

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

**Shohreh Davoodi:** You are listening to episode #86 of Conjuring Up Courage. That's right, Redefining Health & Wellness has officially rebranded to Conjuring Up Courage. I am so grateful to everyone who has been listening to the show for the past 85 episodes, and I hope you'll stick around to see what's in store, starting with today's solo episode. I'll first be talking about the rebrand, and then I'll move into answering a variety of listener questions that y'all submitted. To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to [shohrehdavoodi.com/86](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/86). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/86](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/86).

[Music plays]

This is Conjuring Up Courage, and I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. As a self-trust coach, I help people come home to themselves so they can be more of who they are and less haunted by who they think they're supposed to be. I created this podcast to celebrate what's possible when you commit to being brave. You'll hear from diverse guests who are refusing to let fear and self-doubt stop them from building fulfilling lives and creating a better world for everyone. I'll also teach you my favorite tools, strategies, and mindset shifts so you can do the same. Consider this your invitation to stop living according to shoulds and to step into your motherfucking magic instead. Stay open, get curious, and let's grow together.

[Music fades]

Hello party people! Rebranding and realigning my business has been a long road, and I'm not quite to the finish line on all of the pieces yet, but today I am celebrating because I have crossed the finish line with the changes to the podcast. Fuck yeah!

So first of all, in case you're confused, Redefining Health & Wellness is now Conjuring Up Courage. The transition from one to the other has

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

already happened. On the listener end there's nothing you need to do. This is the same podcast in the same podcast feed, just with a new name and branding. If you regularly listen to the show, then you will have noticed that the podcast switched over automatically in your podcast provider. And for anyone listening who hasn't already subscribed to the show, I would encourage you to do so in your podcast provider of choice so you never miss an episode.

For today's episode, there will be two parts. First, I'm going to talk a little bit about the podcast rebrand and what has led to this evolution, then, I'm going to be answering a variety of questions that were submitted from listeners. So let's do it!

Y'all, so much work has gone on behind the scenes to bring you Conjuring Up Courage. If we weren't in a pandemic and if I wasn't coming off of an absolutely hellish week in Texas with the widespread winter storms, and the power outages, and the water outages, I'd totally throw a party with cake and champagne. But as it stands, it's just me here, celebrating in my office by recording this episode. So do me a favor, maybe do like a little dance party in your house today in my honor or while you're listening to this episode. I would appreciate it.

Some of y'all have been here since the very first episode of Redefining Health & Wellness was released back in August of 2019, after I had spent that whole summer getting everything ready for launch. At the time, I was working as a wellness coach, and I was a certified personal trainer and certified intuitive eating counselor. So, a podcast about health and wellness was the perfect fit. I knew that there was so much more to the health and wellness story than we're led to believe, so I set out to explore

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

health and wellness topics from a more inclusive point of view, with an emphasis on marginalized voices.

And for the past 85 episodes, I think I did that really well. I had incredible conversations with dozens of guests. I made new friends and connections. I learned a ton, and I know that y'all did too. The whole time I was really trying to change the health and wellness conversation and expand the boundaries of what it even means to talk about health and wellness. Because the truth is, almost anything can affect our health and well-being and I realized that when I started the podcast. In fact, one of my favorite reviews for the podcast includes this quote: "Who knew that you could have a podcast interviewing tattoo artists, burlesque dancers, and financial planners and have it all relate back to health and wellness. But Shohreh does, and this podcast is intersectional and charming."

I'll also note that those episode references from that review were all early episodes of the show. Conversations with guests only got more creative from there. And selfishly, there were times I worked really hard to find a health and wellness angle for something that may not have been a perfect fit just because there was a really cool person I wanted to talk to. Which is part of what led me here.

If you've listened to my three-part Self-Trust Series, you may remember me talking about how I was feeling very confined by wellness coaching. I won't rehash the whole thing here, but basically, my work as expanded and evolved a ton over the past four years to lead to the self-trust coaching that I'm doing now, which I love. And I felt like the podcast also had to grow and change with me for me to continue to be excited about producing and recording it.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

Making that decision wasn't that hard, even though I knew it was going to be a ton of work to rebrand a podcast. But what was hard was trying to come up with the perfect name. I swear that naming things is one of the worst parts of being a business owner because the internet has so much shit on it now that it is very difficult to find something that isn't already being used, and that is important for marketing purposes.

You don't want someone to go look for your podcast and find two or three other podcasts with the same name—that's confusing. You don't want to have a podcast name that nobody else has, but then somebody else is using the website, or the Facebook, or the Instagram to advertise something completely different.

I spent an entire coaching session with my business coach, Kelly Diels, trying to brainstorm the perfect name, and we did not come up with it in that session. It took me many more hours, many more brainstorming sessions.

From the beginning I had the idea to include the word "courage" in the name, but that actually proved to be tricky because we so often associate the word "courage" with masculine or military imagery. And in some cases, religious imagery, or at least that's what I found in my searching. So the words that I paired with courage needed to be a really great fit, especially for my brand, which is...distinct, you might say. At one point, I got so frustrated that I moved away from using the word courage completely and tried out some other things, but in the end, I just kept gravitating back to courage.

Eventually it reached a point where time was running out to finalize a name because I had to get the name to my design team so they could work on the new cover art and eventually work on the website. So I was in the bath,

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

and I brought my laptop up with me—I had it on my bath tray, don't worry—and I was pulling up all these lists of words to see if any of them would spark something. And on one of the lists I saw the word “conjuring,” and I had the lightning strike, this is it kind of feeling with that word.

Originally, I was thinking “Conjuring Courage,” so I anxiously typed it into Apple Podcasts to see if anyone was using it. Nobody was, but then when I did other searches, I realized someone had a program by that name, and I got super disappointed.

This ended up being a good thing because at some point after getting out of the bath, I was mulling it over in my head. I was so frustrated because I really thought I had it with this name. And then it hit me that rarely is the word “conjuring” used outside of a paranormal context without also pairing it with the word “up.” “Conjuring up” is typically the phrase that you hear. So, I quickly grabbed my computer back out, ran some searches, and I was so grateful to find that the name was available everywhere. The domain was available, all of the social media handles were available, and I was stoked.

I decided to sleep on it, and then the next morning when I woke up, I reached out to my friend Sarah, asked her what she thought. She absolutely loved it. And the idea for the cover art, the same cover art that there is now, had already come into my head. Obviously the cover art that we have is a much more beautified version of the rough draft that I had come up with, but it's the same thing. So it just felt right.

So that day I bought the domain, I snagged the social media handles, and here we are. I love the name. I love the cover art. I hope that y'all do too. I think it perfectly encapsulates the direction that I wanted the podcast to go in.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

I've been talking about courage for a long time, long before I became a self-trust coach and made courage practices one of my three essential Pillars of Self-Trust. And a thread that I've noticed in so many of my interviews over the past year and a half is people living courageously in ways big and small.

The creation of Conjuring Up Courage gives me the space to talk to an even wider variety of cool people than I could with Redefining Health & Wellness. And this benefits y'all too because it will allow me to show you so many examples of people deepening self-trust and carving out lives for themselves that go against what they've been told a life *should* be.

And talking about health and wellness will absolutely still play a big role in the show because as I demonstrated over 85 episodes, almost everything in our lives is tied to our health and our well-being. Which means it's naturally going to tie into people's stories and experiences, and we can't ignore that.

But this expansion also gives me free rein to talk about other things that are important to me and important to you, like identity, self-doubt and shame, boundaries, vulnerability, resilience, careers, self-care and community care, social justice, and more, without always needing to tie it back to health.

To me, this isn't just a rebrand, it's also an improvement. With more space to play in, I know that I can make the podcast even better than it already was.

Thank you to everyone who has listened to the show up to this point. It means the world to me, and I hope you'll stick around to see my dreams for this show come to fruition. Thank you to everyone who has ever shared

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

the show with a friend or posted about it on social media. I love seeing your tags. And thank you to everyone who has rated and reviewed the show on Apple podcasts because it does make a difference.

I'll also take this opportunity to remind those of you who haven't rated and reviewed the show to please, please do so. It's very common for listenership to drop off a little right after a rebrand, so more ratings and reviews will help make sure that the show keeps growing. If you have any Apple device, or if someone in your house has an Apple device, or a friend has an Apple device, whether that's an iPhone, a MacBook, or an iPad, you can leave a rating and review in the Apple Podcasts app. If you don't know how to do it, reach out to me because I'd be happy to show you how.

But seriously, y'all, this show would not exist without your listenership. Every episode takes a ton of work and unpaid hours to produce and record. Every episode also costs me money so that the sound is professional and there are transcriptions available. And it wouldn't be worth it to do all of that without all of you cheering me on and telling me how much the show means to you and the impact that it's had on your lives.

While I certainly get a lot out of creating this show, both personally and professionally, this podcast exists for y'all. The purpose of this free resource is to make sure that money doesn't keep people from having access to information, tools, and possibility models. Just because you can't afford coaching with me doesn't mean you shouldn't be able to learn from me.

I can't wait to hear what y'all think about the podcast's evolution, and in meantime, I am going to answer some listener questions as promised.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

Thank you so much to everyone who submitted questions for the listener Q&A in this episode. While I can't answer all of them because there were far too many for a single episode, I am going to answer a handful of the submissions across a variety of topics. Before I get to those, I wanted to give some resources for a couple of the questions that I won't be able to answer in this episode because I have other content that addresses those questions.

There was an anonymous question that asked how to find movement that you enjoy. I actually have a past podcast episode that delves into that. It's episode #33, and it's titled, What You Can Do If You Think You Hate Exercising. I will link that in the show notes for you. I will also link in the show notes a blog post that I wrote back in 2018 titled, Embracing Joyful Movement. Both of those do a pretty great job of answering that question, so I will send you to those, dear anonymous listener.

I also got a question asking me to tackle self-trust specifically with respect to money management and financial planning. While this is definitely not *my* area of expertise, there are two past podcast episodes with guests who are experts in this, and they're both wonderful, and inclusive, and compassionate people. I don't know that the word "self-trust" was necessarily used in either episode, but we definitely talked about feelings around money, where they come from, and what you can do to have a healthier relationship with money. So, those episodes are episode #18, which is titled, Redefining How You Relate to Money with Ian Libardo Tennant, and episode #65, which is titled, Financial Self-Care and Values-Based Spending with Kara Perez. I'm going to put both of those in the show notes for you.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

Additionally, one little tip I will give you is that the first step to having a better relationship with money and feeling more in control of your money is awareness. You need to know how much you have. You need to know your debts. And you need to know all your expenses and spending habits. I personally use the You Need a Budget software, also known as YNAB, to keep tabs on my money, and I am a big fan. I use it for both my personal and business budgeting and it has completely changed my relationship with money.

They do have a free trial, so you can test it out before committing. I also highly recommend the Nick True videos on YouTube for learning how to use YNAB because there's a bit of a learning curve. And I'm pretty sure I have a referral link somewhere. I'm not sponsored by them or anything, but I think I just have a referral link as someone who uses it. So I'll drop that in the show notes too, with the links to the financial episodes and with the links to YNAB and to the Nick True videos.

Alrighty then. Who is ready to hear me answer some questions? The first question, submitted anonymously, is: "Best and worst parts of being a pet mom?"

For those who don't know, I have two dogs, and they are my sun and stars. Alamo is my seven-and-a-half-year-old black lab mix. I adopted her when she was two months old when I lived in Chicago. She was the most spastic puppy and got into a lot of trouble in her prime. Thankfully, she's slowed down quite a bit now.

Then, there is Peppermint who is about two and a half. I rarely call her by her full name, usually it's Peppa or Peppa Pig. I adopted her when she was two months old as well from Austin Pets Alive!, which is a no-kill shelter here in Austin.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

They are a very fun pair. They have really grown to love each other as siblings, and I absolutely adore them.

When it comes to the best parts of being a pet mom, and in this case a dog mom specifically, I would say that the unconditional love is pretty high up there on my list. Having dogs really helps regulate my mental health and overall well-being. The compassion, and kindness, and grace I show them reminds me that I am deserving of that same compassion, and kindness, and grace. They're also endlessly entertaining and cute, which is a joy to have in my life, especially when things are hard.

I have no intention of having children, so I really do view my dogs as my family. They also give me a reason to get out of the house and into some fresh air and sunshine, even when I'm not feeling it. Both of my dogs are medium/large and high energy, and they need plenty of exercise. I actually send them to doggy daycare a few times a week because they need it, but I take them for a lot of walks, I love hiking with them, and I also play a lot of ball with them.

I feel like maybe cuddles are included within unconditional love, but let me also explicitly say the cuddles because dog cuddles are the best. Alamo is not a huge cuddler, so when she does cuddle with you, like, it's a big deal and you don't want to move. Peppermint is a big cuddler. She loves attention. She loves to be on you. She's a pit bull mix. I think I forgot to mention that before. So if you know anything about pitties, they want you to touch them all the time, and it's so cute.

But of course, dog parenting also has plenty of challenges, so now I will address the worst parts. Dogs are very schedule-oriented animals, and they like predictability. My dogs are particularly food-motivated, so as soon as it gets close to one of their mealtimes, they get very bratty and needy

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

until you give them what they want. You also can't just leave your dogs for 10 hours at a time like you could with a cat or some other animals. You do have to plan your lives around them quite a bit.

Just like taking care of human children, there are some really gross aspects of taking care of dogs. You not only have to pick up their poop on the regular, but you basically have to become a poop expert and look for clues in their poop about whether they're sick or ate something they shouldn't have. Dogs also love to throw up at the worst possible times and for seemingly no reason. Pepp literally threw up on the couch last night, and it was disgusting.

Dogs can also be very annoying. Mine have loud barks, which can be triggered by a squirrel in the backyard or people walking by on the sidewalk. So it's super fun when they're barking their heads off when I'm on a coaching call, for instance.

Dogs also sometimes decide that they're afraid of something out of nowhere. For example, Alamo has decided that the Instant Pot is the root of all evil. So whenever I use it, she starts to shake, and she runs upstairs and hides. And sometimes she gets so freaked out that for days afterward, when I'm doing any cooking in the kitchen, even if I'm not using the Instant Pot, she runs away again.

The root of a lot of the annoyance and frustration of being a dog parent is honestly that they can't understand me. Unlike human children who eventually develop increased cognition and language skills, dogs never do. So when Alamo is terrified of the Instant Pot or some other sound, I can't reassure her that she's going to be okay and these things can't hurt her. My dogs also can't tell me when they're not feeling well. Maybe if they could, I would have to clean up their puke less. Similarly, when they have

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

to go to the vet, I can't explain to them what's happening. That communication barrier can be really hard, especially when you love them so much.

So there you have it. The best and worst parts of being a dog mom, according to me.

The next question comes from Stephanie, and Stephanie says, "I'm curious about your thought process when you changed your field of study/changed careers. What made you realize that you wanted something different?"

I have had two major career changes over the course of my life. The first was when I shifted from music to law, and the second was when I shifted from law to running my own business. So I'll talk a little bit about both.

Music has always been really important to me, and in part, that's because it was very important to my mom. And she insisted that me and my siblings start learning instruments from a young age. I believe I started taking piano lessons before I was even in kindergarten. Even though I did not like it, my mom said that we all had to take piano lessons before we could learn a different instrument. But I was very excited when I got to sixth grade and I could join the band, because then I got to start learning how to play the oboe instead.

I loved music, and I was also very good at it. My teachers considered me gifted at the oboe and I was able to advance quickly with it. I was a total band nerd, and my mom really thought I should make a career out of music and not waste my talent. At the time, I was completely on board. In fact, if not for being so good at the oboe, I probably wouldn't have been able to

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

graduate high school a year early since it was my admission into music programs that also granted me admission into colleges.

However, being a high school oboist is quite different from being a college oboist. All of a sudden, I was expected to be a woodworker essentially, and I had to learn how to make reeds by hand, which is something that is unique to double reed musicians. You have to have working reeds in order for your instrument to work and in order for you to sound good. It's not just like a flute where you put the pieces together, warm it up, and then you can play.

While my non-music major friends could do their homework and then go about their lives, as a music major, I spent much of college alone in dingy basement practice rooms playing the same stuff over and over again, trying to perfect it for private lessons or orchestra rehearsal. And I didn't practice nearly as much as some of the more intense and competitive music majors. Plus, even as a music performance major, I still had to take music theory classes, music history classes, and piano classes. It wasn't just about performing, which was the thing I really cared about.

So my thought process in deciding to no longer pursue a career in music was that I realized it was going to be a miserable career path for me. As soon as music switched from being a passion to a professional pursuit, it was a lot less fun. And when I was in high school, I definitely didn't have an accurate understanding of what it's actually like to be a professional musician, which is why the advice to simply do what you love falls short practically.

By two years into college, I knew that I no longer wanted to be a professional musician, but my options were limited. Most of my music credits wouldn't transfer to any other major, so if I changed to something

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

outside of music, it would take me an extra two years to graduate. I did entertain the idea of doing a music education major and becoming a music teacher, but I ultimately decided that wasn't for me either.

I determined that the best course of action was to finish my music degree and then go to graduate school for something else. So, I switched from a bachelor of music to a bachelor of arts, which allowed me to take a wider variety of classes.

My decision to go to law school was by chance, though. A childhood friend started going to UW Madison for law school, and she told me she thought that I would make a great lawyer. At her suggestion, I started looking into it as a career path, and it seemed like a good idea, especially financially, because this was right after the '08 financial crash. Plus, my music degree wouldn't be a barrier to getting into law school like it would be with other graduate programs. Thus, I started down the law path.

So fast forward through the rest of college, the year and a half I took off from school and worked, and three years of law school, and I found myself here in Austin working at a large law firm doing estate planning, which was the practice group I had intentionally pursued, and making six figures.

To an outsider, this was a dream situation. I crushed it in law school, which helped me get a high-paying job in a competitive legal market right out of school. I was working in my practice group of choice. But it only took me five months to realize that law was the wrong career for me.

This is the point where people usually ask me if I hated law school, and the truth is, I didn't. Law school was extremely challenging and one of the most mentally taxing things I have ever done, but I didn't hate it. I learned so much, I had great professor mentors, I had awesome friends, and part of

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

me really liked the intellectual intensity. But any lawyer will tell you that practicing law is completely different from going to law school.

This question specifically asked about my thought process in making my career shift, but it didn't start with my thoughts, it started with my feelings. I had an intuitive gut feeling that I would never be happy as a lawyer, and that feeling continued to grow until my job became almost unbearable. I woke up every day miserable at the thought of having to go to work. Similar to my music career path, I knew I needed to get out before I knew what I wanted to do next.

From there though, it was really about figuring out why I hated being a lawyer so much and what I wanted out of a job and a career instead. I've talked about many of those details on other episodes, so I won't get into them here. But I will say this: following through with leaving my career as an attorney was an exercise in self-trust. It would have been all too easy to keep working as a lawyer for the wrong reasons.

The money was great. Being a lawyer comes with a lot of prestige and respect. I knew leaving my job would upset my parents and confuse a lot of people, and if I just stayed put, everyone would remain proud of me. Plus, there was all of that time, money, and energy I put into pursuing a law degree in the first place. Do you know how miserable studying for and taking the bar exam is? That's a summer of my life I will never get back.

But I knew I wanted something else. I knew that I deserved to feel more fulfilled in my career. *And* I had the privilege of having a partner who was also a lawyer who could support me financially and emotionally in doing so. Don't get me wrong, I was absolutely terrified every step of the way, but I also trusted myself to figure it out no matter what happened.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

I have no idea if that answer is what you had in mind when you asked your question, Stephanie, but that's what you're getting.

Before I move onto the next question, I did want to mention that there was another career question submitted by Nicole asking about advice for huge career shifts. I won't be answering that today, however, I do plan to find a guest for the show who specializes in career changes to talk about that because I get questions about it a lot. So stay tuned for that at some point in the future.

I don't want to spend too much time on this next question because there are a lot of resources and social media posts that address this in depth that could be found by googling, but I'm going to talk about it briefly. The question is, "Is there ever a way to healthily, intentionally reduce your weight under intuitive eating?" Signed, Stuck in the Middle.

The first thing I want to say to Stuck in the Middle and anyone else who has been wondering this, is that your desire to lose weight is completely normal given the culture that we live in and all the messages we get about which bodies are "good" ones. Wanting to lose weight is the expected outcome in the world that we live in where certain bodies command more respect, attention, etc. than others.

Here's the thing, though—my answer is no. There is never a way to healthily, intentionally reduce your weight under intuitive eating, and here's why.

First, you used the word "intentionally." Intuitive eating and intentional weight loss are not compatible. They are two things that cannot actually coexist. The practice of intuitive eating is based on increasing your interoceptive awareness so you can hear and respond to your body's

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

signals around food and eating. Intuitive eating is designed to be a way to heal your relationship with food. You can't heal your relationship with food if you continue to elevate external factors like calories, macros, or the direction your weight is moving on the scale over your body's signals.

There is no way to know what will happen to your body when you practice intuitive eating, which, by the way, in a world without diet culture and oppressive standards of beauty, would just be called "eating." Some people gain weight, some people lose weight, and some people stay the same. Weight is affected by many different factors, including genetics, hormones, dieting history, metabolism, stress levels, and sleep quality, to name a few.

I also want to note that intuitive eating isn't static. It's designed to be flexible so that as your life changes, the way you eat can change with you. So even if someone initially lost weight or initially gained weight with intuitive eating, who knows how long they would remain at that weight. Bodies change a lot for all different reasons.

The other word that you used that I want to point out is "healthily," because ooh, that is a loaded word. My question to you is how are you defining health? If you were to experience "healthy" weight loss, what would that mean? In my experience, very few people can focus on intentional weight loss and do it in a way that doesn't have a negative effect on their physical health, or their mental health, or their social health.

And I'm not even getting into the fact that on average, 95% of people who attempt intentional weight loss gain it all back within a few years. There is no known, proven way for people to lose weight and keep it off for the long-term.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

I know I've already answered your question, but I'll also say this: it would be worth your time to really think about why you want to lose weight and whether what you would have to do to make that happen is actually worth it to you. Now you know that intuitive eating is not a path to intentional weight loss. So, you would have to choose a different path to get there. Is that a path that you want to go down?

Additionally, and this is something I always remind my clients when they're struggling with this very thing, dieting and intentional weight loss aren't going anywhere for a long, long time. If you've spent a good portion of your life focusing on changing your body, why not experiment with something different, knowing that you can always go back to trying to lose weight if you decide it's not for you. Best case scenario, you learn a new way of living and being in your body that feels really good. Worst case scenario? You return to trying to lose weight with the knowledge that intuitive eating didn't feel right for you.

I strongly believe in bodily autonomy and that people can do what they want with their bodies as long as they don't try to tell other people that that's what they should do too. I have no idea what the right choice is for you. That's something you'll have to decide for yourself. But I want you to know that what you're grappling with is really hard, and you're not alone. So hang in there, Stuck in the Middle, and I hope you find the answers that you seek.

The next question comes from Casey, and Casey writes, "How do you discern whether a person/company/platform should be trusted? For context, in my twenties I got really into "health" and "personal development." I later found out a lot of the people I was learning from and

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

what they were teaching were problematic, exclusionary, or not right for me. What do you look for and what are red flags?”

This is an excellent question, and it’s also a very tricky question to answer because we can’t know what we don’t know. Usually when we support certain people, platforms, and companies, it’s because we believe they are reflective of our views and values at that time. But being the complex humans that we are, our views and values naturally shift over the course of our lives, and that can bring us out of alignment with people, platforms, and companies we were on board with before.

So, the first thing I want to say is that outgrowing people, platforms, and companies is a normal and expected thing. The fact that you’re doing that isn’t necessarily evidence of naiveté or missing red flags. That being said, there are certainly some things that can help you determine if a person, platform, or company is trustworthy or the right fit for you.

One of the best ways to do that has nothing to do with them and everything to do with you. The more tuned into your core values and beliefs that you are, the easier it will be to determine who and what also aligns with those core values and beliefs. I do a lot of values work with my self-trust coaching clients because many people haven’t spent much time thinking about this. If you don’t know what matters to you, then you also won’t know what to look for in others. So, the more clear you can get on who you are and what you care about, the easier it will be to not get sucked in by the wrong messages.

Now, when it comes to the people, platforms, and companies themselves, there are a couple of things you can look for. First, look for transparency. How transparent are they about things like credentials? The kinds of privilege that they hold? Their business practices and their values? Are

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

these things pretty easy to find, or are they buried? Do they talk about them a lot or pretty much never unless pressed? If you can't find the answers that you're looking for, reach out and ask. If they have nothing to hide, they should have no problem giving you a clear answer for most inquiries, and if they can't give a clear answer, they should also be able to explain why.

Next, assuming there is some transparency about values, practices, etc., are they walking the walk too, or only talking the talk? Let me give you a recent example of this. Last week, Kelly Cutchin posted in her IG stories about a clothing brand that claims to be inclusive and social justice-oriented, but that is selling tops that only go up to a size 2XL while still including the words, "For all bodies and identities," in the description. A size 2XL being your largest size is not for all bodies. There's a clear mismatch in the companies claimed values and their actions, and that is something to look out for.

Unfortunately, there's no foolproof way to make sure that you're perfectly aligned with all of the people, platforms, and companies that you're into. But these suggestions should at least help.

Okay, so I got two different questions about impostor syndrome. One is more specific, and that's the one that I'm going to answer. The other asked me what techniques I use to push back against impostor syndrome, and for that question, I would refer you to episode #79 with my friend, Abimbola Oladokun. We had a very in-depth conversation about impostor syndrome and how we deal with it, so I will put a link to that episode in the show notes.

The other question on impostor syndrome, which was anonymously submitted, is asking for, "Advice for fitness coaches who are just starting

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

out and dealing with a bad case of impostor syndrome? I suspect it's so debilitating because I recognize that it's people's health I have the potential to mess up if I make a mistake. I feel like I need to know everything before I have the right to start trying to help anyone. It's an exhausting feeling."

Well, Anonymous, I am no stranger to impostor syndrome, and I can tell you that impostor syndrome is a real dick. The people who most often experience impostor syndrome are women and marginalized folks because we get messages our entire lives that we are less than. I don't know if you identify as a woman or marginalized, but I just want to throw that out there.

I also want to affirm that for coaches just starting out, it's totally normal to be a bit freaked out and to doubt your abilities. A lot of coaching is figured it out on the job. So even though you can go in with an education, and some ideas, and a direction, you're going to learn far more by doing.

Here's the thing, though. You've mentioned that you're a fitness coach. What the average person knows about fitness, they learned from magazines, maybe a friend in college, or influencers online. Assuming you've undergone some education and a certification process to become a fitness coach, you are leaps and bounds ahead of most people in your knowledge of the body and movement.

If you're brand new, then you're not an expert yet. But you don't need to be an expert to get started. You definitely don't need to know everything, nor could you know everything if you tried. And everything you know doesn't really matter until you start applying it.

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

You mentioned that one of the drivers of your impostor syndrome is that you're worried you could mess up someone's health if you make a mistake, so let's talk about that. As a fitness coach, one of the best ways to make sure that you don't mess up someone's health is to stay within your scope of practice. If your only training is in fitness, then that means you should not be counseling your clients on nutrition or other aspects of their health.

Another way to help keep your clients safe is to make sure that you know proper spotting techniques and that you don't push your clients beyond their capabilities. If you make a point to foster a trusting relationship with your clients, it's more likely that they will be open with you about how they're feeling and what they can handle any given day.

If you're a regular listener of the podcast, then you know that health is quite complicated and multifactorial. So there are very few circumstances where you could actually be directly responsible for messing up a client's health. Just the fact that you asked me this question says to me that you're a thoughtful person who cares about the well-being of their future clients. Those are not the kind of people who typically fuck up their clients' well-being. That being said, the nature of fitness coaching as a profession is that there are risks involved, and people can be litigious even when you're not at fault. So you absolutely must have liability insurance.

What I want you to know is that you don't get confidence by waiting, you get confidence by doing. So if you want to feel more confident in your fitness coaching, you're going to have to find a way to push through the fear and impostor syndrome and start.

So I want you to ask yourself what would make you feel safe to do that? Could you find a mentor who has more experience than you to talk about

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

clients with when you're not sure what to do? Could you start your coaching practice alongside other people so you feel less alone? Take some time to figure out what kind of support you need, and then go and get it.

The other thing I want you to keep in mind is that you absolutely are going to make mistakes, and there's no getting around that. You'll actually learn more from making the mistakes than you ever could from trying to become a fitness-coaching encyclopedia. I've been coaching people for over four years, and I've made so many mistakes. In fact, any coach who can look back at their coaching practice and say they haven't made any mistakes or that there aren't things that they would do differently in hindsight, is either a liar or has their head all the way up their ass.

The good news is that most mistakes are not life or death. Most mistakes are not going to make or break a client's health or happiness. The mark of a good coach isn't someone who gets everything right all the time. That's the mark of a robot. A good coach is someone who cares about their clients and is willing to listen to feedback, apologize when they're wrong, and learn from it when they fuck up. And because you asked me this question, I know you're someone who is already on their way there.

Have courage, Anonymous. You pursued fitness coaching for a reason, and I bet you're gonna help a lot of people.

That brings me to the final question I'm going to answer as part of this Q&A. The question I'm about to answer is about queerness and identity. But I also got several other questions asking about my queer identity and my coming out journey. I am purposely saving those questions to address in June. That's because this year for Pride month I am doing queer content all month long on all of my platforms. It's gonna get so fucking gay up in

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

here, y'all! So you'll have to wait a few more months to hear me talk about my own journey, but I promise it will be worth it.

Alright. So the final question of the episode was submitted anonymously, and it reads as follows: "I guess I'm bi, though I'm not 100% out. Mostly I never gave it much thought because I didn't feel like making a big thing out of something that feels personal. I came of age in the 2000's when it was cool to not put labels on things. Plus, I was a shy nerd who never dated much anyway, so it just never came up. I already have too many overlapping and more visible identities to grapple with, and I just never felt like adding yet another group to the list of groups that'll never feel like I fully belong in. Lol, I'm also mixed racially/ethnically. Is this fine? Or am I just contributing to erasure/stigma by not boldly declaring how I identify? I should also add that I'm in a long-term, straight-passing relationship, so, like I said, I belong nowhere."

Anonymous, I have to tell you that you broke my heart a little with this question. I know how awful it is to feel like you don't belong anywhere, especially as a fellow mixed-race person. And I want you to know first and foremost that you do belong and fuck anyone who says otherwise.

Because this question is about your bisexual identity specifically, that's where I'm going to focus. You asked, "Is this fine?" in regards to your choice to not boldly declare your bisexual identity, and the answer is yes. It's totally fine, and it's completely your choice how out you want to be. But let's dig in a little further.

Whether or not a person is queer has nothing to do with whether or not a person is fully out or if they're even out at all. So your bisexual identity is totally valid, even if you never tell another soul outside of doing so anonymously in this Q&A. I also want to mention that coming out is not the

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

one-time thing that a lot of heterosexual people think it is. Coming out is a continuous, never-ending process, and it can be exhausting. Some people just don't want to go through that, which is fine.

So let me strongly affirm that there's no one right way to be queer. There is no one right way to be bisexual. And you not boldly declaring your identity is A-OK as long as *you're* okay with it.

But. But, but, but, but, but, but, but. This is a big but... If the main driver of your decision not to be more open about your identity is that you feel like you don't belong in the LGBTQIA+ community, then I want to be clear, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Coming out as queer opens you up to homophobia, yes. And coming out as bisexual, especially when you're in a straight-passing relationship, can also open you up to biphobia from certain people in the queer community. But as far as I'm concerned, those gatekeeping asshats can jump off a cliff. As a bisexual, you are a part of the queer community. You are welcome here, you are seen, and you are loved. And anyone who says otherwise doesn't speak for the community and can go fuck themselves.

My point here is that if you want queer community, it is yours for the taking. If you want to declare to the world that your bisexuality is 100% valid no matter who you're dating or sleeping with, I agree wholeheartedly, and I support your choice to do so. And, if you don't, if it feels easier and better for you to hold your bisexuality close and keep it private, I support that too.

So you do you, Anonymous. Remember that you can always change your mind, and please know you're still a part of the queer community no matter what. And if you ever want to be more open about your identity, the kinds

# Conjuring Up Courage

## #86

**Featured this episode:** Shohreh Davoodi

---

of inclusive queer folks you'd actually want in your corner will be there to embrace you with open arms, myself included.

Thank you again to everyone who submitted questions for this episode. I wish I had time to answer them all, but if you enjoyed this, definitely let me know, and I'll be sure to do more Q&As in the future. With that, we have officially kicked off Conjuring Up Courage the podcast. Y'all are awesome, and I believe the best is yet to come for this show.

[Music plays]

And that's our show for today! If you're enjoying Conjuring Up Courage, don't forget to subscribe through your podcast provider of choice so you never miss an episode. Additionally, if you haven't left a rating and review in Apple podcasts yet, you can do so from any Apple device to help more people find and benefit from the show. I also love hearing from listeners, so feel free to take a screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. My username is @shohrehdavoodi on all platforms. Finally, you can sign up for my email newsletter, The Sunday Share, and get more details about how to work with me by going to [shohrehdavoodi.com](http://shohrehdavoodi.com). Thank you so much for listening, and I hope you'll join me for the next episode.