

**EPISODE 57**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:06] ANNOUNCER:** You are listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders, leadership conversations that explore adapting and thriving in a complex world, with Rick Torseth and guests.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:00:20] RT:** Hi, everybody. This is Rick Torseth. Welcome to 10,000 Swamp Leaders. This is the podcast where we have conversations with people who have made some decisions to lead on some difficult challenges. Oftentimes, one of the decisions they make to lead is how they want to choose to use themselves in the world going forward. Today's conversation with a good friend of mine is in that category.

Today, it's really cool, Lianne, to have you on. Lianne Morgan is my guest. I'm going to bring her in here quickly and then we'll give you a little background on who Lianne is, how I come to know her. Lianne, welcome to 10,000 Swamp Leaders. It's very good to have you here.

**[0:00:59] LM:** Thank you, Rick. Thanks so much for having me.

**[0:01:01] RT:** Let me give a brief context on the introduction here. I was trying to recollect yesterday when I was getting prepared when we first met. I remembered that we met, because of a certain age, most adults meet other adults through their kids. That's how our connection started. Our daughters played soccer together. You willingly volunteered your husband to be an assistant soccer coach for me, which was great, because he's welch and he actually knew something about soccer and I didn't.

From that point on, while our daughters went their separate ways over the years, we have not gone their separate ways between Therese and I and you and Toby. That is not, for our listeners, a good enough reason probably to do a podcast, but it's a start. There is a more important reason here. I want to give you a little space here to tell people about who you are. Then I'll take it from there. What do you want people to know about you?

**[0:01:56] LM:** When I was about six-years-old, I remember walking to school and stopping on the sidewalk and looking up at the sky and asking in that child-like exasperated way, as like, when you're mimicking adults, "What is time?" What is this crazy, crazy notion of time that these adults talk about? I think, in some ways, I've been asking those types of esoteric questions ever since. You can contrast that with three and a half decades where I was a marketer in the corporate world, which something in me finds a little ironic, because marketers spend meaning all the time, right? Esoteric questions eventually remove all meanings, so you can see things as they are.

Anyway, after a long career in the corporate world, I'm now coaching and teaching mindfulness. I guess, you could say, it's interesting that your podcast is 10,000 Swamp Leaders and in trying to look at the relationship of what I'm doing to your podcast, I guess, I could say, I help people navigate the swamp within. In some ways, mindfulness and the healing arts have been practices that have run parallel to my career. They've been a study and a practice for me for a really long time. I think something in me has always seen the suffering in people in our society. What I've learned, or come to see is that that suffering comes from a place of constriction, the black and white, the either or, the right or wrong limited thinking of our ordinary minds, the small self.

I think, I help people, I would say, I'm a gardener of space. Trying to find that spaciousness that can hold all of these contradictions to ease tension, anxiety, and also, help them weed out some of the garden variety violence that lives in all of us, to the name of judgment, or trying to fix other people, or people pleasing and things like that. Our society is great at conditioning for and rewarding constriction in many cases. Rarely do we take the time to teach and learn how to deliberately cultivate space, where we can pause before we respond, where we can see the many shades of gray between that black and white. Quite frankly, where something new can appear, where creativity and innovation and new things come in, because those things come from the unknown.

Yet, space and spaciousness are the very doorway, also, to peace. Using mindfulness and compassionate inquiry, I help people create a sense of inner spaciousness, so that they too, can become the doorway, I'll say, to peace in themselves and with others.

**[0:05:17] RT:** Okay. Nice introduction. Let me say a few things from my perspective about my experience with you. I thought about this ever since we arranged the time for this podcast recording. I thought, so how does Lianne show up for me? Now, oftentimes, my guests, I'm not able to do this reflective piece, because I don't know them very well, other than the reason they're on the podcast, but this is not the case for you and I. I thought, well, there's a few things that come to mind. First of all, you are one of the most curious people that I've met in terms of always just wondering, like the five-year-old on the way to school. That does, for me, in my experience of you, that's never changed. There's always a curiosity and a question and a probing about whatever it is that's in front of you. That's hard to find these days with people of a certain age.

You're incredibly creative in every way, shape, or form. You have sense of color, sense of space, you design things, you're a great cook, you're – I mean, you're an artist in many ways. When you announced this transition, which we're going to talk about here in a few minutes, we're making, I thought, I sure hope it's got something to do with the creative side of life, because that part needs to be in the world. I'm glad to see it is.

The last thing I've put down and you probably will like this. I may need to explain this to some listeners here, but I had a friend. I have a friend who's a Jewish Buddhist, which is odd combination. Joel is, Joel Levy is his name. He lives in Seattle. He one day told me, we were talking about something about some individual and he says, "Oh, well, she has one foot in the other world." I thought, "Oh, that is such a brilliant characterization of people who have chosen to break the form of living in the mechanistic, mechanical world full-time and plant themselves, at least partially in this other world." I've always thought you were that way already. I think the work you're doing now, we're going to find out in the conversation, is an opportunity and a platform to express that foot in that other world, if you don't mind me saying that.

First, before we get to who you are now, people who listens to the podcast know that originally, I started it for two reasons. One is to talk to people who've made a decision to lead in some very difficult situations, situations that are somewhat immune to quick fixes, swamp issues. Then the second reason was that I expected that there would be younger people on this leadership journey on the trail behind, and these would be "elder conversations" for the future generations

to come, which is a nice idea. I think it's now about 50% plausible after my daughter straightened me out and said, "You know, dad? There's a lot of people of my age who are doing pretty good at leading, too. Maybe you should talk to some of them." She was right.

I followed her advice and I've had several people of a certain age that she could relate to on and I've learned a lot from them. There's a third reason, too, that's emerged, which I didn't plan on and this shows up, I think in your situation. Which is, I believe, leading is a choice and an activity and it's not a position, it's not a role, and it can come from anywhere. The hardest place sometimes for it to come from is for a person to raise their own hand and choose to lead their own life vastly different than the way they've been leading it here to four.

You have a long career in corporate world and you made a choice to leave corporate world and travel this road. You sent me an email and you said, "This is the email I sent to my team." I hope it's okay to read this. You said, "The courage to act on voice inside me showed up this year. That courage disturbed that part of me that settles for something safe, comfortable and known." Lianne, I think you're giving voice and words to a place that many people find themselves in. I want to start here with what provoked that voice, finally, and what did you do with it and how did you manage and facilitate your own process to go from this safe corporate space that you knew a lot about to this thing you're stepping into? Talk to people about this, because I think this is a useful place where a lot of people find themselves.

**[0:09:39] LM:** Yeah. What I found, Rick, is that I believe in living a life in question, to the degree that we can and I think everything's on a scale in life in some ways. How can we raise the quality of questions that we're asking ourselves and for a long time, there was a felt sense of boredom with work. It felt like life was on. The work life was on repeat, and which is normal, right? We go around that merry-go-round. But there was a question. All of those felt senses were a question, or clues that something was arising.

As I worked through that process, the bigger question started to emerge. How do I want to actually be of service in the last part of my life? What is it that I want to contribute that has some degree of sustainability to it? Like I talked about in the opening, I've always paid attention to human potential. That's just been an area of fascination for me. All of these clues were emerging. I think the email points to the fact that the preparation had been done. Oftentimes,

our mind thinks that it's orchestrating everything; what I'm feeling, where I'm going, what I'm going to do next, what I want to be 30 years from now.

What I can say is I came to a place where I found that wasn't actually true. That when we look at life as a teacher, that it's our being that attracts our life in many ways. By the time that we start asking these questions, the game is afoot in some ways. How do we clear, and that was my work, was clearing enough of the mind BS, if you will. To be able to clearly see when it was time to go, understand the internal work that needed to be done, creating a centeredness, something that could be present in the moment and see things as they were, without all of the stories around it.

That led me to a point where there was a natural point of departure with the company that I was at. That departure was met with just an incredible generosity and kindness. It was very compassionate in many ways, which I think in some ways is hard to find sometimes in the corporate world. I would say, we don't often know what we're preparing for. We'd like to be able to say, it's a 10-step plan and here's what we do. There's some aspects of that are legitimate. Can I clear enough of the mind work to be able to see things as they are and have that felt sense, that impulse that arises out of awareness, as opposed to a doing this, where I'm pushing and resisting and trying to get things done, as opposed to doing that arises out of a knowing, out of an awareness that's there and taps you on the shoulder and it's like, okay, it's time. We're ready.

**[0:13:20] RT:** I imagine people listening, some people listening are asking, well, you're on that side of it now. I'm in that place you were describing back there. I'm behind you. To that wonder, can you provide some detail, I guess, about what you actually went through as you traversed from there to this place. Did you have a practice? Did you do certain things? Did luck play a hand, fortunate relationships? What sustained you on this transition from that to where you are now?

**[0:14:04] LM:** I think that the hardest thing to confront was the fear that my mind and I think many minds have about the unknown. Our mind is constantly searching for a sense of assuredness, to know the answer, to know that things are going to be okay. My practice of mindfulness, if we look at the four aspects of mindfulness, the first thing is, can I see things as

they are? So, when it rains, the sidewalk gets wet, which is a quote by a mystic named Gurdjieff. So often, when we say, “Oh, when it rains, the sidewalk gets wet. And, oh, bummer. I can't go boating today and I can't do this.” It turns into a series of complaint. Can I just see things as they are? When it rains, the sidewalk gets wet. I had to learn to see myself as I was and to confront and be with and to learn to be compassionate with that part of me that was uncomfortable with the unknown.

The second aspect of mindfulness is being in the present moment. The present moment is the point of power. We often find our minds racing. There was a point that this was very active for me in my career of, “Oh, my gosh. I've got it. How much longer do I have to do this?” Just on and on and on and on and on, again, the merry-go reel of thought. In the present moment, if I am truly present, you can wake up in the morning and say, “Yes, I'm going to work today. I'm still employed. I'm doing this.”

There's going to be a point at which some conversation arises, some set of conditions and circumstances arises, and then I'll have a choice. That wasn't there yet. Again, the point of power is always in the present moment. Our minds like to run ahead when we're contemplating change and well, how can we make this happen and when will this time be? I wonder what will happen when?

The third aspect of mindfulness is this idea of noticing that things change all the time. With corporations, things are – and in business, it's changing all of the time. How could we possibly know, or plan for outside of having our own plan and saying, “I'm going to leave on this particular day.” It's just, can I be with circumstances and see them unfold? That served me in my departure incredibly well. I met with some very fortuitous circumstances.

Then the last thing is, can I have a non-judgmental awareness of what's happening around me? Can I see what I'm judging in this process? When I can see what I'm judging, then I can determine and use discernment about whether or not how I want to use the information that's in front of me, or what the mind might think is happening. For me, the practice was really putting everything that I had learned to use in mindfulness. Put it in use around this question of when to leave the corporate world, and to be able to see the trickery of the mind and how the past creates a future. Yet, when we're in the present moment, that past doesn't exist and that future

doesn't exist. How can I be with whatever question is arising in me and whatever emotions and whatever thoughts and sensations and whatever that are informing the moment?

**[0:18:17] RT:** I think this is probably going to inform bunch of the conversation we're going to have here next few minutes. I want you to talk a little bit about, because you were – you held a fairly significant role in an organization. There's a lot of people that were under your leadership. You'd been in that conversation, as you say, for a very long time. When you actually departed, when you actually left, when you actually woke up that first morning without having to go there, how did it hold up? You've got this practice, you've been working through these things. But when you woke up and you're suddenly not going there and you were, for the moment, a free agent, what was that like? Do you remember?

**[0:19:04] LM:** Yeah, it's so funny. A lot of people have asked me that question. In some ways, again, the mind expects there to be some great relief, or it projects into the future. It was like, I woke up, just like I do every morning. I climbed out of bed, just like I do every morning. I had a cup of coffee, just like I do every morning. I had my meditation sitting, just like I do every morning. Again, when we're in the moment, life's pretty simple. My mind had a story. It's just, I remind myself of this all the time, because it's so obvious, and so poignant.

My mind had a story when it left corporate America of, “Oh, my gosh. We're going to take six months off and we're going to have all of this time and just do what we want and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, as the mind does. When I sent out that email that you read and announced that I was going to become a coach and a mindfulness teacher, I had several people sign up.

I left one day and literally the next day, started coaching. We see, the mind projects all the stuff into the future and very little of it was true at all. When I woke up the next day, I had started and opened my coaching practice.

**[0:20:24] RT:** So brilliant. I love that. Okay, so you've just provided the segue. The transition was relatively quick, so let's go. You know this is coming. You know you're leaving. You know all the stuff. What were the influences, or what provoked you to decide, “When I do make this

move, I'm going to be a mindfulness coach"? What gave you a sense of form and purpose around that?

**[0:20:53] LM:** I think it's something that's been whispering to me for a really, really long time. I've been incredibly fortunate from, I guess, it was my thirties when I became the CEO of a small marketing agency, that conditions were such that I was introduced to mindfulness teachers and healers and things like that. I'm walking this one side of walk in life that's all about business. I had a lot of ambition throughout my career. There was a tremendous amount of what I'll call needless striving. Just doing, doing, doing, doing, doing.

On this other sidewalk were the healing arts and learning about mindfulness and putting some of those practices in place, again, everything on a scale. I didn't have a lot of facility with it in my thirties. There was something there that would walk between these two lanes, if you will. I guess, it was in my forties or so, I thought, "Wow, I'd really like to be a coach. I'd like to work with people in the way that these teachers and these coaches have worked with me." Again, they had opened up questions and I started learning the power of the question. It just took. It took the time that it took to get to the place, where I feel I have facility and some providence to help others that are trying to develop the centeredness and the place to come home to in themselves, where we're all tickled by the external world.

I have to have that place inside myself. That inner landscape is often underdeveloped in folks, which is not a surprise when we look at the conditioning of our society. I had to build my own place to come home to in order to help others develop that place inside of themselves.

**[0:23:09] RT:** I wrote down here, come home to. You said it three times here, I think. What is that? I mean, when you say you had to do that, what did you do there?

**[0:23:20] LM:** It's a practice, I would say, first of all, of quieting the mind and truly being able to take a step back from the stories that the mind tells, and getting to the root cause of the stories that we tell ourselves, our behaviors in life, our attitude towards others. It really is a process of seeing life as teacher, which is something that I learned, I would say I really – there was something in me that really understood life as teacher in my – I think, in my thirties. Every time



there was friction every, every time there was an unpleasant emotion that arose, I was clear that it was a mirror for something in me.

Throughout life, running down and reconciling those mirrors, all of those frictions in life helps us see ourselves as we are. It reduces the load that we carry, where we leak energy everywhere, because we're hooked by the political landscape, or the organizational hierarchy that we find ourselves in, or who's getting promoted and not and gossip. All of these things are ways that we leak energy. A lot of it is because we don't actually understand who we are and how we function.

A big, big part of my work, and it's a work that takes years for most people is being willing to look at any grievance that we have and searching for that place inside of us and getting to the root of it. Because when we can see ourselves more as we are, we clear up, we start building that inner space, but we clear up a lot of the unnecessary suffering, I'll call it, that we have with the external world.

**[0:25:40] RT:** To the point you're just making here, there's a lot of dragging of ancient grievances, metaphorically in boxes, or rocks, or something that we carry with us every place we go. I'm interested then, you've written around your, what I call coaching offers, but that's probably not the right term, but you have a couple in here that are pretty interesting to me. You have cultivating well-being, mindfulness, best stress reduction. I can get my head around those rather easily. You have some provocative ones in here, at least for me. I'd like for you to speak a little bit. Getting into relationship with conditions that cause anxiety. Maybe that's just a little bit of what you said, but let's put a sharper point on it. I mean, that's got a directive course of action that I might ping you and say, "Yeah, I want to get in relationship with the conditions that cause me anxiety." Let's talk about that a little bit.

**[0:26:40] LM:** Yeah. Oftentimes, we're 10, 12, 13, 14, 15-layer cakes. When I was in marketing, it was a business development type of role. I was always responsible for going to pipeline meetings, where we're reporting on how sales are going. In some cases, those meetings were incredibly rigorous. There could be shaming that happened in front of your peers, or things that felt like shaming, where people are trying to press buttons that were deeply uncomfortable. You could feel it in the air on these calls as everybody sat and went around rubbing on these things and were quizzed on where deals stood and things like that.

Getting into relationship with friction, we're often triggered – old things in us are triggered, to your point about what we haul around behind us. Getting in touch with that in a compassionate way. So often, what we don't want to do is feel that discomfort, that deep anxiety that emerges in a situation like that. How do we be compassionate? Instead of turning away from it and trying to push it away, “Let me just get through this call. Let me go home and have a drink. Let me go gossip in the hallway with my friends about how horrible that call was,” or whatever it is, we push it away.

What we learn in mindfulness is to approach that aspect of ourself, whatever it is that had was producing the anxiety in a very compassionate way. Can I recognize it? Can I just be with and acknowledge, okay, there's a part of me that feels really, whatever, anxious, shamed, less than, whatever. I see the thought that's like, “Wow, if I don't get this deal closed, XYZ might happen.” There's just a recognition.

Then there's an allowing. Can I allow that thought to be there, instead of pushing it away? Can I get curious about it and investigate it? Very lightly, right? What's here? What does this part of me, which is probably a pretty small part, right? Want. What does it need right now? What does it believe? “Oh, it believes I'm not good enough, or I'm not worthy,” or whatever, right? It's almost like, we're in conversation with this part of us that has this feeling, emotion, thought, whatever it is. We're just learning more about it and learning more about it and leaning into it and leaning into it, until we're at the root. It's likely with things that we really feel and we felt for a long time. That's going to take several times of working with that and just sitting with that part and talking to it, right?

Then, what does it need? Because it needs something. That's actually a part of us that needs some type of nurturance. Does it need to feel held? Do I need to put my hand on my heart? Do I need to give myself a hug? Do I need somebody else to tell me, it's going to be okay? Who might that be in my mind that I can imagine is telling me it's going to be okay? That process of recognizing, allowing, investigating and nurturing is a really healthy way of coming to know ourselves. What we find is if we can sit in that discomfort, as often as we need to, that our presence to that, to those parts will loosen. Because it's a place of constriction in us, and it'll loosen and dissolve in our presence. Often, we look outside ourselves for that, but it's in us.

**[0:31:06] RT:** Right. I had a conversation just last week. Somehow, I'm making a connection here, and maybe there's not one here, but let's see. In this case, the approach to this dynamic in an organizational setting, which is where you can get some pretty weird aberrant behaviors, we know. I think it's worth noting for everybody to remind us all that organizations are weird, and that we tend to spend more waking hours there than we do with our families. We do that for years. That in itself should tell us something's off. That's another issue.

What you're saying, Lianne, brings me back to this other angle in a diagnostic angle, which is a family of origin issues. Meaning that if in a family dynamic, growing up as a child, if there was a lot of tension, we develop resources to survive that tension. It's no surprise that those would be the things we fall back on as adults in a similar conflict situation in an organization. I'm 68, and I'm acting like a nine-year-old, the nine-year-old that used to do this when mom and dad got into a big canuffle. This was my strategy to survive, get out of it, avoid it, go hide.

That's a starting point for understanding it, but it doesn't alleviate it, necessarily. Awareness doesn't actually build me competence. What you're talking about is a possible way in which to actually build an alternative response, mental, emotional muscle, fortitude, something that allows me to catch myself earlier in those situations somewhere in the future. I got to work this practice over time, but I can lessen the potency of it, the length of it, the pain of it, by having a deliberate practice that is oriented around these kinds of provocations that I know are historically embedded in me. Is that a fair reflection?

**[0:33:05] LM:** That's exactly it, Rick. So often, again, we turn away from it, because we just don't want to sit in that unpleasant place. I promise, that cultivating a practice like that is the way that we come to know ourselves, so much of the just the needless negativity that those states create, where we haven't looked deeply enough in ourselves fall away. It's a deeply, deeply rewarding practice. What we find is we ultimately become more comfortable sitting in the unknown, that we can see wonder in people and look at them with fresh eyes. We're much more empathetic, because what we feel in ourselves, when that anxiety, or tension, or whatever comes up, we begin to understand that that exists in everyone. It gives me more patience in working with others.

It's like, "Oh, yeah. I see that in me, too. Okay, we can just move past. I don't need to engage with that part of you." It's a deeply rewarding practice. When we get to know ourselves in that way, it is profound, the space and the energy that we get back.

**[0:34:35] RT:** I'm going to even say, I was going to say, speculate, but I think it's doing that work also then gains agency and access to some long-forgotten gift, talent, or capacity that never got utilized, because there was always a retreat going on to avoid the other thing. There's a healing component, and then there's a revealing component of access to something that's always been there, but never got deployed, or didn't get deployed often enough that makes a huge difference.

I mean, that's my experience. I don't know how it is for you, but that's – I guess, it falls into the space that you coach, I coach. Oftentimes, people show up in these conversations initially, because they've determined there's something wrong with them. If I can just fix the wrongness, life will be better. The abandonment of any review of what are the unused gifts, talents, and potentials that we should also be engaging with in this coaching process is an unnatural act for most people, because they're so pejoratively oriented to what's wrong with them. Generally speaking, that's not true for everybody. Any thoughts on that?

**[0:35:54] LM:** No, I couldn't agree more. I think, so often in our work, what we're really trying to get to is the next innovation, the space for real creativity and how do we really solve our clients' challenges? How do we build innovative new products? That space is most clearly accessed when we're out of the way, right?

**[0:36:20] RT:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**[0:36:23] LM:** Anything new, any new innovation comes from the unknown, but we're so busy covering up, right? We're so afraid of the unknown that no wonder it's so hard to innovate, or see our way through to new social structures and things like that, because we have all of these structures that have imprisoned our innovations and our creativity and things like that, to your point.

**[0:36:50] RT:** Yeah. Okay, so I can imagine listeners saying, “That’s all good. But Rick, you’re not asking Lianne the questions I have about me.” I will remind people that we’ll put information in the show notes, so you can actually track down Lianne and engage her in a conversation on the specifics of the things you’re thinking about that may be coming up in this conversation.

This is called 10,000 Swamp Leaders. I’d like to just add a piece here, because I’d be neglectful to the purpose of the podcast if I didn’t ask you, as somebody who chose to lead for a very long time in a very significant size organization, what is leading to you? What have you learned about yourself and about how to lead that could also be useful for people, because they’re still living in those spaces and they’re looking for ways to navigate that choice of leading?

**[0:37:49] LM:** Rick, I have a hard time getting past your definition of leading, that it’s actually a choice and that it’s not a position that we’re given, although we might be promoted into a new level, a new scale of leadership. I think, the qualities of leading, and this isn’t exactly answering your question, but if I look at the qualities of a leader, a leader who knows themselves, in my opinion, and from what I’ve seen is going to be a much more effective leader, because they’ve moved a lot of their stuff out of the way, so that they can see what is in the landscape. They’re deeper listeners, so they can hear what’s not being said.

Oftentimes, at least when I was leading, was the more valuable part of the conversation, which is a paradox. If I’m sitting in front of somebody who’s really stressed out about something, it was often what wasn’t being said that was much more informative than what was actually coming out of the person’s mouth. I think great leaders lead with empathy. They have deep listening skills and can sort through what right action is in extraordinarily complex situations, and that they lead with questions, as opposed to answers.

**[0:39:23] RT:** As opposed to answers. I agree. It’s a useful distinction you’re raising about what I’m saying. Expand on that a little bit as an orientation point for listeners, which is that perspective is the perspective of Kennedy School’s adaptive leadership program, and they’re making a distinction between authority in the organization, i.e., the organizational chart is a map of authority, position authority, not necessarily leadership, because we’ve all been in an organization where something came up for leaders. We look up to those and they don’t meet the moment.

I think their astuteness is to say, they're not the same. If we can put them together, then something cool can happen, where proper use of authority and proper use of the attributes that you just described are put together. I left that part out of the distinction, which oftentimes is the problem in the first place, because people make those distinctions. That's my clarification there.

All right, so there's a lot of ground in this topic, and there's no chance that I was able to figure out all the things I should ask you. What is it I'm not asking you about this work that you're doing that you think is important for people to understand, to understand what you're trying to do?

**[0:40:40] LM:** For me, the journey of mindfulness has been about relationship and bringing relationship to things. So often, we think of relationship as person to person. Yet, often, what I found is we need to look much deeper to understand relationship. Is my mind in relationship with my body, for example. Am I in relationship with my feelings and my emotions? What is my relationship to the questions that I'm asking?

For me, everything in mindfulness comes back to the question of, am I in relationship? What's not in relationship in this moment? I would say, asking ourselves that question whenever we feel that friction. What's not in relationship right now? When we do feel that joy and wonder, it's like, "Wow. What in me is in relationship right now?" Maybe that answers your question.

**[0:42:00] RT:** I think it's an important piece to the conversation we're having here. I'm of an opinion that relationship to primary and everything's derivative of that, but I hadn't quite linked it to every part of me that I could be in relationship and how am I doing with that? What parts do I neglect? I'm sure, my case, there's parts I don't even know. If that's the case, how do I get in contact and connect it to those parts?

**[0:42:36] LM:** I think it's, again, it's through the study of ourselves. What's my question right now? What's been grabbing my attention? What type of reading and articles and books? What music? What's alive is one way of approaching the question. What's alive for me right now? What seems to be appearing in my field of awareness? I think another question is what's activated in me right now? That's more leaning into the friction side of things. What's bugging me? Where do I allow myself to be bugged? Both of those places can be generative places for

exploring what's in relationship. Then making sure I'm dropping into my body when I explore that, right? What are the sensations that come up? Where does that where do those questions and those frictions, or that aliveness exist in my body? What do what do they feel like? What are those sensations telling me?

**[0:43:39] RT:** Okay, so good. You used this distinction, I want to explore. Because for some people, the phrase, check in with my body, they may not have a relationship with that. What are you saying there? What's what does the body offer us in your experience around information and answering questions and providing data, or however you want to say it, that makes it essential that we stand touch with it?

**[0:44:08] LM:** Yeah. Oftentimes, what we don't realize is our body and our emotions are in time. They're here. They're present. That's why the body is so important in mindfulness practice, because it's the thing that's rooted in the present moment. Our mind is always the last thing to the table. We think that the mind is orchestrating all of this and it's not. The body is here. Our emotions react very quickly to what's around us. Then the mind comes in and makes up the story to create continuity.

Dropping into the body is important, because it's what's here right now. It often has information for us. The issue is getting in relationship with the body. This is why, for me, a meditation practice is really important in being with the breath and feeling the breath in the body. Then eventually, when I've got that, I can work with slowing the mind, which is when I'm in relationship with my body, my mind doesn't run as quickly.

Again, it's a practice of stages. There are all sorts of different types of meditation practices that aren't sitting in quiet all day long, that can happen in the space of 5, 10, 15 minutes. It's a practice getting our mental center, our emotional center of the heart, and the body into alignment, so that I can see the entire cockpit and have some providence with it, so that I get choice.

**[0:45:48] RT:** It's a good metaphor, the cockpit. I like that distinction you're making that the body is the part that's fully present right now. Meaning, we've all had experiences where we can't

cognitively explain something, but we can sure feel it in our body, whether it's joy, or fear, or anxiety, or whatever. Okay, fair enough. All right, so what's ahead for you? Last question.

**[0:46:11] LM:** I'm just getting ready to actually teach some beginning mindfulness classes and meditation courses this spring, and continuing my coaching practice and seeing where it goes.

**[0:46:27] RT:** Okay, so for everybody listening, you know it's coming in the spring, so we will provide the information and the show notes where you can get a hold of Lianne, I assume. They could get a hold of you if they wanted to, and you can explain to them what different ways in which you might be able to be of help to them. Is that fair?

**[0:46:43] LM:** That's fair.

**[0:46:45] RT:** All right, so I want to thank you, Lianne, for being on the podcast. For those of you who are listening, you should know that in a week or so, Lianne and her husband and me and my wife and my sister and brother-in-law are gathering to have a big cannelloni dinner, which Lianne is going to lead on. Besides being a mindfulness instructor, she's an incredible chef. I look forward to that gathering, and we will not broadcast live from the Morgan kitchen on cannelloni. We'll keep that to ourselves. Thank you very much for coming on to the swamp.

**[0:47:18] LM:** Thank you so much, Rick. It's a great conversation.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:47:23] ANNOUNCER:** Thank you for listening to 10,000 Swamp Leaders with Rick Torseth. Please, take this moment and hit subscribe to follow more leadership swamp conversations.

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