



Dr. Irena: Hello, we're back again and here today now, our next speaker is Dori Klass, and I would love to introduce her to you. There's a lot to say so I actually have to read this a little bit. Dori Klass is the founder and president of Dori Klass associates, a professional coaching and leadership development consultancy established in 2003. It's devoted to creating the awareness and teaching the skills needed to support growth, healing, leadership excellence, and transformation in the modern world. She's also the creator of the ground breaking and life affirming, "Say Yes to Your Life" system and "The Courage to Look Within and Love Your Life" leadership development programs. Dori Klass is devoted to partnering with high performing leaders who want to love themselves and their lives on a whole new level, and lead and love from there. She helps leaders to recover from burnout, say yes to their lives, and become their best selves to become more skillful, happy and effective human beings, both on and off the job. Welcome Dori! I'm so happy to have you here.

Dori Klass: Thank you, Irena. I'm really happy to be here.

Dr. Irena: So, Dori, I know there is so much more for you to tell us about yourself. I know this is not only since 2003 that you've been creating these kinds of experiences, so why don't you tell us a little bit more about yourself?

Dori Klass: Well, I'm a 59- year old woman in the process of reinventing myself, much like most of my clients do. I spent 20 years in corporate America where I thrived and I actually loved it. I'm maybe an exception to the rule, but I always loved it. It wasn't a wonderful ending, but the 20 years were pretty magnificent. Um, and I actually met my husband on an Abbot Ski Club Ski trip in Crested Butte, Colorado, and we've been married for over 28 years now.

Dr. Irena: Congratulations!

Dori Klass: Yeah! Um, my stepson Dan was six when we met and he's now 35 and married. And, uh, we're actually spending 19 days with our grandson here right now so that they can do both a business and personal trip in Switzerland for a couple of weeks and be a couple again. So that's nice. Um, and then Michael and I, my husband and I, have three boys. They're 26, 24 and 20.

And so now that our youngest is also in the process of launching, I've been looking at do I want to have a business, grow a business, and for the sake of what? And the answers have been yes and yes. And now I'm in the process of breathing life into this next phase of my work on a different scale. And I'm very, very excited about it.

Dr. Irena: I mean, you look phenomenal, and you say you're happily married, and you said you loved your job, which not many people can say that these days. And I'm sure that made you look so wonderful as you do today, but your life was not stress-free, was it?

Dori Klass: No, no. Um, well, as a physician in your former life, you can appreciate this. I actually was a survivor of suicide and I've been diagnosed with complex PTSD on three counts. And family of origin abuse. Which I need to be clear (about): I love my parents and I'm in relationship with them to this day and things weren't always so wonderful and I never



felt safe in my childhood home. The second count was molestation by a teacher for years, and then three rapes. Two were quite violent, and not that any rape isn't, but, I think the biggest challenge in some of that is not that those things happened. It's that I left my power in the room at the end of the day and that's a form of self-abandonment and self-rape. And that's a lot of the work that I had to do in my own healing process.

Dori Klass: And the thing that's interesting is, not all of my clients, but most of my clients, have experienced very serious trauma early in life and have, like me, done a lot of traditional healing work and have come far. And they show up in the workplace and in their lives powerfully, in part because that stuff propelled them into their lives. One of the challenges is that workaholic oftentimes becomes just another form of numbing; busy-ness becomes just another form of numbing. So we don't have to feel into or do the deeper dive and the deeper healing work that comes up as life unfolds in our relationships and, um, in various roles. And so that's a big part of the work I do with people. It's not just the traditional, you know, leadership and Covey stuff and what's your MBTI type and all that kind of stuff.

Dori Klass: It's the deeper dive of the core motivations and the core patterns and the core forces that are driving our behaviors and our choices in our life. And sometimes we're very conscious. We're making a choice that isn't gonna serve, but we can't stop ourselves. I start to help people learn how to work with that, those parts and those issues. It's kind of beyond social and emotional intelligence and beyond AA and beyond therapy. It's kind of, how do we optimize our lives by integrating everything that's happened to us into them and working from them.

Dr. Irena: That is so impressive. It's a chilling account. And so impressive how you got out of this. And I know that one of your favorite quotes comes from Maya Angelou, "To survive is important, but to thrive is elegant". I've never heard this and I really love it because that word "elegant" is something different. It's more than just thrive; thriving *elegantly* is amazing.

Dori Klass: Yeah. And I'll be honest; in retrospect, which is a big part of the work I do with my clients also, is: create permission to pause and space to pause and a safe and courageous space within, which you can feel and learn how to feel without being overcome by your emotions or unable to finish a sentence or whatever. The fear is there; for most of those 20 years of my corporate life and also in the first half of my marriage, and I was married before my marriage to Michael, I was in survival mode. And I did not really know that I was, you know, and we live in a complex world now where everything's on 24/7 and moving really fast. My youngest son is of that generation where you go to bed with your cell phone next to your head and you know, if they're committing live beheadings, you shouldn't watch it, it's not good for your immune system, but you can't help yourself.

Dori Klass: And so we're in this...we're constantly feeding our bodies and our minds and our hearts trauma. And we're in kind of individual and collective trauma, whether we realize it or not. And what does that do? It puts most of us in fight, flight or freeze or survival mode and our bodies aren't built to be in that state 24/7. So I help people get back to conscious choice and conscious engagement and be more



present in the moment as opposed to constantly past referencing or constantly worrying about the future, which is where most of my clients are in.

When we can get present, we can get powerful, we can get resourceful, we can become, we can have agency and get choice. And all of these things help every relationship we're part of, whether it's a parent-child relationship, a husband- partner/spouse relationship, or a work relationship. It doesn't matter. Everything benefits from those core personal development, spiritual development, bits of work.

Dr. Irena: Exactly. Absolutely. Like I said, always, that relationships are the foundation of humanity. You cannot live without building relationships, can't live on your own. And when you can come from a place like you mentioned, of choice, of who you can be and how you can show up... it looks like you have been able to overcome like the most severe traumata really. Is that what you're most known for now, or is there something else?

Dori Klass: That's a hard question. I've been called by some of my clients "the midlife crisis recovery coach". Other clients have called me the "midlife design, reinvention and revitalization specialist". And, I think that, probably, my signature work is around parts work. I do a lot of work with sacred contracts, archetypes, um, elemental forces. And you know, I fundamentally believe that what works in the workplace works at home and what works at home works in the workplace. When we're really coming from our core true self, when we're at our core values, when we have a sense of what we really want...95% of my clients come to me with real clarity about what they *don't* want and then they're surprised when they get what they don't want. That's what they focus on. And then they're surprised they get it!

Dori Klass: And it's like, hello! So we really mine for what you really want now. Cause that might be really different than 10 years ago. And when we start to get all these bits and pieces together, we can have agency and make choice and get real and get what we really want. So that whole "get real, get what you really want"... Probably every single client of mine has used those words. "I want you to help me get real and to know myself underneath everything and to like myself, to love myself again. Just see the person in the mirror in the middle of the night and go, hi, how are you?" And that's probably what my core work is...I was talking about putting relationships first, beginning with the one with yourself, and if you have a higher power source that you love, that relationship too. By the time we're mid-life, we've had enough wounding, we've had enough loss, we've had enough experience that there's like plenty of messiness to work with that actually really can be fun in the right hands.

Dori Klass: And so the work is to kind of come home to yourself and call your parts and pieces and power back, and to learn to love all of your parts. And that's my signature work. It's the parts work. "Who's on your personal board of directors? Should they be? Are the right voices speaking loudest? Do you have an internal chairman of the board? And is that the person who should be in charge? Can that part of you get a part that's speaking too loudly right now to stand down, and get (summon) the other parts that need to show up for whatever is up in your life? Are they there? Are they present? Do you have facility



and channeling their qualities and talents and gifts and attributes?"
And that's my core work; it is helping people realize their many parts and calling all the parts and pieces back.

Dr. Irena: Well, I'm glad you clarified what parts you were talking about. So you're actually talking about parts of the personality that may sometimes even be hidden and they (clients) don't really know what's driving them at the moment. We're not talking about like, you know, a psychiatric diagnosis of split personality or something. We talking about the sub- personalities that is normal for every human being to have.

Dori Klass: Yup, absolutely.

Dr. Irena: Okay. Now I also know that you came like from a completely different area. Um, it's funny because you said you have a science degree in biomedical engineering. Something my daughter wanted to do, and couldn't because UPenn wouldn't offer that. And then you went into the corporate world.
And were your experiences, the traumatic experiences you mentioned, the driving force behind you becoming, especially now in midlife, the queen of midlife design? Is that why you ended up here, or what are you so passionate about? Why is that happening now? Or since 2003 rather. (laughs)

Dori Klass: Well, you know, part of why I've been maybe slow on the uptake of myself in terms of putting a message out there is because I've been resistant. I've never wanted my life story to be my work and I have resisted that. And not everybody's going to want to get up on a stage and share some of the things I share now.
But, probably one of the core experiences that was challenging for me was when I lost my youngest sister Allison Joy to suicide. Um, she was 18 and I was 24. And she and I were probably most similar. I was the oldest, she was the youngest. And then I have a sister and brother in between. And, um, we were going to her wedding, and we ended up at her funeral.

Dr. Irena: Oh my God. That is chilling...

Dori Klass: Yeah. And I was, because of the things that happened days before, I was at her fiancé's house, which is where the wedding was going to be. My brother and I hightailed it up there sooner and I could go into lots of story, but I won't. Bottom line is, it took a few days before they found her body and we knew in fact that she was dead.
But once that was confirmed, I was actually sleeping in her bedroom in her fiancé's house and her wedding dress was hanging up over the door jamb in the room and there was light coming in. I couldn't sleep. I was crying. It was horrible. I honestly can't remember where anybody was in the house. There was no companionship or consoling or anything with my family or their family. We were all isolated in our own spaces, which is why part of my work is to bring people together in the toughest and the best of times.

Dori Klass: Um, and now I'm getting a little emotional. But so, I couldn't sleep and I prayed. I said, God, if there is a God, please give me something. I need something. I need something...



And I actually got something. I heard four words and they were bellowing, "SAY YES TO LIFE".

And I wasn't that far behind my sister actually. I should've been dead 10 times by then. My body should have been ravaged with sexually transmitted diseases. I'd literally written a business plan. It was more of a back of the napkin business plan, to go into prostitution.

Dr. Irena: Whoa!

Dori Klass: That's just where I was. I had been in hell and back and I still hadn't quite found my way into life. And so here I get this message and it was so compelling. It was so powerful and I hear a lot of voices now; maybe I always did, but now I listen and I said, okay, okay, I have no idea what this means. I have no idea how to do it. But okay. Yes, I'll say yes to life.

And it's been a 35 year journey to learn how to say yes to life no matter what life brings. Because life can really suck a lot. It can be really, really hard even when it's really good. Um, it can be really hard. And so because I've been on that journey to the underworld and back, because I made that commitment a long time ago, I can help people on their journeys.

Dr. Irena: Yeah. This must have been so incredibly intense. Do you feel now, like many people are saying, and I really believe this too: everything happens for a reason? Even the crap? That this was part of your path, part of your journey to have to go through, because *you* were strong enough to still afterwards say yes to life, and then bring that back to other people, so they can say yes to *their* life?

Dori Klass: Um, maybe, I mean, my version of 'everything happens for a reason' is everything serves if we're conscious. And so the work that I've invested in heavily for decades now has been depth work and soul work and spiritual work that helps me be more conscious and calmer; to stay engaged in life, whatever life brings.

And in the process, you know, when you have the kind of history I had... I'll give you a personal example of how that plays out. So when I met my second husband, my current husband of 28 plus years, hopefully my only other husband...

Dr. Irena: Well, it sounds like that's how it's going to be, right?

Dori Klass: Yeah, yeah (smiles). He knew my background. He knew I came with a lot of baggage and even though I had done a lot of healing work, he knew, you know, that there's probably a bunch of stuff in there that's going to come back to haunt us.

Dori Klass: And up until that point for me, for example, sex had only been a transaction, a way to stay alive or a way to power over someone quite frankly. Um, and you know, that was born out of some of my history and, not getting help, you know, early on.

And so his philosophy was...you know, he was a good Catholic boy, went to parochial schools, the good Boy Scout, all that stuff. And he was going to show me that sex could be a beautiful form of communication between two people who love each other. And I'm like, okay, sounds wonderful. Good luck. I'm all for it. Well, we can practice that and



you know what? What's he's come to learn, and he'd be nodding his head if he were sitting here next to me, and what I've come to learn, is that some days sex *is* a transaction. It's all the way over here on one end of the continuum and on other days it's a beautiful form of communication between two people who love each other.

Dori Klass: And there's a whole lot of other possibilities between those extremes, just like survival is on one end, thriving is on the other end. And there's a whole lot of possibility and a whole lot of living that can happen in between.
And if we get more conscious and if we get unstuck and if we are willing to start to shift the grooves in our brain and the patterns that we're in, we have more access to all of that. We can expand, we can grow, and we can have more fun.
And there are times I'll say to Michael, you know what? I have something I want to talk about. And it's kind of a big ask and it might require an investment on both our parts. And so, you know what? Let's go have some sex. And then when you're plateauing, I'll pitch it to ya. (Laughs) And he goes: manipulate me, manipulate me, please!
You know what? Then it's a transaction, and it's fun if you're conscious, right? And playful.
And so there's a lot of ways to look at these things, rather than a firm interpretation or a single way of telling ourselves a story and reinforcing the story that doesn't always serve. So I try to kind of snap people out of that stuff and get them present, myself included.

Dr. Irena: That's amazing. Really amazing. Now who are the people you work with actually? Are you bringing that into the coaching as well? And what do they like most about the work with you? What is it that has the most impact on their life? Is it your story, is it theirs? What do you do with those that then say, oh my gosh, she's incredible. Is there a favorite client experience you'd like to share? Or could share?

Dori Klass: I've had hundreds of clients, thousands of students in classrooms. And my typical client is a mid-career professional. Um, often they have children or adult children, usually facing or anticipating a pretty significant transition. There done. They have some awareness that they're at the end of an arc in their professional lives, but they're not done with their work. They still see themselves in the workplace another 10, 20 years or longer.
But, it's interesting; they're in the middle of a life oftentimes that they worked for really hard, a life, relationships, career...They've worked really hard to build, and on many levels they love. And yet when they come to me, they're feeling almost ambivalent about it, or uninspired, or there's a restlessness. And words they use are; I feel flat, like fragmented, disconnected.

Dori Klass: And they tend to isolate more and more because you know, they're used to being the calm in the midst of the chaos. These are successful, in your face, type A successful, hard-driving people. They're over-scheduled, over committed and they're used to juggling lots of balls, but the tradeoffs are becoming less and less okay. Not always so consciously, but less and less okay.
And usually what propels them to come to me is that the professional life... Like by the time they come to me, we pull the curtain back, and the personal life is kind of a hot holy mess or could be, not always, but you see all the signs. But it's the professional life



when it starts to feel more shaky or they're suddenly left out in the meetings they thought they should be in, or the new shiny person comes in that's 20 years younger, and something happens and they start to realize, maybe I don't want to do this for another 20, 30 years or I don't want to do it this way and there's something missing.

Dori Klass: And so these are the people that are...my clients, I believe, are some of the most courageous people I know. Some of the bravest people I know and some of the most giving people I know, cause they really do want to make a difference. For instance, show up and leave a legacy. But they're really struggling now. I mean they're used to being calm in the chaos, but now they're feeling internally chaotic. And that's new. They're used to having the answers and now they're not feeling like they know what to do. And because this is such an internal process, they also isolate and keep it from other people because they don't even know what it is that's happening, or what to ask for.

And we joke about the midlife crisis. Um, and sometimes that's the evidence that they're in that place, you know; new car, new kids, new spouse, new house, and they all inevitably figure out that that's not the solution, right?

Dori Klass: But mostly they're just burnt out and they're kind of feeling dead inside and they don't know what to do about it. And yet they would still love the stuff although they're ready to be done.

So we do the transformational work that helps them to come to rediscover what's most important now to honor who they've been, where they've been, what they've done, and to start to imagine an aspirational identity and imagine who they'll be on their death bed with no regrets. And that makes a little bit of space.

Because right now, most of the people I work with, because they're workaholics, typically because they're doing, doing, doing, they don't spend a lot of time in the who they're being and how their relating bubbles are. Right? And then you wonder why the relationships are falling apart and you know, why they're having a reaction from people they didn't intend. And so we help them. They're always going to do "the doing" well. They're good at that. We help them spend some time in the "being" bubble, and liking what they find, and in the relating bubble, getting much better at that, both personally and professionally. That's our work. And then really begin to set themselves up for a successful and lovely and full of life second half of their life.

Dr. Irena: yes, that sounds so needed, especially now, where it's just a rat race and there's the societal pressure of doing, doing, doing that the heart-centered and mindful, compassionate people are almost getting steamrolled over, unless they have help and understand that this is now more than ever needed, for all humanity really.

Dori Klass: Right. I like to work with people who see themselves as leaders in their own lives and also, you know, in their homes and in their workplaces and who are literally leaders because they have reach and impact, and what they do matters. And what I've experienced is when we as leaders do our own work of awakening, of recovering that sense of aliveness internally, of cultivating a vital inner life and the ability to listen to all the voices and the wisdom within and around us, and let that inform our outer life; now we've got wholeness, now we've got truth. Now we've got expanded capacity, now life gets really interesting again. And now we're like real people getting real, and it's more



fun. And I take them through a lot of stages and help them learn how to pause, help them learn how to put relationships first, beginning with the one with themselves, help them keep the lines of communication open, and have a healthy relationship with emotions and emotional mastery even.

Dori Klass: Help them make love the most important thing. We say the love word in the workplace and in the home, you know; help them make love the most important thing over fear, over doubt, over concerns and isolation. We want a relationship with the fear, doubt, concerns and isolation. We want to listen to those things because they have wisdom too. However, we don't want them driving the bus. We want love and humanity and the ability to give and receive in the mix. And so we're working on all these things and applying them to what's really going on in life; at home, in the bedroom, in the workplace. Um, and so that we can make it real, right now, every day. That's part of, I think, what I bring uniquely to the table, is we kind of operate at the intersection of that personal, professional, spiritual, practical; and like, let's apply it right now. Get off the phone now and apply it. Get off! (laughs)

Dori Klass: In a perfect world, when I do executive coaching, I'm with progressive leaders who are willing to let me shadow them for days, and literally stop them and coach them in the moment; in their team meeting, or in their one-on-one, or in their marriage in the moment. Really see it happen. And that's powerful. Really powerful.

Dr. Irena: That sounds incredibly powerful. Indeed. And you just said something again "from the boardroom to the bedroom". I think this is also a book you wrote, an Amazon best seller "From the boardroom to the bedroom; who are you being?"

Dori Klass: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Irena: How did that come to be?

Dori Klass: Um, it's kind of a book about one of the pillars of the work that people do with me, which is having a clear set of foundations. We're kind of doing life on a very unstable foundation.

Dori Klass: And so there are, you know, four key parts of that. Learning how to be in relationships, learning how to have fierce, fun, meaningful conversations. (The conversation is the relationship), having assumptions, checking your assumptions, changing your assumptions, but letting them serve as a structure and a container for the relationship, whether you're one-to-one or in a sacred circle or in a work team or family. And then rules of engagement; having boundaries and clear rules of engagement, and articulating them out loud and making sure everybody understands them. And then I have these 21 pillars, um, which are kind of practices, spiritual practices that we can put in place. That book talks about those five things. And part of what I do with my one-to-one clients, and I'm going to be starting to do some groups and we'll do some work with this in groups, which will be very, very powerful. But the tagline from it is...I've been working on edits right now actually cause we're going to try to take it to a paperback form, but "how to go from feeling dead, stuck, uninspired and surviving, to alive, creative, engaged and



thriving at work and at home". It really is about creating space for that whole continuum.

Dr. Irena: Wonderful! I know that you also have speaking engagements; what do you focus on there? What gets the biggest and best response from your audience?

Dori Klass: Um, well my audience or clients don't use these words. Inevitably they respond to them. It's all about stop feeling stuck, recover from burnout and revitalize your life. You really can get real and get what you really want, and love your life no matter what life brings. And so it's always around those topics. Um, I do a lot of parent coaching too, and one of the things I tell parents in some of the talks is: I can't promise you won't be burying your child at 18. I can't, because that's what my parents experienced, you know? But what I can tell you is that if you implement some of the things we're talking about here, some of the things that help you build a thriving life and you make it important every single day, that number one, you'll sleep better at night.

Dori Klass: And number two, if, and I hope to God it's not your reality, but if you end up burying one of your children before you; you'll know you did everything you could, while you could, to be with them, to love them, to give back to them, and also to love yourself in the process. You'll know it in your heart, in your mind, in your body. You'll know it, you'll never forget them, and you'll be able to move on and you'll still have a life you love no matter what life brings. Um, it's real. And you know, with this, no fooling around. Like there's some real tough stuff. I talk about one of my favorite clients; she was dealing with colon cancer, and she hired me to help her shift into a different profession, but she was also actively dealing with colon cancer and we were doing work together and we were going nowhere.

Dori Klass: And I finally said to her, you know, I don't want to keep taking your money if we're not going to make progress and if this isn't the right tool for you to move forward in the direction you want. And I have, um, an intuition and I trust my intuitive hits. My interpretation of the hits might be in left field when their truth is in right. However, I do trust the hits. So I asked her if I could share my hit and at least take her down a process that would help reveal what I was seeing. Cause I didn't want to feed her either. And I do a lot of perspectives work with my clients, especially when they seem to be stuck and can't move forward. And so we actually created a perspectives wheel. I meet with a lot of my clients in public places, get them out of their homes, their offices, their workplaces, cause that's where we get more creative and open.

Dori Klass: So we were in this kind of public place that's a restaurant, but we were between lunch and dinner hours, so not as many people around. And we kinda had it to ourselves. And imagine a Pizza Pie on the ground, you know, with eight wedges. And we called the wheel "perspectives of me having colon cancer".

Dr. Irena: That one was heavy stuff, right?

Dori Klass: Heavy! And it's the elephant in the middle of the room. Let's have the conversation. This is what a fierce, meaningful conversation is. Um, it's like we bring our whole selves to



the table and we have the conversation, right? So, um, one of the perspectives was, I'm going to die anyway, so who cares? Ooh, man. And guess what? Then I asked...you know, after we go through all the perspectives, we feel into all the perspectives, there's a lot that we do in each of the perspectives we name that's within this header. And then I always ask, you know, so what perspective have you been in up until now and how has it served? How is it not serving? And then there's a choice point, right? This is the power, when we start to actually choose, right? And it's like; so which perspective do you want to be in for the next 30 days? Let's just give it a time stamp. And in her case, she chose, 'I have colon cancer and I'm going to live'.

Dori Klass: And in that we work on what are you're saying yes to and no to when you're in these perspectives. And then we develop an action plan as a result of that new choice. And we literally have a commitment ceremony crossing the line to this side, to this new perspective. And then she builds an action plan that she follows through on for 30 days. And guess what? She's still here 10 years later! She got that new job and we started to be able to move forward in the coaching. This kind of work is not just playing with a perspectives wheel or a wheel of life. These are traditional coaching tools. But it's the work we do when we're in it. Are we willing to feel something? Are we willing to let the emotion release from our joints, and our system, and our ancestral patterns?

Dori Klass: Are we willing to see the patterns and the beliefs and the things that are steering the ship now, and choose otherwise and start the real work of that? That requires a witness function; that requires a safe and courageous space within which to do the work. That requires a container, that requires a commitment and a decision, and permission. All of those things we work on in my program with my clients. But the perspectives work; every single client will say, "boy, that one time...cause we do a lot of perspectives work...but you know, that one time, and we did it like right at the beginning and I still remember to this day". That's the kind of stuff they remember.

Dr. Irena: Is that now part of the 'say yes to your life' system? I know you have different kinds of programs. Could you tell us a little bit about those too?

Dori Klass: Um, my core program is the "Love your life and lead from there" and it's seven modules and one of the modules is the perspectives work. Um, the first module is permissions and decisions. And that module is a lot of what my book is about. It's all building a solid foundation underneath your life right now. And the second module is about presence; and we really do some powerful work to reflect on the past, to look in the future and get present today. And it's based a lot on, I even have it right in front of me; William Bridges was an English professor turned management consultant and he wrote several books, but the one I referenced a lot, it's 30, 40 years old, but it's called "transitions, making sense of life's changes".

Dori Klass: Cause I'm a transitions expert. That's what I kind of do with people. Right? And that's what I did in corporate. I thrived in strategic planning and large program management. And then we had to kind of shift and grow teams. But his (William Bridges) whole theory is that corporations, individuals, personal, professional, we move from an ending into a new beginning too quickly. We don't give ourselves permission to pause. That space between an ending and a new beginning is called, in his world, a neutral zone. And most



of us aren't willing to stay in the neutral zone because it feels really uncertain and murky and icky and messy. And nobody's trained us how to be there.

Dr. Irena: Very true.

Dori Klass: Right? And then what happens is we do the rebound. We have the new wife, the new job, the new thing, everything happens real fast. And we don't see expansion. We don't see enhanced wealth. We don't see more happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, nothing. And we're going job after job after job, relationship after relationship. I mean, that's not the solution. The solution is pausing. The solution is naming the ending. The solution is grieving and celebrating the ending. We don't have a lot of rituals in our world anymore, in our Western developed society. So the funeral, for example, is a powerful ritual. And you know, we go, we grieve, we mourn, we give eulogies. And then what do we do? We go to the basement of the church or the synagogue or we go down the block to the restaurant or somebody's living room and we start telling stories and we start celebrating life and we start laughing.

Dr. Irena: Very true!

Dori Klass: We need both! But all of that requires a capacity to have emotional literacy and then emotional mastery. Oh God forbid. That would be amazing. Right? So in that process, in that second step in my seven step system, we focus on naming our arcs and endings, literally grieving and celebrating the endings, spending time. It could be a minute or it could be a couple of weeks, but spending time in the neutral zone, naming the next new beginning. And I have a lot of clients who can't get past the present when we're doing the arcs and endings work. And it's kind of a lot like the last client I just described. I happen to have a lot of clients who are dealing with terminal illness, and they can't get past it because they can't imagine a future. By the time we're done, they get past it and they can imagine a future and they're healthier and...I can't make any medical claims...but, something shifts. And so it's really powerful work.

Dori Klass: The third step is to focus on parts work and that's my signature work. The fourth step is a focus on perspectives work, and also what is your leadership point of view and how does that show up every day, all day long, in all parts of your life. The fifth step is purpose, but it's where we kind of...you probably heard Simon Sinek's term, "what's your why". My why is when leaders awaken and come alive, choose to engage and learn how to create the conditions within and around them necessary to thrive. Then everyone they touch and influence can too. It changes an entire organization. When we do our own work, it could change the world when each one of us learns how to do our own work. And so that's the fifth step.

Dori Klass: The next step is a power step. It's about choosing powerfully. And it's about learning how to be powerful, how to love being powerful. That there's vulnerability in power and there's power in vulnerability and how vital that is. And in that process we develop an aspirational identity and a plan that takes them to their death bed. And then, well, the seventh step is to execute the plan and play and um, really bring a child's mind back to everything and have some fun, take some risks.



Dr. Irena: So yeah, that's very powerful and amazing. And what will you say has that got to do with love, or is love infusing all of those steps?

Dori Klass: Everything! You know, to me, when I think of love, it's more than just the personal, psychological and romantic love. It's: can we greet life? Can we turn toward whatever life brings and say hello and have a relationship with it?

Dori Klass: That's love, that's unconditional love, that's deep love. And in the process of working and building those muscles, and it's a big part of our humanity, and then on a personal level, can we learn how to give and receive love? Most of the people I work with, they're so type A. They're so controlling. They're so hard driving, they're so hard striving. They never pause and they're always about doing; they suck! Suck. Sorry, I hate that word. But they suck at receiving. They really do suck!

Dr. Irena: No kidding!

Dori Klass: If you can't receive, I promise you can't give. And when I think of love, I think of the yin-yang symbol, I think of the polarity, survival and thriving. I think of the opposite of love, which is indifference.

Dori Klass: If we really commit to loving life, no matter what life brings, if we commit to loving ourselves and one another, no matter what life brings, then we'll love all of our parts. Like if I'm a boss in the workplace and I have to fire somebody, I'll call on my inner annihilator. And if I believe in love and if I'm beginning in love, I'll also call in Great Mother and I'll fire them while honoring their worth and dignity. And I'll be present with them. Or think about just the masculine and feminine. This is a big part of, I think, when I met my husband I was so in my masculine function: point, shoot, kill; action, action, action, you know, get stuff done. Um, most of the women I knew in the workplace had forgotten they were women.

Dori Klass: They were all in their masculine aspect. But we need to learn how to be in our feminine aspects, which includes the receptive function. Masculine penetrates, receptive feminine is penetrated, literally and otherwise. But the masculine without something holding it, the containment, the gathering and the holding and the receiving is like Hitler! You know, it's just point, shoot, kill everything! The feminine without the active principle is like an overgrown jungle or prairie or garden and chokes itself out. We need each other. It's why the yin-yang symbol has both. Right? And so for me, love is knowing all of that.

Dr. Irena: Wonderful! And like I said, so powerful. And I know that you have made this radical change and a lot of your clients have been able to do that too. But what if somebody is resistant to that? Is that one of the biggest mistakes? What is the problem if they can't make the same kind of really radical changes you have made? How could they start the process though?

Dori Klass: The best way to start the process is um, self-observation, I would say. And it's not something we're all very good at. Um, but learning how to wake up, start to pay



attention to things differently on either a very transpersonal or a collective or societal level or right here close to home. Notice the things you're noticing!

Dr. Irena: Becoming aware...

Dori Klass: Notice that, excuse me, I'm sorry, I got a little cough here. Becoming aware. Notice the questions that are coming to mind and you shut them down real quick cause they scare you or because you don't have an answer. Right? Or notice the patterns floating through society. Like what's been really popular in the last couple of decades on the big screen or in books is zombies and vampire movies. And then we wonder in corporate America why the biggest issue we have in corporate America is engagement. We'll, hello! We've got a bunch of people who have quit and stayed. They're the undead; they're retired in place. We think what we're projecting on the screen is not us, it's just entertainment, but it's actually a mirror reflecting what's active in us. So a big part of what I bring is I bring you back to a joie de vivre, to a love of life. And to aliveness.

Dori Klass: But that comes from awareness and we have to be willing to feel and experience everything we're experiencing. I had a lot of tough stuff happen in about a decade period of time, but when you're able to face that and move into and through that stuff, on the other side is love, joy and ecstasy. They're the same thing, just the opposite side of the coin.
So the best thing we can do is to at least start paying attention to what we're noticing and to start self-observing and not make up anything about it. Not go into interpretation or story or evaluation. Just go, Huh, that's interesting. I wonder why that came up just now or just notice, be curious, about ourselves. And in a perfect world, I mean, I think the biggest mistake leaders do is not doing their own personal development work.

Dori Klass: I can't tell you how many times I'm brought into companies to work with their frontline people, and then they say they're working with the executive team, but what they're really doing is bringing in high level speakers from really cool places and companies that give them half-hour, hour, or half-day lectures, but they're not actually requiring them to do any work. Right?
And then they wonder why their middle managers and their lower level people are pissed, are jaded, are disengaged because it's like you're teaching me to do stuff that you're not doing. And I can give you 10 examples in the last hour.

Dr. Irena: Wow. Yes. So leading by example is very important, right?

Dori Klass: Yeah. And don't give me lip service. I'm not stupid. Nor are any of your frontline people or your children. Knock it off. Do your own work. That's the work. That's love; when you're willing to be that courageous. And do your own work. That's love.

Dr. Irena: That's love! Love yourself, love others, do your own work. Do you have any other final words for our participants who want to be their best true self in all roles and all, you know, aspects of life, whether it's relationships, work, parenting, anything?



Dori Klass: Probably the thing I want to say is, that I really believe that each of us...you know, there's gazillions of sperm that could fertilize eggs and we're the ones that are here and I really believe that we are each beautiful and have gifts to bring that have everything to do with the personality and personas we've cultivated and so much more. There's so much more deeper in, that we could love if we were courageous and brave and willing enough to look beyond the personas. Most of us have cultivated strong personas to avoid further wounding, but that keeps us from our true self. And so when I watch people on a platform making a case for things, or activists even, you can tell who's still coming from their wounding and hasn't done their work. And you can tell who's done their work and is coming from, you know, an aspiration or an inspiration. It's kind of a Martin Luther King versus maybe a Malcolm X. Maybe, I don't know. I'm not an expert in that field.

Dori Klass: So what I guess I want to say is, love yourself enough. Trust yourself in the process in life enough to put a toe in the water and do your own work. And you might be pleasantly surprised when you have the courage to look within you. I would almost guarantee you'll be pleasantly surprised, with whom and what you find, and that this person is the person who can take you to your deathbed with no regrets. And you could really love your life every day, whether or not you're still a CEO or pulling in 200 grand a year or whatever, you know, driving a fancy car. Um, those things are fun. We want to honor those things. If you're able to have that kind of privilege, Yay! And there's more in you and the world needs that too. So find a partner cause it's almost impossible to do it by yourself. I think every leader and every parent should have a coach. But that's of course biased and selfish.

Dr. Irena: ...but I couldn't agree more. I couldn't agree more that yes, if you find your own true self, you'll be not only pleasantly surprised, you'll be joyful about what you find there. And I also know that it is really pretty much impossible to do that on your own. Now I know you've been generous enough to offer two free gifts to our audience to maybe get them started. What can they do? Where do they go?

Dori Klass: Yeah. So, thank you for that too, Irena. I offer a complimentary "love your life and lead from there", and I'd always say lead *skillfully* from there, exploration session. And so, if anybody is interested in getting a sense for where they are right now and how they could truly love their life and get real and get more of what they really wanted to their life now; we'll have a breakthrough session. We'll identify at least one thing that they can move forward with. And the best way to reach me at this point is literally at my email address at dori@dorklass.com. And eventually they'll be able to get me at my website that's in under construction right now. We're in the shift...Or pm me; private message me on Facebook or on LinkedIn, and let me know you're interested in a 'love your life and lead from there' exploratory session.

Dori Klass: And then the second thing is I've set up a "love your life and lead from there" Facebook group. And I'm offering a monthly, it may even be twice a month, coaching salon that's complimentary. So, it's scheduled for an hour and if it serves, I'll stay on a little bit longer. Most of my clients are pretty busy, so an hour is as much as they can usually afford. But that's another one of those permissions to pause and take a break in the



hustle and bustle of life and just be curious. And it's part of the self-observation process and the creating awareness process. Some days I do a little bit of teaching and then lead a discussion with whoever shows up. Other days it's just open laser coaching, which creates a nice opportunity for people to, in community and with me, get an experience of me; get an experience of coaching, bring a question to the table and maybe get some answers or some new direction or a shift in perspective. And it's all complimentary, because a lot of people aren't ready for the taking a leap in the deeper dive. And so this gives them a chance to play a little bit, dabble, start that process of self-observation and when they're ready we can have conversations about what else (to do) down the road.

Dr. Irena: Very generous of you. Thank you very much. So you are offering a complimentary exploration session, plus laser coaching in the Facebook group; and everything is free of charge. And to reach you it's dori@doriklass.com and they'll find your Facebook group under "love your life and lead from there". And you'll also find these links on the Life in Love Masterclass Series website.

So Dori, I thank you so much for all that helpful and amazing inspirational insight. And I hope a lot of people will take you up on your offer because I think this is something that everybody's so urgently needs to be able to live a life where you're thriving in elegance every day.

Dori Klass: Yeah. Yeah! It really is possible even when life gets hard.

Dr. Irena: It *is* possible. And I think you and I, we both are living proof of that.

Dori Klass: Yeah. Thank you.

Dr. Irena: Thank you, Dori. I really appreciate you.

Dori Klass: Thanks so much, Irena!