

Matt Bowles: Hey everybody, it's Matt Bowles! Welcome to *The Maverick Show*. My guest today is Monique Lindner. She is a high-performance and human optimization specialist, a TEDx speaker, and a location-independent entrepreneur. Her clients range from startups to Fortune 500 companies like Apple. She works with individual CEOs and business leaders as well as teams of up to 160 people in helping them to optimize systems, processes, mindset, and productivity to achieve massive impact.

Monique has helped her clients cut up to 50 percent of working hours, double and triple their revenue, and significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and overwhelm while building unbreakable confidence and resilience. With her unique TIME method and her motto "Slow down to speed up," she is on a mission to help high-achieving business owners take back control of their time and energy.

Monique has built her business with a completely location-independent infrastructure, has been traveling the world full-time, and has been to over 44 countries. Monique is also a survivor of four chronic diseases, sexual violence, mental abuse, and bullying. Monique spent years transforming trauma, adversity, and hardship into personal growth and transforming pain into power. Today, Monique is committed to helping other survivors of trauma, sexual violence, and chronic disease to become the strongest, most confident, and most empowered versions of themselves by building resiliency, self-love, and an invincible will to live. Monique, welcome to the show.

Monique Lindner: Thank you so much.

Matt: Well, thank you for being here. I am so excited to have you here. We should just set the context of where we are right now. Do you want to share exactly where we're doing this interview?

Monique: We are at the conference in Bangkok, and we're in the middle of the empty ballroom of a five-star hotel, but there are probably 500 seats – empty, still – but we are right next to the stage. We could have sat on it, but there is a sofa right next to it. We are just slaying it right here.

Matt: We are. We are crushing it for this imaginary 500-person audience that is not here, but they are listening to us on the podcast, so it's

kind of a nice dynamic. We are at the Dynamite Circle Conference, which is a gathering of about 300 location-independent entrepreneurs from around the world. We actually met at the talk that you gave, which was super awesome and inspiring. I looked more into you, your brand, and everything that you're doing. It's totally amazing and inspiring, and I wanted to get you on the show for sure.

Monique: And, here we are.

Matt: Here we are, and we're super excited.

Monique: Super efficient.

Matt: Exactly, right. So, I'm super excited for this conversation. Would you like to start by talking a little bit about your background, where you grew up, and your journey to entrepreneurship?

Monique: Well, I'm from East Germany, so my parents grew up what we call "behind the wall." For anyone who never heard of that, in the '60s, Germany got split into two different parts. One was the GDR, the German Democratic Republic, which was basically ruled by the Soviet Union after the war, and the other part was ruled by the Americans and the Britons, and that was the Republic of Germany.

It was basically after the Second World War, when Winston Churchill decided to bomb the shit out of Germany, especially out of my hometown of Dresden. In Dresden, we got bombed – I don't want to say the wrong number, but I believe it was 15 times in two days. In February, we have a day where we remember this time. It's called Crystal Night, and the reason why is because Americans and Britons bombed the heck out of us, and everything went to trash, especially the glass, and you could hear the glass breaking from the bombs, and that's why it's called Crystal Night.

Why do I tell that? First of all, it had a lot of influence and impact on my life without my being there, without knowing anything about it, but if someone knows about epigenetics, which is the intergenerational trauma that's been going through generations, it definitely impacted me in how I build relationships because I kind of didn't because there was always this really deep fear of losing people who were close to me that came from my grandparents because they were 13, 14, 12, and 15 when they were in the war, so

they saw it and lived through it. Hearing these stories and having someone who was so close to these events was a very different experience.

My parents were born in 1960 and 1961, and that's the exact year that the wall was built. You have to imagine there was a whole fucking wall through Germany, and if you came within a kilometer, they would shoot you in the face – only if you came from the east side, though. If you came from the west side, they would ask you, "Why the heck are you trying to get to the other side? Don't."

In the beginning, in the first five to 10 years, people tried to flee East Germany in different ways, and they kind of shut the border down completely and literally shot people. It was pretty excruciating, and it basically turned into a prison. My parents never knew anything else, but growing up in this – there's a name for my city, the place where I grew up.

They call it the Valley of the Unknown because basically, no other outside influenced reached it. We were the only town in all East Germany that didn't have any West German newspapers, West German TV, or West German radio stations, and it was because we were in the valley and there was no access to any outside news. We were the only place in the whole country that only had access to East German news, so we were totally shut off.

So, you can imagine when the wall came down in 1989, my parents were like, "Wait, there's another world? Huh. No, it's okay. It's all right. We'll stick to ours for a bit." So, it took a while. That's where I grew up. Our mindset was pretty old-school. Relationship-building was pretty strong. You don't just build a friendship with an East German; you have to work really hard. As with everything, money doesn't grow on trees. If you don't work hard, you don't get anything back for it – all those kinds of things. I literally had to smash through it. It's all bullshit. Let me tell you that from the beginning.

The last time my parents told me money doesn't grow on trees, I got a bunch of trendy euro notes out of my pocket, literally clipped them onto a tree, and was sitting there looking at them seriously, and I said, "Really, who told you?" They were looking at me like, "Man, you are fucking annoying." It's like, "Who told you? I have

a money tree. It's right there." I was serious because I wanted them to shut the fuck up with all these limiting beliefs. If I tried to do one thing, there were 10 limiting beliefs, 10 things that would happen to me. In their minds, I would have been killed 500 times already.

Matt: Can you talk a little bit, though, about growing up in that culture and what that translated to when you were young in terms of your work ethic on the one hand, but work reality on the other hand, and how you grew up, and how those realizations came to fruition about transcending those limiting beliefs and ultimately leading you toward entrepreneurship?

Monique: I have seen everyone in my family – every single one of them – work their asses off. This is something that I must say I'm very proud of to report back because there's not one person that I would look at even now – even my cousins – my sister is a fricking machine, even today. Sometimes, we don't talk for two weeks, and she's suddenly been promoted to the CEO of a company, and I'm not even surprised because this is who we are.

So, this work ethic literally comes from actually being in East Germany. If you look back in the history, we got cut off from any import into the country, and because they didn't have all these products, we didn't have Lindt chocolate from next door or all those fancy products. They would just start their own. "Oh, we certainly don't have teabags. Let's invent our own. We don't have all these fancy machines and telephones. Let's create our own." There was no crying, whining, or complaining. There was just, "Well, that's a shame. Whatever, let's do it ourselves." So, I really saw everyone working hard.

But, the reunion of East and West Germany also meant that West Germany took over most of the industries. We were built on many different small shops, how you still see it here in Asia. Everyone's an entrepreneur, right? This is what happened in Germany. It was all community-based. So, suddenly, these huge, industry-based corporations came in and said, "So, we'll buy all the small shops. Those people seem really old." I believe my dad was 37. "They're really old, so let's kick them all out and hire young people we don't pay much, and we'll just train them to average skills."

So, my dad was an auto mechanic, and he lost his job. Because the

industry changed so much – not just the industry, but the whole society changed who you had to be to get work and find a job. I remember I had just turned 13 when my dad lost his job, and I was sitting down to help him write his résumé. He literally walked into hundreds of companies a year with his résumé, and he literally heard on the spot, “You’re too old.” He would be so depressed because he was 37.

Anyway, I started working when I was 13 because my mom has a spine injury and she could only work 60 percent, and 60 percent of a salary doesn’t work for four people in a house. My sister already had a little job on the weekends, so I was the one left, and there was no question. My parents never asked me to do it, but there was no question about it for me. I was like, “I’m 13. I can go and fucking work.” They were like, “No, no, you have school” or whatever. I was like, “I have eight hours of school, and there’s plenty of time left for me.” I just went head-on, but I took the work a little bit too seriously.

Matt: What impact did that have on you starting to work that hard at that early of an age? How did that go?

Monique: I believe it made me really resilient and perseverant in a lot of fields. You can hear it, you can see it – I’m a woman. Working as a woman in any industry, you do have to prove yourself many more times than if you’re a man. Whether you want to hear that or not, I don’t really care, but it’s just a fact. There are other different levels. If you’re a black woman, you have to prove yourself 15 times more than even I do. This is the sad truth of our society, but it is the truth.

So, when I would walk into a place like, “Hi, I want to work,” they would look at me like, “Well, what can you do?” And then, a friend of mine would walk in like, “Hey I want to work,” and they would be like, “Okay, here you go.” They would associate that he could do some labor kind of work. I can do fucking labor, probably better and faster than him, and they would never believe me. Anyway, that’s a whole different story.

First of all, I was really great at work because I had seen how it worked all my life, so there was no question of why I should do something, it was just how I could get it done in the fastest and most efficient way. So, I worked in very different places. I started

in a pizzeria, cleaning it, and I was promoted to making sauces. It was a really fast career improvement. And then, I cleaned pharmacies, and the next job was in a petrol station.

So, while all my friends were partying and doing whatever, I was 15 and I would wake up every weekend at 4:00 and start work at the petrol station at 4:30 a.m., finish at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m., and go to the next job half an hour later. Literally, I would eat on the way and go to the next job, finish that at 10:00 p.m., and work through the night at events and stuff like that – entertainment. I would do that, and when I started at 13, I didn't have a single day off nor an afternoon free for six full years.

I did that in the beginning because I wanted to support my parents, so I put all my vacation time back into wherever they had the money that they saved up for rainy days, and once they realized that, they were really angry at me, and we all pretended it never happened. They gave me some money back, and I put it back in – all that kind of thing. We never talk about it now. I just pretend it never happened. I think it was a great thing that I was able to give. It wasn't a lot, but it was just 100-150 euros here or there, and it would help, so that's the point.

It taught me to be independent and to stand up for myself in a world where I was told I was not worth anything. I was treated like I wasn't worth anything, like I was a toy for others to be pushed around, not valuable enough to do the better jobs or higher jobs. I would just say, "No, I am, and I will do it." And so, I think because I had a little bit of naivete about being able to do things – "I'm really great at whatever I do" – I had jobs that would take other people half a lifetime to get, and I had them by the age of 22, which was quite a thing.

Matt: So, you were working that hard consistently for six years. What happened after those six years? What was the –?

Monique: The breaking point? One day while I was 19 years old, I came home, I recognized how my migraines – so, I had multiple versions of migraines, including epileptic seizures, and I realized they were coming really fast. Usually, I would get an aura before and I would not be able to see or speak anymore, but on this day, it was literally like a sledgehammer knocking me over. I literally broke down in the bathroom, hitting the back of my head on the bathtub and

breaking down. By breaking down, because I was knocked out from that, I hit my forehead on the tiles of the floor, and that woke me up, so I guess it was lucky.

I was like, “Oh fuck, this really hurts.” I got the seizures, and they really knocked the heck out of me. My seizures would basically start to shut down parts of my brain and get me to cramp up my hands and feet. Literally, you would see even my toes go over each other and shake so much. My mobile phone was in the living room – it wasn’t far; I just had to crawl around the corner. I dragged myself to the living room by crawling with my arms and called my parents.

I was like, “This is literally a red flag, an alarm, whatever. I feel like I have 10 more minutes to live. You’ve got to fucking run. If you’re not here in five minutes, I don’t know if I’ll make it. Bring a fucking ambulance.” And, I hate the ambulance. They did a lot of things wrong. But, when I told my parents I wanted an ambulance, they ran. They were there within five minutes, and the moment my mom opened the door and put the light on, which is the worst thing you can do with migraines, she was like, “Monique, are you okay?” I was like, “Don’t scream at me,” and then passed out.

She said, “The ambulance is here. They’re going to help you.” Those were the last words I heard, and I just blacked out. Suddenly, it was white, and I was like, “Wait, I know the black. I don’t know the white. What’s happening?” Suddenly, I just felt like I was detaching myself from my body. I floated out of my body, and I was in a kind of Buddha lotus position, hanging over my body, and I saw myself lying there with my parents next to me, and I saw the ambulance rushing in and getting the IV into my arm.

I floated up and was like, “Okay, you’ll be fine down there.” I floated into this white space. Oh my God, that was really weird. It was as if a hospital turned up all of their lights and you wouldn’t see anything else but the light. So, I drifted toward it, and suddenly, all these moments popped up. “Oh, wait. Oh, shit. Is this what it is? Out-of-body? Wait.” I looked back, and I couldn’t see myself anymore. “Oh. I think I know what I’m here for.”

I realized that I was drifting away and about to die. The light got brighter and brighter, and when these moments popped up, you

would think they would be the most important things, like great moments with your family. No. They were random shitty moments in my life, like my ex-boyfriend smashing a rose over my head. I was like, “Wow, my life is a shitshow. This is horrendous. I don’t want this life. I could actually just leave.” But, I didn’t have anything that would have been a thing if I died. I had this, “Wait, no, I can’t die. I have to go back. I need to make things happen.”

I was clinically dead for 25 seconds while I had my out-of-body, and I know this because I had tests. It felt like fricking decades out there. Suddenly, it felt like someone dropped a brick on my chest from a 50-meter skyscraper. It was the worst pain in my heart or chest area I’d ever had. It was the first heartbeat. I remember this pain because sometimes, I still have it. Sometimes, when I make a wrong decision or when I feel like something’s going really wrong, that’s when it comes back. The first heartbeat was fucking painful. I can’t even explain it. I woke up like, “Oh, I made it.”

Matt: Wow. And then, once you were on the other side of that experience, you were resuscitated, and you had had those reflections on the experiences of your life up to that point, what was it like coming out of the other side of that experience and what was your vision toward how you wanted to chart the course of the rest of your life?

Monique: I did change quite a few things. I was like, “Okay, I should change my life and go travel.” That’s when I started traveling. I was 19, and I started traveling solo. I’ve obviously kept this as a huge part of my life, but what happened was I didn’t make the connection between me overworking myself and dying because everyone kept telling me it was my chronic diseases. I was like, “Okay, it has nothing to do with the work. It has nothing to do with the way I live. It’s the chronic disease. I can’t do anything about that.”

So, basically, what happened was I pushed even harder for five years until I got a spinal injury, which literally kicked my ass, and I couldn’t walk anymore, and I got kicked out of my job illegally, and the therapist who was about to help me raped me. And then, I thought, “I’m 24. I seem to have a recurring pattern of shitshows that come back into my life. What’s going on here? What’s the common denominator?”

The common denominator was me. I looked in the mirror like,

“Wow, that is really harsh, but it’s the truth.” The truth is the common denominator of all these events was me, and I was sitting down at age 24 like, “Yeah, I really do not like that. So, what do I have to do change it? What do I have to do to get off this roller coaster of super high highs and super low lows? I keep crashing lower, lower, and lower the next time.”

I didn’t want to fall lower. Being raped by a therapist when you can’t walk anymore is as low as I wanted to go. I lost all my friends. When I walked up to my friend and told her the story, she said, “Well, now that the police said they can’t do anything, you can get over it.” This is how much mental support I had through all of my life until a year or two ago, basically, when I cut out all of these toxic connections.

Matt: So, how did you handle that moment in your life, when you experienced that level of trauma and you had that little support? How did you grapple with that moment, and what was your path to processing and ultimately transforming that trauma?

Monique: I think what really made it the worst for me was that my doctors put me on the highest dose of morphine that you can take for seven months, and it didn’t work. So, I was fucking spaced out and full of pain. I still couldn’t walk, and I lost my job. Basically, I sat down – however you want to call it – I was crumpled up in my bed. Usually, I would be really overwhelmed, thinking, “How should I feel about this? What am I going to do in the process? The police can’t do anything about it.” I went to report it, and all they did was walk up to him and say, “Hey, did you do that?” They were like, “Well, he said no, so we can’t do anything.”

I think the combination of not having any support, not knowing what to do, not having this job anymore, having to ask my parents for rent, and the medication that just fucked my brain and pushed me out of space was really exhausting, but I just applied my own strategies. I thought of it as my own project. It was the only way for me to know it.

At this time, I didn’t know anything about emotions. I knew “angry” and “happy.” Those were the only two emotions I’d ever had in my life. Whenever I was sick, I had to make sure that everyone else around me felt good and happy and wouldn’t worry about me. So, I was in agony and excruciating pain, but I would

make sure that I was happy and make everyone else happy around me so that they wouldn't worry. That's basically for background – unless I was blacked out, in which case they could go do it themselves.

So, how did I get through it? Honestly, I just saw it as a project. I have always been really organized and analytical about these kinds of things, and really radical. I was like, “Okay, what do I have to do? I have to find a job.” It was the first thing I thought of because I couldn't put this guy in jail and there was nothing I could do about it.

There was no way I was going to therapy because talking through it didn't help me. Having someone sitting opposite me saying, “Monique, how do you feel about being raped?” I would just punch this fucking person in the face if they asked me shit like that. I would make them watch a rape and ask them how they felt about it. I'm not a person for therapy. I talk a lot, as you can hear, but –

So, I had to find something different. I don't know why, but it wasn't a priority for me. In this moment, denial was – I denied it as much as possible. I took down all the mirrors because if I saw myself in a mirror, I would throw up. I hated myself a lot at this time. My general doctor who helped me with my spine – so, every second day, I had injections in my skull and the nerves – in the surface of the brain, basically – with lidocaine, which is to numb the nerves so I could at least function.

He injected this every second day, and he helped me with some kind of holistic therapy – kinesiotherapy, kinesiology – and this helped me to at least release a lot of these stuck emotions that I didn't know how to identify, and helped me to go through the emotional process of letting go of this event. I'm really grateful to him. He was a major person who helped me to survive in this time and make sense of what happened there, and to believe – I literally walked up to another person in the medical space, and they were like, “No, he wouldn't do that.” You know how it is.

Anyway, I saw it as a project, and I would take the job first. How do I get a job without being able to walk? If they saw I couldn't walk, they wouldn't take me as an employee because they would have had to pay more for the insurance and stuff like that. I would have to fake myself into it. I basically trained myself to overcome

the pain of not being able to walk and drag my leg with me so it looked like I could walk, but I couldn't.

This was painful, and luckily, I chose the right places to look for work, and I only had to go to three interviews. At the one where I was accepted, I was following up with them. I wasn't going to survive going to 20 interviews, so I chose places where I really wanted to work. I got a job offer from two of them, and I chose one and ran with it, basically.

I worked myself forward, and in my head, I would make these project plans, like what I do with my clients now. I would break it down into many action steps and do one fricking step at a time, and then do the next thing and do the next thing, and win. Every day, I would have a mini win. If my mini win was that I could get myself into the fucking bathtub to have a shower – because it was agony to get in and out of there alone – then I had won already.

Matt: For sure. So, how did that job go? When you landed that job, what was your career trajectory from that point?

Monique: By this time, for my age – I was 24, but I had already worked for two big corporations, Siemens and Apple, as a team manager and operations manager, and I built big teams up. I changed processes that impacted 25,000 of their employees and those kinds of things. And so, I was a project manager in a digital marketing agency, and I think they didn't think I would be able to get into that topic so fast because I'd never done digital marketing before, but it was pretty new – 2011 – so for Germany, it was a pretty early startup.

So, we were the first agency that did social media and what we called “digital transformation.” We would take their offline marketing and turn it into online marketing. We had huge companies that we worked for, first in Germany and then worldwide, because one of our company founders was a fricking badass with getting deals. He's literally a sales magnet. He goes out and talks just as much as I do, or even more. That's how he sold all the relations.

Then, he would come back and put them on the project managers' tables and say, “You've got three months.” We would say, “That's a project for a whole year.” He would be like, “Well, I got you three months.” We would be like. “Fantastic – Thanks?” That's

how we had to run. I did that for three years, and then I thought I'd had enough of this pushy, German, efficient, corporate, women-are-not-good-enough environment, and I said, "Okay, cool. Thanks. I'm going to be a scuba diving instructor now. See you later." And, I left.

Matt: What was that transition like for you in terms of how you were thinking about that? That's a major break from all the things that you described in terms of how you were socialized, how you were raised, how you worked as you were growing up, and all those types of things. When you got to that particular moment in your life, when you were willing to say, "I'm going to go figure out how to be a scuba diving instructor," can you just talk about your mindset in that transitional moment? What fundamentally changed?

Monique: I think what has always been the case is that I've never really felt that I belong. Growing up with these chronic diseases was really a great gift for me because I was always different, I was always the outsider, and I was always bullied, but it made me have to find different solutions. First, I died, and then, five years later, I had this spinal cord injury, and I got bullied more and more, and I was like, "Why do I get bullied so much? What the heck is it that they don't like about me? Why do they hate me so much?"

It was usually women that bullied me. I just came to understand that I didn't belong. I thought different. I worked different. I didn't belong there. I had to go out, and when I started with that company, I would already travel twice a year, and this was one of the times I said, "Twice a year, I'm going to go on holiday," and they were like, "Yeah, we're fine with that," and it worked out.

But, this one time, I went on a trip to Vietnam and Cambodia – in the beginning of 2013, I believe – so I went through Vietnam and did all the things, and I went through Cambodia. The plane ride home was a three-leg trip, and I was so dumb, I got out of the plane, and they said, "Hey, you have an hour until your last leg to Berlin." When they said, "You need to go to your plane right now to get the plane to Berlin," I was standing there shaking, like, "I can't go on this plane." They were like, "What?" I'm like, "No. The life that is waiting there for me is the most horrendous thing. I can't go back. Do you have a plane going back to Asia?"

They were looking at me like, “No.” I was like, “But, you do have flights here.” I’m so dumb. It was one of the biggest airports in Europe. They’re like, “No, you need to go to your plane.” “No, no, no, I can just” – “But, we have your luggage on the plane.” “Yeah, you can put my luggage somewhere. I don’t give a fuck. But, can I go on the plane back to Asia?” They were like, “No.”

I started crying and shaking, and I didn’t know why, but being in Amsterdam, where they told me I had to go to Berlin, my thoughts reconnected. It was the most horrendous life that I had started building up for myself again. That was the point where I thought, “Wait. You already died of that shit. You already thought you wanted to change your life. Here you go again. You’re in a shitty place, you’re miserable, your friends are meh, and now, what are you going back to? Being bullied every fucking single day for how much money? Nothing?”

I’m like, “This is fucked up. I have to quit. I’m going back to Asia, I’ll become a scuba diving instructor, and I’ll change my life. Fuck all this corporate shit.” I went home and sat down for five hours, and I made a whole plan of how I could leave society, leave this matrix, leave the fucking system, and here I am, five and a half years later.

Matt: That’s so amazing. You are amazing. Can you talk about how that journey went for you? Once you did that, you’d made the decision, you’d announced the decision, and you’d made the plan, can you talk about how that journey went for you, what your life was like, and how that mental and emotional transition was as well once you’d put that plan into action and started that completely new life path?

Monique: I just did the thing that I’d always done. I was naïve. I actually contacted a few scuba schools. One in Phuket that I contacted had a German boss, so I wrote him and said, “I see that your website and social media is quite shit. Do you need help with it? By the way, I want to become a scuba diving instructor, so why don’t we see what we can do for each other?”

Matt: That’s amazing.

Monique: So, I just went along with being like, “Oh, by the way, I have these skills that you could really use, but I don’t want to use them all the

time, so can we make a deal?” We made a deal that I would get the complete education from zero to scuba hero, which would normally cost around \$8,000.00-10,000.00 in the amount of time I did it, which was around eight months. I got it more or less for free. I did the first year as a scuba diving instructor in Thailand.

Then, I moved to Australia, and I worked in a few agencies and jobs, and I had a really abusive relationship there – not good – and then I saved up \$10,000.00 and was like, “Okay, fuck that. I’m done with jobs and I’m done with working. I think I’ve done enough.” So, I went traveling for seven months in Latin America – 10 countries, 26,500 kilometers over land. I think I must have walked around 3,500 kilometers just trekking, hiking, and walking.

Matt: What were some of the highlights of your South American trip?

Monique: One of them certainly was the Inca trek to Machu Picchu. The reason why is because I chose one of the best companies I could have ever found. They are also a social business, so they are supporting the community of indigenous people there, which is one of the most important things to me to do as well – to help communities who don’t have as many opportunities or as much privilege as I have. I use my privilege to support them, to get on the same starting line. Basically, I just helped them get there, and then presented opportunities so they could grab them and run with them.

So, I loved what they were doing, and literally, if it wasn’t for them, the experience would have been a fifth as good. It was crazy. And then, I went to the Caño Cristales, which is the colorful river in Colombia, the only river in the world with underwater plants. They are not algae, they are not sea grass, they are underwater plants – underwater flowers. The reason why they are flowering is because there is a certain alkalinity in the water, but they only bloom in a certain water level and a certain alkalinity in the water. I was lucky enough to be in Colombia at the time. Another one of my favorites was going into the Amazon jungle in Bolivia. Have you ever heard about the Death Road in La Paz?

Matt: I have mountain-biked down the Death Road –

Monique: Yeah, me too.

Matt: – in La Paz, which is – now, I think you have spent more time in Bolivia than I have. I did about an eight-day trip. We mountain-biked down the Death Road, and then we did La Paz, I went to Cochabamba for about a day, and then I went down to the salt flats in Uyuni, and I did those for three days, which was just magical. But, I did not go into the Amazon and do some of the other stuff that you did, so I would love to hear about your – and, by the way, when I recommend things to people to do in South America, I think Bolivia is the best for Americans – internationally as well, but especially for Americans.

Bolivia is not on people's radar, and I think it is one of the most stunningly naturally gorgeous landscapes I've seen on the planet. It was so crazy to me because in those eight days, the diversity of the landscape that we saw – we just felt like we were on a different planet every day. You're in the salt flats, and you see rainbow-colored mountains, red lagoons, and flamingos, and there's the Moon Valley outside of La Paz – you literally saw different planets each day in Bolivia. It was just insane.

Monique: Tell me what you thought about the Death Road. Can you explain what it feels like?

Matt: The world's most dangerous road – called the Death Road for short – is a 63-kilometer downhill road that descends about 10,000 feet from top to bottom. The reason it's called the world's most dangerous road is because it used to be the primary transportation route where cars and trucks carrying produce needed to drive to get from one place to another in Bolivia. It's about wide enough for one car, it has no guardrail, and a thousand-foot drop-off.

So, what used to happen, especially during the rainy season, was that cars would try to pass each other on the road, and one car would just go right over the edge. If you go over the edge of that cliff, that's it. Three hundred people or more would die every year on the road because it was so dangerous for cars to try to pass each other on a one-lane road with no guardrail and a thousand-foot drop-off, so all those cars would fall off the road.

About 12 years ago, they created a bypass road, like a highway for trucks and commerce to transport through Bolivia, so now, the Death Road is basically just a road where you can do guided mountain bike trips and things like that. We went with a super

professional company that takes groups down seven days a week, and they've been doing it for 10 years, so you can absolutely do it in total safety if you follow the safety precautions.

For me, it was a completely extraordinary, amazing experience, and one of the highlights of my year. What happens is they drive you up to the top in trucks. By the way, the company I used let us ride on these \$5,000.00 Kona suspension mountain bikes. I'd never even seen a bike like that, let alone ridden one. It was crazy. They take you all the way up to the top, you get on the bikes, and then go with your guide.

The top is super cold, so you're wearing your jackets, hats, and gloves, and you're in your winter gear in these snow-capped mountains. As you descend, it gets warmer and warmer, so you're shedding layers as you go down, and by the time you get to the bottom, you're in a rainforest wearing shorts and t-shirts, and you go jump in the lake and have a swim. But, going down, there was some of the most beautiful scenery I had ever seen, and it was really, truly one of the most special days of my entire year.

Monique: Right. That's a perfect description. Now, if you have that in your mind, imagine – so, when I was going down, I hadn't ridden a bicycle for 10 years, and I'm sure I was going down at one kilometer per hour. So, I went down there, and I booked my tour into the jungle, and the bus was supposed to pick us up. Well, we only waited another 11 ½ hours out on the road. They wouldn't let us go into the hotel again, they wouldn't let us stay in any of the restaurants, so we literally had to sit and sleep on the street. Suddenly, in the middle of the night, 2:45, someone screamed at us, and the bus suddenly turned up. It was 11 ½ hours late.

Matt: Wow.

Monique: I don't know why I asked this, but I said, "Where are we driving?" They said, "Half of the way is a part of the old Death Road." It's not the Death Road that we came down, but there's basically another part of it that's built a similar way. I literally stood there like, "You're fucking kidding me. This bus doesn't even fit on this road. This road isn't wide enough for the bus." They're like, "Yeah, but we have to go there. There's no other way into the jungle." I stood there like, "This is suicide."

I also had a really great seat up front, upstairs, on the outside, so I had a 27-hour trip into the jungle, mostly in that bus. Matt, you should have seen me. There's not much that I cry about, but this was one of the days where I was literally just trying to hold my shit together, sitting on the outside of the bus.

I can tell you that I've seen this bus multiple times with the outside wheels halfway over the edge already, but there was another bus coming from the other direction, and they obviously didn't fit next to each other. They were navigating back and forth into a curve, so one had to go backwards and the other forwards until they were into a curve. One had to go into the mountain range, and the other had to drive a little bit over the edge – I'm not fucking kidding – and that's how they navigated. I was in there like, "Someone has to knock me out."

But, I got into the Amazon, and it was a 12-hour drive into the jungle with a Jeep and our crew. And then, we got into a side arm of the Amazon river. It was full of caimans. You know what caimans are? There are three different types of crocodiles. There are crocodiles, alligators, and caimans. They have different types of jawlines – shorter, longer, more spiked, or more square. The caimans basically have the longest, biggest, most square ones, and are the most aggressive version of the crocodile. In this part of the Amazon, they can grow up to 6-7 meters, which is –

Matt: Seven meters is 21 feet.

Monique: Right. We saw one of them. Its head was two thirds the length of my whole body. We were sitting in this longtail boat, where literally, the edge of the boat was almost at the water's surface. This thing – this caiman – literally comes out of the water right next to me and looks at me. I'm just showing Matt how I turned around because I looked at the head, and the head was basically – I leaned back, and literally, the head started at my knees and went all the way to my head.

I turned around and tried to see the end. I was like, "All right, nice to meet you." It was literally right here. I could have patted it on the head. So, the boat was here, the thing came up here, and my guide was like, "Wow, that's really big!" The whole group turned around, looked at me, and I was like, "Right there." They all screamed and freaked out. I was like, "It's really not that bad."

Don't worry." I was wondering if I should pet it, but then, I went through the whole set of documentaries I had watched when I was a teenager, and I knew how fast they were at turning around and snapping at you. I knew he could swallow me in one bite, so I decided not to pet him.

Anyway, this river was full of them, and you would see them along the riverbed. Every two or three meters, you would see two or three of them hanging out. The usual size was two or three meters, but there would be four- or five-meter ones, or this six-meter one right next to you in the morning. But, the reason we were there was to see the pink freshwater dolphins. They were amazing.

Our guide told us that dolphins and whales communicate with waves, and the caimans don't like these wave sounds, and that's why they stay away from the dolphins. I'm like, "Cool, good enough for me." The guide is like, "Okay, there's a bunch of dolphins. You can get in now." I got my t-shirt out, jumped in the water, and got right in the bunch.

I turned around and saw no one else was coming because the whole crew was freaking out. They were like, "Monique, there's a caiman right next to you! It's going down now!" I turned around, and it was two arm-lengths away, and I was like, "All right." The water was really dirty. I couldn't see anything, not even my own hand, so I just pretended it wasn't there. There were enough of them – there were so many, but he had said they don't like the waves of the dolphins, so I just chose to think that was true because he was leading tours every day for over 10 years. If they'd had tourists jump in the river and die from a caiman attack, they wouldn't have told me to jump in.

In my head, there were three seconds of evaluation – "Pink freshwater dolphin, caiman – Let's go in." So, I had all the dolphins to myself. The group told me every five seconds, "There's another caiman going down next to you," and I was like, "Whatever. I don't see them, so they probably don't see me."

Matt: That is unbelievable. And then, you mentioned to me also that not only are you not afraid of them, but you actually like snakes, and the Amazon has some pretty big snakes.

Monique: It does.

Matt: Did you encounter some of them?

Monique: Yeah. We had one day where we were specifically going on land through the – it's not really the jungle. It's more of a vast wetland. He asked our group what we would like to see – which kind of animal – and I was like, "Anaconda." He looked at me and asked, "Why?" I was like, "Why not? I came here, I paid a lot of money, and it took me a long time to come. If I'm here already, I want to see something." He was like, "Yeah, but most of the people want to see whatever." I was like, "I'm not most of the people, and I don't care what they want to see. You asked me, and I'm saying anaconda, so can you find me an anaconda now?"

He's like, "You're asking for a lot. They probably find an anaconda only one out of 20 times that they go look for them." I was like, "Well, let's make it this one time today." He was like, "I can't promise, but I will have a look." So, we were wading through this wetland, and basically, you have to have knee-high boots, and you have to wear the shittiest clothes ever. We sank hip-deep into mud. I mean that.

We got to a point where he said, "Here, this looks like an anaconda could be around, so I'm going to look for it, and you can search for it." We were like, "What would it look like if an anaconda were around?" He explained it, and literally, 10 minutes later, he was like, "I got one!" I just sprinted, and everyone else went away from him.

I sprinted, and I didn't know where it was, and I got from basically from the site to him, and I stood there like, "Where is it?", and he's like, "It's just around your legs." I just stood there because I didn't see where he pointed, and he was a little bit faster than I was in finding her. She snuck up, went around my legs, and sat there in the middle of the mud. I couldn't get away, but I didn't try to. I was super excited. It was a four-meter anaconda.

Matt: So, a four-meter anaconda?

Monique: Yeah.

Matt: Wow. That's 12 feet or so. It was curling around your leg.

Monique: Basically, it made a figure eight around my legs. It was just sitting there, basically checking out the whole situation. And then, there was a point where she wanted to get away, so she pulled together, and my legs pulled together, and I literally fell over backwards because it was so strong. I was laughing so hard. I thought it was really amazing. For me, it was the best part of the trip, even with the caimans and dolphins. She just pulled together because she wanted to get away, and everyone was like, “Oh my God, what’s she doing? She’s attacking us.” I’m like, “No.”

I’ve worked with snakes before – boa constrictors – and if you don’t attack them, they’re not going to attack you.

Matt: Wow. So, after your South American adventure, what was the next part of your journey?

Monique: I basically used all of my savings, and I built an Instagram travel blog along the way, and I was like, “Maybe I can make money off of it,” but I found it hard to monetize a blog. I worked really hard to be on these experiences. You have to travel somewhere each day, and you have to be on the road, and then you have to write, monetize, and reach out to people, and I was like, “No, this is not for me. I don’t want to make a business out of this part of passion because I can see myself getting unpassionate about traveling if I do that. I don’t want that. I want to keep traveling as my life education.”

I want to be a student of the world, basically. I want to meet people and understand their traditions, their attitude, and their worldviews. I want to understand where they’re coming from, how they grew up, and why they grew up there. I want to immerse myself there, but I don’t want to make money off it because I would lose the passion about it.

So, I stopped that immediately, but I didn’t have a lot of money left on hand. I had about \$2,000.00 left, and I thought, “I can never start a business with just \$2,000.00. This is insane.” At this time, I was in Brazil, and a friend of mine hosted me. He was like, “We’ll make it work. Don’t worry. We can get you a teaching job, and you can start something on the side.”

I was like, “No, this is the worst idea ever. I am scared. I don’t know what the fuck to do.” I had a person I had known for four

years, and he ran a business in Vietnam, and he'd asked me for four years if I could be his marketing manager, and I had always said, "No, I don't have time. I have other things that I do." So, I called him up and said, "Hey, do you need me as a marketing manager now? I have time now." He said yes.

So, I paid the flights, I flew over to Hanoi, I put my credit card into the ATM with security next door in the secure airport, and it turns out they skimmed my credit card there. Three days later, it turns out they'd skimmed my credit card. I tried to get all the money out of my bank account, and because it was an Australian bank from when I had lived there before, they blocked the card immediately and blocked the money, so at least not all the money was gone. I still had maybe \$1,000.00 on there.

So, I started this job, and it took about six weeks from the start until I was paid for the first time. I was like, "What am I going to do? How am I going to get my money?" I called the bank and asked them to send new credit cards over, and they were like, "Where are you?" "Vietnam." "Do you have post boxes there?" "No." "Where do they put your letters?" "In the street, and someone from the house collects them, and they just give it to me." They were like, "No, we're not going to send credit cards over there." I was like, "That's how it is in Vietnam," and they were like, "Nope." "So, how do I get my money?"

They had a fantastic idea. They thought it would be really good if I walked into a branch and took out all my money. So, I walked into the bank branch, and I had to go through different forms for a whole week, and then I got all my money out. I was like, "Finally, I've got my money, I've got my new apartment, and everything is settled. I should get an iced tea."

I had an iced tea, I had this pack here on my lap, I have my mobile phone in my hand, and I leaned back a little bit, and I thought – funnily enough, I was writing a block article on my phone that I had written for three days already, and I just sat down to keep writing a little bit about my rape experience, and someone crawled out from under the bench, snapped my bag off my lap, and fricking runs.

Literally, it took me half a second or whatever. I was sitting there because I was thinking about how to phrase this one sentence that I was raped, and I was like, "Well, I'll just write 'I was raped,'" and

I'm like, "Wait. Where's my bag? Wait, wait, wait. Where's the fucking bag? All the money – my key. What?"

They snapped the fricking bag off my lap without me fucking noticing it. They're that fucking good. By "they," I mean people who are pocket thieves, robbers, and whatever. All over the world. I don't mean a particular kind of nationality. I freaked out, and I literally grabbed my phone and the iced tea, and I ran in whatever direction. I screamed all swear words that I know in different languages, which is apparently what I do when I get robbed. It didn't bring the bag back. This is how I went bankrupt within a week.

Matt: It wasn't just that you got robbed, it was that they stole all the money that you had to your name. You took everything out of your account in cash.

Monique: And the German credit cards that were my emergency fallback solution, and my emergency medication, and the keys to my new apartment – everything but the mobile phone and the passport, which was hidden in my apartment.

Matt: Unbelievable. So, at that moment, after you let out all the swear words that you knew at the top of your lungs, and you finish screaming, and you've come to terms with what had just happened, how do you process that moment and what do you do?

Monique: The most honest version was I screamed my lungs out first again, just for emotional release, and then I went back to the same place and I asked people around me, "Did you see something?" They were like, "No." A guy recognized that I had a German accent, so he offered to help me a bit. I said, "Do you have cigarettes?" He was like, "Why?" I said, "Right now, smoking a cigarette is the only thing that will keep me from punching people."

He's like, "Do you smoke?" I'm like, "No, but it's going to help me, so do you have cigarettes?" He was like, "No, but I can buy you some." They were \$1.00. I said, "If I could ask you for one thing, would you buy me a pack of cigarettes?" He's like, "Really?" I'm like, "Yup."

So, he bought a pack of cigarettes, and I started smoking, and I was like, "Okay, the bag is gone. It's not going to come back. I'm not going to get the money back. What's left? Oh, I have my mobile

phone in my hand. Great.” So, I called my landlord, and my landlord came, and he went to the police with me, who laughed about me really hard, and then wrote a police report that they wouldn’t give to me, that I was only able to take pictures of, and then they threw it in the bin.

So, my landlord brought me home, and he gave me a different set of keys. Then, I talked to my parents and I said, “This is what happened.” They freaked out even more. I was like, “No, I can’t have you freak out. I cannot have you freak out. If you freak out, I freak out. I can’t freak out anymore. I’m over freaking out, so stop freaking out. It’s okay.”

So, we tried to brainstorm if and how I could get money somewhere. That wasn’t an option, so basically, I said, “Okay, I have my passport.” I found \$40.00 in the passport that was supposed to be for my visa, and I was able to buy 1.5 kg of oatmeal, and a bus pass to and from work for six weeks. So, I would eat one bowl of oatmeal every day, and sometimes I had a friend from work who would invite me for a noodle bowl, and other than that, to be honest, I was just starving.

Because the job really sucked and the boss, who I thought was a good friend, really sucked, after a week or so, I just decided I was done with that shit. How could I get out of that whole situation? So, I started a business, which is now what it is today, and I bootstrapped the heck out of it with the same things I had done before. What I’d done was the scuba company, right? So, I offered people my skills to get skills from them that I needed and would basically give half of the time that I had for my business to fulfill their skill needs, and the other half to work on my business.

So, I worked 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the job, and usually 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. as business time, and for two or three hours of that, I would just do any kind of work they needed to be done so I could get work done. For example, I exchanged digital marketing for website design, business coaching for some mindset stuff, or whatever. This was how I bootstrapped everything in my business.

Matt: That’s amazing. I love that bartering economy as a strategic way of bootstrapping a business with literally zero resources, literally zero money. People have these stories about starting the business with only \$1,000.00, and there you were, starting the business with zero

dollars, eating one bowl of oatmeal a day because it was all the food you could afford, and you had to be more creative with zero dollars, so you just bartered the skills that you had in order to get what you wanted. That is unbelievable. Let's talk a little bit about the business that you decided to build. What is high performance and human optimization? Let's start with that.

Monique: So, in my world, high performance and human optimization is basically the combination of slowing down to speed up – basically, the “high performance” part is not about getting more done, being more in whatever, it's about slowing down to speed up. It's about integrating your work into your life and your lifestyle into your work. It's the work/life bliss state, basically. You achieve a flow state, so you don't feel like you're working.

The “human optimization” part – I think this is what I achieved for myself as well. Remember when the doctors told me, “You can't cure this”? Well, now I'm sitting here, and 95 percent of my migraines are gone. I just don't have them anymore.

Matt: Can you talk a little bit about your TIME method that you developed?

Monique: Yes. The TIME method stands for time management, impactful leadership, mind hacking, and energy efficiency. For me, those are the four pillars that someone would need who wanted to be a high performer or high achiever and an impactful leader, basically. If you're the one who wants to be high-performing, leave a legacy, and build a meaningful, impactful business, but you don't want to sacrifice your life for it, then these are the four pillars you want to put in place in order to achieve that.

Matt: Let's talk a little bit about those pillars. Can you go through them and share a little bit about what each of those means and how people can give the proper attention to each of those pillars?

Monique: Yeah. So, let's start with time management. I feel like time management is a huge umbrella for so many different things. What I start with my clients is we are going very fast and deep into the 80/20, or even better, into the 95/5. I want to cut down as much as possible from their plates because really, what we are doing is putting as much as we can on them until we can't balance all of these tasks anymore and we trip over them.

So, I usually start by writing out huge task lists of the things they think they would be doing throughout the day or throughout the week, and literally put everything – even if it’s a one-off, a rare task, or a recurring item – on this list, and I’ll tell you which of those tasks are bullshit tasks, which are busy tasks, and which ones are the actual ones they should be doing in order to get the outcome for the business that they want.

You can delegate some of these tasks, and honestly, there are so many that you can just delete. They are unnecessary tasks. They will get you a little bit of an outcome or they may make you feel better about things, but they’re really not necessary. This is what we should get done first. And then, without overwhelming them, without feeling like, “I fucking hate organization, I’m not an integrator, I hate doing all this shit,” I teach them how to plan and schedule it within a really tiny amount of time. It can be 20 minutes a week. You can schedule your whole week out, and it doesn’t have to be painful.

But, what it does give you is a lot of certainty, a lot of clarity, and the ability to focus and prioritize without having to wake up every morning like, “Which of these tasks should I be doing first?”, and using all of your mental energy on making the wrong decisions. The wrong decision would be like “What should I be doing?” The right decision is to know it already and do the hard things, and then, if there is a decision coming up, then you can make it. So, this is what I do first.

Impactful leadership – here’s the thing. There’s being a boss, being a manager, and being a leader. I don’t want to be a boss. I think that’s totally outdated, and I don’t believe in bossing someone around. I will be a manager at some point because we’ll always have to manage people in one way or the other, and there’s relationship management and everything, and that all depends on being able to have great communication skills and people skills.

But, if you’re not a leader – if you don’t show up as a leader and you’re not a leader from the inside out, don’t even try to go out there and have any impact, leave a legacy, or achieve your ultimate potential because who in this world would want to be with someone who is not showing up the way that he expects others to show up? That’s the leadership part. And, I do include team

management training in there, but that's more of an advanced thing for the last weeks.

The mind hacking part – I call it “mind hacking” because we are in the high performance space here. All of my clients have been men so far, and when they came to me, most of them were not receptive of mindset work, energy work, or woo-woo things, which I don't include much, but they can lead into some of these methods that I use with them. I just repackaged them – damn it. Now it's out.

But, the thing is, if I say “mindset,” then they're like, “Oh. Mm-mmm.” But, “mind hacking” – “Hell yeah, I want to hack my mind. I want to hack my brain.” I just say “biohack” or whatever. “Yeah, great, let's do this shit.” I really don't care what you call it, but getting the results is what makes a difference.

So, throughout the work, it will get to the point where they will come to me with “Actually, this is what I believe.” Whether they call them limiting beliefs, roadblocks, or resistance, I don't care. I don't use any specific words. I like them label it first, and then I use what they call it, and then we smash it, basically.

And then, we go into energy efficiency, and energy efficiency is a huge part that I basically weave through all the others. It's not a specifically labeled part in my work, but I put it into each of the other steps, and it has a lot to do with habits and routines.

It has a lot to do with keeping your energy high, not being what I was before with a really high high and a super low low, but keeping a consistent wave of contentment, basically – how to contain high energy, how to keep yourself around people who have a similar energy and who repel toxicity, how to repel toxicity, and how to manage your day-to-day life and make the right decisions for yourself based on whether it adds up for your energy. Do you feel good about it? Do you feel energized about it or not?

Matt: One of the things that you talk about when you coach and teach is the concept of using your body, mind, and spirit for combined tools for achieving your goals. Can you talk about what you mean by that and how people should think about that?

Monique: Yeah. That's a concept that took me a long time to understand, that this is something that is actually a thing. Basically, I don't care if

you believe in a religion, the universe, angels, crystals, uni eggs, or the Loch Ness Monster. Whatever it is that you believe in, make it your thing. If you don't believe in anything, then just believe in your own power to achieve something, but make that one thing your driving force – basically, the fuel to your engine.

So, for me, I grew up Christian, and I don't resonate with it at all. There's no other religion that I could resonate with, and the only lifestyle-based spiritual practice I can kind of resonate with is Buddhism, but I'm not a Buddhist, so what I did was to get this connection of body, mind, and spirit by picking pieces that resonate with. I picked a few pieces from Buddhism that resonated with me.

For example, in Buddhism, they teach you to be happy now, to live a contented life now, and to be in peace now, so I do that. And then, I found out about how we are all energy and we are living on vibrations. This is plain metaphysics. It sounds woo-woo, but it's not. It's neurons and atoms – everything that is physically energy.

So, when I got into the scientific explanation behind it, it made so much sense to me, and suddenly, it wasn't woo-woo anymore, and suddenly, it wasn't some manifest or law-of-attraction bullshit, but it was actually physics and metaphysics, and I was like, "This does make sense to me now. We are energy. Water is energy. We are 75 percent water, so, sure, I'm energy. That totally makes sense. How can I calm this energy down when it's too tense or boiled up when I'm frustrated? How can I align this again with my intentions and my goals?"

This brought me to understand how, for example, going back to the migraines, they were a manifestation or an outcome of me being out of energetic alignment with what I wanted and what I tried to achieve. Basically, what I do when I work with people on their mind/body/spirit connection is integrating different practices and methods within their morning and evening routines that are not really time-intensive, but do bring everything more into alignment.

Matt:

Can you talk a little bit about your concept of lifestyle optimization, which is another term that you use, and talk about what you mean by that and how you work with business leaders on achieving that?

Monique: Yeah. So, a lot of times, especially the location-independent entrepreneurs and business owners, but even the ones who have a brick-and-mortar business – think about why we start a business. We are entrepreneurs because we didn't want to get stuck in the system. We wanted to get off the hamster wheel. We had this image of time freedom and money freedom – “I'm going to do all these great things, but I only have to get this business started and running until it makes me enough money.”

You're still in this rat race that you build for yourself in the business of “I only need to get there,” but what if you get all of the lifestyle first, and it actually gives you so much energy to achieve your business growth and goals faster?

So, when I work with business owners, a lot of times, they have five-year goals. Let's say that in five years, I want to have this house and travel twice a year to these places. I ask them, “What if you get the house now and start traveling next year?” “That's not possible.” “Why? What's holding you back?” “I don't have time.”

But, that's not true. We do have a lot of time; we just prioritize it wrong. That's the first thing. So, I make the switch with them from “I have to work, work, work” to “First, I have to live the life that I actually want to live when I retire.” So, live this life right now because just imagine, Matt: What if you go out of the Conrad Hotel tomorrow and a fricking bus hits you? I had this. I can tell you: As a 19-year-old, waking up and asking myself, “Did I actually try to achieve anything?” and having to answer, “Nope,” I really was a shitty person then. I was just a people-pleaser. My life sucked.

When you're 19, that is really not – you don't want to have this as a 42-year-old, a 37-year-old, or a 32-year-old either because then, you feel even guiltier about how much time you wasted, so why not just – I don't get this. Obviously, I had this experience, but I don't get people who think like, “When I am –”, and then they give me any kind of KPIs – “When I have this, this, and this, then I want to live like this.” Why not live like this first, and then go and get all the weird KPIs that you have there?

Matt: When you think back to all the different clients that you have worked with and the progress that you've made with them – we mentioned in the intro that many of the CEOs and business owners

you've worked with have been able to cut 50 percent of their work hours, they've been able to double and triple their revenue, and also to reduce the stress and anxiety, which is often more important than any of the above. When you think back to those accomplishments you were able to help those people make, what were some of the key leverage points, breakthroughs, or "Aha" moments that were massively impactful for some of those individuals to really take everything to the next level?

Monique:

Make the switch from "hustle and grind" to "slow down to speed up." I work really intensively in the beginning to make them understand this concept of slowing down to speed up and how it works, and prepare them for the fact that it will surely take three to five weeks for them to feel really resistant and frustrated about it because the thing is you feel like you're not doing anything or getting anywhere. You will feel a lot of resistance, or maybe you'll feel all the fear, but that's why I'm here. They have daily support Monday to Friday because on the weekends, I hang out with elephants.

So, what I usually tell them is a great way to do it is to use my voicemail. They can have my WhatsApp, and I tell them, "Just say it out loud so you can hear yourself as well and hear what you're saying because sometimes, it doesn't make sense. If you speak it out loud, you hear it, and you feel like it doesn't make sense, you can just tell me it's fine and you've got it. Say it all out to me on the message, send it to me, and if you've got it already by saying it out loud, you can just say, 'All right, stupid, thanks, got it.' If not, then I'm here to tell you in a fairly harsh and kind way, 'This is how we get through it.'"

I'm not going to sugarcoat it and tell you that the first two weeks will be brilliant and you'll be feeling amazing. Actually, I tell you you're not going to have much fun with me in the first two to four weeks, but that's why you're here, and that's going to be the growth, and that's why I'm on your side. We'll get through it, but you need to stick to it and not run away. If you run away, it's going to be shit. If you don't run away, it's only going to be shit for four weeks, and then the growth is going to come back and you'll see the results.

So, I think it helps many of them that I do have the scientific approach because this is how I work, and I probably attract people

who work similarly to me as well. If I have a scientific, logical explanation of why they feel how they feel and how we can get through it, they immediately feel relieved and think it makes sense, and then we can work through it. I have the tools and the methods for them, and that's just a way for them to basically do it.

Matt: Awesome. Can you also talk about the importance of social impact in effecting positive change in the world? I know that's a really important thing for you in general, and I know you've incorporated it into your business, and it's a significant part of what you do. Can you talk a little bit about the concept in general, and then, specifically, your relationship with Daughters Rising and some of the stuff that you do?

Monique: Yeah. So, I think you and me – you specifically, but me as a second version of it – as a middle-aged white male, you're the most privileged version of a human being on Planet Earth. Whether middle-aged white males want to hear it or not, it's the truth. As a young white woman, I come straight after you. There are a few hurdles they put in front of us, and they're exhausting, but am I just going to kick them down and walk over them? Sure. Is it fun? No, but it's possible to do it 100 percent.

But, we have so many marginalized communities; we have so many other nationalities, people, and races that we make a difference in where there's actually no difference. They're just as human as you and me. And so, in my head, obviously, that doesn't make sense, but it is what it is, I know where it comes from, and so, I do feel a big responsibility to do something about it.

I feel like what I can do is use my platform for the education of my audience, who are mostly white people, to say, "Please look at it and do something about it. Educate yourself." I do obviously have a lot of friends from all kinds of backgrounds, and I love it, I wouldn't want to change it, but I would never want to ask them to do the work for me. I've had this as well. I've had men asking me to explain to them why this specific behavior would be taken as harassment or would be inappropriate, and I'd be sitting there like, "No. This is really exhausting for me to talk about, especially because I've been through so many different traumas on this part as well."

In the beginning, I did. I did this for years. I explained to them, I

sat down – not in an offhand way – but I’d say, “This really isn’t my job. Why not just google it first and ask your male friends who have a little more experience and are a little more leveled up?” It’s the same thing.

For me, it’s really important to do good with the bridge that I have and the opportunities that I have that I can give them. I’ve seen a lot of things in the world, and one thing that I’ve seen is that two groups I really resonate with, which have given me a home as well, are some of the most outsider groups, and those are ethnic minorities and refugees. I’ve long been debating doing something about sexual violence or whatever, and it’s really heavy on me, not because of my own trauma, but – you should listen to the stories. This is fucked up. I was really just like, “Oh, I don’t know if I want to do this every single day.”

I basically found the perfect solution. My friend Alexa has this eco lodge outside of Chiang Mai in Thailand that’s called the Chai Lai Orchid. They rescued 13 elephants. I have always somehow had a connection with elephants, so for my birthday two years ago, I went there to visit them as a customer or guest, and they literally just didn’t get rid of me. I would return all the time to support the situation for the elephants, but then I found out that besides the Chai Lai Orchid eco lodge, she’s running a nonprofit called Daughters Rising.

The nonprofit is basically – so, their mission is to empower at-risk girls from ethnic minorities or refugee backgrounds to get out of any risk to be trafficked and to help them cut through intergenerational poverty in their communities and basically bring their knowledge that they get from our educational programs back to their communities.

There are a few different ways we do this. We have scholarships for universities that we pay for completely, even with lodging and everything. We also have an eight-month on-the-job training in tourism. If they choose to be a maid, they can be a maid. They can work in reception or in the coffee shop. They can be come a tour guide. They get their whole education for free, including salary and housing, so they literally just earn money and can save it up and send it to their families or support their villages. When they finish, they get the chance to apply for an interest-free loan to build their own businesses, and we already have two women who’ve done

that, which is fricking amazing.

So, I literally got stuck there, and I told them, “Well, I’m here now. I’m not going to leave.” They were like, “Yeah, sure,” because they had heard that plenty of times, and it didn’t happen very often. But, as I am who I am, I stick to my word. I did a fundraiser for them first, and it turned into this relationship, and they became my family.

I started to put hours into the game where now, since I ground myself in Chiang Mai and I’m usually there once a week, I put in five to 10 hours of work. I help them with whatever is necessary. We also have English training, and we do drive into villages in the jungle and help the kids with some workshops, some English training, or, for example, how to make their own soap, how to make toothpaste from herbs they find in the forest, because in some villages, they don’t get any education at all. They don’t go to school because they don’t have any transportation to go there, so they just learn things from their families, and that’s it.

The other thing is with each client that I get into my VIP program, I donate \$500.00 of my own revenue to Daughters Rising to support them with all their scholarships, their new projects, and whatever they need.

Matt: That’s so amazing. You are doing such awesome and important stuff. I want to be conscious of your time, and at this point, Monique, are you ready to move into the Lighting Round?

Monique: Yeah. Let’s do it.

Matt: Let’s do it!

Announcer: The Lightning Round!

Matt: All right. What is one book that has influenced you over the years that you would most recommend people check out?

Monique: *The Laws of Human Nature* by Robert Greene. It only came out a year or so ago, but if you’re into a little bit of neuroscience and human behavior, Robert Greene – *48 Laws of Power* as well, *Mastery* is fantastic, but I love it especially for his structure and his crazy research. He researched five years for this book, *The Laws of*

Human Nature.

Matt: Awesome. What is one app or productivity tool that you're currently using that you'd recommend?

Monique: The News Feed Eradicator. It's a Chrome extension to cut out the whole news feed on Facebook. I like a paper book that's called *The 10-Minute Planner*, and for me, it's the best way to plan your week and your days. I don't use a digital app.

Matt: Awesome. At this point in your life, knowing everything that you know now and having all the experiences you've had, if you could go back in time to when you were 18 and give yourself one piece of advice, what would you say to 18-year-old Monique?

Monique: Let all the people around you just talk, and trust yourself.

Matt: Awesome. If you could have dinner with one person who's currently alive today – it could be anyone, an author, celebrity, movie star, public figure, any person you've never met who's currently alive today – who would you choose, and why?

Monique: Lady Gaga because she's also gone through a lot of physical pain. She worked herself up in an industry that probably has one of the highest rates of sexual violence, and she is still standing and doing a lot of good work, and she learned how to keep her boundaries and everything. I just would want to sit down, high-five her, and tell her how fucking badass she is, and that's probably it.

Matt: That's amazing. You have now been to 44 countries. I know this is a really hard question for travelers, but that's why I ask it on the show, to give people ideas to think about. What would you say are your top three favorite travel destinations that you have ever been to?

Monique: I can't tell you travel destinations. I can tell you about experience. Definitely, Peru with the Laguna 69 in the Huaraz Mountains. The trek seems to be easy, but in the last 150 meters, you're just going to die. I think I showed you the picture of the *laguna* on top, right? The reward – if someone doesn't understand that we have to save our fricking planet – if you go there and you don't understand that we need to do something to keep these places like this in order for whomever has kids to see these, and their kids, and maybe their

kids – my nephew and niece won't see some places and animals that I've been seeing, and this makes me really fucking sad. So, that's one.

What else? Definitely, go into one jungle somewhere. I would actually highly recommend somewhere in Latin America – Brazil, Peru, or Bolivia for sure. Obviously, I went into Bolivia, so I can recommend that, but you should go far away. I cannot recommend any treks or plant-based medicine for your first experience because you want to be conscious and aware – let it happen first. Take whatever you want with your second trip.

The third one – it's really hard, but I want to include a diving experience because it had a huge impact on me, and I didn't go diving anywhere else than in Thailand, but in Thailand, in the Andaman Sea, in the Similan Islands, I saw a manta ray, and it changed my life. It just did. So, go wherever you want to go, and if you're not into diving, that's fine.

Matt: That's a great pick. I did some scuba diving training in Thailand as well, and I was insanely fortunate to have the rare experience of meeting a whale shark completely in the wild and swimming around with it for about 10 minutes. It was absolutely epic.

Monique: Yeah. I only waited a year for it, and I was diving every single day, so –go away.

Matt: It's so amazing. You never know what you'll see when you come to Thailand. I want to wrap this up here by asking you what are your top three bucket list destinations – places you've never been before that are the highest on your list you would most love to see?

Monique: The Tiger Temple in Bhutan, the top of Mount Everest, which I will climb, and some airplane I'm going to jump out of over some area – probably a desert. I'm going to jump into it from an airplane with my own skydiving license.

Matt: Amazing. That's awesome. That is awesome. Monique, I want to thank you so much for being here. I think you are amazing. I think you're such an inspiration. I think you're so talented. I want everybody to check out you, your stuff, and your business. I'll be honest with you – I love your branding. I think you are such a badass, and I think you put that front and center in your branding,

and I think it is so awesome. I want people to go to your website just to see that, and just to see what you're doing with how you're positioning your brand. That alone is just awesome, but I definitely want you to let people know how they can find you, contact you, follow you, and get into your universe.

Monique: I think the best way is to go to my website. It's my full name, www.moniquelindner.com. I do have free resources on there. It changes sometimes, but currently, I have a five-step guide to the perfect morning routine for busy leaders in there. Basically, it shows you which parts of a morning routine you should include so you can build your own perfect one, and how to bring it to be a routine that you don't dread. It's a PDF guide, so it's easy to download on your phone and read it wherever. You can download this for free. It should be on the front page of my website, I believe, under my super badass photo. That's one.

If you find me on Facebook with my personal profile, you just search for "Monique Lindner," and the first yellow one that pops up should be me. You will be able to find my Facebook group there. Right now, we are planning amazing content, new life trainings – so much stuff. If you get in now, it's the right time for you to get all of the good stuff out of there. I think the group link is www.facebook.com/groups/productivityaccelerator. I made it pretty easy.

Matt: We will link all this stuff up in the show notes, by the way, so if you just go to one place at www.themaverickshow.com and go to the show notes for this episode, we're going to link up everything that we talked about, all the recommendations that Monique made, and of course, all the links to her website, Facebook group, social media profile, and everything else, so you can just find it all there in one place. Monique, thank you so much for being here.

Monique: Thanks, Matt.

Matt: This was so amazing.

Monique: It was so much fun. Thank you.

Matt: Good night, everybody!

Announcer: Be sure to visit the show notes page at

www.themaverickshow.com for direct links to all the books, people, and resources mentioned in this episode. You'll find all that and much more at www.themaverickshow.com.

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