

Abundance Bound podcast / episode five: Clarity

MIATA:

Abundance is not about the amount of money you have. It's about the quality of the relationship that you have with your money.

KRISTINE:

And no matter where you're at right now, you can decide to become someone who is bound to abundance. Someone who is committed to having a healthier and more compassionate relationship with your money. And you can decide to become someone who is bound towards abundance, someone who is stepping into a more expansive financial future.

MIATA:

We are here to help you become abundance bound.

KRISTINE:

So who are you, Miata Edoga?

MIATA:

I am currently living in Panama, and I'm the founder of the Abundance Bound Financial Education Company. And who are you, Kristine Oller?

KRISTINE:

I am a woman who was once in London for 28 days, and I saw 21 plays. And I'm the developer and coach of the Creating Cashflow program that lives inside of your Abundance Bound Financial Empowerment Program.

MIATA:

So the jealousy is just oozing off of me right now – and at the end, we will talk about your 21 plays in 28 days.

KRISTINE:

It was a dream come true so, I will tell you about that later. But today I believe we're talking about clarity.

MIATA:

Yes, we are talking about clarity. It is one of my favorite words, because clarity is perhaps the most important piece of being abundance bound.

KRISTINE:

Oh, yeah. It's totally one of my favorite words, too – from my days as a professional organizer through my days as a coach. That is basically what I deliver.

MIATA:

I believe that clarity makes us powerful. When it comes to our financial lives, when it comes to our financial relationship, there is always going to be an enormous amount of emotion – emotions around what we make money mean. And emotions are normal, emotions are obviously natural, they're what make us human. But the problem with emotions, when it comes to our money, is when our decisions are led by those emotions. I believe that we exist – really in all the areas of our lives, but definitely when it comes to our finances – we exist in one of two cycles: we exist in what I call the Pain Cycle, or we exist in the Power Cycle. And obviously from the names, we can determine which one we'd rather be in. But fundamentally, the difference between the two is that I believe we are in the Pain Cycle, when we are allowing our emotions to lead our behavior, when we're allowing our emotions to lead our choices, to lead our decisions. And I think what moves us from the Pain Cycle to the Power Cycle is clarity. Feeling the emotion, acknowledging the emotion, but stopping to get clear on as much information as possible.

KRISTINE:

And when you're feeling those kind of big emotions with nothing to counterbalance them, that's when you get stuck. The thing about clarity is it's linked to having data – things you're measuring, actual metrics that you can see, and that you have as goals. When we don't have that kind of clarity and data, what we resort to is what I call just “taking our emotional temperature.” *“Well, it kind of feels like everything's okay,”* or, *“Oh, it feels like everything's horrible.”* And it may not actually be at either end of those extremes, but you don't know. And so you're just swimming in emotion.

MIATA:

When we talk about swimming in emotion, it's easy to believe that we're always talking about what I'm going to call “negative” emotions, right? That I'm swimming in fear, or I'm swimming in anxiety and I'm making choices from that place. But what is actually possible – and happens frequently – is all kinds of emotions, positive as well. I am just overjoyed, I am filled with excitement and the emotions – “good” or “bad” – whenever I take action and lead from that place, that action is not likely to create results that are actually moving me in the direction that I want to go. Because I haven't stopped, as you said, to collect any data. So clarity begins with assessing: *“What are the emotions that I'm feeling right now?”* It begins with paying attention to what I'm feeling. Is it fear? Is it joy? Is that overwhelm? Is that excitement? Is it anxiety? So it starts there with actually naming it. And then the next step is to actually seek the facts, right? *“What do I actually know? What is true? What is actually measurable here?”* That, in my opinion, allows us to start separating our emotions from the data, because we've started by getting clear on the emotion. So, like: *“Okay, I know what that is, I know what's happening for me right now.”* And now I can get clear on the data. And I stop just merging them all into One Big Thing.

KRISTINE:

Yes, it's like when my organizing clients would just be like: *“My closets are not working!”* That's a very emotional statement. It's not necessarily based on concrete facts. And then people often think there's a problem with the closet. And so they'll remodel the closet, when in fact, that's not at all what the data will show what the problem is. And when we're going off emotions, we tend to act more impulsively. And our results tend to be, like, herky jerky – a couple steps forward, a couple steps backwards, and then a step to the side.

MIATA:

Absolutely. Each of us have a North Star. Your North Star is where you're headed. It's where you want to go in terms of all of the aspects of your life. But in this case, if we look at what your North Star is in terms of your financial relationship, then having clarity about what that is for you (versus what that is for me, versus for any other person), allows us to get clear on what the data is that can help us move in that particular direction. There can be a tendency to label our financial behaviors as “good” or “bad,” right? *“Oh, well, Kristine did **not** go buy that blouse, and that was a ‘good’ decision. Miata bought the blouse, that was a ‘bad’ decision.”* So we have this tendency to attach values to our choices, when in fact, there is no “good” or “bad,” there are simply choices that are moving you towards your North Star versus choices that would be moving you away. And in order to really determine the choices that move me towards my North Star, I have to work to get as much clarity as possible – clarity around where I'm going, clarity around where I am, and just whatever facts I can gather about this particular decision that I'm going to make. Once we start to bring in data, then we at least start to recognize ourselves as people who are moving forward in the Power Cycle.

KRISTINE:

Moving and living and being ourselves within the Power Cycle – who we are and how we're being and the choices that we're making – is where we have the most influence in our lives. And that's really, I think, where the satisfaction and the happiness and the feeling really proud of ourselves is created and felt. The “results” are lot of variables that can influence the external results.

MIATA:

Yes, we want to avoid attaching the Power Cycle to results. In other words: *“Okay, if I'm in the power cycle, that means I'm going to get everything that I want”* isn't that. It's really about focusing on what we have the ability to influence. And what we have the ability to influence is how we are showing up. And so I really encourage the members of our Financial Empowerment Program to be constantly assessing: *“Am I operating in the Power Cycle? What would allow me to, in this moment, move from a Pain Cycle to a Power Cycle?”* Because the ability to assess, the ability to recognize: *“Oh, yeah, that was a decision that I definitely made in the Pain Cycle,”* that was something that was completely driven by emotion, and simply to be able to not beat ourselves up, but recognize it. And that is what allows us to continually do better. You know, in my early years of learning how to invest, investing was something that for years, I just declared: *“Oh, it's not for me, it's not for me,”* which was, again, a very emotion-driven phrase. I was just afraid of it, I was terrified: *“How could I ever understand it?”* And so I started to learn. And I started to get some data that allowed me to start purchasing some investments. And I purchased shares in a stock that I had done research on, and I really felt that it was an area of growth. And I was very proud of myself for the data that I gathered around, you know, making the decision to purchase the stock. I bought the stock very low, and it started to climb – and it climbed and it climbed. I think I bought the stock at about \$15 a share; it was up just over \$100 a share. And what happened to me, Kristine, all the data, all the facts, flew out the window, and I started operating 100% from emotion. Man, I was excited! I was so proud of myself: *“Look at me – what I did picking such a winner!”* All of my clarity around... What percentage return had I already achieved? What were my goals in terms of investing? What was my North Star? What was the point at which I certainly should, based on my goals, have taken my wins or at least taken what I've invested? All of that was gone. And the stock plummeted down way below where I bought it at. And it was such a powerful example for me of the Pain Cycle versus the Power Cycle. Being able to look back and clearly seeing how I allowed emotion to take over. I can't predict the stock market, but there were areas of clarity that, if I'm honest (there's that other word!), if I'm honest, were available to me that I did not make use of. I allowed my emotions to firmly take control of the wheel and drive that car.

KRISTINE:

You know, sometimes we're driven by emotions, and that's how we're making our financial decisions. But other times we make financial decisions so that we don't have to feel a certain set of emotions. *“I'm going to buy this or do this or throw the money at this so that I don't have to deal.”* Brene Brown refers to it as “numbing,” Brooke Castillo refers to it as “buffering,” of just putting things in between you and feeling emotions, which is so human. And I mean clarity is only for the brave because it is so scary to get clarity at certain points in your life. And I think this is why a lot of people put off or avoid doing their taxes, because taxes offer you clarity about certain aspects of your finances which can be very scary to look at.

MIATA:

I agree with you that clarity is for the brave. I also believe that clarity sets us free. I think that even in those moments where I've had to look at something – like when I got clear that I wasn't just in debt... I got clear that it wasn't just that *“I had a lot of credit card debt”* and all those things were making me terrified and miserable, I got clear that I had about \$82,000 in credit card debt. I got clear that the interest alone was costing me over \$1,500 a month. And I will never forget the moment where I was sitting at my kitchen table with a calculator and surrounded by paper, and I got all of those numbers. And I remember like exhaling and saying: *“Well, there it is, there it is.”* And I actually felt relief. Because numbing does not release the weight. It kind of fogs it, but the weight is still there, the pain is still there, the upset is still there. And it was like in that moment, I remember feeling: *“Okay. Now I can figure this out.”* Did I know how I was going to figure it out in that moment? Of course not. Was there suddenly some magical solution that came with clarity? Of course not. But it was that clarity that gave me this North Star. And it's like: *“Okay, now I just need to get help, I need to start mapping my course.”* But you can't map a course out of muck, out of a swampy, murky, messy thing. Once we start to put structure around it, wrap numbers around it, wrap facts around it, then we can chart a course.

KRISTINE:

The process is: you get clear, and you face your number... and then you will have a hit of emotion. If you're facing the amount of income you brought in last month, and it's not what you wanted, or thought it was, there's going to be that hit of emotion. And on the other side of that hit of emotion is a field, a meadow, that opens up with choices and possibility and hope that can come from a plan. We're so afraid of that hit of emotions.

MIATA:

Yes.

KRISTINE:

Our lizard brain comes out and says: *"Oh gee, you don't want to look because you're going to die! If your income isn't as much as you thought it was or hoped it would be you'll die."* But by being brave and facing your numbers, what you learn is you don't die from emotion. And once you are a person who thoroughly, in the pit of your gut, knows that you are not going to die from feeling anything, then you can feel everything. It doesn't feel good, but you can feel it and get to the other side of it. Where the meadow of choice and possibility and hope opens up for you. And then you get stronger and stronger and braver and braver and it gets easier to go: *"Oh, yeah"* – because I still have times when I look at my number and go – *"Oh, yeah, it's not as big as I thought it was. I kind of thought it was more,"* or my income, but then the expenses: *"Oh, yeah, I forgot about that."*

MIATA:

Yeah.

KRISTINE:

So it's not like you and I are sitting here and going: *"Well, now every time we look at our numbers, and get clarity on whatever we want to get clarity on, it feels fantastic!"*

MIATA:

Absolutely not.

KRISTINE:

The only thing we now know is that emotions aren't going to kill us. And we've built up our bravery.

MIATA:

Yes, I love how you describe it as a hit of emotion. I love that. Because I think what I've gotten better at is recognizing that that's going to come and that I can get past it. It's interesting, because there have been a few situations lately when I sit down, and I'm actually saying to myself: *"Okay, bring it on. Let's just have it. Let's get it. Let's get through the hit of emotion. Let's just get clear. And then we'll see what's on the other side."* Right? In other words, not putting it off anymore. And that's also the power of community, right? It's the power of being able to hear, over and over again: *"I didn't die. I looked at this and I came out on the other side."* It's the power of being able to experience that with other people who are also choosing and willing to be brave.

KRISTINE:

Okay, so do you want to hear about my dream come true?

MIATA:

I absolutely do. And again, you see, now, after all that conversation, the jealousy is back. So I need you to share with me 21 shows in 28 days.

KRISTINE:

So we had this weird structure in the college that I went to where we had fall semester, and we had spring semester, but then we had the month of January, which our college called "Jan Term," and you could stay on campus and take a semesters worth of one class and just get it done. You could also not

come back to campus for Jan Term and just take it off. But our college also offered these intensive travel abroad experiences, where you studied something for a month and it just so happened that while I was there, during my four years, they offered a month in London just to study theater. I'm a very frugal person. That's how I was indoctrinated growing up, and so I had squirreled away money. And when this opportunity came along, I'm like: *"This. This is what I have been saving all my birthday money forever for this, isn't it?"* So I bought it and it was amazing. And so there were probably I think 15 shows that we, as a group, saw for the structure of the course. But then I was just like: *"I want to see everything!"* Every day we didn't have a matinee, I was at a matinee. Every night, we didn't have an evening performance, I was at an evening performance. I did sleep through a few shows including *The Three Sisters* with Vanessa Redgrave and Lynn Redgrave and one of their nieces because it was BORING – amazing to see them for, like, I don't know, the first 10 minutes and, I think, the end. But it was just my little 19-year-old aspiring actress's dream come true.

MIATA:

That kind of immersion in art...

KRISTINE:

It's not necessarily something I recommend. I think I could only do it in my youth with that kind of stamina, and just glee. But yeah, it's one of my fondest memories.

MIATA:

Oh, yes.

KRISTINE:

Well, thank you Miata. We will return next month for another conversation.

MIATA:

Thank you. I can't wait.

This podcast is our invitation to you an invitation to accelerate your progress towards a more expansive future by joining us in the Abundance Bound Financial Empowerment Program. It's an invitation to develop a healthier relationship with your money, one that is less conflicted, less neglectful, less desperate. Our program offers a warm, friendly environment where you'll have the space and time to work at your own speed and get the hands on support you need. You'll receive step by step guidance that will help you strengthen your money mindset. Practice consistent money management and create additional streams of income to fund the life you want to live. Your next step is to learn more. So take a moment today and visit: AbundanceBound.com/financial-empowerment.

KRISTINE:

All of the show notes for this episode are available at AbundanceBound.com/the-podcast. We are delighted you are listening. Please keep taking very good care of your very talented self.

.....