



WHAT DEATH TEACHES US ABOUT LIVING

Episode Transcript

Hey, it's Rebecca. Welcome to Returning, a podcast to return to yourself and the wisdom within. I'm so glad you're here with me. Thanks for returning.

Today, I am so very happy to be returning with my friend, the phenomenal Bronnie Ware. Bronnie worked at the bedside of the dying and alchemized her profound insights and experience into the prolific international bestselling memoir, *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying*, which has been published in 32 languages and has a movie in the pipeline as well.

Bronnie really is someone who speaks effortlessly and with so much compassion and profound wisdom. I find that her words sort of stop you in your tracks. It's like there is no escaping the truth in what she shares. And one of the things I love about her is she shares it with such simplicity and tenderness and space. This really is such a moving episode, and I just think you're going to get so much from it. I know I certainly did.

And as always, at the end of this episode, you'll find a guided Soul Inquiry for you to return to the wisdom within and explore the themes of this episode even more deeply. I know how precious your time is, so let's jump right into opening Sacred Space together now. At the center of your heart imagine a beautiful flower. With your breath, invite it to open petal by petal, revealing a light in the middle. This light is your inner wise self, your soul. Invite it to step forward now. And together acknowledging the keepers and custodians of the land where I am, where you are known and unknown. Beautiful. Let's begin.

Bronnie: Hi Bec.

Rebecca: Oh, you know said something before we started recording, which was actually one of the top questions that I personally want to ask you, because it's something that I admire about you so much, and that is your dedication to, like, living slowly and simply but like, while also having a big mission in the world and being a mom. Like, is this something that's always been important to

you? Is it something that came naturally to you or has it been like a big lesson? Like, tell me about that.

Bronnie: I think it's probably always come naturally. I've always, without a consciousness of it as a child or whatever, I was always happier when I was living gently and not rushed. But I can rush and I can get things done. But then I had the big lesson through my health that I don't function well overloading myself. And so I find I show up more efficiently for my work and more presently for my parenting if I don't overload my day. And yeah, it's actually become part of my natural habit now. And I don't like to be, I just don't set it up that I'm going to be rushed or late. But, you know, today, as I mentioned, I've just come, I'm in London and it's been a bit of a rush in the car to get here back to my motel from another appointment. But I got here with enough time to be grounded because I don't want to just fly in and go warm on here with anything in life and certainly not for a conversation like this. But yeah, I just don't, I really don't think we have to live fast, that we can still get as much done by living at a more supportive pace.

Rebecca: I know you and I have spoken about the push pull challenges of social media and how amazing it is to be able to have this vehicle of connection. But then also, you know, now it just seems like bite size, quick content, which is really, really fast and entertaining verses dropping in to that potency. And I love your vlogs that you've been creating with your daughter. I don't know how involved she is, but they're so beautiful. I've been watching them. And I do really notice that in all of your communication, Bronnie, it's like there is this potency. And I think that this is whether we resonate into being a creative or a mystic or just a conscious being like, it is this challenge in this fast paced world to, kind of, say yes to the call when it comes, but also stay true to the potency. And I know I struggle with, you know, that fine balance between creating and producing and like being the mystic versus the machine. How do you navigate that?

Bronnie: I think through a commitment to space, just truly understanding the value of space, of leaving space and committing to it as a necessity, not as a luxury. And so if I was to overload myself, I'm not going to show up as my best. And yeah, so I just think treating the practice of leaving space, so treating space as a sacred element in my journey that I'm not happy if I don't, if I don't leave enough space because otherwise it does get too fast for me.

Rebecca: That makes me think of one of the regrets I've written here. It's the fifth one. Which seems, like, obvious, but also it's actually the most perplexing to me. It's something that I question myself of, like. I wish I let myself be happier. And anyone who is new to Bronnie's work, she has an amazing book, which I will link to - The Top Five Regrets of the Dying. And number five, 'I wish I had let myself be happier'. It sounds so simple to be, like, because everyone wants to be happy, but is this, like, what stops us for letting ourselves be happy? Like how, and how do we let ourselves be happy?

Bronnie: It's a great question. The what stops us, I think, is probably the first one in being, which is about the expectations of others. And so a lot of our life can be shaped unconsciously by how we think we should show up in the world because of the expectations of others. And so the more you can face the fact that you're going to die and that you are going to die and that your time is actually sacred, every minute, every day is sacred, you start to let go of that influence of other people's opinions. And so then there's a freedom that comes which naturally makes life a lot easier and a lot happier anyway. But life will always have its shadow and its light. And I mean, most of the shadow is just our own resistance to our potential, I think. But in, you know, even in the hardest times, if you can stop and focus on a bird singing or focus on gratitude, find something to be grateful for in that day, or the wonder of a flower opening or something magnificent that is, seems really simple, but is actually incredible. You know, a perfectly in-tune bird or the magnificence of a flower opening. And it doesn't even need to be as beautiful as that, if you can just in that moment think, okay, well, life's really, really tough at the moment. I hate this chapter of my life that I'm in, but I can get outside today and breathe the fresh air and there's people that aren't well enough to get outside today or something like that. Then in that moment, even if it only distracts you for a few minutes, you have chosen to be happier in that moment. And so you haven't been dwelling in what the challenge is. You've actually made a choice in that moment to lean towards something happier. And the more you do that, the more it becomes a practice. And so it's not about denying the hard times and saying, I've got to be happy all the time because it's through the growth and through the shadows that we truly get to know our potential and what's important to us. But, if we can just make those small choices regularly, that I'm going to focus on something else, then we're creating the habit of allowing ourselves to be happier.

Rebecca: Oh, I love how you described that and brought nature into it because, yeah, I think, I think for me, like I've always been, when I was younger, I was kind of like obsessed with death and I just couldn't understand why everyone else was like, why wouldn't we, just like why isn't that all we think about. And like, what happens when we die and we're all going to die. Like, why do you think that we don't look at that? Is it that death scares us or is it that we just don't understand it? Or that we... Why? Why doesn't society look at death? Like in a, like if we look at it, it's this certainty that will happen. It is the greatest mystery. And sooner or later, we will definitely experience it directly. Like, why don't we look at it?

Bronnie: Hmm, I think it's certainly fear based and it's cultural as well. That in the Western culture we just deny it, which is just ridiculous when you think about it, because of the guarantee. But I think for some people it is the fear of the actual death or fear of life being over. But I think deeper underneath that Bec is that fear of maybe I've got it wrong, maybe I'm living in the wrong direction here, maybe I'm focusing on the wrong priorities. And so by denying death, you can sort of justify the chase for more, more, more, or you can justify the lack of connection with the greater family of humanity and just live in that, sort of, self-absorbed, or not totally self-absorbed, you know, caring about those in your inner circle, but not the big picture of humanity. And so I think that by denying

death, there's a certain freedom to behave badly. And it's not necessarily behaving badly as some people would judge it. But just as humanity is operating now, as a species, we are behaving badly. And so I'm not talking about, you know, going out and sleeping with a stranger or, you know, something that someone might judge as badly. I mean, the way we're treating our planet, the way we're treating each other, is behaving badly. And so by denying death and allowing ourselves to just not have to focus on what's really, really important, until it's too late, then there's a certain amount of license to behave badly, I think.

Rebecca: Yeah. Wow. And I think the special. Yeah. Yeah. Just tiny little questions and answers. Um, I think the regret that, like, strikes my heart the most, especially now that I've had kids, is 'I wish I didn't work so hard'. And I kind of struggle with that one because, like, I love my work and it lights me up and, you know, so it's not like I'm working just purely for money to pay for a house and, you know, like that kind of how I would see that regret. But now that my kids are growing up, like right before my eyes, I'm just like, oh my gosh. But I've also caught myself, I've got a couple of events that I tuned in and they were yeses for. And yeah, like I like to bring my daughter who's still a little baby. And/or do I leave her here with people who are able to look after her and all of that. And like, it's this anxiety that I've constantly got of, like, trying to do the right thing. But then there's all this guilt associated with it, you know? So it's kind of like that, I think, particularly in the context of being a parent, like, not wanting to miss your life, but then also recognize that sometimes your work does fulfill you. Do you know? So how do you, how do you figure out, like, where the line is?

Rebecca: Well, I think it's a very fluid line that changes all the time. It's a dance. And I don't think there's, like, in that regret about working too hard. That was when people were making work their whole life. And so it's not about not loving your work. I'm the same. I love my work. And in our field especially, we're very much project-based. So it's about leaving some space in between the projects, not going to perform like we could have in our twenties or be full parents yet. But, at the same time we're going to show up better for our kids if we do meet those other needs, because they'll always, as a creative soul, they'll always be a divided heart between parenting and our work. Because sure, our work actually feeds our children and that's very lovely. Thank goodness. But, it is also a part of us that we need to express. That there's things that come through us that life is asking us to share. So, I think in terms of the guilt, they do say they take the baby out and put the guilt in. You know, like it's part of being a mother, having guilt. But it can be dissolved. I have you know, it's a bit different for me, my daughter's 11. But I'm able to explain to my daughter that I'm doing this for both of us and that as much as I love it, I would much rather be hanging out with her and be on holidays, or out in the bush, or whatever. I would much rather do that. But in honoring this part of my needs, I'm showing up happier for her as well. And so I think it's just accepting that it is a dance and that there's no perfect balance because some days will be all set for work and we can't work at all because we have to parent. And some days we think we're going to not do any work, and our child is like, in my case, my child might get invited to a spontaneous playdate or your kids may sleep longer than normal or, you know, someone comes along to help you out and then

all of a sudden you find yourself having a couple of hours of really inspired work time that that you weren't planning. So, yeah, I think for me and what I would say to any other working mums is accept that it is a dance and that you just have to move with it and do the best you can as long as your child feels safe and loved, then that's okay. That's, everything else is, we're going to have a divided heart and there's nothing wrong with that because both are aspects of ourselves.

Rebecca: I haven't heard it like that, the divided heart, that strikes so true. So that's definitely how I feel. And yeah, I think as well, like I'm noticing I'm writing at the moment, which I feel so relieved to be doing. I didn't do it, I wrote a lot when I had my first Sunny, but there was no structure and order. And so it's almost like the stuff that's been coming in, it's all backlogged and I'm finally trying to get it out and it feels so, so good to just, like, have that flow again. But it's so different to when I used to write before. It was like I used to, like, live and breathe like it was a beloved, you know, sleep with it, that kind of thing. Whereas now it's, like, just these, like, tiny little windows...

Bronnie: That's right, but you get it done. You, somehow, you still get it done.

Rebecca: Yeah, that's so true. That's so true. I remember someone saying to me that they said that babies bring abundance and creativity and it's so true. It's just quite different to what you expect.

Bronnie: Yeah, well, it's true me being a parent that I got my act together. You know, it's funny actually.

Rebecca: Tell me about that. Because you, was it during the pregnancy or when your daughter was just born that you started writing your first?

Bronnie: Oh, I started writing before I was pregnant. I started writing Five Regrets, and I'd been blogging before that. But I had been very nomadic and I hadn't really prioritized money. And it was more a case of as soon as I'd saved anything, where can I go? Maybe I should invest this.

Rebecca: And I know in your book, you described yourself as, like, being a bit of a black sheep of the family. And I knew that you had such an adventurous heart and spirit and you lived all over. Tell me about that. Like, were you always like that? How has that shaped who you are? And do you feel like you kind of, like, came in like that or it was like something that you grew into through your life?

Bronnie: I think I came in like that. Even in the school holidays, I used to jump on a plane and go and visit families of friends. Or, I'd go off to a sports camp. I just couldn't get away quick enough. I just had this sense of adventure. And yeah, there was a moment in my twenties, I just left a really heavy relationship and I was driving to a friend's wedding down in Wagga Wagga. And I remember

thinking, no one in the whole world knows exactly where I am right now. And it was just a moment of bliss that never left me. And so for me, whenever I was on the road and I'd have that, sort of, recognition of that again like, oooh no one in the world knows exactly where I am. And it was just a freedom that I really loved. Yeah, but then I had this calling to have a family and I was blessed to conceive naturally and quickly and even though it didn't turn out with my daughter's father, you know, I still was amazed, you know, to be able to conceive, to birth at 45. First became a first time mum at 45 and in the same 24 hours, Five Regrets had been rejected by 25 publishers up to that point. And so I put it out independently four months earlier while I was pregnant. I had put it out and then in the same 24 hours as I became a mum, Hay House rang and offered me that international publishing deal.

Bronnie: You know, it was a birthing of me, of a baby birthing of me as an author, as a published author, birthing me as the provider, the financial provider. It was, you know, birthing me as a mother. It was, yes, such an incredible time. And it hardly ever rained, it was in Tamworth and in New South Wales, Australia, and it had been really a very drought time, very dry time. And it rained for three days and I love the rain and it had rained, it rained for three days while all this was happening. And yeah, I just remember thinking oh look at this, it's been raining for me, you know, it's everywhere. All the abundance kicked in.

Rebecca: Yeah, that is amazing. And so it was like the gates of life opened.

Bronnie: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Rebecca: And I know that you had some experience of working with birth or babies, but also you having your own baby as well as working with the dying. I'm curious, like this concept of, like the gates of life of, like, souls entering and leaving. Do you feel like they're similar? Like, is it a similar kind of energy that opens at birth and death, or is it different?

Bronnie: I think the gates open when the baby arrives in the womb. So I do think it's different because with a death, it's such an obvious absence of the soul extracting from the body. And so, the difference between a dying person lying there, resting, or in a coma, or whatever, and a dead body is so massive. And I find that quite astounding and beautiful in its own way. That this vessel is just completely empty at the end. And so I see them both as incredible, magnificent miracles of some sort, Because I mean, I was really blessed to know exactly when I conceived. I actually felt Eleanor come in. But I know that that's a very rare thing. And so I feel that that soul coming into the baby's body in our womb is, I mean, is just as incredibly magnificent, but it's a more private thing because we can't see it. You know, we do pregnancy backwards. We get to know our child once they come out. And yeah, I feel that we can celebrate the birth and that, you know, that release of one body from within us out of the world it is, you know, beyond words really it's astounding and beautiful. But, I don't know, I tend to think that the soul's arrival and the soul's departure it's less

obvious to us when the soul arrives in the baby as when the soul departs the body. That's just my thoughts, yeah.

Rebecca: So interesting. And yeah, I've really been with two people who have passed, as in their bodies. And I, prior to this, I was just, I was, you know, my work was always around the soul anyway, so, like, I had a, look, I believe in the mystery, which is, I could never possibly know. But my belief that currently exists and has for a while is like the soul animates the body. And so I, I felt like I knew that but when I saw my friend Blair's body after he had passed, he was, that was the first dead person I'd been with, I just could not believe how he just was not there. Like I knew he wouldn't be there, but it was like everything that made him him, like everything was not there. And I still can't believe that. Even though it seems like the most obvious thing in the world. But it's like they're literally gone.

Bronnie: Yeah, exactly. And you say it seems like the most obvious thing, but the actual reality of it is that astonishing. It's just like, how can that be?

Rebecca: And, with your experience of, like you've experienced that way more than me. Like, is it different every time in the sense of like it's gradual and sometimes it's, and I'm not talking about the mode of death, but is it like the soul leaving or this essence or not being there? Like, is it a black and white type thing, like you know when it's happened? Or, is it gradual? Or both? Or how could we possibly know?

Bronnie: It's both. Yeah, it's both. And something I came to a conclusion I came to and, you know, there's no scientific evidence on this or anything. And, but this is not a conversation for having to justify things through science, but something I observed after, with eight years of being by the side of the dying, was that those who had a faith in something beyond, whether it was a religion or some sort form of divinity without a religion, their transition appeared to me to be far more gentle. It's like there wasn't the resistance. And so the actual moment of dying and that extraction of the soul from the body, it's almost like they, it was just set free and off it went, you know, and that was that was it. But those who didn't have any sort of belief or who was still denying the death almost right up until the day there was a bit more of a fight for the actual extraction. Sounds like such a shocking word when we're talking about something so incredible. But, you know, the whole life force of things. But that's what I did find that sometimes it took people without any sort of belief a little bit longer to, for their body to actually let it go completely. So it took a little bit longer to die.

Rebecca: And so my mind goes, is that perhaps because they were afraid of the unknown or, like, do you think that it's like a mind type thing or...

Bronnie: I don't know Bec. I think by that time I've got to wonder if they're even capable of thinking that distinctly. It could be. It certainly could be. But I think that denial is a resistance to what is. And

yet, you know, people who are... One woman was telling me she, up until the day before she died, that she was going to get me to do the books when she got better. And by then she couldn't even, she was using the bedpan, she couldn't even get on the commode and let alone to the bathroom. And I'd been with her for a few months, and every day she got worse. And she was still up until the day before she died, said, look, when I get better, I'm going to, because she knew I was an ex-banker and she was an ex-high profile corporate woman, and she was like, I'll get you to do the books as soon as I'm better. I mean, that's crazy. And even when I'd said to her, I'm telling you, you may not get better, you know, it's not looking like you're getting better without having to, you know, say to her, you're dying. You know, let's get real here. It's just as gently as I could say to her, I don't think you're going to get better. And she's still denying it. And so then when she actually died the next day, it was yeah, it was a little bit, a little bit rough. And yeah, it was almost like her body and her mind. I think you're right, yeah, it was just like she just didn't want to let go.

Rebecca: So, let's just say that it's likely that most of us will at some point have some direct experience with being close to someone who knows that they're going to die. Like, is there from your experience, if death is known, is there something that we should say or allow or, you know, because I can imagine like you'd be like, oh, you know, if you've got a connection with them, it's like you're going to get better. But then that doesn't allow for what is. So is there, or is it just being with them and not saying anything? Or is there just no thing that you can say and you just have to trust it?

Bronnie: Yeah, I think there's probably two main things, and one is to set them free of their responsibility to you. And so if it's your parent or someone who's looked after you, let them know you're going to be okay so that they're not spending their last days because elderly parents are still worried about their children who are 50 or 60. To let them know you're going to be okay and that they're allowed to go, because that can be really hard for people who are dying. They've got enough to deal with, but they're still focusing on are kids going to be alright or feeling, look, like they're a burden. And the other thing is, to be a listener. Just to have such a comfortable space that if there's anything they do want to share, you're not, you don't have to be heard in that case. Let them be heard.

Rebecca: Yeah, right.

Bronnie: They've got to be safe. They've got to feel safe to know that okay, if I open up this conversation, I, you know, I've got to feel safe to say everything I want to say.

Rebecca: And then with the third regret of 'I wish I expressed my feelings'. Like, it's funny, I was pondering on that, and yet it's a relationship in my life where I've been consciously trying to, like, rewire the thing. And I'm noticing my resistance of being, I'm trying to be generous, but it's hard because that pathway hasn't been there with that person. In your experience with, because I know

you had developed relationships with like sisters and brothers and aunties and uncles and husbands and wives and all of that, who maybe the relationship's been difficult. Is there, because a lot of people have said to me, like how important it is to try and express your love and mend the relationship before the final moment. I guess I'm wondering if there is any way that you guided them to express in a way if they ever felt blocked around their feelings.

Bronnie: Yeah, sure. I mean, there were times when the communication wasn't open in the family, and so the patients actually had to share their things with me, who had been a stranger a few months earlier. And that was quite heartbreaking. I mean, beautiful for them and me, but heartbreaking in the whole reality of it. But, I mean, that regret around sharing your feelings can come from a couple of different angles. It can come from people wishing they could share their love and express their love to their families. But even if they do that, there's no guarantee how it will be received. And that's why it's so confronting and scary for some people, because there's not the communication channel. And if they say all that they might be laughed at or it might just be, you know, that or whatever. But then that regret was also for people wishing that they had set boundaries and being kind to themselves and actually spoken up for themselves. But I think the thing to remember, especially around this regret of expressing yourself, that whether people are dying or not, it's not a Hollywood movie. And so just because it might take a couple of years to build up the courage to express your feelings to someone doesn't mean they're ready to hear it or doesn't mean you're going to get the reaction that you want or you think you need. And if you can accept that and just be proud that at least you know you gave it a go, at least you've done that. And if they are to mock you or laugh at you, well, you know, dissolving our ego is not such a bad thing anyway. And it really doesn't matter who's right or wrong in the end. But if you can make peace with the fact that at least you gave it a go to express your feelings, then I think that's sort of enough. You know, that's an act of self-love to have got to that point where you really want to express yourself, whether it's in terms of endearment towards that person or whether it's in terms of endearment towards yourself against that person. And I think just knowing that you've given it a go is enough because, like I say, it's not all a Hollywood ending. So we can't control the readiness of other people to receive what we have to say.

Rebecca: And then, so this is a big one, and it's obviously like the greatest mystery that they're in, so I understand that you don't necessarily know the answer. But with, like, even at the moment or just as you've been living into it through your experience, like what do you, do you believe in the soul and what do you think happens when we die?

Bronnie: Yeah, I definitely believe that we return to, and that's not a pun of your podcast's lovely title either, I just realized what I was saying there. Yeah, I definitely believe we return to a place of love. And I've seen a couple of people die and just before they died, like one woman was in a coma for two days, and she opened her eyes and looked towards the corners, like where the wall joins the ceiling and just was... There was just such a look of recognition. It was sort of like *gasp*

and it was joy and recognition and surprise and bliss. And then she just sort of died and left. And that always stayed with me that the sense of recognition. And that's why I feel like it's a returning, it's not a going to somewhere we haven't been before. I believe it's a returning to a beautiful space of love. And yeah, I mean, I was raised with religious beliefs, but I've sort of let go of a lot of that. I feel like my relationship with divinity is so much stronger by not having any religious sort of dogma around that. But I fully respect that religion is the path for a lot of people as well. Yeah, so I believe we return to a place of immense love where we're held in love.

Rebecca: And when you were younger or at different times in your life, like, did you have that yearning to return to it. I'm curious, I know I did as a child, I was like, I just wanted to get through this and out. Which sounds quite morbid, but did you have that or?

Bronnie: No, mine was more a state of wonder with nature, like I was in a permanent state of wonder. Right through even when it was tried, when the family tried to knock it out of me or certain people tried to knock it out of me, like, come on, dreamer or daydreamer or whatever. And I'd just be like but look at that cloud.

Rebecca: And do you think that is like just because nature is absolutely amazing and, you're obviously preaching to the choir here, but oh, my God. Oh, my God. Yeah. Oh. Do you think that's just because nature is amazing or because, like, your soul is just like, wow, I'm here? Or both?

Bronnie: Yeah, I think both. I think both. And that I was in-tune enough, like, still connected enough to my soul to recognize the wonder of it, to not just see it as a tree or whatever, but in terms of, you know, the rest of that answer is that because I was raised, so I was raised as a Catholic and went right through Catholic schooling. I had an uncle on my father's side who was a priest and aunt on my mother's side who was a nun, and then she became a missionary. And before that, the uncle who was a priest, asked her if they left their order, whether they could join as a partnership, which is, yeah, it's getting pretty weird.

Rebecca: We've all got that aunt or Uncle

Bronnie: Yeah definitely, that's family. So, I used to have like this Uncle Jim would come to visit and we'd be like, oh, and we'd have to have mass at home before we go to school every day and things like that. So it was a very strong religious upbringing in that regard. My dad wasn't religious, but, you know, he sort of just let it be what it was. But I do remember as a Catholic having to go to confession, where you go and report your sins to the priest. And sometimes it would be like, oh, I've got some sins, I need some sins. Like I've got to report three sins. What have I done wrong? Look, I need some sins. All I can't say that one, I said it last time. What am I going to do? I need to sins, you know, and that sort of thing. But there was one time that I genuinely had a problem, I can't remember what, but I was about 11 or 12. And I went into the little confessional box and

pulled the curtain across. And I did the bits about, you know, all the sins and then got my penance of how many Hail Marys to say or whatever. But then I said, Father can I just tell you something? Talk about something. And I talked about it all, whatever it was, and he just said, okay, we'll say six more Hail Marys. Like he didn't hear me at all. And I walked out of there and I thought, he doesn't care. Like, how can that be kindness in religion? How can that be God represented through this man if he doesn't even care? And so that's when I actually started questioning religion. And I felt because there's so much guilt in Catholicism, as it was then or there was then, I remember being really struck down by, scared to be struck down by God when I was 18 and decided I wasn't a Catholic anymore and actually said it. And then I remember saying, oh, I'm sorry, God, I still believe in you, but I just can't be in a religion anymore.

Rebecca: I so relate to what you're saying. I was like, I had such mixed feelings about God growing up. And like my grandma introduced me to Mary, Mother Mary and I felt connected to her and I still like prayer all the time. I'd pray before, like to win a race, like when I was really young, I'd do like the sign of the cross without anyone knowing. But yeah, it was a complex thing of like, oh, it just doesn't feel right. But then just having this like deep, deep, deep yearning for the sacred at the same time. But then being like, but I don't I feel it here, but then I want it so bad. And yeah, just like not being able to identify or feel like I belong in a place. But maybe that's also the path of the mystic these days because it's just like the path of the heart, or whatever. But yeah, I think it, it is interesting times. I was going to, the, one of the questions that I ask everyone, which is, I'll ask it now, what is the sacred to you and what word do you use for it? Like is it God, Goddess, sacred?

Bronnie:: Oh, my heart just explodes when you even ask that. I use the word life, because I feel that I use life for God. And, but generally I use life because God can become a little bit too gender specific or male specific for a lot of people and my, or divinity. And my relationship with life and with divinity is of course non-gender. And yeah, and so I don't use the word universe anymore. I did for a while just to steer away from the word God years and years ago. But it became a little bit too, it just didn't fit me. It became a bit too woo woo for me. And yeah, so I guess in a conversation like this, I'm totally comfortable saying divinity, which is really what my personal relationship is with, is divinity. But in general, I speak about it as life. Like trust in life or look after, you know, life because I just feel that that is probably a less loaded conversation. And I really don't have the energy to try and prove anything to anyone. I really believe that we can be inspired by others through their own wisdom. But it's a very, very personal journey home into ourselves and into our soul. So I feel like if I leave it as broad as calling it life, then at least it's a safe place for people to take that however they want. And I have had people on my mailing list, I write a fortnightly newsletter, and I have had, when I've said something about life this, or life that in that context, I've had people write in and say, well, you know, you're talking about his, you know, Jesus Christ or God our Father or whatever. And I've written back and often, you know, I'll let it slide, but occasionally I'll just write back and say to my audience, call it what you like, but don't correct me. You've chosen to sign up here, I'm

going to call it life. And yeah, but it really, I mean in the heart of it Bec, for me it's divinity. And for you? I know it's you got to ask the questions, but...

Rebecca: No, no, I'd love to answer the question because I'm constantly changing my answer for it. I'm writing a book at the moment. And I mean, like you, I am just in awe with nature. And when I go into that, like, you know, whether it's water or a flower or the moon, or the spinning of the planet, or a baby growing like every part of nature, it's just like... I call it at the moment the intelligent pulse of life.

Bronnie: Oh, yeah, that's beautiful. Yeah.

Rebecca: But it's everything in the whole cosmos. And cosmos is beautifully ordered universe. Like you I don't like universe. I used to say the divine, but then, I'm like, is that a man in the sky? So then I started saying sacred because it felt more earth. And then I naturally, like you grew up Catholic, and so God was what? And I feel personally in my heart, God is beautiful and isn't just a man, but it does conjure that image. So I don't want to use that. But then Goddess feels like I'm making a point, which I am, but also not. And then I love Great Mother. Great mother that works with me. I've had direct experience with that, like proper mystical experiences and so that feels like I'm connecting with something. But then I'm like it's everything though. And then you try and put a word over it and it's ineffable. It's impossible. It's like I was talking to, have you met Annabelle Sharman who is with Hay House, she wrote the book Future Ancestor? She's a Mutti Mutti woman and she, we were having a conversation around words like this, like the word mystic or sacred or whatever. And yeah, and because there was feedback for her because I was, we were, I was helping her with her book and there was feedback about be as mystical as possible. And this phrase mystical is like what even does that mean? And I'm like, well, it's just, like, poetic and, you know, from the heart. And basically it's an invitation to not be, in this context, it was an invitation to not be rigid and just, like, feel like just basically trust yourself and just be yourself. It was a beautiful compliment, basically. Just go for it. Because she's a beautiful writer, and if anyone's read her book, you'll know what I'm talking about. And she had these whispers from the Grandmothers. And she then consulted to one of her elders, Aboriginal elders, and was like, what does that mean, that word mystical or whatever? And then, oh my God, I will never forget, I'm going to cry, like remembering what she said because it changed me. And she said, that's just a word that white people use to describe, and I'm paraphrasing here, the most normal thing in the world. And I'm like, oh my God, it's so true. It is, but it is. And this is like the awe of nature. It's extraordinary and ordinary all at once. Like the rose, in all its states, you're just like, wow. And look at that daisy, like how ever are they two flowers and they're just like, so different. And the tree that helps us breathe. And the water and babies grew in the water and we are water beings and without water, there's, there's, there's no life. And so is water God? Oh my God. It's like, wow. And it's so normal too.

Bronnie: Yeah, it is. It's so normal. I guess, you know, the word that might sum it all up is love. Because it's, a way, gifted with all of that. It's got to be love, hasn't it. To be, yeah, to be a part of that. But yeah, it's exactly, that's beautiful what she said. That's what white people call everyday, normal things, like just normality.

Rebecca: Yeah, which kind of feels like it takes us full circle to where we began of, like, death being the certainty and so extraordinary and hard to look at, at the same time.

Bronnie: Yeah, but in the meantime, life's a wonder to get us there.

Rebecca: Yeah totally. Amazing. Oh, well thank you so much Bronnie. Can you share just where people can find you? And if there's anything that you'd just like to share with the listeners.

Bronnie: Oh, sure. Yeah. It's Bronnie, like Bonnie with an R it. And Ware, W-A-R-E, like hardware, warehouse, that sort of ware. Bronnieware.com. That's sort of the mothership, everything else can be found via there. Yeah.

Rebecca: Amazing. And all include all the links to Bronnie's books and and yet that website as well over at the, on the episode page. Thank you so much Bronnie, it's been so beautiful.

Bronnie: Oh, for me too Bec. Thank you.

Rebecca: Soul Inquiry is a practice where we enter into a direct dialog with our inner self. I like to write my answers as I find I receive them more deeply that way, but feel free to do what works for you. Today's Soul Inquiry prompt is: How are you being called to create more space in your life so you can truly live? How are you being called to create more space in your life so you can truly live? And now it's time to perhaps commit to a grounded action. So reflecting on one baby step you can do to take in that direction today. What's one baby step you can do in that direction today?

Rebecca: Let's share a deep breath together now as we close this Sacred Space. I'm so grateful for you being here. If you'd like to keep returning to yourself and returning here with me, then please hit subscribe. If you love these podcasts, I'd so appreciate if you could leave a review or a five-star rating. Yeah, thank you so much if you do that. And as always, you can find the show notes and everything mentioned in today's episode over at rebeccacampbell.me/podcast. Thanks for returning.