

Letting Go of the Reins: Learning to Relax into Trust

Episode 60 of the Yes! We Rise podcast

Transcript

Christine Gyovai (01:26)

all, the next iteration of our course, Collective, How to Build Community and Consensus comes out in the spring of 2026 in February and March. It's going to be an eight week online class with community connection calls with time for implementation and learning to help you envision your future. Check us out at dialogueanddesign.com to join the wait list, ask us any questions you have, and we can't wait to see you in the Collective course. It's going to be amazing.

Christine Gyovai (01:52)

Hi all, welcome back to the We Rise podcast. Really glad to be with all of you today. I wanted to share a little bit about what this most recent season has been like. It's been a little while since I've done a solo show and I wanted to come back to a theme that I talked about in some of the earlier podcast episodes from this year. It's fall of 2025 that I'm recording now.

And the theme for me this year has been relaxing into trust. And that has been a real doozy of learning this year. The last six months, five months in particular have really been a doozy. And I wanted to talk about what my own process has been like with that and what I've relied on, what's worked, what hasn't worked, how my mindfulness practice has come into play.

and what that has looked like relaxing into trust or not being able to relax into trust.

So this year, I started off this spring when I talked about it on some earlier episodes, particularly the one with Amber Ellis, we had a federal funding freeze on our largest project, Riparian Consortium, but also had the experience of having some funding for a course called Collective with that funding freeze, but deciding to move forward anyway.

Deciding to we'd been working on the course for a year and half deciding to go ahead and record it to Launch it to get it out in the world and we had a great springtime launch and it was a fascinating example for me of feeling anxiety and fear that came up with the federal funding freeze, but also noticing that when I leaned into the difficulty and when I leaned into creativity I

Created energy. I made this generative energy through creating the course and it gave me a lot of energy for other areas of my life so that was an interesting example of meeting a challenge and still using creativity and Creating something new and putting it out in the world was really a powerful experience That was one thing that happened in the spring another thing that happened. I ran my second ever half marathon had a great race a great run and

have been continuing to build my training and running over time. I got my first pull up this spring and I was feeling really strong and feeling really healthy. So that's a little bit of the backdrop of this spring that I was going into. And I decided to run or try to train for my first ever marathon this fall. I was supposed to run in a couple of weeks, mid-November in Richmond, Virginia. Needless to say, I've deferred it for a year for a number of reasons.

And there's been a lot of health stuff coming up, family stuff, as well as at work challenges. And I wanted to talk about how that's brought me to my knees and what I've learned with humbleness, with really needing to let go of the reins and really needing to let go of control, even though I really like to try to be in control, because it helps me feel safe in the world, or I think it does. And when I finally have surrendered to some of the challenges this fall, what that's looked like for me.

So Rewind, again, in the late spring of I decided to try to run my first marathon this year. It's something that I wanted to just, I'm curious about. I wanted to see what it felt like in my body. I was able to run longer distances and longer miles. And I really appreciate and deeply value the sense of calm that I feel when I run those long distances. And building a different relationship with my body, feeling a lot of gratitude to my body and what it can do.

while also focusing on strength and getting really frustrated over time and working on getting a pull-up finally after a lot of work and trying. So I had been building a lot of momentum. And in May, I started to develop something that many runners get, something called Achilles tendonitis. So I was getting pain in my Achilles and talked to the running doctor, talked to my own doctor, saw the physical therapist. I also developed vertigo for the first time in my life.

and those two things together were, stopped me in my tracks. It was really hard to, do yoga with vertigo. And I had a lot of nausea and dizziness and difficulty functioning. And, the Achilles tendonitis got worse, not better, even though I was doing the things that the running doctor said to do. and over the course of the summer, things kind of got worse in general.

I was still trying to train for a little while for the marathon, but I started to develop more aches and pains in my joints. I forgot a work meeting. First time ever. It was with a long-term client and friend. It was just a one-on-one quick check-in. I don't think I've ever missed a work meeting before. And I was like, whoa, something is up to actually miss a work meeting.

That was the first signal that I was like, something's really off here. We were in Massachusetts for a chunk of the summer and one particular weekend in July, I was just in bed. My husband Reed and I had just celebrated our 20 year anniversary and had gone out to dinner and later that night, just had aches and pains and fever and chills and just feeling yuck. And I was like, well, this must be food poisoning because I don't know what else it would be.

Well, I realized in August what it was. But continued to have more symptoms of vertigo in July, more dizziness, more nausea, more blah, blah, blah. Just went on and on. My achilles were not getting better despite doing so many things. If you need any tips about Achilles

tendonitis, I'm happy to tell you what other people have told me. But it really started to become concerning

In August, we came home from Massachusetts back to Virginia and I had some really severe brain fog where I just felt like I was swimming through split pea soup. I could not shake it. I started to have more confusion and difficulty making decisions, more aches, and it finally dawned on me this is Lyme disease. One of our kiddos when they were younger experienced chronic Lyme disease. I learned a lot about it many years ago.

Thankfully, there's a lot more research today about Lyme disease, but I know in my bones that fever in the summer is very often Lyme disease. And when I think back now in July, fever, summer, Lyme disease, that's just an equation that I know, fever, summer, Lyme disease. But I chalked it up to other things. Is it perimenopause? Is it GI stuff from going out to dinner with my beautiful husband? Is it this or is it that?

But when things linked up, Lyme disease, it all started to make sense. The Achilles tendonitis, Lyme bacteria in my Achilles, vertigo is a symptom of Lyme disease. Who knew? It's also a symptom of perimenopause, according to Mary Claire Haver. But when I started looking more at vertigo and why it wasn't going away, it didn't make any sense why it wasn't going away. And it was that connection, realizing that vertigo is a symptom of Lyme disease and the joint pain.

and not getting better that I finally worked with my doctor to get on meds as soon as I could to get on antibiotics. And I did testing and it showed an acute infection, positive for an acute infection, but decided to do medication for eight weeks, doxycycline for eight weeks and a whole host of other medications. And if you're wrestling with anything like Lyme disease, talk to your doctor.

There are so many great resources available online to ILADS, I-L-A-D-S is an acronym of a Lyme Association that has a lot of really great resources. the big thing with Lyme disease is to kill the Lyme bacteria. Now, I know that Lyme bacteria can take a number of different forms and it can be really hard to get rid of if you've had Lyme disease for a while. And the practitioners I talked to said it had likely been starting in late May when I did have a tick bite.

All this, the Achilles tendonitis, likely there was some inflammation from running, but it was likely the Lyme bacteria,

the vertigo, dizziness, the cognition. So likely I'd had Lyme disease since late May. even though it had been about the three month mark when I got it, found out about it, started treatment, that's still a while. And the Lyme bacteria again can be a spirochete, a spiral. It can also be a biofilm. It can also...

kind of hide in between your tissues and it's really difficult to treat it sometimes. So it can work with your practitioners if you think you might have Lyme disease to work with them for

treatment. So I did a lot of pretty intense herbals, doxycycline, probiotics, and a number of other things to work to address the Lyme disease. But...

decided again to do that for eight weeks, but had a whole kind of new host of side effects. I had a whole range of pretty substantial ups and downs with Lyme disease and on meds. And it was more challenging than even I thought it would be when I first thought it might be Lyme disease.

I just wrapped meds up around the end of October. And I'm recording this in early November. So just over a week I've been off of them. And so I want to just set the stage for that was going on this big health thing that really I stopped running because Achilles tendonitis was too painful. And one of the practitioners I worked with said you need to put that energy running towards healing. So one of the main things I had done

have done for mood stabilization and feeling great in the world was gone. Just still doing other movement, but I was so tired this whole time. Summer, fall, so tired, so much fatigue. I've watched so much of the Great British Baking Show, like 40 episodes of it. That's really no joke. A couple other things have been going on this fall. We have our sun is almost turning 18.

So we've been in the thick of the college search and he's been searching, we've looked at a number of different schools and have been right there with them, filling out paperwork, talking about options, but it is no joke. I thought it was gonna be like, okay, you know, we have two kiddos, our daughter, our amazing daughter is gonna be going to college or going on an adventure in a couple of years, but I was like, okay, you know, I'm really excited for you and I'm excited for where you're going and I love you. I didn't think it was gonna be really hard for me, but.

my gosh, my heart started to break thinking about my baby boy going away to college. My little boy chubby cheeked, little boy who is now, you know, he's a man and going out in the world. And I just had no idea it was going to feel so hard thinking about him going to college and this almost anticipatory grief that I have felt my heart aching thinking about him, him going to college. So excited for him, so excited for our family, but just really a lot of grief.

And yet again, another federal funding freeze happened with one of our long-term projects. And ~ there's been a lot of shift in funding for other projects too, and it has been really challenging. So the swirl of those things, putting my running on pause, deferring the marathon having Lyme disease and being on treatment, the ups and downs,

college applications, federal funding freeze on projects,

and a whole slew of other things that are happening internally and externally in the world just made for.

An experience of just completely bringing me to my knees, to be honest with you. I spent the first about six weeks of the eight weeks of the time I was on medication for Lyme disease.

completely trying to control things. Really still trying to, you know, I was railing against and rallying against the fact that I was not gonna run this marathon. The ways I have defined myself often in my life through feeling healthy and strong, you know, I really wanna be as healthy and strong at 60 and at 80 and whatever ages, you know, I am that I possibly can be.

And to go from feeling so capable and so strong to feeling not capable at all and not strong at all and to feel my health start to slip so hard. Couldn't define myself through my fitness, through my being strong, running, pull-ups. It's gone. Couldn't define myself through

work necessarily. And that was one of the lessons I learned this spring, but even this fall through doing good work and making good change in the world and finding a lot of value and meaning. I love my work. I love working with communities to create change and having a freeze on projects that should be a go has just, ~ goodness, it's just activated so many different things in me about just

I have had no control. is not something I can control at all. And I can't control our son going to college, you know, and I can't control my health. And I really, you know, man, I just tried really hard to control it. I tried to, you know, if I just take the right supplements, I just do this, I just do that. And, and I finally just said to spirit, you know, however you define if you do.

a power greater than yourself. said, spirit, I really don't know if you're real. But this is starting to feel like this might be more than I can actually handle. That's a very rare thing for me to say. But I really felt like I was brought to my knees, completely brought to my knees, and I had to completely let go. I had to surrender.

I had to, I wouldn't use the term relax because it was more like kicking and screaming. But I realized that I had absolutely no control over the situation. And control is one of the things for most of my life I have tried really hard to control, often to feel safe. And it's something I've worked with a lot. And this situation, I had to just totally let go of the reins, totally had to lean into humbleness and say, have no control over this situation.

at all. And just breathe with that, go for a walk with that, see my friends and talk about that, go outside in nature, go for another walk, dance. The things that I do to keep myself stable, continued to do, continued to see practitioners, to talk with them about how I was doing. it was a bigger, has been a bigger struggle than I remember facing in many, many years. This fall really has brought me to my knees.

But what happened when I let go, what happened when I really let go of the reins was yet another lesson of learning to accept things as they are rather than how I want them to be, which is one of the core and fundamental teachings of my mindfulness practice. My teacher

training is instead of trying to control the outcomes or suffering because I want things to be a different way, I had to just

Be with what is, breathe with what is, and accept what is in each moment, because I did not have another choice. There was not another way. And when I finally did that, when I finally let go of the reins and just say, OK, fine, this is what is, only then did I start to have a sense of peacefulness with what is going on. And I started to have a sense of calm. And I started to have a sense of

my body relaxing, and I started to have an inkling of trust, of trusting that there is something outside of myself. I know that things will be okay, whatever that is. It doesn't mean things will be easy, but I know that things will be okay because I've gone through a lot of hard things as have many of us been through a lot of hard things and we make it through to the other side. But it really has been a big lesson for me in humbleness,

letting go of the reins, having to just

take a deep breath and relax into trust. I've done a lot of art, here's art, relax into trust. For those of you who are listening and not seeing this, I've been doing work with watercolor pencils, which I used to do a lot, and just creating in what feels like a very destructive time. The things I've named and other things that have been going on that I haven't named has just made for a really difficult season. And just accepting it for what it is has allowed me to have some space.

to have just a little bit more breathing room and then a little bit more breathing room and then a little bit more breathing room. So that's been part of my learning. And the way that I, to wrap up the way that I ended up dealing with this, I haven't been able to be in the sunshine while I've been on doxycycline because you can get a sunburn. I have a tiny bit of a sunburn on the end of my nose right now. If you're watching this, you can see. But...

Soon as I finished doxy, I gave myself a couple days and then I knew I had to be in the sun. So I drove myself to Florida, the St. Augustine area and I found the sunshine and I took a couple days to just relax and be in nature and be outside and get on the water. And I am really thankful that I've been able to do that. I'm thankful for my husband and kiddos for holding the fort down at home. But.

It was really necessary to let my nervous system relax, to have a deep demarcation line from what has been going on to what will be, to let the stress responses in my body chill out and to just be, to just be calm, to just relax and to trust, to say, this has been what is and to have time for reflection and learning, to reset my yoga and meditation practice and keep that as a central part of my life and to look ahead to what comes next.

So for all of you who might be in a place of struggle, one of the things

was reminded of through this is that, it's so hard, but my strength comes from my struggle. That what I learn in the struggle gives me the points of energy to move forward in the future. And I wish that to you. I extend a hand to you. I see you. I wish you well. I wish you peace. And to know that it is through our struggle.

that we find the way forward. So here's to humbleness, here's to letting go of the reins, here's to relaxing into trust, here's to finding community. I would love to hear what is happening for you this season. Drop us a note on social With that, take care all. I wish you well.

Links & Resources

- Learn more about Yes We Rise: <https://www.yeswerise.org>
- Join Christine's community work at Dialogue + Design: <https://www.dialogueanddesign.com>
- Follow on social @yeswerise