



The Women Masters Interview with Charlotte Kasl

AMY: Welcome, everyone, welcome, welcome to the Women Masters Teleseminar Series expert call with Charlotte Kasl. Are you ready to get inspired? I hope you are. As most of you know by now, my name is Amy Ahlers and I'm the creator of the Women Masters Teleseminar Series, and I'm also the CEO of Wake-up Call Coaching. My vision for this series is to allow people from all over the world access to the most respected women experts of our time, so that you can be inspired and motivated in this time of challenge, and in this time of hope, as well. I want all of you on the call today to wake up and to have this call be a true wake-up call for you, so that you can step further and further into your power and genius. Just note that at the beginning of these calls, because we have hundreds of people calling in at the same time, sometimes there's a little bit of interference, which may happen for the first four minutes or so. Just know that it does usually subside, and I just appreciate your patience with that.

I'm just going to tell everybody a little bit about Charlotte Kasl, just to give you some framework for her outstanding work. Charlotte has an M.A. in music from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Ohio University. She is the author of eight books—eight books! I mean, what an achievement! Some of you may be really familiar with her series called If the Buddha—If the Buddha Dated, If the Buddha Married—she has an amazing series of books. The most recent is The Sixteen Step Model. The threads running through all of her work is helping people find their own voice, accept themselves and develop a spiritual and social consciousness, the increases understanding and compassion for all people.

Dr. Kasl's empowerment model, know as the Sixteen Steps for Recovery from Addiction, has had a major impact on the addiction field. The model brings a flexible, socially conscious approach to recovery, and seeks to build self-esteem and a sense of personal empowerment. We're going to go into much more detail about the sixteen steps, and I'm just thrilled to welcome Charlotte Kasl, so everyone give her a warm welcome. Yay! Hi, Dr. Kasl.

CHARLOTTE: Hi. It's nice to be here.

AMY: Welcome. Thank you so much for donating this hour so that people can hear about this incredible model. Just to tart us out today, I wanted you to tell us a little bit about how you define addiction.

CHARLOTTE: Okay. I want to distinguish between addictions, compulsions, habits, because people get them mixed up. A true addiction is when it starts grabbing your life. A person feels powerless to say no. They find that they want to say no, maybe, or not, but they don't do that, and their life starts kind of having little pieces of unmanageability. Now this can vary for different people. With a compulsive gambler it could be all the sudden you don't have



the rent money. It can be humongous. For people, if it's steadily drinking more and more, it's not quite such a sudden consequence, but some people escalate very rapidly into the unmanageability, and their life starts coming unglued. Other people, it goes long and slow. The other thing is that it starts moving into your creativity, your joy, your ability to be close and intimate in relationships, because there's this wall of denial that gets built up around you, and that affects everything. It escalates over time. Generally it gets worse. Now for some people, again, it gets to a place and it plateaus there for long periods of time, and then it's very hard to quit; there are withdrawal symptoms. This could be in relationships, too, because people getting out of a relationship, physiologically, they get shakes and stomachaches and headaches and can't sleep, and can't eat. With the alcohol it's like you can't get your mind off the cravings and the body, and the feelings that are coming up, and they feel overwhelming. It's like, what do I do to feel okay? That's part of the addiction.

AMY: That's great. I'm really hearing that there's a sense where the substance—the relationship, whatever 'the' is—has taken over your life.

CHARLOTTE: Pretty much. Now some people, I think, again, they maybe have an addiction to alcohol in that they can't seem to live without it, but it plateaus, so they don't lose control. They still have their job, they go to work, there may be some difficulty in losing their temper a little bit, or it may be they can't relax without it. It may be partner's often complaining he or she keeps his distance, there's always this distance, and you hear that a lot from people, but for many it escalates to the point you're waking up and you're wanting a hit, and life becomes finding it. There's addiction to sex, and I wrote a whole book on that, also, that it becomes the center of life—how do I find the next partner, or pornography, or prostitution, or just get my partner to sleep with me every day, twice, kind of a thing. It's like, I can't feel okay unless I do this. The mind has it paired with: this makes me either powerful, it releases me from pain, it helps me with my anxiety; it has a positive effect for a very short time, and then the harmful consequences follow.

AMY: Got it. Okay, great, thank you. That's helpful. Tell us what distinguishes that from something like a compulsion or a bad habit, or are those separate at well?

CHARLOTTE: They're kind of separate. A compulsion is rooted in a need to lower tension. It has words like I've got to, I must; I must get this house cleaned up or I just can't relax; I can't sleep without masturbating; I must be with Charley tonight. There's a kind of intensity to it, and the thing is often, like for cleaning up and making things perfect and orderly. It's not that it's so much fun doing that, it's that it relieves the tension inside. A lot of times what I find is when we have chaos on the inside—old pains we haven't taken care of, fears we don't want to acknowledge—what we're really trying to do with this compulsive tidiness, or whatever, is control the chaos inside, and we can't control that, so we control outside of us. But it doesn't escalate the same way a true addiction does. Someone may always need to go check the burners three times, just get that house cleaned up, get certain things done at work, and check them over; check them over again and again. It's more of a cutting off from a peaceful life. It doesn't stop it so much as clutter it up, and I often hear children saying, yes, my mom, she's just busy all the time. One woman said, I let



my kids know if they leave a coat on the living room chair, I'll go ballistic. It's like you can't handle it because these emotions inside are so strong, that unless you keep everything under control on the outside, then you don't feel very good. The question with all of this is, well what would you feel like, if you didn't do it? What would it be like if you didn't give in to the addiction? What would it be like if you didn't give in to the compulsion, if you just sat down and let those feelings arise in your body? What would you learn about yourself? Interestingly there's much brain science around this. There's a wonderful book called The Brain That Changes Itself, by Norman Doidge, and he talks about breaking compulsions. He says you basically have this groove that you keep deepening and deepening, and that's where these things become ruts, literally, in your brain; you seem to have to do it all the time. Changing that is you have to make a new groove. You have to make a groove that I can sit down and leave the dishes sit a while, and read to my kid, and play with him, or just hang out with the friends at the dining table, and just enjoy conversation. I don't have to get that kitchen cleaned up; this comes up so much with women. It can be at work: I have to go back and check things; I have to go over that paper again; I have to do it. Now there's doing a good job, but then there's this anxiety and fear about not getting it right, going over it again, can't have one misspelled word ever, that kind of thing.

AMY: Then what distinguishes compulsive behavior, like that, from just a bad habit?

CHARLOTTE: Habits can be . . . I use the word usually, sometimes, always; I usually eat popcorn when I go to the movies. It's a habit and you don't feel quite okay if you don't, even though, let's say, you're trying to lose weight, and it's bad stuff.

AMY: You mean the buttered popcorn at the movie theater isn't the best thing if you're trying to lose weight?

CHARLOTTE: Right. You know, I have to have a shower every morning. It's like my friends who go roughing it, backpacking, camping; they don't have that. They take a shower, get dirty, and so forth, but some people really can't do it because oh, I couldn't have a shower. It limits things; compulsions limit things. They limit our connections because we've got to get this thing done. We can't say oh, I'm going to go out and see him; I'm going to go take a walk; I'm going to go have some fun. It's not; I've got to stay home and get this done. It's like, open it up, breathe; it'll wait.

I'll give you a wonderful example. I was living in a part of town, and old part of town with front porches, and I had a front porch swing, and my house was only ten feet from the next house. Grandma Millie Bean was there, who was my neighbor, and I said, oh, gee, I've got to go in and clean the house. She said, now sit here with me; the dirt will wait. It was just so lovely. She made such a lovely request—sit here with me. So she was rocking on her front porch and I was in my little front porch swing, and we just sat and yakked away, and it was just nice to be able to do that. But if you're driven, if you have that compulsion, then you just can't relax. Some people get sick for a little bit, and they're just going nuts, because "they can't get things done." It takes us away from, again, our relationships, from sticking our feet in the sand and the dirt, or just sitting



outside, taking in the leaves, the butterflies, whatever's going on; that we don't have to have everything perfect, then we get to have a minute of pleasure in this life. We get to relax and enjoy the beauty and the awesome wonder around us.

AMY: I love that. It's so powerful, what you're saying, and I know that so many people on this call can relate to what you're saying. You asked a question a little bit ago about what would happen if I didn't do that, what would be coming up. What a powerful entryway into just noticing what is, which is one of the things that I love about your work, is, as you put it, the spiritual and social consciousness, and that peace of spirituality and the peace of self-respect, when you and I were talking earlier today.

Tell us a little bit more about what role spirituality plays in all of this, for you and your work.

CHARLOTTE: Well for me, I'd say the best thing that captures it is what Ghandi said: Truth is but another name for God. It's quite simple, in that it's about listening inside, hearing what Quakers call the still, small voice within, or the truth as it lives inside of me, not all the clatter from the fluids and stuff like that, and really living by that as much as I possibly can, and being at one with that. It's about a very deep self-awareness, very deep listening, and I'm not very connected to the outside form of it. I've written these books that bring up Buddhism and talk a lot about the Society of Friends, or Quakers, which actually has a lot of common ground with Buddhism, because it's about honoring all people, all ways, how they relate to their Creator, that people can have different rituals, and this and that, but the ritual isn't the spirit. The ritual is something people try to do to get there. It's like you can point to the moon, but your finger isn't the moon. To me it's this deep, deep, deep listening, and that's the center, by the way, of the Society of Friends, is the truth as it lives within us all, that we really listen to that, and that's considered, then, to be at one with Spirit, or God.

In Buddhism, there's looking at your attachments, and this was huge for me too, meaning when I want something to be different than it is—a person, a situation, the weather, how I look, my weight—I'm fighting reality, and that creates a resistance and a duality inside. Coming from more of an Eastern Zen perspective, you get away from dualities. You experience, well what's this about? This goes into the empowerment model that's been used for overcoming addictions, actually, that I put out in '92, and it's had a big resurgence in use. It's not about saying I have things wrong with me I should get rid of. It's like, well, let's meet those things; let's take them apart; let's look at it. Okay, I have this compulsion. I always have to have the house tidy and the kids have to get their rooms really neat. Well, what happens if I pull back on that? Well, I start to feel kind of anxious inside. Okay, can you sit with that? Can you just let it come up for you? Can you let yourself have quiet and silence, and drift back inside, and see what starts coming up for you? Very often then, people bring up hurts and pains, anger, painful memories from childhood, that they've been trying to just push away, but we have to work so hard to do that, and over the years the pushing gets stronger. That part's pushing to be heard, and we're pushing harder and running harder and faster to keep it away. So from this point of view, we look okay. I have this fury that comes up, maybe; something will set me



off. Well boy, what's that related to? How old does that feel, I ask that a lot of times. Oh, that feels like when I was about twelve or fourteen, or eight; people will have different ages that come up for them, and oh, yes, that's when the step-dad came in and he was really mean to me, and I was so mad at him, and I was so sad and angry at my mother. We start unraveling this stuff and you get a bigger picture of where it comes from. Then there are these wonderful therapies now. I won't go into depth, but EMDR, Ego-state therapy, ways you can really get this stuff out of the nervous system, so you're not triggering so much. People don't have to live with these compulsions forever, and addictions.

AMY: I was just going to say, tell us a little bit about the history of developing the sixteen steps, the empowerment model, and I just want to direct everyone. If you're in front of a computer and can manage, you can visit Charlotte's website, which is CharlotteKasl.com, and you can click on Sixteen Steps, right on her home page there, and you'll actually see the sixteen step program. We're not going to go over every single step today, but I really want to direct you to her website, so you can check that out, and then there's a whole bunch of amazing information there, and order form, et cetera, et cetera. So tell us a little bit about developing the model and maybe how it differs from the AA model, for example.

CHARLOTTE: Sure. I was in graduate school. I had taught piano and then I went back to school in counseling, and they had a course at Ohio University in alcohol and drug counseling. I think it was all considered alcohol at the time, and we were taught the AA model's the one and only way. I had been brought up to question things and ask if it's for me, and I'm very thankful for that. I was later working with women, at a women's therapy collective in Minneapolis, many of whom had huge histories of trauma, abuse, incest, or just a lot of anxiety, and many of them were in twelve step groups. I'd look at the steps and things were missing for me, like where is it about joy? Where is it about affirming your strength? The focus was so much on breaking down the ego, and that's what it was meant to do by Bill Wilson, who started the twelve steps, which was brilliant in his time. It was focused on men, and break down that ego, so you can admit you have a problem.

The women I was working with didn't need their egos broken down. They'd often had such devastating lives, and all the cognitive therapy—for depression, positive psychology, all these things along the way—have affirmed this. You want to focus on your strengths, you want to take action on a daily basis in your behalf, you want to learn not to focus on other people's needs, and not take responsibility for what they do, and really, focus on building up your energy, building up your strength. Big in my model is creativity, gratitude, being around people who affirm our intelligence, and so forth, and staying away from people who are hurtful, harmful and demeaning. That differs from the twelve steps in that in the Al-Anon, people are told to be more patient very often, and to detach, and I suggest that I think it's very hard to "detach" from being in the same household with someone who is very moody, very angry, who is using, because it's all energy, and we pick that up. It's like being with someone who's depressed. It's very hard not to have that spill over into you. If you think when you burn the food on the stove, it smells all over the house. The same is true with the energy of a person, and it's so much better to be around people who are uplifting, encouraging, bright spirited, that you



can really enjoy. This model really encourages terrific self-care, and I have a step that says we affirm and enjoy our intelligence and strengths, and creativity, remembering not to hide these qualities from ourselves and others. So many women get in the habit of putting themselves down, or hiding themselves, not to threaten someone else's ego, or make them feel bad. There's certainly not hurting other people or bragging, but on the other hand, not to squash your talents. Your talents are beautiful, and your creativity, and have you let yourself explore it, and look into it, and enjoy it? It's not really about the ego from a spiritual point of view, because it's a gift. It's a gift for me I've written these books. I don't know how I did it sometimes—one step at a time—but it was given to me to do this. I hear they connect with people, but I don't feel like I'm the doer of that in that I'm more the messenger of that. It's just what comes up for me. It's how I think. It's how I see. It's how I was raised as a child. It's my genetics.

If we just all took our best self, our talents, our strengths, and pooled them together, then we give them to community, we share them with each other. A lot of Native American tribes did that. They'd try to find that child's strength, and then that would often become part of their name, or their attributes, and then that's what you give to your community. It's not like you're this separate person and it's your ego. It's just part of the dance of who you are. It's part of the garden of . . . like you have a lot of different flowers, you have a lot of different attributes, and we share those together.

Let me tell you about the first step. The first step in AA is about we admit we were powerless over our addiction and our lives had become unmanageable. Well, I had gone through a big period of depression, and my life _____ and manageable, from the depression; just sad. That word powerless was just not a word I was going to say, and also, I was very hooked up to a lot of feminist literature and movement, so I started this with: we affirm we have the power to take charge of our lives and stop being dependent on substances or other people for our self-esteem and security. I came to that—going back to the history for a minute; I sort of digressed—I watched a lot of women who said, well, I'm powerless over this, and then I'd say, well what do you have power over? That word is very confusing for women, especially; men, too. Power is not a bad word. Power is a good thing. If you connect it up to the I will; I can; I can do; I can set a good goal; I can take the steps to get there—that's power. That's personal power.

Let me jump back a minute. Women came in and they were often told if they were depressed, say, to go do a fourth step, which is taking a fearless, moral inventory, and I didn't like the language. It sounded so moral and judgmental, and it came out of more of a Christian tradition of sin, as opposed to, well, what are the things that get in your way? That's how I think—what's the guilt and shame that's sitting in you, that blocks you from loving yourself, from loving others, or being free inside? I'd say, you know, I don't think that's a good idea if you're depressed, when your sponsor tells you to do a fourth and fifth step, because depressed people can focus on their faults all day, and that's usually what they do. What about focusing on all the positive things that have ever happened in your life, the things people have been nice to you, the ways you've taken control, the ways you've been powerful, the way you stood up for yourself, even the little tiny ways, because from a physiological point of view, that's going to go into your system and start



sparkling those neurons and sparking the cells. You don't want to do depression thinking when you're depressed. You need to take action. It has a huge physiological impact when we start doing things on our behalf. There's exercises with all the steps here, that help you understand something or take action to do something.

Then there's also steps on gratitude, like we express—this is the ninth step—we express love and gratitude to others, and increasingly appreciate the wonder of life, and the blessings we have. Now I've done that step with women in prison, for instance, and it's amazing to hear and feel how the energy shifts when people just express gratitude to each other, gratitude for what they have in life, and what has brought a sense of wonder to them. One woman said, well, I'm grateful I don't have to wake up every day and argue with myself over chasing drugs, because I'm not going to have them. Some people were getting help learning things they had never learned before, so it wasn't that most people wanted to be there, but there were things to be grateful about, and that's virtually one of the highest vibrations of energy, is gratitude. It focuses much more from an energy perspective. For instance, we affirm and enjoy our intelligence. That sparks our energy, and it's incredible to go around the room and have people talk about something they did they feel really good about. You learn things about people that are just amazing. Instead of going to a group and talking about how you screwed up that week or what hurts, and there is a time to talk about some of that, but it becomes kind of a norm in a lot of groups. Not all groups, because people have been incredibly helped by some of these groups, but for me it didn't go far enough, and it's very personal, then, how I started re-writing the steps. I started finding there was an enormous response to it for teenagers, for instance. Teenagers are just trying to get their ego built up, and they need a lot of affirmation and strength.

Also, in terms of the spirituality part, I'm still playing with that step, but it's like you choose. It says: we come to believe that—you can choose—God/Universe/Great Spirit/Higher Power awakens the healing wisdom within us when we open ourselves to that power. When I realize I am one with Spirit, I am one with Energy, I am one with God, it's all connected, and that goes back to the deep listening. I just listen, listen, and there's my guidance. It comes from inside and it comes from experience. It's not you tell me what to do and you know the way; it's like, well, what do you think? What have you tried? Has this helped? You ask this to people and there's the empowerment. Amy, when I ask you, well, what's been useful for you? You have to go inside and think about that.

AMY: That's right.

CHARLOTTE: And that's exactly what you want to do to help people evolve, is you want them to learn to go inside and think, well, let me see; I can figure this out, maybe, let me think about what I should do. This is a model that helps build a core, a center, and operate from there. Twelve steps is more here's the program, do it, and you'll be better, and it certainly, again, has helped people. But if you talk about levels of development, like Maslow, Erikson and so forth, they all end up with you being the author of your own life, you finding your own voice, you speaking from your center, so this model is based on getting



to the very highest level of human development, that we are coming from inside us, and that is the spirit.

AMY: I'm really blown away by the work that you've done here with this model, and I know, just from being a coach for so long, that I've coached people that are in addictive patterns, and I've encountered people that don't resonate, specifically, with the AA model, or other things that they're trying to do, and I really can see how people are hungry for this, and how women, in particular, are coming in, saying I do need help, and I feel powerless right now, so getting them to feel empowered is so vital to them healing.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, absolutely; absolutely. I have a DVD that we've made, where we went to women who've been in these groups, some that lead groups now, and we made a DVD from two different groups, on women sharing their experiences with this, and it just blows you away. Some of these women had incredible addictions from everything from cocaine, prostitution, food, since they were quite young, actually, and they've gotten over this stuff, and they don't focus on it. They don't talk about it. They talk about what's going on in their lives and being creative, and how they can help others, and the it feels like the addiction kind of fades away. Here's my belief here, is that addictions first start as a way to manage or regulate the kind of disregulation that happens from trauma, loss, abuse, harm that you've had done to you. It's kind of like . . . think of a thermostat, inside, of emotions. If someone's had a pretty stable beginning in life, and someone's kind of crabby to them, at a store, or a friend, they might get a . . . let's say, on a zero to ten scale, it might go up, a little irritation, a little hurt, like to a two or three. But for someone who's got a back history of trauma, someone being cross with you, that might have led to being hit, or scolded or shamed, and the body goes up to an eight, or something, physiologically. The adrenaline shoots up, the cortisol, the fight, flight, freeze kicks in, because the body has learned that this is a threat. The body, when you've had trauma, is bouncing around a lot. It goes up, it goes down, or it flat lines; you just can't find any feelings. You've just numbed them out, turned them off, or you find you just get hurt so easily by being left out. It just takes you down so bad, whereas someone who's more stable, childhood, well, it still hurts, and you feel left out, and oh well; you move on. But for the people who've had a lot of difficulty, or older traumas, or long term, really harmful marriages, these things hit big.

You try and soothe that. Let's say you keep getting riled up, well, you want to take something to down that a little bit, take the edge off of it, and that's where a lot of over-the-counter medicine comes in, as well as alcohol and other drugs. People are using it to calm themselves, or some people use it to feel at all. They're just feeling so numb inside, they like to go jump out of airplanes and get adrenaline highs this way and that way, and always at the edge of danger, and that kind of thing, then, for the people who drop down into the lows, they want something to kick it up, so they're more for cocaine, that kind of thing. It's not that you choose the drug; the drug chooses you, or the food, or whatever it is. You're trying to comfort yourself, and food is so deep, because that's the first thing we had contact with, as a comforting thing. But then it gets disregulated inside of us.



My sense is we're trying to re-regulate that system, so we don't get as upset. We don't get as hurt, we don't get as sad, that we want to feel ourselves up with good, healthy connections to other people, with exploring our talents and our intelligence, and affirming that. That's like energy sparking the body, making us feel more whole, and that becomes the barrier to addictions. It's not like I'm an addict. People have said it: I'm an addict, I don't know why, I just am, I guess. It's not true. If people look back at their history, they started using some kind of substance—fantasy life, masturbation, food, whatever it was—to comfort themselves, to calm themselves, to go to the party and have a hit so you can relax, because you feel so miserably uneasy around people.

I look at the addiction as really like getting over trauma. This model works for people who have a history of trauma, because it parallels all the markers for healing from trauma. For example, the number one marker, according to _____ is the ability to reach out for comfort and help when you're hurting, and have people around that will reach back. That is the number one healer. Isn't that the most primitive thing in life? Isn't that what we needed when we were born, when we were young. You cry and somebody comes. You need that basic, basic comfort of someone being there, and that's still deep in all of us, and usually that was very disrupted in these traumatic, abusive homes.

This model really talks about authentic relationships, where we're not saying platitudes. We're saying yes, I did this good; I feel sad about that. We're transparent, we're vulnerable, so people can get close to us, and it's very scary because we've been hurt before, but that's why the group can be so powerful, because everybody's working on that. One woman told the story, it's on the DVD, that she had been sexually abused by her father and had a baby at thirteen from this. She had held that for 40 years in herself, really killing herself with drugs. She was in a group, and in the sixteen steps, by the way, you can talk about anything you need to. Another woman revealed a similar history and she just went, oh my god, and she said, I can talk about this. She said it was just like a ball and chain fell away. In these groups if you want to tell something like that, you can. It's not that you've got to focus on the addiction. This is focus on you, your life, what are all these issues you're dealing with on a daily basis, and you get to bring that to the group. That's the empowerment. It's holistic; it's a wellness model.

AMY: As you're saying this and as you're talking about the need that we have, and the metaphor of the little baby crying, and just being able to be held and soothed by another, and how we need that, even into adulthood, I look at what our society is doing right now by having things become less and less connected. It's no wonder that as we become less and less connected, more isolated in our cars, over the phone, via email with our BlackBerrys, what have you, it's no wonder that addiction is going up and up and up.

CHARLOTTE: And depression; depression and teenage suicides have gone up enormously, and you're right, there's such a disconnect. There's certain things that can be nice, that we can, quick, do something on an email, but kids who are texting 2,000 and 3,000 messages a month are constantly doing it, and they can't relax. These become compulsions because they can't relax without it, and I think it is troublesome, and I think we really need to think about it, because connection is the great healer. Eric Fromm said all anxiety stems from



disconnection, and it's like when we're held we're soothed. Someone looks us in the eyes and they're giving us their full presence; that is so healing. The fact of someone listening to us, really listening, helps us listen to ourselves, and being present. All of this we do to become more present to ourselves and to others, which is, in many ways, the way of peace in the world, in that what we understand, we're not afraid of. People don't feel like the other. They're like, oh, I know that place in me. I can get upset, or I've told lies when I was scared; I can understand that. I don't sit and judge it because I've made friends with it inside of myself.

I think there's hardly anyone who comes for therapy—and maybe very different background, and more traumatic than mine was perhaps—there's not many qualities I can't relate to, inside. When we make friends like that, and don't try to “get rid of them” because that just makes war inside, it's like we understand other people. You can understand, well, why would someone go be a suicide bomber, to take an extreme thing. If you really study where that comes from, the conditioning, what they're told, the lack of access to feeling good about themselves in other ways, you could put yourself in their shoes. What would make me do that? Can I imagine a life that would lead me to do that? I'm writing a book now—should be out December, January, sometime—on raising children to make peace in the world; what childhood would look like, to help people that aren't going to want to go to war, aren't willing to shoot people, aren't willing to drop bombs, that want more dialogue, want more diplomacy. That's the far end of all of this work.

AMY: Since you mentioned it, if you don't mind, give us a little bit of tips about that, about raising children. I know that there's a lot of moms and dads on the call today. What can we do in order to raise children that are living in peace, and going to help make peace in the world?

CHARLOTTE: Interestingly, the biggest thing, and I get this from other people. Dan Hughes, who's a big expert on attachment, and I had a marvelous conversation, and there was just an article in Time Magazine or Newsweek, one or the other. It's to have a child who feels stable, who has a sense of self-worth, confidence, sense of mastery. When you feel strong inside and you are allowed to question—not be rude, not be disrespectful—but you get to have curiosity, fascination. I interviewed lots of people for this. In one family, the father referred to his daughter as the little lawyer; she would question things and answer like a lawyer, too, and he liked that, and he encouraged that. She would make her case for things. Think about how strong she feels inside, and she really likes her parents.

They talked about . . . there was this old study where people were told to pull a switch and it would put a little electric shock in the person in the next room, and you could hear. What they never studied is the people, maybe ten percent, who wouldn't go on with it, and I think that's what we need to look at. It's not to have rote obedience; rote obedience is based on fear. It's to inspire children, model for children, and bring your children there. It's starting very young to read stories about people who made strong choices and were courageous in life. It's about talking about that when you read it, and not putting people



down who were different, or who rebelled. You think, wow, that was something; they stood outside the courthouse for two days and protested that—that's really courageous. You make those people courageous, not what a crazy person. This is the beginning of bringing up children, and bringing up to have critical thinking, meaning you look at something, not just with this emotional response. About 60% of the people in this country can have their minds changes with a lot of emotional propaganda, basically, playing on their fears, like talk radio plays on hatred and fear, instead of on your intelligence. When you're thinking over something, you think over many dimensions of it. You don't just jump to some conclusion because someone said, oh, this would be great! Oh yeah, I'm going to do it, too. It's like, let's slow down, let's think of the upside, the downside, the consequences, how it might play out in a month, in six months, in five years; let's think it over.

This whole thing is going back to politics a little bit. When the oil got low, and it was like, drill baby, drill! It's like, well let's slow this down and think about this. Now they find out, well, it would be ten years before we really got much of a solution from that; it would only last for a year or two. But all reason aside, once you've whooped up the emotion, a lot of people just sit right there in that emotional response, as opposed to the reasons response. The whole thing on torture; is it's said over and over and over it doesn't work. You cannot trust what you get out of people through torture. Most people will tell you just about anything to stop the pain. This is so deeply known and yet, if you go on talk radio, you go to the right wing, you're going to hear people say, well, it's saved us and we should do more of that; it's a good thing. There is no evidence to show that, but a lot of people hang onto that because they come out of—back to parenting—a very authoritarian parenting, which has: you do what I say and then I'll love you; then you're a good boy. I get away from all those good/bad things. When you have that, you're out to please other people. The model I come from, and the same with the empowerment, is how do you find out who you are? What do you know? What do you think? Let's see how we can solve this problem; have you tried this? Have you tried that? Thomas Edison made a great remark. He said, I didn't make any mistakes, I just know 500 ways not to make a light bulb.

AMY: I love it!

CHARLOTTE: That's the kind of spirit you want to put in someone, and creativity helps teach it. Little kids aren't trouble. They put up the blocks, knock them down, put them up, knock them down, and build things, take them apart, make the sand castles, tromp on it; no problem. But we teach them not to do it. It's like, play in it, have a good time and let it go. That's a much bigger inner freedom.

AMY: Yes. I'm really hearing you say raising children that are independent thinkers, and that are in touch with their own personal power, and in touch with what they think, what they feel, and are able to express that. I really see how that mirrors the empowerment model because, really, it sounds like there's a piece where you're re-parenting yourself through the empowerment model.



CHARLOTTE: And through the other people in the group that make connections. The thing is, with children, people mistake giving children some leeway, that oh, they're going to be brats and disrespectful and self-centered. Actually, when children feel free, and you don't use punishment, you use logical consequences to help them learn for themselves why it's not a good idea to not eat dinner. If you don't give them snacks or anything later, they're going to feel hungry. They're going to learn, oh, if I don't eat my stomach aches. You let them learn that and they've got it inside them. It's not that I'm lecturing them on _____ eating. Its really helping them experience what real life is about, and giving them empathy for it.

Let's say the kid is being oh, I don't like this, I don't want to eat this for dinner. Okay, no problem, we'll have breakfast in the morning, and you don't say another word. You don't lecture and the kid's later, oh, I'm hungry. Then you empathize—oh I know, it's hard; I know when I haven't eaten I find I'm hungry, too. You empathize, don't give them anything, and they're probably going to eat dinner tomorrow night. But you're not lecturing.

AMY: Oh my gosh, Charlotte. As a mom of a, well, she's now 20 months, I have to say that my daughter—I've been reading a lot on positive discipline, which is, obviously, very what you're talking about, and logical consequences and natural consequences. My daughter was playing with the dog's water bowl yesterday and was just splashing in it, and making the biggest mess, and getting so wet, and it just drives me nuts. I was like, okay, really, Amy, what's going on here, because she's just getting a little wet and she's just going to have to be in wet clothes, and that's okay. What are the natural consequences of this? Okay, time to clean it up. She helped me clean it up, but it's really interesting how triggered we get as a parent; it's just fascinating to me.

CHARLOTTE: Right, and see what you did, you slowed it down and stopped and thought, and that's critical thinking. It's like, well, wait a minute. What's wrong with this? She's just getting wet; she's enjoying it. Maybe we'll find a different way to play in water that doesn't get all over the kitchen floor, but there's nothing inherently wrong with loving to splash water. Twenty months? You bet.

AMY: Yes, I mean, right? How fun; I get it.

CHARLOTTE: When I grew up we loved to play in the sink. You'd stand up on a stool, or something, you'd put water in the sink, and get all these little measuring cups out, and it's soothing. That was very soothing, and if parents can attune to the children, and that means you're noticing facial expressions. You notice body language. So often when they say, now kiss Auntie Em good night, they cringe, because they don't want to kiss Auntie Em. I don't want to kiss someone I don't feel like kissing; why should we ask a kid to do that? You read their body language and learn. Are you creating shame in them by what you just said, because you'll see the cringe, the face go down, and that's toxic stuff we're putting in kids. So the empower model, yes, would be great for parents, because it helps you think and it helps you be open, and accept yourself better, so that you can accept your kids better. It's to bring that reasonable thinking in.



I interviewed children from Quaker, Amish, Mennonite backgrounds, as well as Jewish, Mormon, that had different kinds of belief systems, certainly about violence or war. None of them believed in violence toward each other, or towards children, or towards partners. They might have a different idea about military, but they were really teaching a consciousness of non-violence, and these parents were very engaged with their children, being different than intrusive. Intrusive is where . . . I get people, their parents were laying out their clothes at nine and ten years old. Kids can start picking out clothes at three, four, and getting themselves up. My daughter had an alarm clock by six. She loved it; she was up on her own. That was being a big girl; she liked it. I hear other people, oh I can't get her out of bed; she's a sophomore in high school and the mother's going in six times to wake up the kid. Why are you doing that? This child can get herself up or she'll miss school for a day; there you are. She has to live out the consequences. It's a relationship that's engaged, but not like we're meeting all of intimacy needs through our children, not like we need them, to be okay, so it's very much important for the parents to have a life of their own, to have fun, get out, have things that bring meaning, service, as well as the kids. That's easier said than done when you're on a limited income, and you may not have a lot of resources.

AMY: Starting winding down the call here, I'm just thinking, from a listener's perspective. We've talked about a lot of different things. We've talked about your empowerment model, we've talked about some of the differences between addiction and compulsion, and versus just a bad habit. We've talked about a lot of things and I'm wondering, for a listener right now that may be has listened to you speak and has said, you know, this thing that I'm engaging in, whether it's a relationship, or alcohol, or food, or what have you, is either a compulsion or an addition; it's something that I want to overcome in some way. What's a really good, tangible action step for them, to help them right here and now?

CHARLOTTE: One would be to list the harmful consequences, all that it's costing you—your sleep, your peace of mind, your anxiety—and the other list is all you have to gain.

AMY: All that you have to gain from continuing or stopping?

CHARLOTTE: No, from letting go of it.

AMY: Okay, great.

CHARLOTTE: It's always hard to let go of these things. That's why the empowerment model builds up pleasure and joy, and all these strengths in life, because you have those to go to. People don't just let go of something if there's no place to go, generally. The other thing is know what's the addict or compulsive voice inside you, but what might it be like without that? What if you were free? What if you didn't have to think about that all the time? What if you didn't get so anxious? Think about all you have to gain. I just want to say there's a great world on the other side of it. I just bumped into some former clients, and I had said that to him. He said he remembered that, and he's since sobered up and their marriage is much better. He said, it was so true; I couldn't believe it when you said it, there's a



whole world on the other side that you can't even imagine, but there is, so start imagining it. Then start affirming your strengths: I have the power to take charge of my life; I can get out of this. One thing I encourage people is to find movies of people who made a difference in the world, who really were strong, or books to read. Don't go to things that are downers. People who are strong and own their own made a difference in the world, and they're no different from any of the rest of us. They just had a lot of passion and got in there, and obviously, the circumstances probably helped, but it's go back inside, find those little islands of strength, focus on your strength. Don't focus on the dumb stuff you've done. We've all done dumb stuff; I certainly have. Keep going toward the goal, going toward the light, going toward you as a life that gets to live.

AMY: That's great. Inspiring homework assignment: for those of that have identified with anything that Charlotte has said about this and about addiction, and about bad habits and compulsions, for you to make a list of what it's costing you, and to make a list of what you believe that world on the other side of overcoming it, what that would be like.

CHARLOTTE: Right, and you might go just read through these sixteen steps, because people feel good when they read them.

AMY: Yes, so again, CharlotteKasl.com, and you can click right on the sixteen steps. For those people on the call right now, the next time a really negative feeling comes up, let's say you're frustrated, you're in a stressful situation, stress of whatever kind has come up—give us a tool, if you will, Charlotte, for dealing with stress in a way that is healthy. How do we be with the stuff . . .

CHARLOTTE: Just breathe into it.

AMY: Oh that? That whole breath thing?

CHARLOTTE: Yes, the whole breath thing. Usually we're very stressed because everything's narrowed down to oh, this is terrible, this is such a big thing. A Buddhist meditation is to change it from: oh the stress of my kids doing bad in school, to: I am feeling the stress, just like millions of other parents, and my kids aren't doing so good. Then you move up to a bigger way. Then you say, whose problem is it? That's one of the steps that's the anti-depression step people love. It's like, wait a minute, that's not my problem; that's their problem. They need to figure this out.

AMY: I'm hearing the ownership, where you're taking ownership where it doesn't even belong to you; it's none of your business.

CHARLOTTE: Yes. Byron Katie has this thing; she says: whose business are you in?

AMY: Yes.

CHARLOTTE: What am I trying to control that I can't control? Then you go to, well, what if? What if I lose my home? What if I end up homeless? What would that be like? It's like, keep



going; what if? What if this person leaves me? Well, there's 6 billion other people on the planet. What if I lose my job? Well, I might have to give up my house. Well, what if I have to give up my house? We get that it's not this gigundous catastrophe.

It's interesting, I watched around Missoula, as there were huge fires around here, and houses did burn down, and like they have in California. People's reactions were so different. Some were just freaked out all the time, in fear. Other people would say, well, I took my photos and a few other things to a lockup place, a storage shed, and, you know, it's a house, and I love it, and if it goes, I'll be okay. So you lay stuff going into it. It's usually we've narrowed our perspective. Broaden the perspective. Do I want that on my tombstone? Is it really headline news? People get more fried over little things, really, than other people do dropping bombs on people, and killing them, because you get so super responsible. Give to everyone what belongs to them, and there's steps around that, and get into big mind. This to shall pass. It doesn't mean be a Pollyanna. You can say, I'm upset, I don't like this, I'm going to do everything I can to manage it, but there it is.

AMY: Great. Thank you so much, Charlotte. I want to let everyone on the call know that Charlotte is going to give away—she has, actually, a few different things that whoever the winner is can choose from. If you'd like to receive either Charlotte's book or video—you'll get your choice—you can email admin@WakeUpCallCoaching.com, and Charlotte, choose a number between one and twenty.

CHARLOTTE: I got it.

AMY: Okay, what's the number?

CHARLOTTE: I can tell you?

AMY: You can tell me.

CHARLOTTE: Eight.

AMY: Eight. Okay, great, so the eighth email that we receive, we'll go ahead and we'll put you in contact with Charlotte directly, and you will have your choice of a free thing. You can just put free book in the email subject line, and email admin@WakeUpCallCoaching.com, and we'll go ahead and get the eighth person down. Samantha will do that for us, and send it on over to Charlotte to get her in touch, and get you a free gift from Charlotte.

With that, I just say thank you so much everyone, for listening, and Charlotte thank you so much for this amazing, deep work that you've gifted us with today. I appreciate it very much.

CHARLOTTE: Thank you; thank you so much.



AMY:

With that, I'm going to go ahead and take mute off, so that everyone can say thank you, and have a wonderful awake and alive day, everyone. Here we go.

Thank you so much, guys. Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen, for being on the call.