



EPISODE 3 | DEATH AND THE REIKI MASTER

Programmanus

Intro music

NARRATOR

This show was recorded when the world was a bit different.

Sound of a plane flying

NARRATOR

You could easily fly to the US, hug strangers and you didn't hesitate to share a can of soda.

Sound of a can of soda being opened

NARRATOR

You're listening to Preach Shorts, with Linda Ulfhielm.

Music

LINDA

Hi!

THALIA

Hi!

LINDA

Hi!

THALIA

Thalia.



LINDA

Hi, nice to meet you.

THALIA

Nice to meet you, too. Welcome!

LINDA

Thank you so much. This is such a cool place.

NARRATOR

Over the course of eight episodes, Linda is in L.A. talking to people from different faith-based backgrounds about the big questions in life. You're listening to Preach Shorts, snackable edits from the podcast Preach.

Music

THALIA

Yeah, I mean, it's a beautiful space. It's a beautiful space to practice in. You kind of come in, and instantly you just feel a little bit calm and centered already.

LINDA

Yeah, I noticed that.

LINDA

In this episode, I'll be facing my fear of death with the help of Thalia, a reiki master and an end-of-life doula. Reiki is a Japanese healing tradition, and a doula is someone who helps you through big life events. Typically mothers who are about to give birth. But Thalia helps people and their families prepare for death.

Music

LINDA

Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

THALIA

Yeah!

LINDA

Yeah? Just start from the very beginning.

THALIA

Yeah...

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Um, so, I'm a reiki master. I'm a sound healer.

LINDA

Yeah.



THALIA

I'm an ordained interfaith minister, end-of-life doula. You're like, "What are these things?"

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Um, an interfaith minister is someone who... It's kind of a newer thing that is emerging, especially in the US now, with so many people not practicing one specific um, religion, but still wanting, you know, meaningful um, ceremonies to take place.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Um, so, that's kind of where an interfaith minister comes into play.

LINDA

Okay.

THALIA

Um, if you're looking at it from the lens of like, someone who uh, is performing marriage ceremonies, and you can marry people of two different faiths.

LINDA

Wow!

THALIA

Yeah, whereas if you want to go to a church or, you know, a synagogue, you know, or whatever type of religious establishment that you're with, that person would have to convert. So, you know, it kind of bridges that gap between just doing it with, you know, with the state and then doing it with like, you know, a priest. It's like I'm that in-between person, between the two.

LINDA

Yeah.

LINDA

Thalia and I are sitting on the floor in the middle of a meditation studio. She has thick, curly ringlets and a peaceful aura of someone that meditates a lot.

LINDA

Yeah, you studied to be an end-of-life doula. Yeah.

THALIA

Yeah.

LINDA

What's that, exactly?



THALIA

Yeah. It's...it's different things depending on the needs of the family and the individual. So, it's to be support of the person that is dying, primarily.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

But then also for the family as well. Because in the medical system, there's also a gap, where you have hospice, and you have hospice nurses that come in. But they're just kind of dealing with the physical, uh, issues of pain, and just helping that person find comfort, but then they often just leave. They have a bunch of questions they ask you, they check some boxes, and then they go.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Um, and if that person is not a part of a religion, then they don't have someone there that can kind of help them and guide them through that process, of all their questions that they start to have towards end of life. And a lot of it is around truth and reconciliation.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

It's around... It's around coming and making amends, you know, with their life, finding forgiveness, because it's hard to pass, people have a hard time moving on if they're holding on to a lot of fear or anger.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

It's not until they find peace deepening over time. Um... The person cannot fully pass and release their body until they find inner peace.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

It has to happen, so that's what I'm helping people to do. Whether they're healthy like you, here, right now, or whether they're at the end of their life, um, helping to facilitate conversations around healing, maybe with certain family members.

LINDA

Have you done it? Like, with a person that has died?

THALIA

Yeah. It's really, really powerful.



LINDA

Wow. Yeah. I can't even imagine because death for me is so scary.

THALIA

From a very young age throughout my whole life, I've experienced a lot of death. A lot of family members, a lot of friends, um, a lot of best friends' parents, you know? So much death. And so I started to have to kind of grapple with these questions really early on. And throughout watching my family, different friends, looking at their process through it, I always found myself to be that person holding space, and to not really be fearful. To be sad, obviously, because you have to mourn, and there is a loss. But I've always felt very connected to this sense of "source" or something greater, a higher power, spirit. You know, something along those realms. Um, everything's impermanent, you know?

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Everything that lives, dies.

LINDA

I asked Thalia what she thinks happens when we die.

THALIA

Um, it's the end of the physical body, it's the end of this experience.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

Um... I have no idea if I'll reincarnate and come back. I like to hold on to that belief, because it's nice to have that belief, but I can't say for sure, "This is what happens, I'm going reincarnate and these are the different levels and stages of reincarnation."

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

But I believe that we go back to, um, this sense of "source." We are... We are energy, you know? We're energy. We connect back to that energy that we came from in the beginning.

LINDA

But do you think it's possible to, like, get over the fear of death?

THALIA

I...I believe so. I've gotten over it. Um, you know, facing it so much I was freaked out by it. You know, I was like, "I have so much I want to do with my life, what if I die tomorrow?" You know, you just never know. I have a friend that died in his sleep. One of my best friends had epilepsy. Just died in his sleep one day, and you just... You know, you never know what's going to happen. Um... So we have to make the most of things, but we also have to take it moment to moment. This present moment right now, that we're sharing with each other here, is the only thing that's real. Connecting with that non-physical part of yourself is what helps you not fear death as much. Because when you're connected to that



non-physical part of you, that's the part that lives on forever. So, if you feel connected to that while you're living, then when it comes time to die, you're not fearful of it, because you realize, "This is just a shell."

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

You know? From the time you're born, you start dying, you know? It's like a ticking... It's a time clock.

LINDA

Yeah, I know. I know. Too bad.

THALIA

Exactly.

LINDA

Too bad.

Music

LINDA

I haven't had that much experience with death. But the one I had was pretty life-changing.

LINDA

I saw my grandmother when she passed. I was there. Uh... And it was weird, because I always felt like this is who she is, her body. But when she died, it was something, like... I...I just couldn't talk to her. When I was going to say goodbye, you know, uh, I couldn't really... It felt weird, because I was like, "She's not here. She's some...somewhere else. This is just a shell."

It got...just got so obvious to me, you know? My heart was pounding, like... Yeah, I thought I was about to die, too, because, you know, it's... It was the worst thing that has ever...that I've ever experienced, I think. But it was also the most beautiful thing, you know? She...she had cancer, so it was like, "Okay, this is the best thing for her."

And she had a lot of anxiety, like, before. And to see that, all that, just...disappear... It was such a beautiful moment, too. Even though it was terrible, but, you know.

THALIA

If you're able to see someone pass and fully die, um... Everyone that I've ever talked to, or been with during that process, um, completely sees that process of a soul leaving the body.

LINDA

Yeah.

THALIA

And then they look at it, and they no longer feel an attachment. Then they have that realization...

LINDA

Exactly.



THALIA

...and it's easier for them to kind of let go after that. You're like, "Oh, they're not... I saw them go somewhere off." You know? "Back into space. But they're not *here*."

LINDA

You've just heard snippets from my conversation with Thalia. I found it really interesting that someone who used to be afraid of death, now helps people at the end of their lives. Thalia likes to believe in reincarnation, and that the soul and the body are separate.

So now I'm asking you: What do you believe happens when we die? And why do you think having an answer feels so important to us?

Music

NARRATOR

You've just finished Preach Shorts, with Linda Ulfhielm. Preach is a production from the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, by Daniel Persson Mora, Nanna Olasdotter Hallberg, Ludvig Widman, Tove Jonstoj, Karin Winther, and Martina Magorin Borg, with host Linda Ulfhielm.

Music

NARRATOR

This was a program from the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company. You'll find more at UR Play.