

You are listening to The Uncorked Conversation Podcast with Allyson Scammell, episode number 30.

Hello, and welcome to The Uncorked Conversation, a podcast for soul-guided, passion-filled women entrepreneurs who want to uncork big magic in life and business without burning out. We'll get to the truth of how to uncork our core gifts, the ones we keep hidden inside, and how to infuse those gifts into our personal and professional life in a way that feels like magic. We'll also uncover how to truly experience the joy of the journey through smart time management and planning.

I'm your host, Allyson Scammell. Let's uncork.

Hello and happy spring. If you're in a place that has spring weather, I hope it is abundant where you are, and you're feeling that cool sensation of putting winter behind you and looking ahead to the rebirth of new flowers, new seeds, new possibilities, green and fruitful.

So episode number 30. Wow.

If you've been listening to me for a while, you will know that I devote every 10th episode to telling a story. And the story is in service to you, and may it be something that you can learn from or benefit from in some way. So I dedicate this story to you.

I started knowingly listening to my voice of intuition in around 2009. I had a big life experience then, and it guided me very strongly to that voice. And my intuitive voice is very strong and clear, and I have immediate and knowing access to it. And I've lived a very intuition-based life since then, meaning I allow my intuition to make all of my big decisions. I don't always implement it's advice immediately, because the thinking mind can be a pretty strong voice inside of you as well, but ultimately all of my big life decisions have been from the guidance of my intuition.

Looking back, I asked myself, when is the first time I heard the voice of my intuition, because it was with me throughout my life, I just didn't realize it. I go back to a day in spring, 1998. Wow, 21 years ago. I was about to graduate from college, and I could not decide between joining the peace corps, which had been a childhood dream of mine, and going to Washington DC to work on Capitol Hill.

At the time, I had a job offer, a good job offer, for around \$30,000 a year, and I thought that was more money than I could ever possibly make. And the whole peace corps thing had been quite crazy in the sense that I had applied, and they wanted to send me to Africa to do agricultural development because I grew up on a farm, but my heart really, really wanted to go to Eastern Europe, at that time, relatively new free market economies after the fall of communism. I was kind of obsessed with it. And I wanted to do civil society development in these areas that didn't have much of a civil society during communism.

Well, to make a long story short, by a lot of synchronicity, I got a meeting, little ol' me, 21-year-old me, with the director of the Peace Corps, which is a huge presidential-appointed position. And he said to me, "Where do you want to go? What do you want to do?"

And I explained, "Well, they wanted to send me to Africa, and I really want to go to Eastern Europe and work for an NGO."

And he said, "Well let me call my head of recruitment here in Washington, and we'll see how we can make this happen."

And lo and behold, the head of recruitment was a woman from South Dakota, where I am from, and she was dear friends with my mother. Truly, this all just fell in my lap. But I still didn't see it as any sort of sign that they were going to send me exactly where I wanted to go, to Romania, doing exactly what I wanted to be doing, NGO and civil society development. And I was still not knowing that there was a voice of intuition. So when I was in those final weeks of university, I was struggling about whether or not to go to Romania or to move to Washington DC and take a job on the hill.

It was quite agonizing, and I just didn't know what to do. And I knew that the two paths would take me in very different directions, or at least that's what I had sensed at the time. And I remember meeting a mentor of mine, and I was going through this agonizing decision with him, and the pros and cons. And he just had this sad look on his face. He said, "Man, I would take the international adventure. That, to me, sounds so amazing."

I don't remember exactly what his words were. It was something to that effect. But man, do I remember the look on his face, filled with so much regret of so much living that he wanted to do and hadn't done. So I thanked him, and I left, and I walked home from the campus to my home, which is something I rarely did. I normally drove. It was a beautiful spring day. The Sun was out, the birds were chirping, and I walked home.

In that walk, I moved into an incredible sense of the present moment. I heard things at a higher frequency. I saw colors deeper. Life slowed down. Everything seemed to be in slow motion, and my senses were heightened. And I heard this clear voice coming to me, clear as could be, coming from inside of my heart, saying, "Join the Peace Corps, join the Peace Corps."

I didn't know that that was the voice of my intuition speaking to me, but I knew whatever that voice was, it was a voice I often didn't hear and I had to listen to it. That voice was the right answer, the answer I had been so desperately searching for.

So I made the decision. I said yes to the Peace Corps. I said no to Capitol Hill and that big \$30,000 a year payout. Oh, and actually in the Peace Corps, I think I made about \$172 a month. So yeah, it certainly wasn't a decision based on finances. And so I did.

When I graduated from university, I was at the top of my game. I had been student body president, I had so many friends, I graduated with highest honors, and I just had this great robust, amazing life. I had an absolutely amazing university experience. I wouldn't change a thing about it.

And then, graduating at the top of my game, at the top of my class, I gave the commencement address speech to a crowd of about 5,000 people. Two weeks later, I'm on a plane to Bucharest with 70 other strangers, to be a Peace Corps volunteer. I was so idealistic. I really thought that I would change the world, I would change the lives. I don't know, I thought I would move mountains.

So I arrived, and the first summer was okay, because it was a three-month training with the other Americans all living in the same town. It kind of felt like summer camp. But then at the end of the

summer, we got assigned our towns, and we'd all be assigned to the four corners of Romania, all living in different cities, villages, etc.

I got sent ... because I asked for a rustic place. And I remember that the Romanian woman I told that to said, "Be careful what you wish for." And they gave me the most isolated place in the country, I can say. They sent me to a village on the far, far, far eastern tip of the country, called Sulina, and it was smack dab ... wasn't really in the middle, it was at the end point, truly the end of the earth, of the Danube Delta. There were no roads. You could only get there by boat. They still used the barter system, so you could buy bread with fish, and it was the most isolating place I'd ever been in my life.

My Romanian was improving day by day, but it was still very bad. I was assigned to this organization that was completely defunct. There was one guy that went in about an hour a day to play Freecell on the computer, on the big old desktop. There was no internet connection anywhere. And then he would go home.

Every day I would say, "Hey, I have these ideas. We could do this project or that project or do a local fundraiser. We could do this, we could do that."

And every day he would say to me, "[Foreign Language 00:12:07] Allyson, [Foreign Language 00:12:08]," which means be patient, be patient.

So I went from this robust schedule, 14 hour a day schedule, to absolutely nothing. Nothing to do, no one to talk to, nowhere to go, nothing. So I went into a depression. And then winter came, and it became dark, and there was no place to exercise, and the only food available was potatoes, bread and cheese. So I put on weight.

And I was so depressed, I was so lonely. I missed home so badly. And I thought, "Why did I decide to come here? What a horrible decision. Why didn't I take that job to go to DC? It would have been a full-time day job with status and a paycheck and people, interesting people. What on Earth am I doing here atrophying, withering away, making absolutely no impact on the world?"

And I didn't realize that I had indeed listened to my intuition, but had I did, I would have said my intuition was wrong. It steered me in the wrong direction. I should have never listened to it.

So the winter raged on dark, dreary every day, no sign of the sun. I isolated myself. I gained more weight. I was depressed. I stopped showering. And it was the first time I'd ever experienced those types of emotions, or had been confronted with such a unhappy situation.

But then this crazy thing happened. Spring arrived, the sun came out. The extremely seasonal, local outdoor markets where I bought all my food, had strawberries, sweet, juicy, grown right there locally, strawberries. I hadn't seen a strawberry in months. There were no strawberries flown in from Peru. And they were delicious. Then I found a gym. I started exercising. I found a group of people who were local ornithologists, botanists, they worked with children, they all had PhDs, highly intellectual, driven people who wanted to do an environmental camp for children, and they asked me to be part of it.

I had made friends, I was completely fluent in Romanian. And even though it wasn't without its challenges, certainly, my second year in the Peace Corps was like a totally and completely different

experience. Then, when my tour started coming to an end, and I had to decide what I was going to do next, I really wanted to go to grad school, and I realized I wanted to stay in international affairs. I wanted to live abroad. I wanted to travel. I wanted to learn more languages. I knew that this was the world I really wanted to be in.

So I applied to Grad schools. I got accepted to my number one choice at Columbia in New York City, and that Peace Corps experience launched me to the career I went on to pursue for 17 years before I pivoted to coaching. And looking back, I wouldn't give up any of those experiences I had working in international affairs, traveling and living abroad, for anything. They truly made me who I am today, even though I'm working now in an entirely different profession. I use everything that I learned from my international affairs career every day as a coach, in various ways.

So why does our intuition take us down dark paths? Okay, in the story I just told, maybe it doesn't seem so bad because it ended on a good note, but what if you're down that dark path now? What if you've been guided to a dark place, and you can't see the silver lining yet? You can't see how you benefited from it. This is when you have to really trust and surrender to that voice that is connected to your higher self, to your soul, the wisest all-knowing part of your soul that's connected to source energy.

And that voice always has your back. It always has your highest purpose in mind. It's always coming from a place of pure love, but sometimes that love is tough love, the richest and deepest form of love there is. And so why though specifically, let's take it a level deeper, does our intuition guide us down dark paths to very difficult and trying circumstances, that we think sometimes we could have avoided had we made other choices, other decisions?

And the first and foremost reason is to confront fears, confront fears that have been blocking you, and that have been trapping blocked energy inside of you in pockets. And what I mean by that is if something happens to you as a child or in a past lifetime, because yes, those certainly come into play, that is traumatic or difficult, a coping mechanism that we need to rely on often is to bottle that pain up inside of us, because maybe at the time of experiencing the pain we just can't handle feeling it, seeing it, expressing it. So we tuck it away in a pocket inside of us.

The problem is that that pain can only stay inside for so long. And what often happens is we manifest situations that are similar to that pain because it is stuck inside of us. And what our intuition will try to do is guide us to situations that help us to confront it, so we can bring that pain forward, and bring it to the surface and feel it, which is how you release it, and it's no longer trapped inside of you.

Another reason your intuition will guide you to a difficult place is to help your soul evolve, evolve to a bigger, more powerful you. When you get to the other side of a difficult challenge, you have learned, you have grown, you are stronger, you are in a greater position to help others, to guide others, be a leader, be a healer, whatever it is you feel called to do. And there's lessons to be learned. Your core gifts are deepened in challenges, those gifts that are uniquely you to share. If we avoid all of life's difficult circumstances, we don't get that opportunity to go deeper, to grow and evolve into a higher version of ourself.

Another reason that our intuition will guide us to a dark place is to open us up to new possibilities, so we can go bigger, we can take things to the next level, we can see the biggest possibilities that are out there, the biggest impact we can have. Going through a difficult time, such as my first year in the Peace

Corps, and learning to overcome that really on my own, I didn't have much of a support system, I was the only American assigned in my town for most of my time there, and I dug deep within. I looked inward to get myself through that. And being able to do that, and knowing that I could do that, really opened me up to so many of my life's possibilities.

After that, I had the courage and the confidence to take on bigger and bigger challenges, because I knew that I got through something really difficult all on my own. So I knew I could only do it again if I ever needed to.

Our thinking brain can certainly also lead us down dark paths, and those paths will have a different flavor. They will not always be in service to the evolution of your soul. Those dark paths will, at times, block your growth, not lead to the development of it. And it's only when we shift back to the voice of intuition that we will truly get unblocked, that we will truly get back on path, on purpose. So yes, both voices, the voice of the head and the heart, can lead us down a difficult path, but it's the voice of the heart that we want to listen to.

A quick and easy way to know what voice you're hearing is where the voice comes from, and our thinking brain creates thoughts that go out, and they literally ... you can feel them in your head. But our voice of intuition, the voice of our soul, our higher self, our inner being, is a message that you receive from your heart. You, conscious you, receive it as a gift, as a message, from your soul. And it arrives in your heart space.

So if you're ever not sure what the voice is you're hearing, just ask yourself, "Where did it come from in the body? Did it go out from my head," or come in through your heart.

And if your thinking brain leads you down a dark path, that certainly doesn't mean that that's not part of your path and part of your human experience. It is. But honoring the voice of the intuition and where it's guiding you to, even if that place ends up being a difficult place, will always be in the highest service to the evolution of your soul. So you will come out of it on the other side, stronger, more gifted, more free, more independent, more connected, more loving, more of all the fabulous things that makes you you.

So my challenge for you is to surrender to that voice. Get quiet, get still, listen to it. What is the voice of your heart guiding you to do? Does it feel scary? Good. That is your calling card to take action. And I promise that if you stay with that voice, go to that voice, allow that voice to carry you through, you will always make it to the other side of any challenge, a stronger, more powerful version of you.

So my dear friends, that's all I have to share for today. I truly hope that this story was in service to you. I tell it in service to you, and if you're feeling called, if you're feeling so motivated, I would be very, very grateful if you shared this episode with a couple friends, liked it, gave it a rating and review, and this is how more people can find the podcast.

And as always, my dear friends, stay uncorked.

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