



EPISODE 7 | DIGITAL DETOX DURING SHABBAT

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

NARRATOR

Over the course of eight episodes, Linda is in LA 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.

LINDA

In this episode, I'll be trying to disconnect from my social media. It feels kind of scary. I'm going to meet with Becky, who's observing Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest.

LINDA

Hi. How are you?



BECKY

So nice to meet you.

LINDA

You, too.

BECKY

Come on into my humble abode.

LINDA

Thank you. Wow. There's not much...

BECKY

I made a little bit of space. Come in.

LINDA

It's really nice and cosy.

BECKY

Thanks.

LINDA

Becky's wearing a flowery dress in warm tones, and she has an equally warm personality. She kind of feels like an old friend from the start. And energy... Well, she has a lot of energy.

LINDA

I want to ask you, who are you?

BECKY

Who am I. Oh, my gosh.

LINDA

Give me the life story.

BECKY

Let's focus on you. I was born in Israel; I was also not born in this country. I had to really figure out where I came from to figure out where I wanted to go. So I did a lot of those questions – that was in the head. I was like, "Okay, Judaism means this, and Judaism says this," and I was like, "Oh, that resonates, that's cool." That makes sense as to why we have to take off on Saturday and just disconnect for a day...

LINDA

Yeah.

BECKY

...to not lose our minds, because we're constantly on our devices. Like, okay, there's an intelligence to that, that makes sense. That was here. But then, like, the other part of me of just disconnecting and going to Israel and trying to feel if I really like it... Like, do I like this?



LINDA

Yeah. What was your relationship to your faith before? Did you, like, practice?

BECKY

No. I didn't practice at all, growing up. In fact, like, Friday nights lighting candles, I couldn't wait to finish so I could go and hang out with my friends.

LINDA

You didn't know what it meant, really?

BECKY

I didn't know the deeper "why." And my parents knew it, but they didn't really want to bother us with that. So they didn't go deeper into, like, "This is why we light candles, this is why we sit together, this is why you don't go out with your friends, but we spend time together learning and talking and singing and drinking and eating." You know, there's a reason to that, but, again, being in the modern world and in America, and wanting to do what everyone else is doing, I wasn't ready for that. And that's okay. I just became ready for it later. The decision came over time, of, like, my head, my heart, and the all of me.

LINDA

Yeah.

BECKY

Yeah. And it wasn't overnight.

LINDA

Shabbat is the Jewish day of rest. In Sweden we take Sundays off. This is because of our Christian history. But Shabbat is observed between Friday and Saturday evening.

BECKY

It's this 25-hour window in time that we, like, step into every single week, which is this carved-out, sort of connection time with yourself, with your loved ones, and with the Creator, with God, with whatever you want to call it, Source. You just don't do anything. You're like a king and a queen. You just read, you meditate, you pray, you walk, you enjoy outdoors, you go to friends' houses.

LINDA

Oh, wow. You don't anything.

BECKY

But you don't actually exert effort. Like, for a person like you who's, like, "I need to be doing," Shabbat is probably the best gift, and the biggest challenge.

LINDA

Yeah, I almost get stressed, like, to spend a whole day without doing, like, something. How do you...?

BECKY

At first, it made zero sense. I was like, "This is weird." And I'm a busy person, so I was, like, "I'm going need to do stuff."



LINDA

Exactly.

BECKY

Slowly. I remember, when I started to keep Shabbat... ish, it was about six years ago, and I told my boss, "I'm going take Shabbat off, just don't call me." I wasn't... I didn't turn my phone off, I was still online, and I was still on social media, but I wasn't working. Then I started to go to Synagogue. Then I started to go to meals. And then slowly I started to really keep it more and more. Where now I turn my phone off.

LINDA

Completely?

BECKY

Completely. Email's off. I don't write, I don't drive.

LINDA

You don't drive?

BECKY

Mm-mm.

LINDA

Oh, wow!

BECKY

So, if I need to go somewhere, I either walk or I plan to be in that area.

LINDA

Oh, wow.

BECKY

And I just keep it mellow. And, the craziest part, I swear this is crazy even for me: I miss nothing.

LINDA

Really?

BECKY

No one misses me. Yeah. Because boundaries. Like, when you create boundaries, your world adapts to those boundaries. Shabbat is our taste of what is, like, the world to come. Like, what could be a reality where we aren't so consumed with doing, and we just get to be connected. So you get this taste and it, like, resets you. I think of it like plugging myself into the wall, like you're charging your phone. You charge yourself. And you turn off the thinking side, and you get to just be. And, for my anxiety, it's been better than any pill I think could be prescribed.

LINDA

Really?



BECKY

I think it was just really nice to know that I had a space where I could be, and no one needed anything from me, and still... And my success has only gotten better, as opposed to me, like, missing out on money, or missing out on opportunity. I've gained more than I've missed out on.

LINDA

The first thing that comes to mind is, of course, all of my social media. Maybe it would be nice to get a break from my phone for the next 24 hours. But I'm worried the world might forget that I exist if I'm gone for that long. Or even worse: that no one will care.

LINDA

I have, like, this weird relationship with Instagram. It's very... I just feel a lot of pressure when I'm going to post something.

BECKY

What's interesting with anxiety is that, like, we never complete the story. So what you're actually doing, you're like, "What happens if I post something and it's stupid?" So, what happens? Let's complete that story. Okay, so you post something, it's terrible. One person likes it. It's your mom.

LINDA

Exactly.

BECKY

And it's the only person. Everyone is like, "Oh, my God." What happens? Do you die?

LINDA

No, but I...

BECKY

Do you, like... What happens?

LINDA

I know, I know. I've tried to think about that, but I never... That's very interesting, what you're saying, because I'm never really... It's happened too many times that I delete the post before. If it's been, like, ten minutes, and, like, I don't get the response that I'm used to, I feel like, maybe it's, like, a bad time for posting or something. But the way I think about it is, like, "Okay, they think I'm boring, they think I'm ugly, they don't like me, I'm going to delete this."

BECKY

Do you think that's true?

LINDA

No. Or... Yeah... I get very, like, vulnerable. Sometimes it feels ridiculous to just...yeah, to just say it out loud. I sound like, "Oh, my God! Am I this shallow that I even think about this stuff, you know? That I even care this much about what people think about me." But I really do. It's just... I can't help it. I don't want to be in that place, because I hate it, you know. I get anxious if I don't post on social media. But I also get anxious if I do.



BECKY

But, like, what an amazing opportunity now to take the Shabbat to, like, taste-test what it might be like if you don't look out.

LINDA

Shut everything off.

BECKY

Except for yourself. And really being with yourself and learning and being in connection to people. But, like, just kind of relaxing and not feeling like... As soon as Shabbat is in, we light the candles, we say a blessing. And the blessing... I guess there's words and technicalities, but the blessing is really just to say, like, "I am now choosing to be in Shabbat mode." And it's like airplane mode. You know, it's like, Shabbat mode, (boop), and then you're just chilling.

LINDA

I really like that.

LINDA

You've just heard snippets from my conversation with Becky. I feel really different after not having a phone all day. I can't help to feel like even though technology is supposed to connect us, it just makes me more distracted and anxious. So now I'm turning the question to you. Do you think our phones make us more connected or drive us further apart? Or would you be happier or less stressed if you unplugged for a few hours each week?

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 & Martina Magorin Borg. With host Linda Ulfhielm

Music