



JAMESCHRAMKO

Discovering Personal Change and Authentic Self Expression

Wondering how to get good luck? There's more science to it than you might think. Brand and identity strategist Monica Laurence elaborates.



Monica Laurence

James: James Schramko here. This is episode 917. Today, we are chatting with the very interesting Monica Laurence. Welcome.

Monica: Thank you so very much for having me, James.

Who Monica is and how this talk came about

James: One of my favorite things to do with the podcast is to have a chat with someone who a mutual friend has brought together. And in this case, I met you through our mutual friend, Jesse D. That's how I know him, as Jesse D. I first met Jesse through a really good friend of mine, [Dean Jackson](#), probably one of the most well-respected and innovative people in the online space. He actually invented the concept of putting your email on a page, so the email opt-in, way back.

Monica: Wow, okay.

James: Yeah. Jesse and Dean are friends, and I went to breakfast with them, and Dean visited Sydney, and Jesse and I have been great friends. He's also an extremely interesting character. I love what he's doing, teaching corporates how to be better thinkers. And his business model works, and the stuff he was doing with Tourism Australia was groundbreaking and probably a real legacy, still.

So when he says, Oh, you should have a chat to Monica, I'm like, Okay, introduce us, this will be great. Because I have a deep amount of trust in his judgment. But you're not an easy package to describe. I'm going to do my best here. Because you're a serial entrepreneur, you're also a real explorer, and very passionate about life. And you've done a lot of the global stuff like enterprise, Hollywood, Silicon Valley technology.

But you also have a hospitality interest, you've got a resort there in Tavola, Fiji, a lux private villa. You do stillness retreats for execs and visionaries. You also have this concept called Quantum Surfing, and I imagine that might have been a bit of a bridge to connecting us, because anything with surfing in the name is an automatic magnet.

Monica: Yes, you're quite the surfer.

James: I'm not good at surfing, but I love surfing, just to be clear. I do post some clips every now and then, and I know that I'm not a very good surfer. Sometimes people give me tips, you know, if you just put your hand here or whatever. So I've been blessed with lots of surf coaching via the internet. But you've been helping people with this idea of quantum surfing. And I think we should probably delve into that a little bit today.

Before I sort of wrap it up, I think where we could have an interesting conversation would be around the ideas of business model and differentiation, because you've worked with so many people. And I imagine Jesse would have had good conversations with you about that. I'd also be interested in talking about flow and that sort of personal freedom and authentic self-expression that as entrepreneurs we sort of innately have.

But I think we could learn some techniques to really bring that out, because a lot of us already stepped away from a corporate role. But there will be people listening to this who are still doing their current iteration of life, but it's not what they had in mind for the end game. Or as a lot of people talk about goals, and I know you've got some strong views on goals, and alternative ways to talk about that from a mindset perspective.

So I was going to use a pun and say, let's dive in. But I think that'd be cheesy. Hopefully, that kind of captures a little bit of the rich tapestry of Monica, and we can go from there.

Quantum surfing and its relevance

Monica: Thank you, James. It's really a delight to be able to engage in any one of those threads with you. And yes, my experience with Jesse is also one filled with mutual high regard. We had lots of conversations, the two of us, during our COVID lockdowns. And that's the time in which I was putting together all of my materials for quantum surfing. And so Jesse joined my second cohort and is a quantum surfer.

It's a philosophy. It's a framework that I share, which is a completely different framing perspective on how life works, and how we bring energy and vision to the table that allows us to really navigate life in the way that we find more joyful and satisfying and with higher impact for our businesses.

James: This seems like the topic of the moment for me in life. Because we read headlines like the great resignation. People have been at home doing something different than what they had at corporate. I read a social media post yesterday, and someone was saying that they loved the lockdowns. They absolutely loved it, because they got to spend so much time with their kids.

And I kind of felt, Oh, you know, like, what a shame, that person, I think they were 47 years old. Why didn't they engineer their life to spend more time with their kids, and not need a lockdown to be in that situation? That was interesting.

And then I have a couple of coaching students who're kind of like, they've succeeded in the things they've done. But they're kind of a bit over it. Burnt out is a strong word, but I'd say they've just sort of done it now, and they're ready for the next thing, but they don't know how to - they don't have tools to figure out what the next thing is.

And then since I moved to a new state, very quickly, gathered again another surfing community, which is a really interesting thing, that surfers have this own code, right? And the two main people I surf with are both involved with helping people find their life's purpose and through different tools, some of them talk about journaling, other ones talk about meditation and stuff.

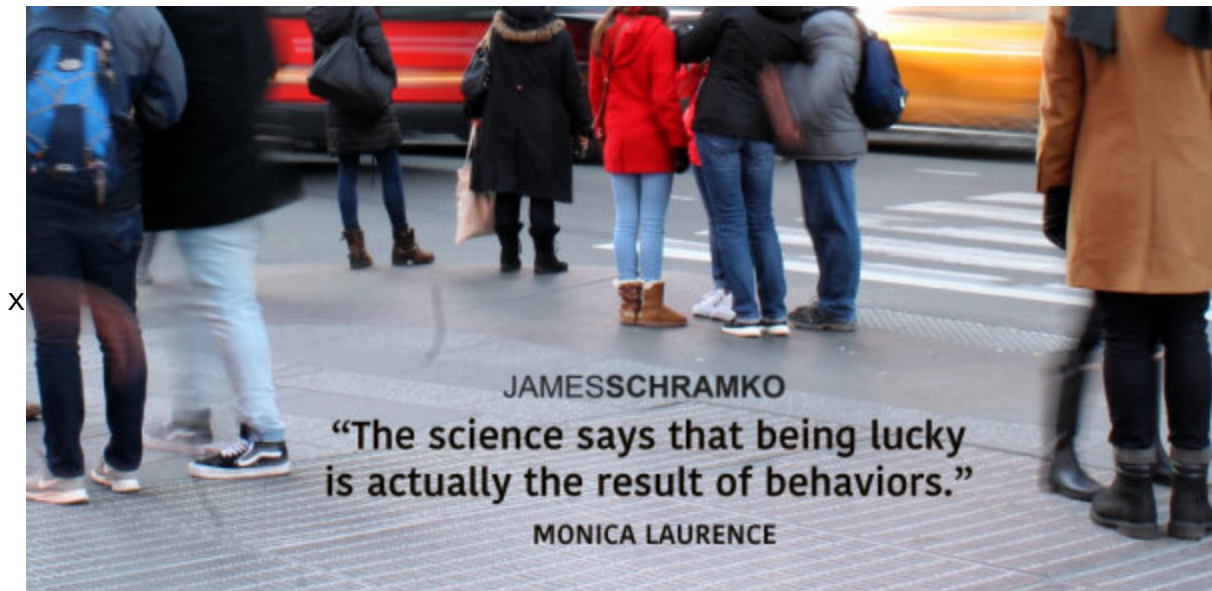
But I really think this is going to be a strong topic over the coming few years, because people are ready for a shift. I think they want to move on. But they don't necessarily want to go back. So that does sort of pose the question, with quantum surfing. I have a description here about it. What I've got here is a framework of actionable philosophies, drawing from quantum mechanics, neuroscience, spirituality, and a quest for personal freedom and authentic self-expression.

But basically, it's a shift in perspective on what is possible. That's the bit that I really think is the punch line. What is possible for someone who's a bit worn out, or a bit sort of done with the old way, recognizes there's been a huge shift or change in the way people are going to live in the future, and want to grab it with both hands? Where do we even start with this?

Monica: Well, my own travels through this happened over the last 10 years. And it started with a lot of spiritual experiences. And from those, I was noticing that some of those practices would create predictable outcomes, and others were kind of up and down. And so I started turning to neuroscience and quantum mechanics to understand why.

And what's so interesting, James, is I would say that we live in cultures that have a certain belief, a set of beliefs around how the world works, how reality works, and that it's outdated, those beliefs. In fact, our quantum physicists have been telling us for 100 years that we live in this weird and wonky thing called quantum. And we don't have any sort of cultural narrative, set of cultural beliefs that incorporate what's happening in the quantum field.

And so we're kind of out of step with what's possible. So I love a great experiment. And so I started launching lots of different experiments. And one of the fastest ways I've found to kind of get through that little hurdle that you were just describing, which is, how can I find what's right for me, you know, is to just embrace the unknown and to adopt a set of practices where you become predictably lucky.



Now, I know that that sounds like, bizarre, but the science says that being lucky is actually the result of behaviors. And so what I do frequently when I find myself at a crossroads, when I'm not sure what the next vision is going to be for me, I just say, well, let me just kind of play here for a little while, and invite in lucky coincidences, different experiences that may then allow me to discover what's next for me, what am I gravitating to, what feels like it's aligned with who I am and the resources I have to offer and something that's going to make me passionate that I really care about, you know?

What we can learn from children

So in quantum surfing, that's the first thing we do, is we start practicing lucky behaviors. And curiosity is absolutely one of those, just allowing yourself to explore, not always to be so much in the mind. So directed, so plan-oriented, so goal-oriented, you know? Much more aware that discovering that perhaps a child might use before that child had learned all the proper ways of envisioning what's next in life.

James: That was the first thing in my mind, children already know this. And one of the most interesting podcasts I've done in the last year was [speaking to someone who's an expert at child mindset and parenting](#). And the big takeaway was that kids want to do what the parents do. And so I've spent a lot of time with my daughter, who's about two and a half.

We just do things together, and she wants to do everything that I can do. But I also learn from her, what's she doing, how she plays. Like, if you talk about it in a vacuum sense, if you just had a room and you put a kid in it, and you're not on your phone, or working or doing something else, and you think, well, gosh, where do they start from here? They've got all these resources at their disposal.

And then you see how they adapt and play and role play, and it really is fascinating to see. And it's very interesting that you talk about goal setting, because there's certainly a very strong culture of writing down goals and setting fixed goals, and it's almost a setup for disappointment, in a way, if you go off track. And certain things are variables and hard to plan in advance, and sometimes need to happen to you, and then you take a different direction or grow from it.

If you didn't have such fixed goals, then I guess you could be more appreciative of where you're actually at in the moment. And in fact, even setbacks or negative experiences could be reframed as fortunate or lucky that you got this lesson or the education out of this situation, and that you can carry that knowledge forward, I guess, to the point where one of my mentors used to say, age equals wisdom.

I think by the time you get older, you've had a lot of experiences, and then you start to learn the patterns and can easily sort of navigate them better.

Being the hero in the storyline

Monica: One of the things I like to do is to challenge myself when something isn't going my way, it's a disappointment, it's a perceived setback. And I like to take the idea that there's a storyline happening here, and that if I'm the hero in this storyline, that what is this setback teeing up, that allows me to kind of like, emerge later in a more self-composed, more focused, more directed, more powerful way, than without this setback?

So even this notion of curiosity, just to apply it to perceived setbacks, and I say that because we have judgment about these things. And yes, absolutely right. If we've set a goal that, you know, I'm going to sell 10 widgets, and we only sell seven, then, you know, somehow that is a failure. And now we're beating ourselves up about that rather than seeing perhaps a silver lining, which is, well, it's actually widget 2.0 that needs to be sold.

And, you know, the fact that you didn't get to sell all 10 means that you're actually becoming more creative, and you're understanding your market more and the needs of your customer to deliver something that's a true match. But we don't often take that lens with us. So we don't often take that lens of curiosity.

Is your goal big enough?

So if we could just get out of the stories that we tell ourselves about how we're not measuring up, you know, we're not fulfilling the goals that we set, and instead say, I bet there's something in here that is making my dream, my vision even bigger than I ever imagined. And for me, there's kind of this combination where I do like to have some quantitative focus, but I try not to hold too tightly to it.

Because in my experience, as long as I'm interacting with amazing people, and I'm showing up with these lucky behaviors, that my goals routinely get blown out of the water. Like, I wasn't even thinking big enough. And that can be the other side of setting goals, and can even be limiting. So I like it to be more directional and more of a shape.

James: Yeah, it is interesting when, if you use a specific term, like your goal isn't big enough, that is most definitely a situation that happens in the entrepreneurial space. Often, a goal is very closely equated to a revenue number. That's a really common one. In my field, just about everyone that I would start coaching is going to nominate a [goal of \\$10 million dollars revenue](#). And when we peel that back a bit, we find out that it's not necessarily the goal.

I have other metrics for my life, like I want to be healthy and feeling like, really good about life. But other metrics are like, I want to be surfing every day. That's an important metric that sort of like Dean Jackson would say, How do I know when I'm being successful? It will be that I'm surfing every day.

If something happened to prevent that, then I would say I've deviated from my success path. But it wasn't a number, it's not a number on a spreadsheet. It could be on a spreadsheet of a graph of plotting my daily surfs over a year. So it is interesting, measuring the right thing would probably be a major part of how much we're going to feel in the flow of things or not.

What about when things are seemingly beyond our control, and we have setbacks that are catastrophic? Firstly, I just want to say, that little soundbite you gave about casting yourself as a hero in the narrative, I don't think I've ever heard that before, and I think it's absolutely incredible. It's one of the most profound things I've heard for a long time.

I've always said things like, you know, when people are having setbacks, when I'm coaching them, I say, Look, celebrate these difficulties, because these are the obstacles that stop everyone else. If they weren't there, then everyone would be doing great, and there would be no way to really stand out. Like, this is where people stop. And we're going to see what lessons it's trying to teach us and adapt and move on.

But I think the way you described it is such a great way to put it. I'm definitely keeping that one in the memory banks. So far, that's a knock it out of the park way of dealing with it. So we're the hero in the movie, these setbacks have come, what other tools have you got in that toolkit of yours, Monica?

Learning and practicing lucky behaviors

Monica: I really turned to these lucky behaviors, which can be learned, and you practice them. And, bizarrely enough, James, things start to happen in your life. The beautiful thing about the quantum surfing practice is that because it's in cohorts, you always gather with another group of people.

So each week, everyone is coming back and talking about the experiments that they launched. And then their lucky outcomes. And you would think that they're not related, because the lucky outcomes are so disjointed from the behaviors themselves. And yet, the lucky outcomes are only happening once we start practicing the lucky behaviors.

So as an example, last version of Quantum Surfing One had a serial entrepreneur in the course, and he had just sold his most recent startup. And so we had this window of time before deciding what to do next. And he thought, Well, I thought quantum surfing would be a great thing for me to just give a whirl and take some perspective.

He had been considering several avenues for his next startup. And he considers himself an introvert and rather set in his patterns and routines. So now we were talking about doing intuitive wandering, right? Because intuition is one of four lucky behavior patterns. And so he finishes his work day, working from home, and usually, he would just make dinner and watch something with his housemates.

And he thought, you know, I'm just going to walk the neighborhood. I'm going to do an intuitive wander with no place to go. And so, as we were sharing with one another, you walk out, which direction am I going to go, left or right? Oh, I think I feel to go left. Okay, let's go left, right? This is truly a low stakes game. All right?

So then, you walk a little further, you get to that next choice point. Which way am I doing? Oh, okay. Oh, I feel to go right. And this is how we talked about it. How do I feel, like, because this is intuition? Anyway, in his case, he does this whole meandering, and he finds himself at this service station where you get fuel.

And so he says, I'm kind of thirsty. I think I'll walk in and get something to drink. Walks on in, and the guy at the service station says, Where did you come from? Where is your vehicle? You know? And he says, Oh, I'm new in the neighborhood, and I just thought I would take an evening walk, and I ended up here. And he says, Oh, cool, like, what do you do? Common. Just strike up a conversation, right?

So this surfer who was in the quantum surfing course had been doing a lot of investigation of NFT's, non-fungible tokens. And he wasn't getting to the information that he truly wanted to know, to put together the concept for his new startup. He starts having this random conversation with the guy who runs the shop, at the service station. Come to find out, this guy is an expert in NFTs, happens to know exactly what this surfer wants to know. And they end up having this fantastic dialogue and staying in touch.

And he comes back to the next surfing session. And he's like, I can't even believe it. Like, I've looked for a year for this information. And no one could tell me. And yet I took this seemingly bizarre, random, intuitive walk, and I end up meeting the precise expert who happens to hang out at the service station.

So these are the kinds of, it seems weird, right? But when you start to see the quantum energy of it combined with how the brain works from neuroscience, then you start to go, Oh, okay, actually, there's something here, we just don't have a cultural narrative or a set of beliefs that really brings that home for us.

James: So are you saying there's some fabric going on that's not really visible to most people?

Monica: Absolutely.

More than coincidence in play?

James: Yeah, it sounds like that. I mean, what you just described is, more or less, how I live my life. And so it seems very normal to me, but it might sound a bit strange to others. Like, I get that. And I do feel at times like maybe I'm an alien or something, just because normal humans don't, they just don't seem to have the same approach or thoughts.

But I think the more time you get to yourself, the more likely that you can start tuning into that. I had a very strange experience. When I moved up here, I was surfing by myself most of the time. And it's weird because I used to be in a group of 65 people, and we used to surf with others all the time.

And I was just down at the beach the other day, and this guy was sort of looking at me. And I looked away, and then I looked back, and he's still looking at me. I thought, that's weird. And I just sort of felt myself drawing a little bit closer to him. And he was coming towards me. And he goes, Are you James? I said, Yes. He goes, Oh, I'm a friend of Adam's. And you look familiar, you're not normally here, are you? I said no.

So anyway, I've surfed with this guy last three days in a row, he's part of my new surf group. And it's like I've known him for my whole life. It's the most incredible thing. It was meant to be, clearly, and he said that he had just written out a list of podcasts that he wanted to go on. And he'd written my name down that day. And then he sees me in the surf.

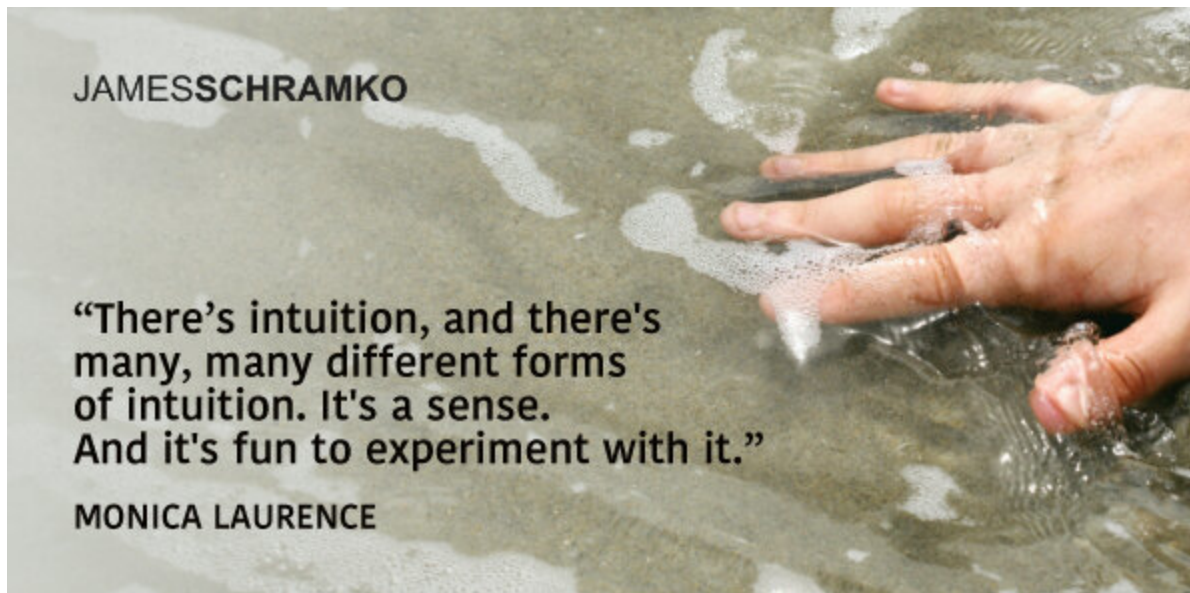
So it's like, it sort of fits that sort of description you're talking about, where things are in place, but they're not normally visible.

Monica: That's right.

James: And I was looking for someone to surf with, so it's like, yeah, just sort of clicked into place. And he doesn't normally surf at that place. He didn't have a surfboard with him, he was body surfing. And I've caused him to start surfing again. He said, Thank you for getting me out of bed and surfing again. Because I'm like, in surfing is, I'm like about 12 or 14 years old. I'm sort of at that level of excitement, like a 12 or 14-year-old kid, I'm like a grom.

And he's sort of, he was a teacher. And he says to me today, like, I'm thinking I really need to brush up and improve my ability. He says to me today in the surf, Are you open to tips if I see anything, or do you want me to tell you, you know, because I was a surf coach? I'm like, Throw it at me, whatever you got. I know nothing. I'm your complete student, empty glass. Give it to me, whatever you got. So it's all just layer on layer. It's very good.

Monica: Yeah. I like how you put it that there's, in your, it feels like it's a fabric, right? There's an interconnection. Yeah. And it truly is a fabric of consciousness. It's an information and energy network. And these are senses, James, that we have, that we just don't use. And we don't even really believe that they exist, because we've never been trained to use senses.



It's no different than, like, smelling or seeing or hearing. There's intuition, and there's many, many different forms of intuition. It's a sense. And it's fun to experiment with it, and to have exactly the kind of experiences that you just described, you know, where he had just written down your name. And then, lo and behold, here, you're wandering by.

James: Like, literally, I did some random beach in another state to where I live. He's just there, I'm just there, like, he was just trying to process, how is this even possible? Because the borders are locked. He wasn't aware that I - like, I'm not even potentially supposed to be able to be here. But that happens all the time for me, like that's just like, just so often, it's ridiculous.

I was drawn into a shop the other day, and there was no sign or whatever. And there was tools out, and they were just setting up, and I was their very first customer. And it was a really emotional moment for everyone when the transaction worked. They'd been through such a lead up process to that first sale. It was like, the relief, I could sense it through the air.

It was a couple of sisters who'd set up their own business. And you know, this was it. And I was just like, just happened to be in the right place to give them their first. I wanted to buy something to make sure they got their first sale. I know how important that is, because I remember my first sale of a car when I was in the automotive industry.

I still remember the guy's name and the color of the car and everything, you'll never forget the first one. Same when I helped someone with their online courses or whatever, that first sale. I imagine when you - did you start the resort or take it over?

Monica: Yeah, so at my place in Fiji, it was already a resort, and it came up for sale maybe about four years ago. And yeah, I had a meandering path to actually become the owner of my place in Fiji. But I had been going back and forth between Fiji and California for quite a while. And I was finding that the energies of the two places were really amplifying my creativity, my ability to notice these kinds of synchronicities.

And I started feeling that more people, more people who are purpose-driven, who are creative visionaries, would benefit from the time in Fiji. And so I had this vision to create a home where people come and hang out, and maybe they meet other cool people, and they get reconnected to self, reconnected to people who matter to them as well.

So it was in 2018 that I acquired the property, and I was laughing when I was listening to one of your podcasts, because you said there's that [broken glass phase](#) where you like, crawl across broken glass. I'm like, okay, I know that phase. I know that phase.

James: It's fresh in my mind. I've just set up house again. We were like two days in and the hot water stopped. And it's a brand new place. It's got solar and everything. But the solar battery thing is not talking to head office, and they'd shortcuted to work off the local thing. And anyway, no big, like just all the things that you could expect. But next time those things happen, I'll just be the star in my own movie.

Monica: Hero.

The challenge that was Fiji

James: I didn't know what a story narrative was, like, three or four years ago, maybe five years ago. So it's like, when you have these tools, it makes everything so much easier. So Fiji would have been difficult at first, and then you get it all set up.

Monica: Yeah, it was really quite challenging, because I had been an entrepreneur several times here in California, and so I'm used to creating businesses, and so I show up in Fiji, I create a business in Fiji. How different could this be? Well, it's completely different.

James: I'm thinking about island culture and, basically, lack of resource and availability of many, many things.

Monica: Almost everything. Yes.

James: You know, I've surfed in Fiji a few times, and I went there a lot as a kid. And I mean, it's a lovely, lovely place. But you've got to set your different expectations on stuff.

Monica: Yeah, and I'm sitting on that property and, you know, everything was broken, right? The generator was broken. But I would wake up, and there would be no water. You tried to turn on the shower, open the tap, and there was no water. I'm like, why is there no water? And then people say, Oh, it just happens sometimes. I'm like, no, no, no, this is not, this can't happen.

So everything had to be redesigned, everything. And that was its own journey. And then we got it all done, you know, everyone came and helped and rolled up their sleeves, and we put on great tunes, and, you know, had lots of dance parties.

James: Kava parties?

Monica: Yeah, Kava parties. And so just as we finished that up, and everyone who was hanging out with me departed, I was like, Alright, awesome. We're ready for work.

Stuck on an island in time of COVID

And then COVID struck, and I was in lockdown in Fiji by myself for 20 months.

James: Wow.

Monica: So that's when I decided to bring quantum surfing in. I'm like, Well...

James: That's it. It's an opportunity. I started a whole new business during COVID as well, just because for me, it's the first time I haven't traveled every month for a decade. Like, even recording this, I'm recording it on an actual desktop computer, I've got an iMac here. I was on laptops only. But it's improved the ability for me to just walk in and create content and have a consistent environment.

So, so many other things that can happen. So I like the yin yang of it all that, as my grandmother used to teach me when I was learning to paint, you can't have light without shade. So there's got to be something offsetting that. If there's something taken away here, it's going to probably appear there, is a simplistic way I look at it. Hopefully you were somewhere, you know, able to do golf or surf or something. Some activities.

Monica: Actually, we were very fortunate because for the first year, when the entire world spun to a stop, we had no COVID in Fiji. And there was maybe a dozen of us who all found ourselves there locked down behind the border wall. And it was a playground. Honestly, we were like, okay, what waterfalls are we going to go find now? What new hikes are we going to find?

And I got to know this group of people in a way that I never would have, without the gift really, of that endless summer, that endless amount of time that we were there entertaining ourselves and each other.

James: Well, you know, I wouldn't be sitting here in a different state without COVID, because the opposite happened. Where I lived, it just got absolutely crowded. Normally, people would go off to work in the city or do things during the day, but everyone was at home. Everybody decided to take up surfing. It went from five or six people to 150 people in the water.

It just felt like, nah, I'm out. I'd really like my freedom. And so my success metric got impeded upon. And so we went to a much quieter, warmer, less crowded place, you know, more organic place, and it's absolutely perfect. Absolutely no looking back. So this is a great example of turning a situation that is outside my control into, how's it going to work for me and my family? And so I'm going to take responsibility.

One man's creepy is another's science-backed normal

I think you saw [my video from quarantine](#) as well. There was some crawling over broken glass involved. I just had to really strip back from comfort into discomfort, and through some undesirable things, to get back out the other side, but I always visioned the other side.

How's this? I visioned it so clearly and strongly, my vision was of these stand-up barrels in the National Park. So like, catching these incredible waves reeling down the bay. That was my vision. I had sound and everything with it. That got me through it. And then I was at the markets a few weeks ago, and I met a photographer, and on his wall was that picture, which he took from his camera about 15 years ago, and I bought it and brought it home, it's on my wall.

But it's, you know, again, for me that's normal. For others that might sound creepy. And you're saying this is science-backed.

Monica: Yes, it is.

James: Well, that's going to probably get some of the cryptics, skeptics.

Monica: For me, one of my real strengths is kind of looking across disparate pieces of information or patterns or trends and seeing connections. I've done that in amongst my clients in Silicon Valley for years. And it's probably also what's made me a really strong entrepreneur when it comes to the business strategy and then seeing a path forward.

But for me, I wasn't satisfied with not, like, knowing that sometimes these flukes would happen, but they weren't reliable, they weren't predictable. So that's why I started digging into the science. Not only is it the quantum mechanics that's fascinating, but it's also the neuroscience. And what's interesting, you might be familiar with it, there's a TED talk by a neuroscientist out of the UK by the name of Anil Seth.

And he has this like, kind of catchy title for this TED talk, which is, We're all hallucinating our reality. What he really means is that the way the brain functions is it uses your beliefs to decode all of the signals that you receive. So if you believe, in your case, that this random mix tends to just happen in your life, and that you've grown accustomed to looking out for it, noticing, feeling into it, then that becomes part of your beliefs.

And so those aspects of your environment become accessible to you, because they get decoded properly. Whereas someone else is like, I'm totally skeptical, I don't see that, I never experience it, well, then that's also true for them.

James: So the short punchline to that would seem it would be a good idea to just have beliefs that lend themselves to the way you want things to happen.

Monica: That's right. It's true. Now, you could be a Pollyanna that way, you could be ignoring reality. Right?

James: I see those two. I've dealt with delusional people, who, I don't know, I was actually thinking about this when I was coming back from my surf the other day, which I do a lot of thinking, because there's a short walk up a hill. And I was thinking about this sort of theme of being somewhere in the middle.

I know these people who are crazy to one side, just out there, off their rocker. And then I know these super conservative, penned-in, controlled, no real freedom whatsoever types. And I feel like I'm somewhere in that - I feel like the most normal person in the middle there. But I have dealt with delusional people who have suffered enormous setbacks because of it, because they're just really going against the grain in some cases, like doing silly things. And their belief system has got them in financial trouble or relationship trouble. They won't let up.

Monica: Yeah. With regards to that point of, you know, kind of balance, right, being in the middle, the way that I like to get at refining beliefs is to launch experiments. And that's why I talked about the intuitive walk, right? It's low stakes.

Breaking out of unhelpful belief systems

So, launch experiments. And then by doing so, you welcome in lucky coincidences, you see what's right for you, what you want to take on board. And so it's more of a gradual refinement or a gradual adjustment, rather than just choosing to believe something that to your point....

James: Well, that's like a lot of belief systems are forced on or installed in. So for example, a lot of people grew up with certain religious beliefs that were installed at an early age and then supported by a community. And then of late, we've got a lot of forced beliefs, often disguised by science or pushed by politicians for agendas, they're forced onto us, and we must comply to those. Those ones don't seem to stick well.

Clearly, because you've traveled a fair bit, you've been able to break out of your, whatever sort of starting point was. Perhaps a lot of people are in stasis where they're so stuck in their environment, they haven't really got any external option to change. And that's where those experiments would be helpful, because you're so like opening a little window and starting some change.

And if you could keep doing that, over time, you'll end up changing quite a lot to the point where you may even create dissatisfaction with going back to the old way, they don't even want to go back anymore.

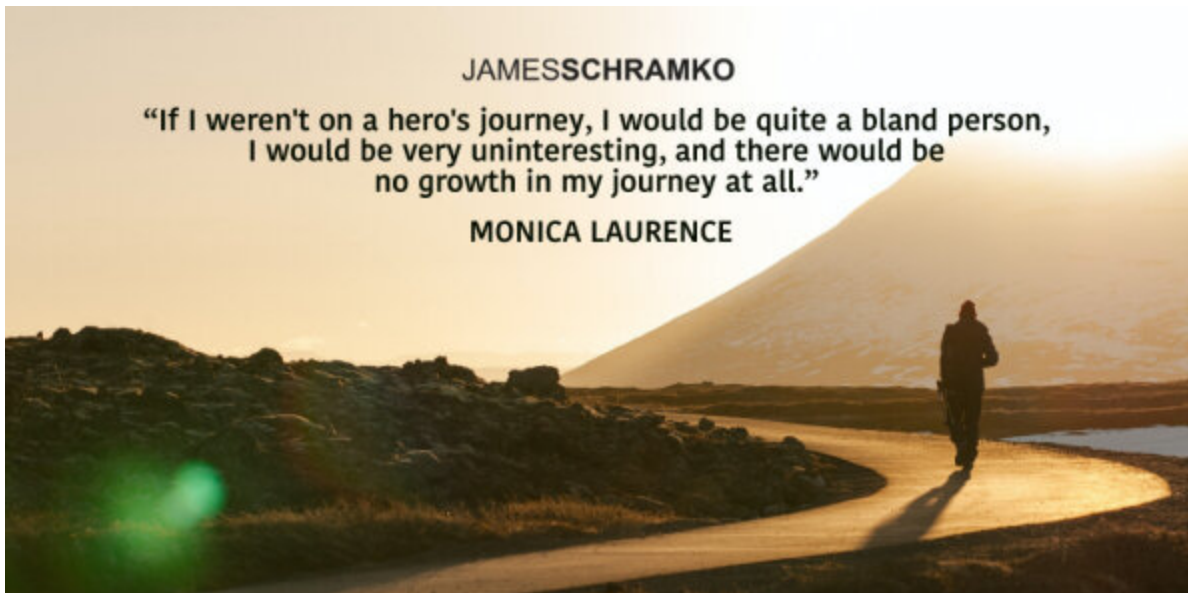
Monica: Well, it's fun to see what is really possible and to experience life in a new way that is filled with joy and serendipity, and also growth and impact. You know? So I find that truly enjoyable. Travel is a way that people are often exposed to new ideas.

The lever that shifts a lot of things

James: Podcast is, too. Like, every time I do a podcast, I learn something. I'm going to take the hero narrative technique that you gave me and apply that for myself, and I'm more than likely going to help others with that, and I'll credit you. But just one little thing here or there can shift, that can be the lever that shifts a lot of things.

Monica: Yeah, the hero narrative is actually, I opened Quantum Surfing Two with that story. In Quantum Surfing One, we focus on the lucky behaviors, right? And then the amplifier, which is playfulness. And then Quantum Surfing Two is no longer about getting up on the board, it's about balancing on the board.

And so to balance, you have to master the skill of resilience, right? And I find that the hero, imagining yourself as the hero, can really welcome in a lot of resilience. Like if you say, You know what, I'm just going to trust that even when things aren't going my way, that there's a larger arc here, that this is just me on a hero's journey.

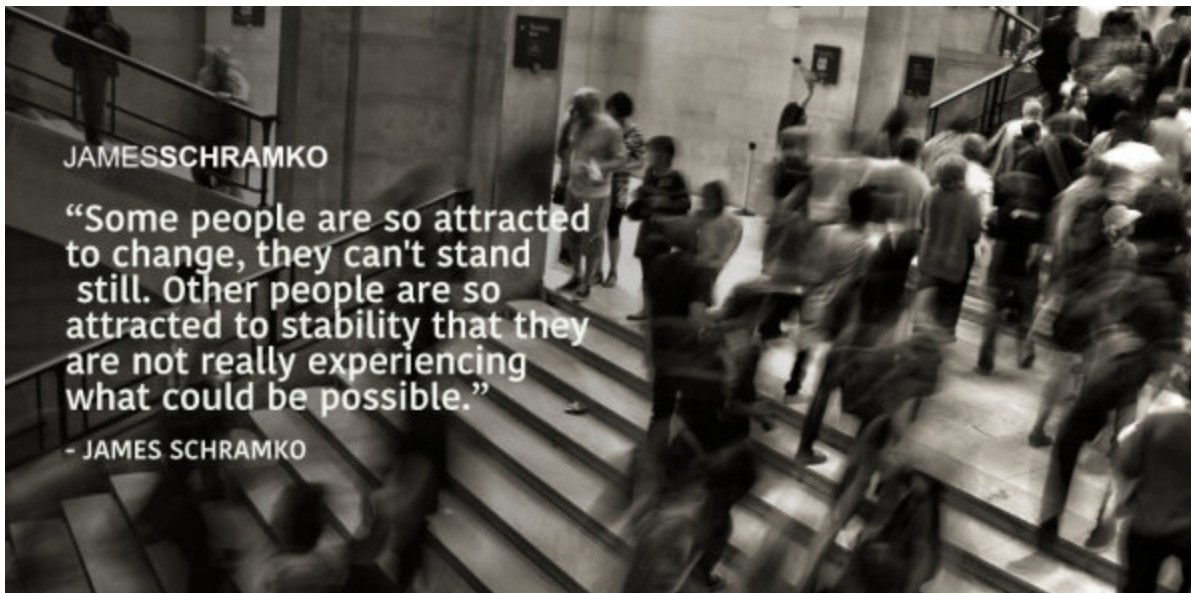


And if I weren't on a hero's journey, I would be quite a bland person, I would be very uninteresting, and there would be no growth in my journey at all. So what would be the worthwhileness of that particular undertaking? So if I can just reframe as well, this sucks, it must be a twist in the hero's journey.

Yeah, then there's many ways I can come at that idea that gives me more freedom. And especially as entrepreneurs, I think this is important for us, because, you know, our businesses are really our form of art. They're our form of self-expression. And as artists, we need freedom.

And so to be so narrowly focused doesn't always serve us, there's this balance, as you were saying, where we are both open and yet applied, visionary and yet directed. So that we're, it's both sides of that equation that really allow us to create something of impact for ourselves and others.

James: Well, the balance is important. I see a lot of visionaries tend to change business models every few months. And they never stick at anything. So their sticktuitiveness is low. Results are low, they try something, don't get a result, and move on, try something, or they just get bored. They don't have the good support infrastructure like an integrator or a team who can actually deliver their vision through, and they're often just automatically attracted to change.



Some people are so attracted to change, they can't stand still. Other people are so attracted to stability that they are not really experiencing what could be possible. I suspect that's probably a huge group that you would be helping, people who need a bit of help to try something. And that's why I love the terminology of experiments. Do you want to share another experiment that you do, if it's possible?

The attributes of luck

Monica: Yeah, the attributes of luck, and we keep a lucky journal for that entire six-week course. So it's curiosity and resilience. It is intuition and positive expectations. And so the kinds of experiments, it'd be like just small tweaks that get you out of your patterns, and I think that so often, our patterns, we don't even see them. They're kind of invisible to us, like, we drive the same way to work, or we have a certain routine and that routine maybe makes us hyper-productive, but we're choosing to be hyper-productive, and yet not to allow for this kind of serendipitous creativity to pop in.

So this idea that when you go to a social event, which so few of us are even going to them anymore at the moment, but like, how do you decide who to talk to? You know, if you're an introvert, maybe you walk in and you feel uncomfortable, and so, you're just looking for someone that you know. And then maybe that's how you choose.

But what if you had a different method of choosing that was completely and totally random? Like, you know, I'm going to talk to everyone today who has freckles, I have no idea why.

James: Or you could do color coding. Or height.

Monica: Yes, anything, anything. And you make it like a game for yourself. My mother was always just, you know, wonderful at these sorts of things. She would always say, Make it fun, make it a game. Like, no one else knows that you're playing a game, but you're playing a game.

James: It reminds me of my old hairdresser. A long, long time ago, when I had hair, he would just go up to whoever's trying to take something, like food or whatever. And he'd cut them off and grab whatever they're going for. And it'll usually be an attractive lady. He goes, Hey, darling, this is mine. And then he'd look at them and then do a cheeky smile. And he goes, I know you, I do your hair.

And they say, No, I don't think I know you. You come in, I'll fix this. And he shocked me just how forward he would be with doing probably the most socially unacceptable thing of just like, cutting someone off, trying to take their thing before they're getting it. And then they were usually just in shock and not able to process it so quickly. But I think that was his business generation/love life generation methodology. And it was fascinating to me to see how people operate so differently.

Monica: Yes, yeah. And that you're observing that and you're saying, Oh, that's producing like, just different results. That's a whole other approach that I've never even considered, and fascinating to watch the outcomes that occur.

James: I do like to observe and learn from everyone around me. I do drive different ways. I drive different cars, I surf different boards, I like to put that variety. I think one thing I don't want is I don't want boredom, and I don't want lack of stimulation in the things where you can, I think you can create your own momentum. Keep that variety and spice.

But I do often think about, what is my routine, and is it serving me well? Or does it require change? And it's hard sometimes to do the change thing. But there's so many examples of it. It's ridiculous. I used to surf at lunchtime, because that's when everyone was at work. And now, often I'll surf at five or six in the morning. I don't even recognize who I am. Like, I wasn't even awake before seven in the old environment.

But a new environment creates a new you. And you can take steps to change and adjust. I think probably one of the key words that comes up for me would be around resilience. And I imagine that might be a product of what's coming out of your cohorts.

Monica: Yeah. And really interpreting resilience is there's the courage, yeah, there's the bravery. There's the silver linings. But there's also that notion of, this is a narrative that requires twists and turns in the story. And so how rapidly can I take on board and appreciate the gift of those particular twists and turns?

And so often in the course, James, what we're also doing is, of course, launching deliberately various experiments, but then keeping a journal so that we notice. And this is the thing, is that we don't often notice. And when you start to plant these seeds, and then you are on a daily basis, noticing, you start to see connections that kind of are striking, right?

Small connections and lack of attachment

So one evening I was having dinner with a friend and we were there in Fiji and there was no access to live music, and we were saying, When COVID's over, you know, really can't wait to be back into live music venues, really, truly, truly miss it and so forth. Okay? Had a great dinner and said good night, went on my way.

And then overnight, I got a message came in from a friend of mine there in Australia with a link to some fantastic live music performance. And I'm like, Huh, you know, these little tiny connections, where you just kind of have this whim. And I would even call it whimsy, that you just would be, wouldn't it be nice to hear live music?

And then you're not even attached to that idea, which is why we don't notice that later on, and sometimes very quickly, some version of that desire, some version of that idea, is flowing in. And so when we keep a journal, and we start to see that this is what's happening, then we start to become more aware, well, what sort of energy was I bringing to the table as these things were unfolding?

And in large part, it is this whole sense of lack of attachment, just like a childlike desire to have that experience, to have a yummy ice cream cone or something. And then suddenly, you're driving by the shop that says, Hey, we have, like, homemade ice cream. So there's the experiments. But there's also the noticing, you know? Because these things are happening for us, we just don't always perceive them because we are so focused on what we believe is so worthy and demanding of our attention.

A lot happens in 10 years

James: You know, one of the serendipitous things that happened for me is 10 years ago, a client of mine said, Hey, thanks for the coaching and everything. But I'm really curious, like, what do you actually do in a day? Like, what are your thoughts? And how are you operating? Is there any chance you could share that with us?

So I said, Sure, I'll just do a journal. So I've been journaling in my [SilverCircle](#) community for 10 years. I just clicked over 10 years last week.

Monica: Wow.

James: At the end of every day, I just write down some thoughts. You know, like what I did, what I'm thinking about. I usually often put pictures as well, because it embeds Instagram. And I just, yeah, that 10 years just crept by, but I was initially doing it from the perspective of helping the people around me to sort of observe, so I was sort of looking outside myself.

But I think that speaks very clearly to your point about noticing. I notice on a daily basis, sort of my little, my daily review, it's just a little summary. And it's really caused a lot of thoughts, a lot of thinking. If I did absolutely nothing for the entire day, I actually think, because yesterday, for example, the only appointment I had yesterday was to swim with my daughter at swim school.

And if I went back 10 years ago, when I was writing that, it might be like I was sort of lazy, or I didn't put in much effort. But today, I would consider that a massive success, that that is a perfect day, it means I'm doing everything right. So reflecting on what that means and my own journeys and where that fits into the narrative has been really interesting. So I'll continue to do that. Obviously, it's become a bit of a habit. This is just a normal thing to do.

Monica: A new track record.

James: Yeah, and I've been podcasting for a long time. I was just thinking about this, everything I've done for 10 years is the foundation, 10 years of running live events, 10 years of podcasting, 10 years of journaling, 10 years of running a membership, plus, and I'm almost up to 10 years of surfing, not quite. But it's amazing what you can achieve if you do something for 10 years, but that's the skeleton of my life. And then all the flesh has completely changed over time, as you would expect.

So it's been interesting chatting to you about these concepts. I imagine we could talk about a lot more. Checking back in on where we're at, I feel like we have talked about self-expression and taking more personal responsibility and enacting change in our life. And you've introduced this concept that there's some science-backed quantum elements and neuroscience to why these things can happen, and you've given us a hint of a few tools in your toolkit, Monica.

So I appreciate that, and thank you for sharing your stories about Fiji and lockdown and how people can actually break out of a sort of a stasis or a routine that's not serving them to their best higher purpose. So I'm grateful for this episode. I learnt a lot from this one.

Monica: I've really enjoyed speaking with you, James, and I appreciate you sharing your stories and how you've actually been living so many of these principles and concepts on a routine basis for yourself. It's just kind of the way you naturally are. So perhaps you're not only a surfer, but a quantum surfer too.

James: Maybe. I'm finding labels for things that I've sort of felt but, you know, you're bringing some science and labels to those things and definitely some extensions of them. So it's been good. I think someone listening to this episode is going to be into deep thought about where they're at in life. And if you're not happy with the way things are, the greatest news, I think, from this episode, is there are ways you can engineer more luck for yourself and to get better outcomes.

We're going to put a link to your website, Monica, monicalaurence.com.

Monica: And quantumsurfing.com.

James: Quantumsurfing.com. This is episode 917. We will transcribe it and put a summary of this episode and yeah, thank you so much for sharing.

Monica: Such a delight to be with you. Thank you so very much James, and best to you and your family, and I hope at some point in time, your travels bring you to Fiji for a little surfing there, too.

James: It's inevitable. Thanks.

A photograph of a desk in a bright, airy office. On the desk, there is a laptop with the text "Driving your business" on the screen, a large Apple iMac monitor, a mouse, and some papers. In the background, there are several potted plants and a window looking out onto a green landscape. The image has a dark blue overlay.

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