

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT: [From The Ashes, S01E01](#)

My name is Becca, and you've found, "From the Ashes"

From the Ashes is a non-chronological, mostly autobiographical podcast series chronicling what it's like to leave friends, family, and a 12-year career behind. There will be tales of travel, tales of common humanity. Tales of joy. Tales of struggle. And I absolutely guarantee that there will be some sex stories along the way.

I can't wait to share all my experiences with you, and I want to thank you for your interest and attention.

Hello everyone! This is From the Ashes, Episode 1: Ayahuasca's Four Stages of Deep Healing

My name is Becca and today I'm coming at you from a rooftop in Valparaiso, Chile.

My name is Becca and today I will be reading the experience I had taking ayahuasca with a group of 10 people at a farm in southern Chile. I wrote this the day after I took ayahuasca, and the story you're about to hear is completely true.

With that being said, I have two really important disclaimers.

Disclaimer #1: Ayahuasca is not a recreational drug, and should not be treated that way.

Ayahuasca is an Ancient plant-based medicine from Peru. I cannot stress enough that Ayahuasca is not a recreational drug. It's something that you do if you're looking for a fun high. I can tell you from experience that this particular medicine should definitely be done with an experienced shaman, and only when you're ready to confront very serious emotions in your life.

Disclaimer #2: My perceptions are not true to life.

I did ayahuasca in a group of 10 people, and the actions of some other people are described in this episode. What you're hearing is not an objective judgment of these

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people, but rather how my brain interpreted the actions of these people while on ayahuasca. My sober judgment and my ayahuasca judgment of these folks are not the same, and yours shouldn't be either.

With those disclaimers out of the way, let's go ahead and get started.

From the Ashes Episode 1: Ayahuasca's 4 stages of deep healing.

"If one hour into this, you aren't experiencing anything, you can come for a second dose. If you are already dizzy or lightheaded, don't take a second dose."

I had been fasting all day in preparation for the experience of going toe to toe with the "death vine." Supposedly, I should've cut out all sugar, salt, sex, alcohol, drugs, meat, caffeine, onions, garlic, spices, and a whole list of other shit out of my diet in preparation for this. They said the vomiting and diarrhea could be pretty intense if you didn't. Despite the warning, my willpower to cut everything but caffeine and alcohol out of my life waned after about 2 days.

In the days leading up the ayahuasca ceremony, I ate delicious apple bread and a sugar-coated apple dessert baked by a charming, intelligent, and always slightly offensive polish boy who discovered the joy of cooking by my side. I watched a lamb slaughtered, peeled back part of it's skin with my own hands, and honored the sacrifice of it's life by enjoying the rotisserie-roasted, crispy, salty meat cooked by friends dearest to my heart. I made a lamb stock soup from the bones with onions and salt and spices that I devoured with delight. I ate a weed brownie. I partied with friends soon to be departing. I danced wildly by a fire. And, I made love to a tender, wonderful, surprising French boy.

I did all this despite the fact that I was told ayahuasca was not drug to take lightly. So, in penance for my inability to abstain for a week, I did all my abstinence in one day (minus 3 blackberries). In engaged in a 24 hour fast to appease the grandmother.

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("The grandmother" by the way, is the colloquial name used by the Shaman to describe ayahuasca).

In the hours leading up to the ceremony, in the field where almost 2 months previously I had begun the journey of letting go of my past, I sang the songs my heart needed to sing at the very top of my lungs. I soaked in the sun, I moved, I tangled with blackberry vines, and I filled an entire coffee can with sweet, ripe fruit. Before moving to the sacred site where I would meet the Grandmother, I knew I had used my last hours wisely. If I were to die tonight, I would've died connected to the earth, singing my final refrains for the universe to hear.

"The medicine will heal you. Some will cry. Some will laugh. Some will join me in song. This is their journey, worry not for them, they are healing."

One hour after taking the first dose of ayahuasca, the dose was still a bitter tang in my mouth, and there was light burning in my esophagus, but there was nothing. No effect. Just physical sleepiness from a day spent moving without eating, and an emotional exhaustion from saying goodbye to all the friends who had become family in my heart.

So I stood up and took the second dose, surrendering to the possibility that the grandmother wasn't meant to visit me this night. That I would swallow the bitter concoction once again, lay back down, and simply drift off to sleep.

Just as I was accepting that this drug would not work, I was staring at a reflection of the fire in the plastic sheeting that covered the quincho under which I was laying, flat on my back. The shaman was singing, and his voice became a dark melody to accompany the dance of flames in the reflection. I had a distinct moment where I was like, "Fuck. I'm about to trip balls with this crazy fire caterpillar right now."

Never take the grandmother lightly. At any point, she will bring you into your deepest self.

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As the fire caterpillar danced and I was rationally contemplating what the fuck this drug was doing to my consciousness and how it worked, I began to think of my plans to become a traveler.

The face of my brother, my flesh and blood brother, flashed on the roof of the quincho, just above the caterpillar of fire. As I saw the face of my brother, I felt his two sons in my heart and saw them in my mind's eye. That is when I covered my head with my sleeping bag, curled up on my side, and began to weep.

These boys. My best friend. My three fiercest loves. In making my choice, I knew I would have to let them all go. Let them live without my light. Let them go on, knowing I won't be there for them, to love them.

In that moment, I felt the depths of heartbreak. Of despair. Of loss. Of sorrow. In choosing me, I cannot choose them. I cannot take them with me. I have to let them go. The pain was unbearable and all I could do in the face of it was sob, uncontrollably.

I cried and cried and cried until I could no longer breathe out of my nose. I wanted to be able to breathe, I needed to be able to breathe. So I sat up. I grabbed some tissue. Blew my nose. Rolled onto my stomach, and then I heard a voice from the woods echoing the song of the Shaman. Thinking of the owner of that voice, wrapped in a sleeping bag that to me made him look like a spaceman, made me laugh and it broke me out of my sorrow. It enabled me to sit up, clear my sinuses, and then roll over on my back.

"Medicina. Medicina. Medicina. Medicina."

Having survived that wave of emotion, I checked in with my body. It was at this point that I told the grandmother that we were equals in strength, she and I. There would be no vomiting, there would be no diarrhea. I had fasted for her, and she would not

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take any more from me in trade. There was a peacefulness for a time. Just watching the lights dance in my vision, listening to the Shaman chant.

That is when the second part of my journey began. The reflection of the fire on the roof of the quincho began to dance wildly, frantically, and with a frenetic energy. My breath began to quicken, and in me a deep, intense, throbbing desire, overtook all my consciousness. I wanted to fuck, but not in a trivial or flippant way. I felt as though this was a desire that was deeper, more primal, more essential - a desire at the depth of my very soul.

I could think of only one person, and as I held this person in my thoughts, there was a golden brilliance, visual tracks, and sparkles that rose and intensified. As the Shaman's song crescendoed, the light grew brighter and filled me completely. I knew that what I felt for this person was true, and pure, and right.

Love.

A love that I've never experienced before, and may never experience again, but it was such joy to know that that love was possible within me.

As the Shaman's voice decrescendoed, so too did the desire. So too did the joy.

"Be yourself. Practice what you preach. Let your inner light shine. Practice what you preach. Be yourself. Gracias! Gracias!"

In what had been pure silence or silence broken only by the refrains of the Shaman, the others began to awake. To expel their demons. To heal. And they were fucking loud and annoying in that moment. Whereas the singing had helped me to move beyond my pain, I couldn't stand to hear these other people.

How selfish of them to be so loud. How self-centered to vocalize so uncontrollably knowing that others are on a journey of healing. I lay for a time, seething. Angry at their lack of self-control. Upset that I couldn't focus on my inner journey.

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Which is when I realized I didn't have to stay where I was. So, wobbily, I stood up, I grabbed my sleeping bag, I grabbed my bag full of fruit, I strapped on my head lamp and I set an intention to go back to my tent to finish this trip. I was not bound to this circle, and I started to march toward the fringes.

"Becca. You must stay near the Shaman."

I didn't want to. I couldn't listen to them anymore. But I sat right where I was stopped. Headlamp illuminating a grandfather tree, and I was pissed. As I sat, the cries of the others quieted for a time. And I was alone.

So deeply alone. The depths of a lifetime of feeling alone. Feeling that because of how I am in this world that I never quite fit. That I am always on the margins. Did I create this for myself? Or is it my destiny to never be fully integrated? Is this the necessary pain to prepare me for who I am to become?

I wept for myself. For the knowledge that I will always be just a little bit separate. The weeping intensified and I asked the grandmother how she bears it. As a grandmother, she knows my loneliness. Cherished, respected, needed for healing, but nearly peerless.

"It is not hubris grandmother because we have established that you and I are equals this night. I need to know how you bear it alone."

There was no answer from the grandmother. I wept for the weight I know I will someday bear on my own. Even though I don't know yet for what I am chosen, I wept knowing that when it comes, there will be cruelty and there will be hardship.

Why have I been chosen for this? How was I supposed to bear this burden alone? I am just a person.

But all of a sudden, I wasn't alone. A hand on my shoulder. The hand of a near stranger, reminding me that I am never alone. His strength allowed me to be

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vulnerable. His hand on my back carrying me for a time so I could let go of my strength. I descended into full body, drooling, snot pouring out of my nose, tears streaming from my eyes, sobbing. Tears for a future of pain. Tears for a lifetime of weight on my shoulders. Tears for the impending end of childhood.

I asked the grandfather tree how he withstood it, and I remembered that he was just a fucking tree. It was easy for him. I asked the grandmother again, "How do you bear it?" And again, she was silent. And in her silence, I realized that I will withstand it in the same way I have withstood hardship my whole life. I stopped crying, opened my eyes, and with force I blew all of the snot that was blocking my breathing. I wiped my face on my hands and wiped everything off on my pants.

It is only pain. You beat pain with strength.

I turned to face my stranger, and it was the friend I knew it would be. I hugged him and thanked him in my heart. I threw off my headlamp, I cried on his shoulder, and he reminded me to breathe simply by breathing. I knew he was sent here for me, a bright light in the darkness. A reminder that there are others who will help. As we breathed together, I was almost ready to return to the circle.

And then...

"Practice what you preach. Don't be afraid to be yourself. Be creative."

The never-ending record of self-affirmations tore me away from the peace of knowing how to withstand a life alone. My annoyance returned. I broke away from the near stranger and turned my back on the circle of people nearby.

How grandmother? How do you withstand this? The selfish children. How?

No answer, so I breathed the breathe given to me by the bright near stranger.

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This time, the grandmother answered simply, "With love. You have to learn to love them as they are."

As the singing rang out, cutting through the woods, I knew the selfish children were here to challenge me. I turned my heart toward love. I knew this ear-splitting refrain came from pain. From hurt. From a deep wound that needed healing. That it was a cry for attention that hadn't been delivered early in life.

I calmed.

"I'm ready to go back."

I returned to the circle, feeling peaceful. I watched the children walk around, sit by the fire, smoke tobacco, and eat apples.

It was then that I remembered the blackberries in my bag. It had been my intention to share them, but as I watched the children, I remembered the words of my lover, "Take care of yourself sometimes."

So as the singer continued to interrupt, and the quiet one silently ate an apple, and the pensive one's fingers danced in the front of the fire, and the poser ... posed, I ate blackberries.

And I listened as the healer sitting next to me wept. I wanted to hold her. To give her the strength that had been gifted to me by the near stranger. I wanted to offer her blackberries to ease her pain. But somehow, I knew that she needed to cry this one out.

For a time, I knelt over her, placing a hand on her leg. Long enough for her to calm for a moment, long enough so that she knew she wasn't alone, but not so long that I would co-opt her healing. I took my hand away and she resumed her crying. I contemplated how even healers need time for deep healing.

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I ate blackberries until I couldn't anymore. Until what was left in the bottom of the coffee can was a squishy mess that was difficult to handle. The singer sang one last refrain of "Practice what you preach," and this time I laughed.

At the absurdity of that being her refrain. At the fact that she was still high. Out of the understanding that she has healing to do, just like we all did.

I lay down in my sleeping bag, closed my eyes and tried to sleep, but couldn't. I rolled up my blankets, took the journey to my tent, ate one perfect apple, and finally it was time to pay the price to the grandmother.

I squatted in the woods, squirt out a tiny watery shit, wiped my ass, told the grandmother we were even, and went to sleep.

Alright you made it! Thanks so much for listening to my very first episode of From the Ashes!!

Before you go, I have two really important things to say.

The first is that I need to give Pat Flynn an enormous Thank You!

Pat, this podcast exists because of your extremely detailed step-by-step guide on how to start a podcast.

For those of you who don't know who Pat Flynn is, I've used his wisdom and advice about everything having to do with online stuff for years, and I highly recommend checking out his work at smartpassiveincome.com. That's s-m-a-r-t-p-a-s-s-i-v-e-i-n-c-o-m-e.com

I'd also like to say that if you are interested in seeing how impactful kindness, caring, and full transparency can be on a business, I highly recommend you check out his income reports. I fucking love you Pat!

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The second thing I'd like to ask is that you [subscribe to this podcast](#)! Next week, I'm going to be taking you through the second part of my ayahuasca experience, and I have to tell you it is a whole different story.

So, you can subscribe how you normally subscribe to podcasts, or you can just check out my blog at smarthotfun.com.

Thanks so much everybody!

I fucking love you all.