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Kristi Angevine

[Habits On Purpose](#) with Kristi Angevine

Ep #117: Burnout, Mindfulness and IFS: A Conversation with Dr. Sogol Pahlavan

Welcome to Episode 117. I'm your host, Kristi Angevine, and I'm here to help you understand the root causes behind all your habits so that you can live on purpose instead of on default.

Today's episode is an interview with Dr. Sogol Pahlavan, pediatrician, mindfulness expert, and business coach. She shares her story of working hard to check off achievement boxes, and how she ultimately realized she was experiencing burnout, even though from the outside everything looked picture perfect. Ready? Let's go.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now here's your host, Physician and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

Hello, hello, everybody. I'm really excited to bring you another conversation episode. Today, I'm speaking with Dr. Sogol Pahlavan, who's a Board Certified Pediatrician, as well as the cofounder, managing partner, and CEO of ABC Pediatric Clinic in Texas.

After she struggled with burnout, Sogol started a healing journey that led her to study mindfulness, become a Reiki Master Practitioner, and get certified as a Mindfulness Physician business coach. She's a TEDx speaker, an avid podcaster, and she hosts the podcast *Mindful Living with Dr. Sogol*.

She's also the cofounder of SOULpreneurMD, where she and her business partner help female physician entrepreneurs create profitable, hustle-free businesses while also living in alignment with their values and feeling authentic. So let's get started.

Kristi Angevine: All right, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. I am so delighted to bring you another interview because I love these conversations. I have the pleasure today of having Dr. Sogol Pahlavan. So, Sogol, could you introduce yourself for the people who maybe haven't met you yet or aren't currently following you?

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Dr. Sogol Pahlavan: Yeah, totally. I am Sogol Pahlavan. I am a general pediatrician. I live in Houston, Texas. I'm originally from Iran. I moved from Iran when I was 10, to Texas, and I have not moved since.

I own my own practice, a pediatric clinic. My sister's a pediatrician, as well. So, we started our practice two years out of residency, and we are going on 16 years. It's a pretty large practice, with a total of nine providers. And we are unique in that we are a private practice, but we cater to the underserved Hispanic Medicaid community.

So, it has basically been my passion project. I didn't know at the time it was, because I was shoved and thrown in there, but looking back and reflecting on the last couple of years, it is something that's near my heart. So, private practice, and three kids. I started private practice with two kids under four, and then became pregnant... I always say private practice is your fourth child, or my fourth child.

And so, the first decade was crazy. I had no coping skills, and so I just gave, gave, gave, and I found myself, at the age of 40, completely burned out. I didn't know I was burnt out; I just felt horrible and awful and tired. And so, I knew at that point I needed to do things differently. What had worked till now was not going to work moving forward.

That's where I found coaching. It helped significantly, and I loved it so much that I became a certified coach. I am now a certified mindfulness coach. I still practice, and I have my clinical practice as well.

Kristi: Oh, that's amazing. Okay, so there's a lot there. I mean, I feel like we could probably talk for hours about... I mean, even just immigrating to the United States. You said you were 10, I mean, just that alone could probably be an entire podcast episode.

I have a couple questions for you. Is that okay?

Sogol: Sure. Yeah.

Kristi: Okay. So, you're in Houston now, and it looks gorgeous. I can't see out your window, but it looks beautiful where you are. It's nice and sunny.

One of the things that struck me, is that you mentioned that you were exhausted and you were burnt out, but you didn't know that it was burnout. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Sogol: I always say I lived with my eyes closed until 35. And then at 35, I opened one eye. And at 40, I opened both eyes. I think a part of that journey was definitely parenting. Right? That thrust me into this realm of not controlling. Like, what I say is not exactly what everybody needs to follow, and there are other ways.

I had super tunnel vision. I was the typical type-A overachiever. I mean, as an immigrant, you have so much little-T trauma immigrating here. I was a brown kid growing up in a white, Caucasian, suburbs of Houston, and Houston wasn't diverse 30 years ago and I emigrated. It's not like it is now. So, a lot of negative messages.

It's like, you know how those kids in med school... and I don't know if you were one... they're just geniuses? They just don't need to study, and they get... I was not one of those kids. I was probably a B student, I studied 12 hours a day, and I was probably undiagnosed ADHD, so I had to work really, really hard. I struggled.

I didn't get into medicine because of my grades, I got into it because of my grit and my inner drive. So, I kept working like a horse, right? In medicine, it's very much like you do X-Y-Z until you get to this goal, and then you set another goal, and it's a straight path. So, I was just on that straight path.

And, I didn't really pause. There was zero pause in my life. I mean, three kids under the age of six, with private practice, and I was doing 2,000 other projects on the side. And so, when I got to 40, I had checked off all the stuff.

My vision board was complete: I had the amazing house. I lived in the neighborhood I wanted. I had healthy kids. My husband was supportive. I work with my sister, with whom we have a very close relationship. So, it was amazing. My clinic was profitable. My parents... It was just like the perfect life; whatever that you would imagine.

But I felt the symptoms. I was tired. Fatigued, I would say fatigued. The physical symptoms, number one was fatigue. Number two was palpitations. I probably had high-functioning anxiety and didn't know it for 30, 40 years.

And then, I started having these vague pains, random, that didn't make any sense in medicine. So, I went through that whole medical... Is it autoimmune? Do I have cancer, right? Because I was like, "Oh, I'm tired. I have cancer." I checked my own CBC like, 10 times.

And then, I kind of settled into, "This is just midlife." Right? "I don't know if you're menopausal." I don't know. You have three kids in middle school, you're running a practice, you have a husband, and you're getting older. So you're just supposed to feel like this.

There were some points, not like in a year's span, but like a couple of times a year where I was like... I had these thoughts of, "What is the point of all this?" I wasn't suicidal or depressed, but I had these thoughts where they scared me. Where I was like, "Wow, why am I thinking like that? This is weird. This is so odd. This doesn't align with what I've created in the external world, it does not align. It doesn't match how I feel in my internal world."

So, then I got into coaching, la-de-dah, stuff like that. But I will say, burnout manifests differently for different people. Right? And for me, I explain burnout in two ways. I'll explain to you the woo way, and then I'll explain to you kind of not woo... well, they're kind of the woo way... a kind of global consciousness level.

I don't know if your audience knows about Divine Feminine and Divine Masculine, and I'll try to explain it super quick. Divine Masculine; let's start with divine masculine because a lot of women in medicine are. These are energies, right? The energy that you're coming from.

The Divine Masculine is very structured, very cerebral, very rational. Everything that you've been taught in medicine, that you've been conditioned in medicine to do, is masculine. Not that it's male and female, these are just energies, right? So, a person, whether you're male or female,

is supposed to have a balance of both Divine Feminine and Divine Masculine. And you're supposed to use this, versus that, in different scenarios.

But I was completely unbalanced because I was masculine all the way, right? And so, when you are masculine all the way, that's one of the causes, the energetic causes. You literally burn out. Your flame basically burns out, okay? That is what I call the definition of burnout. Your energy, that flame, that energy that you're supposed to work with and move with, which is essentially all your feelings... Energy is all your feelings... What happens to the person? Their energy goes, it really plummets.

And, that's what I was feeling; fatigue, fatigue, fatigue, fatigue. Then, the other energies that you carry with yourself are like... Your mood goes down, right? So, dragging, the sadness. Just not being able to get out of bed. Those kinds of symptoms that you hear. Not having interest. Kind of like depressive symptoms, right? Not having interest in things, not being excited, no joy, no contentment, no excitement.

That's what I, when people say "burnout", that's what I resonate with, on that level.

Kristi: This is actually perfect for me. Because one of the reasons why I wanted you to elaborate on this was specifically because my theory is that there are so many... People in all careers, but particularly, you and I work with a lot of female physicians... Lots of female physicians are high achieving, overthinking, really thoughtful women who experience burnout. They experience anxiety.

They experience bone tired exhaustion, but they don't think it quite qualifies for those labels, because they have a different idea of what those labels are. And so, they do what you do. They're like, "Well, it must be PMS. It's just perimenopause. This is just midlife. This is what all those people are talking about."

So, what I find is when people can have a very specific description like yours, they can go, "Oh, maybe what I'm experiencing might be something

just worth checking in with.” Whatever you call it, it doesn't matter. But just giving it a beautiful context so you can understand it better. And sometimes having a word for it opens the door to your understanding.

And so, I think whenever you tell yourself you're not supposed to feel like this, “I'm not supposed to be like...” as soon as you notice that, that can be your cue. “Uh, why am I not supposed to be like this? Where am I from where I would like to be?”

I think it's just so easy to miss. So easy to miss. To equate exhaustion with poor sleep, “I've got some young kids, I'm tired.”

Sogol: Yeah, there's a lot of shame. There was a lot of shame for me. I'm supposed to feel happy, because, literally, I manifested everything on my vision board. Everything looks amazing on the outside. There's nothing wrong on the outside, per se. And then, you can't go out and reach out to people and be like, “You know, I have this amazing life, but I don't feel well.” Right?

Kristi: It's what many people covet and have worked their whole life for, and so it looks great. So, how could there be a discrepancy between the inside and the outside? Right?

I do have questions. I think this takes off nicely, and if you remember the other burnout thing, please just jump back. So, I think we have a lot of overlap in our coaching philosophies. But what I'm curious about is, how did you specifically get interested in mindfulness, in coaching?

Sogol: Oh, yeah. So, I hired a coach, and the coach was specifically for mindset coaching. I'll answer that... There are two branches. One branch was mindfulness, and the other branch was more of the deeper subconscious work, okay? And, I think they go hand in hand.

So, we're Muslims. My mom is spiritual. My grandmother was what I thought was religious, she read the Koran, but looking back, she was very spiritual as well. I just didn't understand what that was back then. So I come from a lineage. We're Iranian, and Rumi is Iranian in origin as well. So, I

think ancestrally I come from a lineage of strong people with spirituality. Spirituality is very much part of our culture.

So, I have been exposed all my life with these kinds of components, but you're a kid and you just kind of go, "Whatever. I need to get A's and get into med school," kind of thing. My mom always talked about, introduced me, or recommended books about spiritual healers.

And so, my first book that I ever read, which was at 35, was Eckhart Tolle. I've read all of his books. And that's where mindfulness came from, because he was my first spiritual teacher, Eckhart Tolle. So, I think that's just a straightforward answer. That's what mindfulness was. And I will say, I didn't fully understand mindfulness.

I cerebrally understood what it was, and I would go through the check, check, check, like physicians do. But it's taken me the last, I would say, six months, especially this year, to fully embody it and be like, "Oh, this is mindful living. I get it now." So, that's that.

Mindfulness is living in the present moment, which was very vague for me. I was like, "I don't understand. I'm living here, what do you mean to live in the present moment? I'm alive." So, that was a whole thing that I had to go through to embody it.

And as I did more mindfulness, I started looking, just being curious and open about different modalities. There's coaching, but what else is there in the spiritual world, in the Eastern medicine realm? And so, I found Reiki. That really resonated with me. That's where I started to learn a lot about the subconscious mind, the intangibles, the mysteries of the universe.

Like, yes, I have this brain that thinks, and I have this body that feels, and we can see it and we can touch it, and we studied it in medical school. But what did we not study? What were we not educated on that will make this body more a holistic approach?

And so, I started studying a lot about energy, I became a Reiki Master Practitioner, and I started studying about the energy component. I dove into the subconscious mind, right? Yes, you can do mindset coaching on a

conscious level; those are the thoughts that are probably ruminating all day long. Those are the thoughts that you know, most people know. But then the deeper level is that subconscious mind.

The subconscious mind, the way I can explain it, is this is where all those hidden thoughts are, that are kind of playing in the background but you're not fully aware of them. They carry all of your childhood traumas, your ancestral lineage, your life experiences.

I won't say you, but I say personally, I, because of all the emigration and growing up, or the experiences that I had in my life, I was completely disassociated with those thoughts. And, it was a protective mechanism, right? If I had to sit and embody the thought and the feeling, I probably would not have been where I was when I was 40.

This comes to my second point that I forgot earlier. So, burnout for me... I don't call it "burnout" because I think it's a negative connotation. And so, I call it the "midlife awakening". What happened to me, you can label it burnout. But I would have not taken a different path, right? Like, what happened to me, it's a positive thing. I had an awakening.

I decided that I'm not going to be a victim of this. I'm not going to beat myself, and be like, "Oh my God, I didn't do this..." whatever. I'm going to see... again, change in perspective... I'm going to see. I fully believe the thought that everything happens for you for a reason, everything. I don't care what it is, everything happens for a reason.

So, this burnout happened to me for a reason. My motto moving forward is now, "What got me here, will not get me there." Yes, for the first 40 years of my life, and if you want to go into IFS, I used particular parts, like overachieving, controlling, non-delegating, restlessness, hyper vigilance... Those were my five parts that I used... and I'm grateful for that. They manifested my vision board. Yes, I love them. I'm not angry at them.

This was with a lot of work, right? Because initially, I hated all of them. But with a lot of work, I understood that no, they were a blessing. This is how I got where I got. But do I want to continue to operate with the same parts?

And I decided, I don't. I don't. But there are moments that I would like to bring those parts forward and make decisions from there.

And then I asked myself: How do I want to move forward? What do I want to do? And the thing that kept coming to me, it wasn't even joy and contentment and happiness, I just wanted it to be... I didn't know what calm was. My nervous system was so active, and that was part of not feeling good, right? That was the palpitation, that was the paresthesia, that was the inflammatory processes, the chronic stress.

And so, I was like, "I don't even want to be happy. I just want to be calm." That's where the awakening led me. And that's the journey that I've been on for the past three years. How do I calm my nervous system? How do I process my feelings? How do I heal and love five parts that have created my life, without shunting them and shaming them?

And then, what other parts can I bring forward and operate from? Those other parts that I brought forward and operated from were all divine feminine parts. So, how do I be curious? How do I flow? How do I chill? How do I become creative? What does that look like?

That's going to be the journey until I die, right? Just kind of balancing and bringing in this Divine Feminine, but also still holding the masculine, and just loving it and being with it.

Kristi: So, I do want to highlight a couple things, just because I think they bear repeating. Because the things that you said were really, really important. There's some IFS terminology in there, so if anybody's listening and Internal Family Systems is kind of a new notion to you, and you're like, "What parts is she talking about not liking?" Don't worry, it's fine, just go with it for now.

But I think it was really, really important that you highlighted the difference between a cerebral intellectual understanding of things, like checkbox... I know how to sit on my pillow. I know how to breathe. I watch my thoughts, they go by.... Versus an embodied knowing.

I think for many people listening, if we operate for many, many decades from the neck up, being very rational, very logical, very systematic in our brain, but kind of detached or dissociated, to use your word, from our bodily emotional experience, somebody might listen and be like, “Embodiment, what's that mean?”

But once you experience that, it's like when you know, you know. So, I love that you sort of made that distinction. Because many of us wonder why the things we try don't necessarily “work”. Why they don't work, well, sometimes they don't work because it's almost like, “If I want to learn how to be a really good cook, I can know a lot about cooking and ingredients and the history of this dish, and I can watch all these videos on YouTube and read all the cookbooks. But if I don't actually cook...”

There's the difference, right? I don't taste the food, know the food, know how to do things, but I know a lot.

And then, I also love how you said, talking about the difference between what we've been educated on and what we haven't, I just love the idea of asking, “What have I not been educated on? What has been off my radar that might actually inform my lived experience?”

And the last thing that I thought was just so good, that you mentioned, is that when we think about IFS we think about our system being a multiplicity of all these different parts. And there are a lot of parts where people are like, “I just want to get rid of that part.” All their language of, “Banish your inner critic. Eradicate your self-loathing.”

These are parts where it makes great sense, who doesn't want to get rid of the need? So, in my work, I find IFS is integral to coaching on habits and pattern changes. When you look at what you habitually do versus what you would like to do, if you don't get to the root cause of why you do what you do, you're going to just stay in the intellectual.

It's when you wonder why, when you say that positive mantra, it doesn't stick. I feel like it helps people get in touch with their inner wisdom, and get

in touch with who they really are. So, it helps us deeply understand ourselves at that level.

Your work with, at least the work that I know of, with doing business coaching and with working closely with people, physician entrepreneurs, I get the sense that you integrate that Internal Family Systems model a lot. I'm wondering which way specifically you use the Internal Family Systems method to help your physician entrepreneurs?

Sogol: So, how I learned about IFS... Just a couple of sentences... is by being open and curious, and listening to other people, listening to podcasts. And at that point, I'd gotten very good about tuning into my intuition, because I meditate and I've done all the Reiki. I have daily practice, right?

And so, before, I wouldn't even think about picking up a particular book or being open to a particular modality. "If this thing came up, would it feel good?" IFS was one of those things that I was like, "Oh, my God, this feels like wow. I want to learn more about it."

So anyways, Dick Schwartz, *No Bad Parts* is an amazing book. Y'all can all read it, you don't need to be a coach to read it. It's an excellent book. You could do the audiobook, as well, if you're curious about it. So, since I've been an entrepreneur for 16 years, private practice... One of my passions is preserving the private practice in medicine. I don't even have to explain it to you, on this one, there's a zillion reasons we need to do that; because of the landscape of medicine. Right?

At the beginning, I was always like, "I don't understand why everybody's working for the hospital. Why would you not want to work for yourself?" That took me a decade to understand why. Because from the get go, if I didn't do medicine, I'd be in business.

I think the only reason I went into medicine was because business was not an option for an immigrant brown girl, right? You went into these stable jobs; which are medicine, law and engineering. So I picked medicine, but I always had a passion for business, right?

Then I did mindfulness, the coaching, and I was like, “How do I put mindfulness with business? How do I do that? There's a way to integrate these things.” And so, Dr. Dr. Parastoo Jangouk, she's a GI doc in Austin, is my partner. Our program is called SOULpreneurMD.

So, all the traditional business coaching programs focus on the outside. How do you market? How do you do the finances? How do you hire/fire? H/R? All the components. So, it's the people on the outside, the product on the outside, the profits on the outside.

But our program focuses on you as the CEO of your business. Whether that's clinic or product, or whatever, right? Because you, per se, are the foundation of your business, right? So, if your thoughts are not aligned, if you're not processing your emotions, if you're holding on to perfectionism, people pleasing, and all sorts of other things, that is going to manifest...

These things always manifest in reality through our actions and our decisions. And how many decisions do you have to make as a CEO? How many people do you have to fire? How many people do you have to hire? What boundaries are...? I mean, CEOs are all boundaries. You have to know to draw boundaries.

And women physicians... One thing that you would pick, that you would teach women physicians, is how to draw boundaries, right? But how to draw boundaries goes back to a lot of your experiences as a kid. When you were seven years old and you didn't want to do something, and your mom made you do it, but you tried to speak out and your mom yelled at you or shamed you or hit you; worse.

That's why you can't draw boundaries as an adult. When you're in middle school, and you tried to draw boundaries with your friend group, and they ridicule you. If you haven't processed that, that gets stored in your body. And so, when you're an adult you're functioning, but you're functioning from your middle school self, not your 40-, 56-year-old self. So, we build your business from the inside out.

Kristi: Can I pause you there for a second? Because I think some of these... I don't want people to miss what you just said. If somebody has experienced those things, or things in that realm, and their middle school-self experienced heightened emotion, shame, inadequate... something, and it's not processed, it's almost like it's frozen in time.

Then fast forward 30 years, when you encounter something that sort of touches on that, almost like touching on a sunburn, then that middle school you is the one you're operating from. Even though from the outside you're mid-40s, got it all together, looks great, middle school you is present, loud and clear.

I just want people to notice that. If you ever notice, "Wow, this feels just like walking through the cafeteria. It feels just like when my mom told me this is a terrible job. It feels just like..." yeah, there's a reason.

Continue on, but I just wanted to stop because that's a big point, and it would be easy to overlook.

Sogol: Yeah. Basically, this is every human being, right? We're talking about "little traumas". We're not talking about sexual abuse, physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse. We're talking about stuff, incidents, that happened to you. That the person that probably said it or did it didn't even mean for it to have this kind of effect on you.

In a lot of these circumstances, just like I did as I went through the work, you don't know that you're holding on. So, for me, it was like, "How was your childhood?" I was like, "Oh, I guess, fine. I don't remember the details. I don't know. I think it was fine." So, that's the dissociation that you have.

That's why it's so important to have someone that can hold this space for you and kind of lead you through it. Whether that's a coach, a therapist, or whatever you want it to be.

So, our program, the way it is, builds the CEO from the inside out, basically we look at your socialized self, which is essentially who you have become. It is not who you are. It is who you have become because of your social conditioning. Because of your experiences. Because of your trauma.

Because of your religious background. Because of what society you lived in. Because of your immigration. Whatever that is, your experiences in life.

And then, what we do is we try to realign you with your true self. So, your true CEO-self, versus your socialized CEO-self. Okay? I'll give you a prime example. Because these are very big concepts for people. "Wait, what? True? I am true to myself."

I've done the work. I'm still the CEO of my... I'm one of the managing partners, and we don't have a big admin team. So, I don't have... I'm H/R. I hire, I fire. Before, I was fearful. I had this fear of, "If I say this, then they might leave. If I don't give this, then they might leave." I had this fear of abandonment, in a sense. If I could put it into one big bucket, it would be fear of abandonment. It might sound a little bit too intense, but I think it was fear of abandonment.

So, when you have fear of abandonment what do you do? You keep giving people what they want, right? Because you don't want them to leave you. So, zero boundaries. And when you keep giving people what they want, what do they do? Even the kindest human beings, when you keep giving them what they want, what do they do? Some of them are appreciative, but some of them just keep taking. Taking a little bit...

For some people, it's totally intentional, that they take. But for other people, it's not. They're like, "Oh, my gosh, she's so nice. Maybe she can do this." And so, that was one of the biggest reasons for my burnout. Because I kept giving, giving, giving of myself, and there was no appreciation coming back. Then I was just empty, right?

And so, the giving part of me... If you put it into parts works, let's say... I'm really generalizing everything. I didn't even think I was a people pleaser, but apparently I was. So, that's the thing, you don't know what you don't know. So, the giving part of me got really tired, that part.

And when I decided, "Okay, if I want to function from my true CEO-self, what do I do with this giving part of me? How do I balance this giving part of me? I can still give, but this giving part of me needs to feel safe drawing

boundaries, and not fear abandonment when I draw boundaries.” That's the work that you do with this part. You give it safety, support, and love, and see it for what it does.

Because all of your parts that are on hyperdrive are tired, y'all. They want rest. But you have to give them permission to rest. Awareness is number one. You have to be aware of what your parts are. And then, you have to understand that they're not bad. They have created your life until this point. So, then you have to love them and hold them and support them. And then you put them to rest.

When you go through that fourth cycle, that's when they can step back. That's when you release the energy. And then you're allowed... You're opening up for other parts to come through that can make decisions that are different from your giving part.

Kristi: People can't see you as you're doing this, but just as you're talking about meeting your parts, with what sounds like some gratitude, “Wow, you've worked so hard. You're not bad. Here I am to help you and support you, and give you a sense of belonging,” and a whole team that is “me”, what I'm seeing is, it's almost like I see your shoulders go down the tiniest bit.

Energetically, things seem like, you mentioned “calm”, and they seem to slow down just for a moment, when you're talking about what sounds like a harmonious, very homeostatic, beautiful relationship internally. So, it's just interesting to see your body respond in that way.

I feel like you're validating and normalizing so much for so many people, who say, “Wow, a part of me really wants to be so giving. And it's very uncomfortable if I'm not giving.” So, that's one of your parts, right? You also really normalize people having what we call the more chronic, lower-T trauma. Little things repetitively done here and there, that don't fall into one of the aces, left an impact, and the difficulties, and things like this.

I mean, to have these unprocessed things almost, not ferment, but just sort of stay there unlocked in our system, can be one of the things that just makes us fatigued and not know why.

So, you've mentioned this idea of "true self". In maybe a sentence or two, how would you define your true, authentic self?

Sogol: Yes. This is one of those that are really big because it's not tangible? The way I try to define it is in a couple of ways. One way is, just kind of by definition, is that your true, authentic self was the soul that was born in your body in infancy. So that pure... if you look at an infant, that pure...

I'm a pediatrician, right? I think that's why I was drawn to pediatrics, because you look at the four-month-old and they're lit up, and they're just light and they're love. And yes, they cry sometimes. But then they go back to their neutral loving self, and they smile. And if they're six or nine months old, and they've had a calm environment, a soothing environment, they smile at everyone and they're happy and just very flowy, and they go with the flow kind of thing. Okay?

So, your true, authentic self is who you were born with. And then, as you were put into this world you got messages, negative and positive messages. You were nurtured or not nurtured. A lot of us were not nurtured. A lot of us were nurtured in the sense that we had food and shelter, but emotionally or physically, as far as the touch... That's why we're doing a lot of skin to skin on newborns. We didn't have that, right?

You start getting this nature versus nurture. And this is where embodiment work comes in, especially as you make decisions. Alignment is very important to connect to your true, authentic self. And the way I've done it, is I've allowed my body to lead me into my true, authentic self.

So, how does that work? What do you mean about 'my body leads me'? What does that mean? Like, your arms move? No, it's all about feelings. When you actually start to feel your feelings into your body, not identify them with your head, that's different...

When I started coaching, I couldn't even identify the feeling in my head. I would make noises. There's no distinction between bad or good. So, if you're there, and I was totally, it's okay to be there. We were conditioned to be there. So, it's identifying it intellectually.

And then, identify it in your body. Where do I feel it? Is it in my heart? Is it in my belly? Where are the different areas? I feel it? And then what does it feel like? What color is it? What temperature is it? What shape it's in. Really going into it, describing it, and seeing it as the entity for what it is. Seeing the energy and then processing the energy, right?

And then when you do that with your different feelings, then your body starts talking to you. Right now, your body's also talking to you. But you're so disconnected. You're like, "Oh, I don't know what that means. But I'm going to ignore it because it's fine. It's not cancer, right?"

So, you start tuning into your body. Let's say I'm making a decision about hiring someone. Let's say, okay, I made this decision about hiring someone and I've got three candidates. I like one over the other, for whatever, but they're not all perfect. So, I can basically tap into my body, which is, again... A different way of explaining it is, following my intuition. Because your intuition comes from your body.

But you have to have a safe nervous system to even tap into your intuition. So, I can tap in and I can put the three names in front of me. And then, I can be like, "Okay, how did it feel about this candidate? How did I feel about number two? How did I feel about number three?" And my body, it'll give me some signals.

And then I'll be like, "Okay, I'm going to trust my gut, my gut feeling." You've heard of 'trust your gut feeling.' "Okay, I'm going to trust my gut feeling, and I'm going to pick this one." So, that's how I make decisions.

Now, I use my brain to do methodical work, like a resume. But the final decision always comes from my intuition, it doesn't come from my brain. Again, masculine/feminine, you see? The brain is the masculine part that

I've had experience with for 15 years. Now, I'm strengthening my feminine part, that intuition. So, now they get to work together.

Kristi: Like when we think about our intellect. What you're referring to is that more masculine, scientific and cerebral approach. When we know that language really well it's like being fluent in the first language we learned, in terms of linguistics. But there are all these other languages out there, all these other ways of looking at the world, and ways of communicating.

And once you start learning, once you start learning how to speak French, then all of a sudden, you're like, "Oh, this is something else." And so, once you start learning that there are messages from your body... I just want to clarify for some of the people listening, because I know many of the people listening are kind of neck up. They're like, "What do you mean? I feel blech."

They're probably rolling their eyes like, "There's not a color to bleach. I feel bad. It's terrible. It's gross. I want it to go away." But once you start sitting, and you have somebody walk you through, and tell you how you might actually feel the sensations... All I can think about is, there's the sensation you get from adenosine, and there's this sensation you get from Dilaudid. Emotions have sensations that are equivalent, that you can feel once you start tuning in.

And once you start tuning in, then you start noticing all these things that in the past were obscured, just because your focus was in this other way. Like you look through this one pair of glasses, not this other pair of glasses.

I would love to sort of bring this to something really tangible and practical that the people listening could do. I know it's sort of asking you to give me a tiny nugget for this thing that takes many, many years to do. But I would like to emphasize too, you said that getting in touch with your intuition does have the precursor of having your nervous system feel safe.

For people who are listening and they're like, "Okay, yes, I know how to recognize when I'm activated. I know how to get grounded," what is something that once they do feel like they're settled enough to do this,

what's something that could help them start tapping into their intuition that they get to start today?

Just a two or three minute thing that on their way to work or at home they could just be like, “Alright, how can I start listening?”

Sogol: Yeah, yeah. So, I'll give you two things, because it goes hand in hand. So, most of us know when we feel “ugh”. We've gotten that, “I feel ugh.” If you google “feeling wheel”... You could probably put a link on it. There are a zillion feeling wheels.... That feeling wheel has the inside circle, the outside circle, and the third circle.

Start with the inside circle. Y'all, don't go to the higher ones, because then you'll get overwhelmed. It's like three comfortable feelings, or four comfortable feelings, and four uncomfortable feelings. It's stuff that you'll know, like sad, mad, scared, joy, excited. I don't know, I don't have it memorized.

When you get it, make this your daily practice, okay? I don't care what time of the day, it doesn't matter. Just pause at some point in your day... you could be in the shower, you could be on the toilet, it doesn't matter. You could be getting dressed, doesn't matter. Brushing your teeth. Everybody brushes their teeth, hopefully, in the morning. So, when you are looking in the mirror brushing your teeth, just be like, “How do I feel right now?”

Then look at that wheel and identify it. Something will pop out at you. Your brain is going to give you a tendency to resist, and be like, “No, it's not that one.” Whatever pops out at you, that's your intuition. You probably don't know that whatever pops up, that you just say, “That's it. I'm not going to argue with it. Even though I don't think I feel angry, that's okay. This is what popped out at me.”

So pick, identify whatever that is in the inner circle, and then you say, “I feel sad. That's exactly right. I feel sad.” Then you say it as you're brushing your teeth. You say, “I feel sad,” but you don't get mad at yourself for feeling sad. You don't get mad at yourself, you just feel sad.

The next thing that I want you to do, if you can, I want you to close your eyes. I want you to identify *where* you feel the sadness in your body. I'll give you the five points. So, head; do you feel sad in your head? Do you feel sad in your neck; your chin down to your clavicle? Do you feel sad in your chest; which is your heart space right above your diaphragm? Below your clavicle, above your diaphragm?

Do you feel sad in your belly, which is diaphragm to your uterus? And the fifth one, the last one, is your uterus; we're females listening. Your reproductive area.

And you might not be able to identify it the first time you do this, it's okay. Keep doing it every day. This takes like 30 seconds, y'all. You can't tell me it takes longer than that.

So, identify the feeling, "I feel sad", and then close your eyes and be like, "Hmm, that feeling, that sensation, is coming from somewhere. Where is it coming from? Do I feel sad in my head? Do I feel sad in my throat? Do I feel sad in my chest? Is it my belly? Or is it my ovaries, uterus?" Whatever. You don't have to physically have those things.

Keep doing it. And sometimes what happens is inadvertently your hand starts going to that area. When I coach sometimes, you can't verbalize it. But the client will put their hand on their chest, and I'm like, "Oh, your heart." And they're like, "Oh, wait, what? How do you know that?" And I'm like, "Because you just put your hand on your heart."

So, if you're in front of a mirror then that reflects back at you. Super easy exercise. Start there. Identify the feeling, locate the feeling.

Kristi: That's brilliant. So good. Yes, do that for a month. This simplicity makes it so accessible. It's just so good. I know there are people listening to this who are going to want to follow you, listen to your podcast, learn about SOULpreneur... if I'm saying that right. Learn about your one-on-one coaching, etc. Where can people find you?

Sogol: Yes. So, my podcast is *Mindful Living with Dr. Sogol*. If you just put in my name, I'm the only one that has that name with a podcast. So, it'll pop

up. And then our website is SOULpreneurMD.com. We're on Instagram. If you go on our website, it's all there. So SOULpreneurMD. Can you put the link in the show notes? Because it's hard to spell and it's long.

Kristi: Yeah. Anybody listening, she's not a podiatrist, this isn't the sole of your foot. This is your soul, s-o-u-l. Soul + entrepreneur, put together. You'll find it, but we'll put it in the show notes.

And, like with many of my guests, I feel like we could have maybe about seven hours of recording. I mean, I have questions about your experience immigrating, being brown in the south, your passion project, all sorts of things. So, to be continued.

But for now, thank you so much for coming on. It was really fun to build the chat and kind of go through all the things that we have in common. I know that everybody found this really useful. Thank you so much.

Sogol: Thank you so much for having me, it's an honor.

Have you been toying with the idea of getting a coach? Coaching can help you not only with exploring why you do what you do, but with encouragement and with accountability. With coaching, you get things that are really practical in terms of tips, advice and techniques. So you can take all the things that you know intellectually, and start applying them in the trenches of your everyday real life.

Now, coaching isn't therapy, but coaching can help with self-awareness and help you increase a sense of purpose, confidence and resourcefulness. If you want to learn more, first of all, join my email list. You can go to HabitsOnPurpose.com and you'll see a little link that says "Join the email list".

And if you want to take the next step, and connect to see if private coaching is for you, I keep a small panel of private clients, and I have a few openings right now. You can go to HabitsOnPurpose.com/private, and we can see if my coaching is a fit for what you'd like to do. I can't wait to connect, and I'll talk to you next week.

Ep #117: Burnout, Mindfulness and IFS: A Conversation with Dr. Sogol Pahlavan

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