

Redefining Health & Wellness

#74

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

Shohreh Davoodi: Welcome to episode #74 of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. This is the first episode of a three-part Self-Trust Series. Because I'm a self-trust coach and I've been helping clients develop a deeper sense of self-trust for a long time, I thought it would be helpful if I shared with you more about the ins and outs of learning to trust yourself. Today in part one I'll be talking about what self-trust is, why it's important, and who some of my favorite self-trust icons are. To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to shohrehdavoodi.com/74. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/74. In the show notes, you can also find a free download for this episode which provides some self-trust journaling prompts specific to Part 1 of the series.

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Joining my Patreon community at shohrehdavoodi.com/patreon is the best way to offer ongoing financial support and get extra members-only perks in the process. If you prefer a one-off contribution, you can tip me for my work through the payment links located at the bottom of the show notes for each episode. Lastly, even if you're unable to support the podcast financially, you can always subscribe, rate, review, and share it so that more people can find and benefit from the show.

However you choose to invest in the podcast, thank you for believing in me and tuning in each week.

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[Music plays]

Welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host and resident rainbow glitter bomb, Shohreh Davoodi. I started this project because I saw how black-and-white messaging about health harms everyone, and I wanted to paint a more honest and vibrant picture. This podcast is a space where we can reimagine health together by confronting limiting misconceptions, delving into aspects of well-being that are often ignored, and prioritizing conversations with marginalized individuals. I encourage you to take what you need and leave behind what you don't. Are you ready for this? Let's fucking go!

Welcome everyone to Part 1 of my three-part Self-Trust Series on the podcast. This episode is all about what self-trust is and why it matters. Before we dive into that, I first just want to talk about the recent shift towards self-trust as the overarching theme in my content and coaching.

While I've definitely clearly reoriented my business around self-trust over the last few months, truthfully, my work has always been about self-trust. This is just the first time I'm explicitly naming that. At the time of this recording, I've been a coach full-time for the past four years, and through every iteration of my business, I've been helping people come home to themselves, even though the tools and strategies haven't always looked the same.

When I was exclusively a fitness coach, for example, I helped people get back into their bodies and feel what it was like to move them in new and challenging ways. I cheered people on as they discovered what worked for their bodies and just how much they were capable of. I actually think all great personal trainers and fitness coaches help their clients develop self-trust, it's just in a very specific way.

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Similarly, when I became a certified intuitive eating counselor, I started helping people unlearn diet culture so they could hear their own internal voice more clearly, particularly when it came to food. I encouraged people to respect and care for their bodies no matter what they looked like any given day, and I showed people how to get in touch with and respond to their needs.

For the past four years I have been steadily learning and growing, and for those of y'all who have been around that entire time, or even some of it, I know that you have seen that evolution in action. Through motivational interviewing training, self-study and reading on a wide variety of topics, networking with incredible colleagues across fields, including on this podcast, plus my own lived experience and my former legal training, the scope of my coaching has naturally expanded to help people address some of the major things that I've seen holding my clients back over the last four years. I absolutely love the work that I get to do with clients, so I've pushed myself to be able to do that in additional and even more innovative ways.

I'll be completely honest and say that fitness coaching never satisfied me because I saw that fitness was just one small piece of the big puzzle, and I wanted to be able to help people with more than just that. No shade to fitness coaches, by the way. Most of the fitness industry is a hot diet culture mess, and we need all the incredible folks who are making it more inclusive and accessible. I'm actually so glad that I have my personal training certification and that background because it's a knowledge base I still use with my clients. But for me, I never truly loved it as my main focus.

You know, I remember talking to a business coach I hired several years ago about how fitness was not my favorite part of what I did and how I

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really loved working with people on more of the mindset stuff. And she was like, well, you need to bring people in with the fitness because that's what sells, and then you can hit them with the mindset stuff. And while I don't necessarily agree with her advice, especially thinking about it now, I'm also grateful for the journey that I've gone on where I've tried a lot of things, done a lot of certifications, because it has really helped me to be a better coach and it has allowed me to get to the place where I am now.

Because intuitive eating is really a similar story for me where I am so glad that I got my intuitive eating counselor certification. I have loved focusing on that with clients, focusing on body respect, and then over this last year really expanding into overall health and well-being. Because that's allowed me to help my clients in so many new ways. But again, I still had this yearning. I still wanted more. Because even health and wellness with all of its broad scope, the very broad scope that this podcast has been delving into for over 70 episodes now, just felt a smidge off from where I wanted to be.

If you remember back in the one-year-anniversary episode of the podcast when I had on guest host Sarah Gray who interviewed me for a change, I talked about how I had always struggled with what to call myself and how I had been using weight-inclusive wellness coach, but it didn't fully encompass everything that I did.

So finally, I decided it was time to stop spinning my wheels and hire someone to help me. And I hired Kelly Diels, the feminist marketing consultant who you may remember from episode #55 of the podcast. And if you haven't listened to that episode, you definitely should because it's incredible. And what Kelly and I did together was take stock of absolutely everything that I've done over the last four years. All of my content, all of

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the newsletters that I've sent out, the podcast, the coaching, the different programs and challenges that I've had—all of it. And we tried to pull out all of the broader themes, and ideas, and the things that I'm passionate about from that.

And when we did that, what very quickly came to the forefront is that there is a thread that has been woven through all of my work, even as it's changed over time. And that thread is that I help people develop a stronger sense of self-trust so they can be more of who they are and less of who they think they're supposed to be. Boom! Mic drop! Yes! That is what I'm here for. Once we were able to name it, it was so easy to see. It's like it had been there all along and I just hadn't fully conceptualized it yet.

Because the thing is, the people I work with and the people I've been working with all this time are already filled with so much motherfucking magic. They blow me away every day. Like, they are smart, they're accomplished, they're funny, they're badass, they're compassionate, they are critical thinkers who want to make the world better for not only themselves, but for everyone else in it. Like, these people are not the problem. They're not the reason they feel stuck and hire me for help, right? Our culture is the problem.

Because our culture teaches all of us that we need to hide our magic and fit ourselves into preexisting palatable boxes in order to fit in. Our culture ensures that our sense of trust in ourselves gets eroded from a young age so that we turn to external sources for answers. And as a result, our own voices get steadily drowned out by self-doubt, leading to lives that are dictated by shoulds, musts, and have tos that we didn't want or intentionally choose.

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And the funny thing is that I've deeply known this all along. So if you've been here for all the different iterations of my business, then you know that my original business name was Glitter & Grit Fitness, and eventually I dropped the word "fitness" and it was just Glitter & Grit. And the reason I chose that name, and I said this at the time as part of my marketing, is because I felt like the world was trying to shove me into boxes I didn't want to be in. Glitter & Grit was specifically supposed to represent that I could be someone who loved glitter, and rainbows, and unicorns, and also be someone who loves strength training. But more generally, it was about how I've always hated people telling me who I'm supposed to be and what I can and cannot do.

So it's not actually that surprising that the work I do, and the work I've been doing, at its core is about teaching you the tools, skills, and mindset shifts needed to move through self-doubt and step back into your power. And this is power that you already have within you, even if you're having a hard time feeling it right now.

And even though you're not in the room with me, I'm guessing that you can feel my energy because it is electric. Like, I am just so fired up about what I'm doing, and I am so grateful for everything that has led to this point, even though I will not lie, the last four years have been so hard. Like, don't start a business unless you want your life to be really hard for a while [laughs].

But I truly feel like all of it has been leading me to this moment where when someone asks me what I do for a living, I can say, "I'm a self-trust coach," and then when they look at me confused and ask what that means, I can say, "My job is to help people find their way back to themselves."

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Clarity is such a gift y'all. And thank you for indulging me in sharing how I got to this point. Any time a business goes through an evolution it can be confusing for people, so I thought it would be helpful to talk about my process. Plus, I also think it's a great lead-in to the Self-Trust Series because now we're gonna talk about what self-trust is and why it's so important that I'm literally coaching it for a living.

And I'll also note that while I'm explicitly calling myself a self-trust coach because that's the best fit for me, there are many different practitioners and coaches who help people develop self-trust in a variety of ways. I've already mentioned inclusive fitness coaches, therapists definitely do this, registered dietitians, life coaches. So self-trust is the purview of a lot of people, I am just making it my specific focus.

Okay, so what the heck is self-trust? I guess after we have already talked about it so much, I should probably define it for you. Self-trust actually doesn't have one single solitary definition, so let me tell you how I like to think about self-trust. From everything that I've seen and gathered, self-trust is a firm reliance on yourself, on your inherent worth, and on your own integrity. It's about seeing yourself as the authority in your own life. It's about trusting yourself to care for yourself and meet your needs, and it's also about having clarity and confidence in your choices.

And when I say that, I don't mean that self-trust is about knowing all the answers all the time or always doing the right thing because that's impossible and it's rooted in perfectionism. But people who have a deep sense of self-trust tend to react to their mistakes in a kinder way because they are so deeply grounded in themselves. They don't give up on themselves no matter how badly they fuck it up.

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People who have a more developed sense of self-trust understand that the relationship they have with themselves is extremely important because it is literally the longest relationship that they will ever be in. It's the only relationship that any of us have from the cradle to the grave.

And I want to be clear that self-trust doesn't ignore other people, right? We need other people. We need love, and validation, and community, and feedback. Like, self-trust isn't about only depending on yourself and eschewing others. But deepening our connection with ourselves actually allows us to more deeply connect with others. And because the relationship we have with ourselves is so long, we have to be able to rely on ourselves. We have to be our own biggest fans and we have to be able to push ourselves to do better.

When I look back over my own life, I can see how self-trust has been the foundation of all of the hardest decisions that I've had to make, and also all of the best decisions that I've made. Without trust, we will not make the big leaps. We will not do the scary, hard thing. We have to be able to trust ourselves that things are probably going to be okay and even if they're not, we're gonna get through it anyways, in order to take those risks.

And there are different kinds of risks, right? Like, not all of self-trust is on hard mode where it's do or die. There's gonna be different layers and levels to this. Self-trust comes into play both for decisions such as what should I eat today, and decisions such as, should I quit my job and go down a totally new career path. And let's also note that for many people, deciding what to eat is extremely difficult, right? I've been working with people on intuitive eating for years now, and that's some of the crux of what we have to do together is be able to get to know ourselves and our bodies well enough to be able to answer those kinds of questions about

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food. So what may be easy for you to trust yourself with, may not be easy for somebody else. Everyone is different on where their self-trust levels are.

To help illustrate what self-trust is, I want to talk about some of my favorite “self-trust icons,” as I have deemed them in this moment. And, of course, this is my outsider perception of these people that they have a deep sense of self-trust, but I think they just really live out these principles of self-trust in the public eye.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, also affectionately known as AOC, is one such self-trust example. For my non-U.S. listeners, AOC is a congresswoman here in the United States. She serves in the U.S. House of Representatives for the State of New York. At the age of 29, AOC drew national recognition when she defeated a 10-term incumbent in her primary election and then went on to defeat her Republican opponent that November. She is the youngest woman to ever serve in the United States Congress, and she also just won reelection earlier this month.

To put it mildly, uh, Republicans fucking hate her, and over the past two years she has been the daily target of abuse at the hands of conservative politicians and pundits, from taking issue with her progressive stances to ridiculing her for her choice of clothes and makeup. Oh, and then there was that amazing—not—fucking bitch comment from a fellow congressman.

AOC and I actually were born in the same year, the oh-so-glorious 1989. Yes, yes, we are millennials. And I cannot even imagine being a congresswoman and dealing with the bullshit that she has to deal with every single day.

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So how is it that AOC, a Hispanic woman of color from a working class family, with literally no political experience or connections became a star congresswoman and a pop culture icon? As far as I can tell, it's by living according to her values and refusing to stay silent, even though the world has made perfectly clear that they think people like her should keep their mouths shut.

And what she's doing isn't easy. I can guarantee that AOC cries, screams, begs for the bullshit to stop, and wants to give up just like the rest of us, probably all the time. But she doesn't because she cares about her constituents and she leads according to her progressive values.

I think AOC resonates with so many people because she's living as her authentic self and she truly cares about what she's fighting for. One day she's doing a makeup tutorial video for Vogue, and the next she's absolutely destroying Michael Cohen with her line of questioning at his committee hearing.

Also, as an aside, her signature shade of red lipstick is bomb. I bought it because she and I have very similar skin tones and I've had a hard time finding reds that I like, and it is amazing.

So I look at AOC and I see someone who is just reverberating self-trust. Like, it is clear that she has spent time getting to know herself, and her needs, and her values, and that she is living according to those things. And again, this doesn't mean that she doesn't make mistakes. She absolutely has made mistakes. But what sets her apart is that when she makes a mistake, she is willing to hear feedback, learn from it, and correct herself, and that is such an important skill that not a lot of people have.

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Okay, for my second self-trust icon I'm gonna show my emo heart just a little bit because that icon is lead singer of the band Paramore, Hayley Williams. It is no secret that I am a Hayley Williams stan, and my 17-year-old self is giddy that I have found a way to work Hayley Williams into a podcast episode. But, hear me out on this one because she is indeed a self-trust icon.

Hayley has been the frontwoman of Paramore since she was 15 years old. She is one year older than me, and she's about to turn 32, which means she's been navigating the male-dominated music industry, and in particular, the male-dominated emo and pop punk scene, for over 15 years.

Throughout that time she has been well-known for wearing clothing that would be considered out of the mainstream just because she loved it, as well as rocking tattoos and all different hair colors. In fact, she actually co-founded her own hair dye brand called Good Dye Young with her long-time makeup artist, Brian, because she wanted to create a hair dye brand that was inclusive, vegan, and cruelty-free.

What I love about Hayley is that she has fought so hard to not be put into the boxes the music industry wanted to place her in. Her record label wanted to sign her as a solo artist at 15 and she refused because she preferred to play in a band. She also never gave in to the pressure to be hypersexual that all young female artists experience. She's really brought her own style to everything she's released over the course of her career, and it shows.

Then, outside of her music, she's been an outspoken advocate against racism, sexism, Trump, mental health stigma, and a lot more. And she's continued to do this even as fans pour into her comments and DMs to tell

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her that she should stop being political and that they would rather she just shut up and sing.

As a long-time fan, I've absolutely loved her watching her bloom over the course of her career and seeing all the ways she has decided to use her voice and platform to talk about things that truly matter. She's just such a badass, and I feel like now more than ever the self-trust is just flowing out of her.

Honestly, there are so many self-trust icons that I look up to, I'll just name a few more for fun. There's Glennon Doyle, who is an author, and her latest book, *Untamed*, is a master class in self-trust. I highly recommend it. She's also the founder of Together Rising, which is a hugely impactful non-profit that supports women, families, and children in crisis. Oh, and she's also married to soccer star and Olympian, Abby fucking Wambach, which gives me all the feels, and the two of them together on social media is just, mmm, chef's kiss!

Another one is Alok Vaid-Menon who is a gender non-conforming poet, performance artist, and writer. Their Instagram account is so educational, and they just released a book titled *Beyond the Gender Binary*. Alok's fashion is also a delight and they keep putting themselves out there, even though people treat them terribly and shower them with abuse simply for refusing to fit into the binary of gender that most people expect them to.

I could go on, but I'll stop for now. I just wanted to demonstrate for y'all some of the beauty and magic that is born from a deep sense of self-trust. Self-trust is really something that allows you to navigate the world in a different and better way than you're taught to. I can't stress enough the importance of self-trust, especially after having worked with so many

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clients on developing it. It's definitely something that requires time and patience, but damn, it is so worth it.

And I know this episode begs the question: well, if self-trust is so great, why is it so difficult to cultivate? And I will be answering that question for you in detail in Part 2 of this series which will be episode #75.

In the meantime, for each of the episodes of the self-trust series I'm offering a free download of self-trust journaling prompts around that episode's topic. Even if you're not a journaling person, you can think through the prompts, make a list, talk through them with someone you trust, or use them in other creative ways to dive a little deeper into the topic of self-trust. To get the free download for Part 1, just head to the show notes for this episode at shohrehdavoodi.com/74. That's shohrehdavoodi.com/74.

Thanks for joining me for Part 1, and I'll see you back here for Part 2 to talk about what erodes self-trust.

And that's our show for today! If this podcast has taught you anything or helped you in any way, I hope you'll consider supporting me in my effort to keep it going. You can join my Patreon community and receive members-only perks by going to shohrehdavoodi.com/Patreon, or you can tip me for my work through the payment links located at the bottom of the show notes for each episode. I would also encourage you to subscribe and submit a rating and review through your podcast provider of choice. I love hearing from listeners, so feel free to screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. Finally, if you're looking for more information on what I'm all about and how to work with me directly, head over to shohrehdavoodi.com. Hope to see you for the next episode.

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