shorts, and a tank top for the rest of my life and smoke pot, because I never thought I'd live past 21.

Colette:

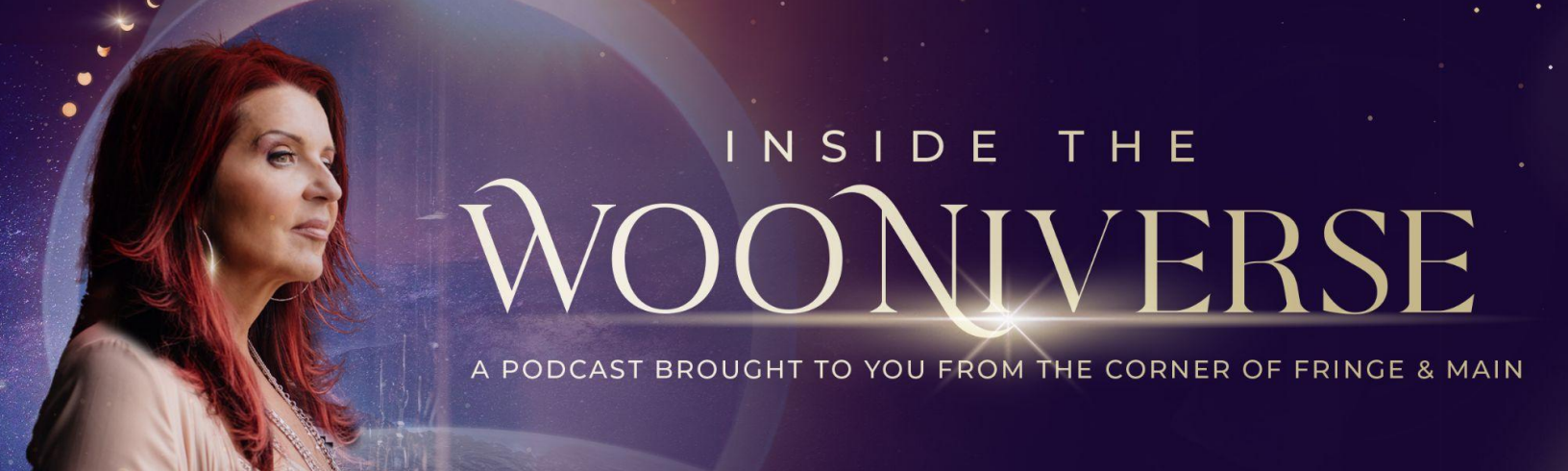
Yeah, I get it.

Captain Sandy:

Who thinks like that? An addict.

Colette:

You get it.



Captain Sandy:

When I did live past 21, that's when I was like, "Wow." When I got clean, destiny found me, and I'll never forget it. I went to vocational rehabilitation, which is a program where they sent me to school. They never tried sending anyone to become a dive instructor before, water related. I convinced them to do that and I got certified.

Colette:

Wow.

Captain Sandy:

I didn't actually work as a dive instructor. I needed to get a job to pay all my fines to get my driver's license back, and I answered an ad in the newspaper that was washing boats. I started washing boats and next thing you know, I did-

Colette:

Washing boats, all right.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah. The guy offered me a full-time job and I was like, "Sure." He sent me to sea school, he invested in me, because I was sober and grateful and I could appreciate a sunset, and I was just so happy. You know that song, You Can't Touch This? That's how I felt about it, you couldn't touch my spirit anymore because no matter what, you couldn't dim my light.

Yes, because I found a solution, and I had a sponsor and I was working the steps and I was on fire. I was working in the sunshine, exercise, washing a boat.

Colette:

I love that. Can't touch this.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah. And it was so cool. And he offered me a job and sent me to sea school and I was like, "Wow, this could be a career." And then the path just opened up with the work. So the path didn't open up and it was equal. So the work, the road, I just kept walking. And you know what it's like we get sober. We're like, "Just give me a sign something. Just please give me the



instruction book to life and how to do this." But it was just my sponsor goes, "Wake up, get ready, take a shower, eat breakfast, get ready for work, go do your job, come home, go to a meeting, say thank you, get on your knees and say thank you, and go to bed."

And I would call my sponsor and say, "Blah, blah, blah," and she goes, "Go to sleep. Say thank you, and go to sleep. It's 10 o'clock at night." And it worked. And that was my path to becoming a captain, really. It was the work I did in recovery coupled by the opportunities that kept unfolding for me because I kept doing the next right thing and someone believed in me because they saw the potential in me. And then boom.

Colette:

Right. So when you say the work, you're referencing the 12 steps. So what do they mean to you? So I really believe the spiritual life is the primary life. I believe that that's just been that. There is no life without the spiritual life. This is in my experience. Tell me it from your experience, what does it feel like to you? What does it mean to you to have this, and how has your intuition clicked on as a result of it?

Captain Sandy:

The 12 steps are the reason I'm here today and the work is in the 12 steps, in my connection with a higher power, my spiritual life. Because without that, I have nothing. And my sponsor, I'll never forget, she said, "I want you to write one feeling of each step." The first step was hopeless. I didn't feel hopeful.

Colette:

Right.

Captain Sandy:

And then the second step for me was I felt out of control. How I felt. The third was I didn't feel connected, so I had to write one feeling, which was really great. I needed that simplicity. And then after that, we built on that. So how did I become hopeful was I admitted I had a problem and that I wasn't the solution.



Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

It was my connection that if I continued and that's what I did, and I had someone hold my hand, because it takes people to help us through this. We can't do it on our own. Even though I had this connection and I felt like I could conquer the world, I needed someone to help me and to lay out the perimeters. And I had all this stuff that I did wrong in my past. And I had another sponsor, and I'll never forget, she sat me down and she goes, "We're making restitution to all these people."

And I had this furniture I never intended paying for. I went to that furniture store, I sat in front of that manager and I said, "Sir, I can only pay you \$5 dollars a week." And I paid it off and I paid \$5 dollars a week. And that feeling of restitution that I had by doing the right thing and paying off my debt was incredible. And Leah's really grew up in the religious world of organized religion. And some of the things she says is so profound and I'm like, "Oh my God, I did that. That says that in the Bible?" Because I never really read the Bible.

Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

And she goes, "Yeah." And I was like, "That's part of the 12 steps." It was really fascinating. And my connection with the higher powers daily, momentarily sometimes when I just want to feel that connection and direction, it really works, because you have those moments in life. And those 12 steps led me to that and the sponsor I had, because I couldn't have never done the 12 steps without someone in my life that had worked them before in that direction. And I had a sponsor that said to me, "Find other people, work them differently. Try them with other people because not one person has all the answers."

Colette:

And I'm so glad that that happened. I had to go to therapy also. So I did a lot of different things outside of the 12 steps as well to make sure. I had a really severe anxiety issue also. And I still



have once in a while, I just really manage it well, but it's also an addiction. I realize some days I'm powerless. This is a sign I'm disconnected, I have to turn it over. Where do I need to take a look at my part in it? Because sometimes, I don't know if you still do the weekly inventory, I still do that. The inventory for me is really, really crucial. Am I on track still? What do I need to clean up? And I love that you talked about the restitution piece. I also had a coat that this woman, I never paid her for it.

And I had gone through treatment and I was beside myself. I needed to pay this woman, but I had the money to pay her. So I went and found her, and I went right to her and I basically told her the truth. I said, "Listen, I was a cocaine addict and I took advantage of you," and I told the absolute truth, and I said, "I really am sorry, and I want to pay you plus bank interest," because I calculated everything she would've lost. And she looked at me and had this look on her face that I thought she was going to hit me, it was all screwed up. But what it was is she was about to cry. And then she grabbed me and said, "You have restored my faith in humanity," and then told all the people in the room that I was this ex addict that came with money.

It was so crazy. And every year, for a few years, she sent me a brand new coat every year as a gift. So you don't know, I didn't expect anything, but we don't realize how we impact people when something really serious is there. But it's also, I don't know if you learned this too, but I used to think I had to apologize for everything and I had to really discern what was my part.

Captain Sandy:
Right, right.

Colette:
That the program actually taught me that too. Because I had such low-worth, I just figured I was the cause of anything bad.

Captain Sandy:
Yes. Yes.

Colette:
I don't know if you felt like that too, but eventually I had to say, "Wait a sec, I cannot apologize to that man who punched me in the face because I made him angry."



Captain Sandy:
Wow.

Colette:
No.

Captain Sandy:
Did that happen?

Colette:
Because that actually happened.

Captain Sandy:
Oh my goodness.

Colette:
That happened.

Captain Sandy:
Yes. No.

Colette:
Oh, yeah. That happened to me. We learn to take the right kind of responsibility. And when people project on us, that's not always ours to own.

Captain Sandy:
That's right. Yeah. So that's when you have those moments where you're unclear, but you think, "Well, I didn't really do anything wrong," that's when you have this other person, for me, it was my sponsor that says, "No, that's not your fault. However, let's look at your part."

Colette:
Yeah.



Captain Sandy:

So although it wasn't my fault, I always had to look at my own behavior. We're taught not to look at the other person's behavior but our own.

Colette:

Yes.

Captain Sandy:

Something you triggered in me was about the coat, when we do things that we know are wrong, it stays with us. It lives in us, and it takes away from our light. It really does.

Colette:

I agree.

Captain Sandy:

And when we make restitution or amends, even if it's you cheated on someone or you cheated with someone, making that restitution or amends really helps. But in our steps it says accept when to do so, when injure them or others. You really have to ...

Colette:

Right, or others.

Captain Sandy:

... take a look at that. Am I doing this to clear my own conscience or am I really doing this because it's the right thing to do? If you're doing it to clear your own conscience at the expense of someone else, that's not okay. Part of the responsibility is living with what your mistake is and accepting it for yourself and forgiving yourself. You don't really need the forgiveness of others at the expense of others to forgive yourself.

Colette:

No.



Captain Sandy:

It's that internal work. That's that connection with a higher power. And that's really the work. So if it's tangible, I take these, I stole these years ago, make restitution. You're not going to hurt the other person by saying, "You know what? I didn't pay for the coat. I'm going to give you some interest." But if you cheated with someone's husband or wife-

Colette:

Oh, you don't say.

Captain Sandy:

You don't need to go tell them. You have to live with that. And that's where I did that. And the only reason I'm talking about this is because someone said to me, that was in recovery, said, "Go read your ninth step." And I was like, "Oh."

Colette:

Right.

Captain Sandy:

And then I read the ninth step, then I had to call my sponsor. And that was explained to me. So I really like that. And for me it's contingent on the spiritual maintenance through the day. So my wellbeing, my presence in the world is contingent on the work that I do in the morning to prepare myself for the day. Sometimes you can start your day over. So it is all about that and it's awesome. I don't know. If I think of would I ever trade what I have today? Not in a million years. I love what I have and I'm not rich, but I'm rich in my soul.

Colette:

Yeah. I wouldn't be here. You wouldn't be here if it wasn't for that. Everything I have in my life today, I owe to those moments, that program, my sponsors. I had a sponsor that was like Aunt Clara from Bewitched. Her name was Marguerite Lee. She passed away, but she loved me, called me her exotic bird because I had blue hair and I used to wear thigh boots and spandex pants and studded brass. I was like this goth person that would come and I was determined and they were like, "Oh my God, look at this one here." But they said, "Keep coming back." And I



did. And you're right. And the definition of wealth. I love the way you just said, "I'm not rich, but I'm rich in spirit." I have so identified with what you said because that is the richness of a spiritual life with a consistent spiritual practice is wealth.

Captain Sandy:

You can't touch it. You can't touch this.

Colette:

I believe that. It's wealth. You can't. You can't touch that.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

You can't. We have to take a little break now. More with Captain Sandy Yawn when we return.

And we're back with Captain Sandy. Okay. Captain Sandy, my next question is, I'm dying to find out here, how the heck did you come to Hay House with this book? That Be the Calm or Be the Storm, it's such a great book. I want to know how that journey came around. And I do want to go back and talk a little bit also about some of your experiences as the super yacht captain. Because on the show, you always have so many beautiful sayings that really help people. So you walk your talk, you definitely, you walk it on the boat.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. I never thought of writing a book, not an author. Just honestly, everything that's happened in my life has been boom. Another one of those moments where the fans, they're like, "You need a leadership book. Where's your book?" Thousands of messages. And when you're just walking through life, doing the next right thing, just giving back to society instead of taking all the time, people cross your path and they cross your path because it's that moment in time that you're ready. When the student's ready, the teacher will appear. The person appeared. The agent appeared. Next thing you know, I'm sitting down with this agent, Nicole, and she talked me through it, walked me through it. Fascinating world, the book world. I had no



idea that they do auctions. I'm like, "You're auctioning me off?" It's the most bizarre thing. There were seven bidders and it was fascinating.

And I read Louise Hay. Hay House, Louise Hay, from the time I got sober, it was almost required reading in the program. Although it wasn't, everybody was reading the books. And I would've never thought in my life that I would be paired with Hay House, a book that was written that helped me with the affirmations to improve self-confidence, self-esteem. All that stuff that I learned with Louise Hay that I'm actually going to be published by Hay House? It was so fitting, so incredible. And that's how it happened. The fans, alignment with a woman that I read the books in my early sobriety to today, and that's how we created this book. And through the TV show, Bravo's done a great thing. It's reached millions of Americans. It gives people hope out there, there are jobs in the maritime industry. I'm so grateful to be a part of that.

And I wanted to put my life before I got sober in the book because I think it's really important that people can see how you can change. And I always say, "I'm Sandy. My career choice, well, it wasn't my choice, it fell in my lap, I'm in the maritime industry. I'm a yacht captain, and I happen to be on a TV show and now I'm a Hay House author." It's just incredible. But I never forget where my feet are. Never. And I know that-

Colette:

Me neither.

Captain Sandy:

... I am here because I'm meant to be. And that comes with a responsibility. And part of that responsibility is to do that self-care, do those checks, connect with the spirit and just show up. And as tired as I am, I continue to show up because I know the energy that I get from showing up is tenfold.

Colette:

And there's a lot of humility and gratitude, I'm hearing from you. I don't know if that's true for you too, but for me, gratitude is the fuel. We got a second chance. I got a second chance. You got a second chance.



Captain Sandy:
Just a lot of chances.

Colette:
We did. And we have to show people that it's possible. And it's possible.

Captain Sandy:
Yes.

Colette:
We can and do change if we are willing. And you don't have to be in a 12 step program. It just so happens, I know this shows me and Sandy, we both come from the same egg. But the truth is that when you put a spiritual life as your priority, that's your first priority and live in 24 hour compartments. And we take that day and we commit that day to spirit and then ask, "What is my next right action," then literally everything falls into place. Even if you make mistakes, even if you recognize that some of your old patterns come up or whatever, life is very doable. But you change in ways, you transform in ways that you couldn't even imagine. That life you have, Sandy, you couldn't have imagined it.

Captain Sandy:
Not at all, not in a million years. And I love what you said in daily life, if you really want to work on yourself, get into a relationship.

Colette:
Oh yeah.

Captain Sandy:
Because that's when the other work begins. And that's beautiful in so many ways and then challenging in a lot of other ways. But at the end of the day, that mirroring and that work and admitting your own faults and saying, "I'm really sorry," and given the grace to be able to have a do-over is incredible. And it's through this program, I am who I am because I am sober and clean from drugs that I am where I am. And I know that. I'll never forget that. And the gratitude list is something that I'm told to do on a regular basis, which it's a habit. It takes 30 days to form



a habit, whatever it is, it takes 30 days. And when you start making those gratitude lists, that's when the humility and the grateful heart comes in.

Because you look, if you got bills and you're like, "Oh my God, I can't. What is that bill? It's piling up and all this stuff is happening." But for today, I have everything I need. I have food in my fridge. I have a car in my driveway, I have gas in it. The little things that I never had before, I can never let go of what it was like. I didn't have food in the fridge. I didn't have a car. I didn't have a driver's license. Today I'm responsible, I have a driver's license. Those little things you go back to and say, "What am I complaining about? If I can pay \$5 dollars a week on furniture that I was never intended to pay, I'm sure I could work out a deal with this and pay that bill off."

Colette:

I love even the analogy of paying the bills. Not even looking at the specifics of it, but when it's taking care of our obligations and what we're truly accountable for. Do you know what I'm saying? That's in all areas. And you do it a day at a time, and you can do it a little bit at a time. There was times where I wasn't willing to be forgiving, for example, because it makes you feel vulnerable. Sometimes somebody does something to you or accuses you wrongly of something or whatever. You want to be resentful. But then it's like, "No, I don't." It's like, "I want to forgive that person because I don't feel good." So then that you get there. I had to be willing to be willing to be willing. And then I'm willing, I'm going to do it. Then it goes to I do it. So there's these sometimes stages it takes and being patient with yourself, but doing one thing a day to move you towards that freedom. Because spirituality is freedom. It's a genuine freedom.

Captain Sandy:

That's right.

Colette:

It really is.

Captain Sandy:

Look at Mandela. He sat in prison for all those years. And he talks about this, how he was confined, but he wasn't confined because mentally he was connected. To hear his story is so empowering. Now, I would never want to have to have that experience to find that out. But, it's



fascinating because you're right. If it's in here and in here. This connects with this, and if this is right and you have that joy and that spirit and that connection, this suddenly gets clear.

Colette:

It really does. And being able to slow down and take an inventory and seeing what am I accountable for? What's my part in it? And then realizing sometimes, and also surrendering to the fact that sometimes you just can't have an impact on another person or a situation because they're not receptive to it. Do what I'm saying? And that's also you don't do amends and you don't take responsibility so that somebody else will behave a certain way. We have no control over that. It's why it has to be us to do it first, for us. We are doing it to clean house.

Captain Sandy:

Right.

Colette:

To clean house. It's so important. And sometimes just you don't have an impact on how another person feels or thinks. And that's the relationship piece that you talk about too. We are in community with others and we have to be responsible for our side of the street. But oftentimes when people want us to be responsible for their side of the street too, that's when the discernment comes in. And because we cause more damage, I think when we try to fix somebody else too. "Oh, don't feel like that. I'll turn myself into a pretzel for you," which is why everybody goes Al-Anon.

Captain Sandy:

Right. So codependent.

Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

You have to learn how not to be codependent because I think we are when we come in.



Colette:
Totally.

Captain Sandy:
We're just so guilt ridden that we're taking care of others, because it makes us feel better temporarily. And then you lose yourself. Yeah. That codependency. Yeah. That's another book we read Codependent No More.

Colette:
Yep.

Captain Sandy:
I read that.

Colette:
Melody Beattie

Captain Sandy:
It was required.

Colette:
Yeah. So it seems that you and I were reading the same books. I had the same experience too with Hay House. I read Louise Hay. I remember being really struck by Marianne Williamson's book, A Return to Love. I think she published it back in 1987 or '89, I don't remember. But all those early Shakti Gawain, do you remember that book, Creative visualization?

Captain Sandy:
Yes, absolutely. Read them all.

Colette:
I read all the OGs.



Captain Sandy:
Yeah.

Colette:
Right.

Captain Sandy:
Yeah. And I did the Course of Miracles ...

Colette:
The Course of Miracles.

Captain Sandy:
... for a year.

Colette:
Me too.

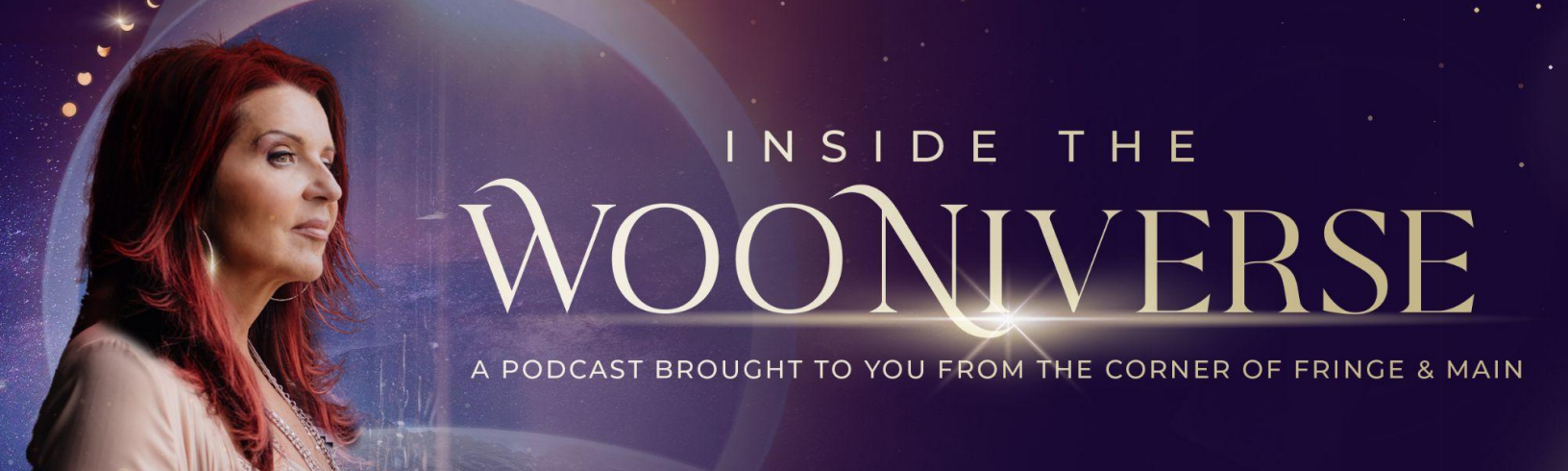
Captain Sandy:
Which was pretty awesome. Yeah.

Colette:
Because it was miraculous and it still is.

Captain Sandy:
And we're seekers.

Colette:
Yeah.

Captain Sandy:
We're seekers. So we seek and that's what transforms in a person when they get clean.



Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

You continually seek and you try different things. And they say that. If that doesn't resonate, try this, try this, try this. Don't be afraid to try and just do it. And then you can decide, "This isn't working for me." Try something else.

Colette:

Totally.

Captain Sandy:

Everything I've ever been involved in course of Marianne Williamson, love, read them all.

Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

It works. Road Less Traveled. Such a great read.

Colette:

Right, yeah. What was the one that was Healing the Shame That Binds, that was life-changing. So you're in front of us on television, and I want to know how do you stay so positive during storms? And then I want to talk about your book, because I think it's important to talk about what's in the book and what you're bringing to us. But how do you do that? I noticed that you're like everybody's mama.

Captain Sandy:

On TV ... Listen, over years, I've been doing this a long time. I was never ... In the beginning, it was a learning, like everything. Learning of different personalities, different nationalities, language barriers. And I grew up, no matter how dysfunctional my family was, we were always taught to be kind. That was in me. And I think also when I had that first connection with a higher power was the sweetness in the soul. And I just think that's someone's kid. It could be one of my



family members. And I always try the approach of encouragement, not discouragement. Because when you're in leadership, you want to make sure that first of all, you don't want to go through people. You don't want to tear their soul down. You want to build them up. You want to build something of trust.

And when I step on a boat, I always say to the crew, "I trust you and I respect you. I don't expect you to trust me. I don't expect you to respect me as a person, but you need to respect the position I hold." And I know it's my job in leadership to earn their trust and their respect in the time that we are doing this season together. I don't set out to do that. I set out to do my job and they see how I have their back, and then I show up for them. I help them wash the dishes, take the garbage out. I don't go to bed and say, "Bring me coffee. Where's my lunch?" Like a lot of captains do.

I'm on the ground with them and I help them. And that's when I earn their respect and they see how I have their back when it comes to the clients. And I stick up for them. And that's when I earn their trust. And by the end of the season, we have this beautiful working relationship. And that's how I do it. I have my moments. Trust me, I'm a human being. I go in my cabin, I call Leah, I call my sponsor. I call my friend Randy Gold, and I just like, "Blah."

Colette:

"I need to get off this boat."

Captain Sandy:

And then I'll come out of my cabin prepared. I connect with my higher power, and I reset myself. And a lot of times when I can't go in my cabin, I look at where my feet are, look down, take a breath, look up, and then respond. These things that we learn by getting clean and sober and doing that work in those 12 steps. We learn how to pause, we learn how to treat others, we learn this. It's all learned. So I did this through the years, and that's made me who I am today as a captain. And I love what I do and I love people. And the book is everything that I have experienced before *Below Deck* is in that book, with my former crew and how we work through things and storms and the threat of pirates together. And honestly, the constant in everything I've done in my life at sea that's in that book is my connection to a higher power. My connection. And that's what drives me.



Colette:

Is there a specific spiritual experience or moment of clarity or even spiritual-

Captain Sandy:

Yes, I have many.

Colette:

Yeah. Okay.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

Yeah. Let's hear some.

Captain Sandy:

On anchor, off of the coast of Mallorca, which is northwest Mallorca, in this beautiful anchorage, rocks around us, beautiful, the storm comes. The wind out of nowhere. All of a sudden we're dragging anchor, have people on the bow. The rain is coming, the owner's on board. I close my eyes and I said, "God, please." And that second that I said that my chief student, Nicole, put her hand on my shoulder and said, "You're doing a great job." She didn't hear me say, "God, please." She didn't hear that. I was silent.

Colette:

Right.

Captain Sandy:

And that was God saying to me, "You're doing great. Don't stop." That was a spiritual experience.

Colette:

Right.



Captain Sandy:

I'll never forget it. I have these moments because to me, it's in the action of the desperation of am I doing the right thing? And when you have those moments, it's the people that touch you, that say things to you. That's the message. That's the spiritual awakening or experience. I've had many, especially at sea, when in those moments where you're freaking out because am I doing the right thing? Look where I came from. People trust me. I got these lives in my hand. What is happening? I've had a lot of that. And also personally, where you have these ding, that feeling of this is what I'm supposed to do. Those are spiritual experiences for me. It's the subtle things.

And you know the two boats and the helicopter story? Where it's a flood. The guy's ... The little boat comes, "I'm going to rescue you," and he's like, "I'm going to wait for God to save me." The second boat comes, he's on the second floor, "I'm going to wait for God to save me." He's on the roof, the helicopter comes, "I'm going to wait for God to save me." He drowns, he goes to heaven. And he goes, "Why didn't you save me, God?" He goes, "I sent two boats and a helicopter."

Colette:

Helicopter, right.

Captain Sandy:

And that's how I feel.

Colette:

And the world works like that. So that story, the two boats and a helicopter, is really how the world works as our oracle, because it's always speaking to us. The universe or conscious universe or God or spirit speaks through people often to us just when we need it.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.



Colette:

Just in that moment. Any other wild amazing thing happened that really stuck with you?

Captain Sandy:

I had a fire in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen.

Colette:

Wow.

Captain Sandy:

During a civil war, right after President Bush was reelected two years after September 11th. And I remember the fire, the crew, everything was happening, and I got so calm. I remember praying, "I really need some help here, dude," because I call my higher power dude, whatever I want to call him.

Colette:

Oh yeah.

Captain Sandy:

Like, "I can use your help here, dude." And I got so calm and so clear in that moment of what to do next. It was like the manual of how to do it was in front of me. That's the clarity I had. And for me, every time that I've been in those moments, I ask for help. I ask silently. I don't do it out loud, so everybody around me is freaking out like, "Oh my God, the captain's praying. Holy shit, we're going to go down." No. I do it where I don't frighten others. I do it because I'm frightened in that moment and not clear on what to do next. And that's when I have those moments, "Please help me here," and yeah, it's the clarity.

Colette:

And it comes. It's when we really-

Captain Sandy:

Yes.



Colette:

Because what we're doing is surrendering to the power that is not us. Who's large and in charge? Not I.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

It's the remembering that, "Okay, I'm not in charge here. I need the help, but I'm surrendered to it." And it's like, "Thy will be done through me." So I always say, "Use me as thy will." I think even that's one of the prayers, "Relieve me of the bondage of self, so that I may better do thy will. Let there be light."

Captain Sandy:

Right.

Colette:

That through me, "Thy will be done through me." So it's really saying to use me as your instrument, and bam, there it is. The manual, like you said.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

Yeah. And you don't forget those moments. I know you just don't forget those moments. Let's talk about your understanding of leadership, because that's a lot of what the book is about. What does personal growth play in effective leadership? And that's for anybody.

Captain Sandy:

So to lead others, you need to learn to lead yourself first. So that's the self-work. I speak a lot to corporations, and if you're a mother and you have a 16-year-old or a 17-year-old, you just have a fight and you're a CEO of a company or a manager, you have that energy in your car, how do



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you show up at work? How do you change that? So you got to find tools that work for you to shift the mindset before you walk into work and you got piles of paperwork and your staff isn't showing up and you're ready to lose your mind because you just had it with your kid or your husband or whatever. And the tools for me that I utilize is music. I'll play a happy song in the car, a song that resets the brain. And when you step into that corporate world or wherever you go to work, you're able to reset that.

So that's part of that self-leadership in order to lead others. Colin Powell does a great speech. You can Google it. It's a leadership speech that he does. It's a press conference and it's so fascinating, how you can't show him that you're cold, hungry, and tired. You have to show up as a presence of leadership that exudes this feeling that you can conquer the world together, that you bring your team together, that we are going to get through this. These rough seas will calm down. We will dock again. We will refuel, you will get rest. But in the meantime, you got to show up in that way where you empower them no matter how tired they are, how hungry you are. You have to show up in a way that you're not hungry, that you're not tired, that you can lift them up when they're tired, that you'll pick up and help them like I do in the kitchen, wash the dishes, take the garbage out.

That's leadership. Leadership is doing for them in the moments where they can't do for themselves. And that's not saying, they're not doing their job. That's saying that you're helping them do their job. And a lot of times it's also stepping back and saying, "Make those mistakes," so they course correct. So when I give someone a job description that's very thorough, and we talk it through now, it is their job to take that job description and put it to use and implement it into their world. And sometimes they make mistakes. You got to allow that, but not bang them down. Just say, "Well, that was a learning curve," and empower them. So that's what I do. So in order to lead others, you need to have that self-leadership. And that's that self-care, checking yourself, checking where your feet are and staying in the moment. And I learned this from someone.

This isn't my material. Past thinkers are very depressed and just gloom-and-doom, forward, thinkers are usually anxiety ridden and, "Oh my God, what's going to happen?" And as a leader, you need to be a present thinker. You can't be back there. You can't be ahead. Of course, you have projections, however you need to be present with your team. And that's really what I try to



do every day. And some days I'm not great at it. And that's when I do that self-check. And my little toolbox that I have of these little things that work for me, music is a big one. Big. I have a set of songs that I go to. I hear new music, I add it to my set list, and I'll pop in my cabin, reset my brain, come out going, "Yeah, I got this."

Colette:

Oh, I love that. I love that. Let's pull a card together and see if there's anything else that we could be talking about.

Captain Sandy:

Yes, of course.

Colette:

Is that okay with you? An Oracle card?

Captain Sandy:

Yes. I love that.

Colette:

See what's our next right action to talk about. Would you like that?

Captain Sandy:

Sure.

Colette:

All right. So I'm going to pick a card. Actually, I know what, I'm going to pick a card from Wisdom of the Oracle. It's a different deck. It's the one that I teach with.

Captain Sandy:

I love that.



Colette:

And I have a feeling. All right. So let's see what the Wooniverse wants to talk about today. Let's see. Okay, we're going to pick a card. Is there anything else we should be talking about today? Yes. Fairness.

Captain Sandy:

I love the card.

Colette:

Let's talk about this card.

Captain Sandy:

Fairness, I love that.

Colette:

It's called To Be Fair, and it's about how we engage with others where we can bring in balance and fairness. So any story that you have quickly that brings to mind this idea, how does this operate for you?

Captain Sandy:

Let's talk about relationships. Personal relationships. I think-

Colette:

There you go.

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

Yeah.



Captain Sandy:

So it's perfect. When I do something that triggers Leah, I have to be fair and allow that space for us to have that conversation and not point the fingers.

Colette:

Yeah.

Captain Sandy:

I think fairness, even with my crew. So I just always want to be fair in a negotiation. So if I go back and in a negotiation for financial, I get paid, so I want to be fair. I don't want to, "I am this and I deserve this, and I want to make this." It is what is fair. So I try to put myself in their shoes, in my shoes and try to come to the middle. And that's how I lead. That is how I lead in fairness. And if you interview anybody, I guarantee you they'll say, "Sandy's fair." I try to be fair. I'm not always kind. Even though I want to always be kind, my fairness doesn't come across as kind, but I'm fair.

Colette:

I know what you mean.

Captain Sandy:

I guess that's it. I don't really know how to describe it because I live it.

Colette:

I love that.

Captain Sandy:

I just live it.

Colette:

Well, we see that on the show, really. We see the sense of fairness, and sometimes tough love is being fair just to say, "Hey, I'm not going to rescue you. I'm going to have you participate in



your own rescue." And that's the fair thing to do sometimes. You stay out of a conversation sometimes, that would be the fair thing to do. It really is interesting.

Okay, Captain Sandy, 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 renowned super yacht captain and one of the leads of Bravo's Below Deck, captain Sandy Yawn. We have time to go quickly into the tea time after party for some fun with Connie, our executive producer Connie Diletti's here.

Connie:
Woo.

Captain Sandy:
Yay.

Connie:
So happy to be here.

Colette:
Woo.

Connie:
Yay.

Colette:
Yay. All righty. We're going to switch gears. I'm going to start with a question. If animals could talk, what type of animal would you like to have a conversation with?

Captain Sandy:
A puppy. I love puppies, so I would have definitely a dog.



Colette:

That's to Captain Sandy.

Connie:

Okay. You've traveled so far and wide, so if you could be fluent in any language overnight, what language would you like to be fluent?

Captain Sandy:

Okay, so I'd speak fluent Italian because I love Italians. They are so romantic. It is such a ...

Colette:

Love it.

Captain Sandy:

... romance country. It's romantic, Italy. It is all about the romance. Being in the south of France is all about being sexy.

Colette:

Yeah. No, I go to Italy. What is gelato?

Captain Sandy:

Yeah.

Colette:

And you're just naturally sexy because that's just the way it is. You don't have to try. Okay. If you could be any supernatural creature, what would you be and why?

Captain Sandy:

Supernatural creature. What would my superpower be?

Connie:

Maybe a mermaid. Yeah, a siren.



Captain Sandy:
Well...

Connie:
A mermaid.

Captain Sandy:
Oh, a mermaid.

Connie:
Or would you-

Colette:
So we're picking for you now, Sandy.

Connie:
You're out to the sea...

Colette:
We're going to pick mermaid.

Connie:
It's a type of fish, right?

Captain Sandy:
Yeah.

Connie:
Okay, see?

Captain Sandy:
You're right.



Colette:

You're a Pisces. You're a mermaid. And you don't have to say why. Because we picked.

Captain Sandy:

I'm not creative. Perfect. Okay. A mermaid.

Colette:

That's okay. We're good. We're good.

Connie:

Love it.

Colette:

Thank you so much, Sandy. To learn more about Captain Sandy and her book, her podcast and television series, please visit her at captainsandyyawn.com. And as always, for a summary, quotes, links, and a transcript of this awesome conversation, visit us on our show notes page by clicking the link in this episode's description or by heading on over to itwpodcast.com. Thank you so much for joining us today, Captain Sandy. We love you so much.

Captain Sandy:

Thank you.

Colette:

Bye.

Captain Sandy:

Bye.

Colette:

So what did we learn today? Yeah, I think what I really got out of what she said about herself and what we both shared in common, but the idea that spirit comes first, that the higher power comes first. That we're accountable for no matter what goes on in our lives, there's always a



part that we play. So accountability is really, really key through everything that she talked about, about being present to life on life's terms, and also self-forgiveness is really huge too. We're not going to do life perfectly, and I just loved her stories, period. But anyway, until next time. Thanks for listening. I'm Colette Baron-Reid. Be well.