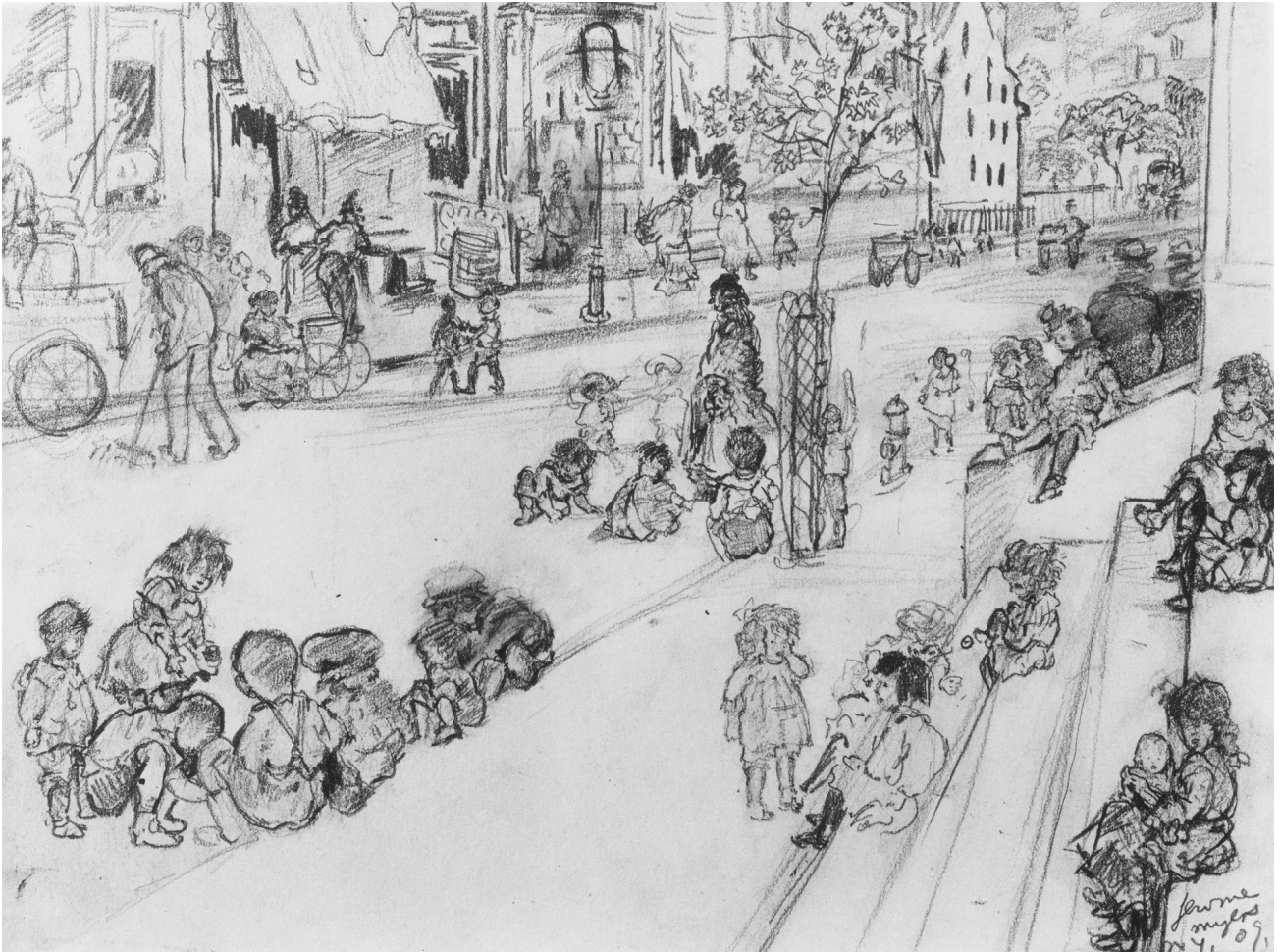


NEBOJ

aligning thoughts, words, and actions with the welfare of all beings

In Conversation With Alexandra



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Episode 4 posted: 08/02/2026 11:11 Peter Wynne

P: Greetings my dearest, dearest friends and welcome back to another episode of the Neboj podcast. i do sincerely hope that i am once again finding you in good health and high spirits.

Today, as a first dear friends on the Neboj podcast i am in conversation with Alexandra. i am indeed very excited about this 'first.'

Alexandra grew up and lived most of her life in the USA but some years ago life or the universe perhaps presented her with a calling, one that would inadvertently request that she leave her comfort zone and set up home in a foreign land, asking of her to adapt to a totally different culture and language. She accepted the challenge and had the courage to answer her calling.

An educator, a mother, a creative individual, it is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you Alexandra to the Neboj podcast.

A: It's great to be here.

P: Wonderful and I'm so glad to have you. Listen, tell me Alexandra you've been a teacher now, tell me a little bit about your life as a teacher how that has been going for you? Your experiences?

A: Yeah, so I actually used to be in the corporate world, if you can believe it and then I grew quite tired of it and I decided to pursue the profession of teaching English as a second language so in 2020 I became certified to become an English teacher and I started teaching students mainly from all over central and South America and then from there I moved to the Czech Republic and now I teach students here.

P: That's very interesting there and was there any particular reason why as you say 'you got tired of working in the corporate world'?

A: I think it just felt very, for lack of a better term: - 'soul sucking.' It was quite draining and quite, uhm, I don't know, just, not exactly what I wanted to do with my life, it didn't feel inspiring, it didn't feel like something that was motivating me to get through the day, not exactly what I wanted to do with my life, it didn't feel inspiring, it didn't feel like something that was motivating me to get through the day.

P: It didn't resonate with you.

A: it didn't resonate with me, exactly.

P: That's interesting, and you could feel that within yourself, that something was missing. And so, do you feel now that teaching is resonating with you? That is your call so to speak?

A: I think so, I often have, I teach different ages, I teach adults, I teach children, I taught people from many different countries and I have always found something in each teaching experience that has changed me or inspired me or made me feel that I was maybe doing the right thing with my life.

P: Very good and so from your teaching it has been, what would we say, it has helped you to grow, to develop yourself.

A: Yeah, definitely, I definitely feel like I am a better version of myself now, than I was before becoming a teacher, I think it has changed me in a lot of positive ways.

P: That's fascinating, that's very, very good. And so 4 years ago you moved to the Czech Republic from the USA, that must have been a big move for you, I mean, big changes there.

Yeah, I had lived in the same place almost my entire life and then I moved to an entirely different country where I didn't speak the language at all, I actually didn't know anything about it at all so it was quite a big shift in a lot of ways, culturally, language wise, everything.

P: Right, that must have been a big shock for you especially culturally wise as well like. And how has the 4 years gone for you now, how do you feel now 4 years later?

A: I think overall, it's been very, very positive. I've made some friends here that maybe I would not have become friends with in the US but they've changed everything for me, they've made me open my eyes to different things I suppose. The culture here obviously if anyone has ever been both to the US and the Czech Republic, the cultures are very different, people are a bit more reserved here than Americans are, that was a bit of an adjustment to get used to that, I was a very outgoing person for a long time, for most of my life, I talked to strangers all the time, people don't really talk to strangers here.

P: Right, right and do you think there is any particular reason why people don't talk to strangers here? Is it to do with crime, fear, why would they not be talking to strangers?

A: Certainly not crime or fear here, there's hardly any. I don't think I've ever been afraid living here which fits very well with the name of your podcast.

P: Absolutely, absolutely, yeah.

A: You see why Neboj is so important.

P: Yeah, that's wonderful yeah.

A: You don't ever really feel unsafe at least not to the level that you can sometimes in the US. There's very low crime rate here. There's... the people are very friendly here, very welcoming. I'm not sure, they just aren't, I don't know, you have to really, really get to know a person here before they really open up to you I suppose, things are less shallow, I'm not sure.

P: Right, and have you become accustomed to this way of life?

A: Yes, I find myself a lot more introverted now. I go back to the US and I have no idea how to make any small talk whatsoever. Somebody in the line in the store tries to talk to me and I have no idea what to say any more.

P: Is this a good thing?

A: I'm not sure.

P: You're not sure, okay, very good. So where did you actually start out in the Czech Republic?

What city were you in?

A: In Prague.

P: In Prague! Okay, that's a big tourist attraction place. Did you enjoy your time in Prague? Are you still in Prague by the way?

A: No, I'm not no.

P: Okay, so you've moved on from Prague. Tell me then your experience of Prague then?

A: I have a lot of feelings about Prague, both positive and negative. No, I wouldn't say that I have any negative feelings about Prague, that is not an accurate statement but I think there's a very, very big difference between living in Prague and visiting Prague. I think to visit Prague is a wonderful, charming experience and to live in Prague is maybe sometimes a bit overwhelming because of how many people who visit Prague for the charming experience.

P: Right, right, so you reckon there's a big difference between actually living there and actually visiting.

A: Yes, but it's a beautiful place.

P: Where would you recommend, let's say for example I wanted to take my holiday in Prague, I have never been before, what would you suggest I do in Prague, where should I go?

A: I didn't know this was becoming a tourism podcast. I feel a little on the spot. Well, you have to go to Prague castle which sounds very lame, but it's true, the largest castle complex in the world, very impressive, beautiful, stunning but also all of the gardens in the area around Prague castle are much more impressive to me, to explore those and see. It's hard to say there's a lot of things to see.

P: A lot of things to see... well done! Now the other thing Alexandra, you're not only a teacher, you're not only living in the Czech Republic but you are also a mother. Tell me.

A: I am yeah, to a toddler.

P: To a toddler, wow, wow!!

A: I know, crazy life.

P: Tell me now of that experience for you.

A: It's an experience, big life changing experience, actually one thing definitely about living in the Czech Republic, one of the best things about living in the Czech Republic is raising a child here, in my opinion I think it's one of the most child friendly cultures I've

ever experienced in my life. I've been to a lot of countries and everybody is very accepting of children being children here. Kids can you know, express themselves in the way kids do and people don't get mad about it. You go to restaurants or cafés and there's places for children to play and do things. Everyone's very accepting and welcoming of children here.

P: That's very positive isn't it?

A: Yeah, so I definitely think that's one of the biggest positives about the Czech Republic is how much of a child friendly place it is, it's very safe, the kids can go on public transport on their own and it's completely fine, no body bothers them.

P: That's wonderful isn't it? It's great, great, great. Now, you being a teacher as well, is this a benefit to you as a mother, rearing an infant?

A: Well, apparently I've become a kindergarten teacher.

P: Kindergarten teacher!!

A: Our walls are covered with all kinds of interesting pictures and colours.

P: That must be very stimulating for the infant? Other facilities around town? Are there other facilities where you can bring the infant to engage in?

A: There is in fact a very good library, full of activities for children and there's play cafés here. They are cafés specifically designed for children to play but also they have drinks and food for the adults that are with them, they have all different kinds of educational toys and things like that. Parks, lots of parks, playgrounds.

P: But tell me more about the concept of, you just mentioned there where the parents can partake in, let's say a coffee together while the children are playing, how does that go? That's a very interesting concept, isn't it?

A: it's a concept that I have never experienced till living here. I've looked far and wide in the US and never found one but there's many, many of them here. Yeah, it's just the café has a designated area, depending on the café, it's up to them, they've designated a big space that has things for children to climb on or baskets of toys for children to play with then there's tables around just like a normal café where the parents can socialise. Normally they also have food and drinks specifically for kids, so they'll have... cup cakes with less ingredients, healthier alternatives, children's teas so the kids can feel included.

P: And this is very beneficial from a social point of view for the mother, the mother we could say could be isolated with the child for many, many hours.

A: Yes, I definitely feel, when I first discovered these cafés when my son was about, he was just under a year old, that was how I started, you know, talking to people, socialising with other people and he could socialise with other children but creating friendships

with other moms , going with them, with our children to these cafés where are children can play together, we can sit and have normal conversations was a life saver when my son was around one year old. It definitely sometimes can become quite isolating to be a mother, that was a big game changer.

P: Big game changer, that's a big new word now isn't it? It's very fashionable now. But it's wonderful and it's wonderful for the child too, he can interact then with other children.

A: Yeah, but normally they also have, I don't know, activities that are very goal oriented so the child can feel very accomplished at the end of the activity, they have puzzles, things like that.

P: They are challenging which stimulates their mind and that type of thing so it's not just a sitting around wondering what will we do next. That's very interesting Alexandra, fascinating, fascinating. So looking forward then Alexandra how do you see then the next few years for you and your son and the family in general.

A: I'm not sure to be honest, I used to be a person who thought I had five year plans and ten year plans and twenty year plans then my whole life took a big left turn, it suddenly turned out that I can't predict my next life either or two years for that matter.

P: So, it's dictated for you.

A: For me, yeah, the universe it has a plan, so I think really moving forward, I just want to just be happy with how things are, be settled, create a life that my son will look back and be happy with, that's my number one priority. I would like to kind of relax, take a chill pill from all of the chaos with all of the moving and all of that. A big focus I have to focus on learning Czech better, that's a big motivator.

P: And so how are you getting on with that, how is that going for you?

A: It's a journey. It's a very difficult language but it's very rewarding when you learn to speak it.

P: Are you out there now, are you in the bakery for example?

A: Yep, in the bakery ordering in Czech.

P: You're expressing yourself?

A: I'm expressing myself in Czech, yeah, yeah,

P: That's fantastic! That's progress though isn't it?

A: It is, it is.

P: That'll give you confidence. It's really the using of it that builds your confidence isn't it? Wonderful, wonderful! And tell me this now, the last thing there now... you mentioned there a moment ago about the universe opening up for you. Do you feel the universe opens up for you? Are you fortunate in this way?

A: I suppose sometimes I feel that way, yeah. I think the universe has an idea of what it wants me to do. It's certainly not what I thought the universe was going to want me to do but it turns out it had lots of plans.

P: And you're happy enough to follow along with this path?

A: I think so, I mean so far it has led to me having a very happy marriage and a very happy family and a very... you know, fruitful life I suppose. Different endeavours that have occurred that never would have crossed my mind so...

P: So they all just happened, you weren't expecting this say five years ago or so, six years ago?

A: Certainly not, I was not intending at all for my life to take the turn it did six years ago.

P: Wow, listen tell me... so you mentioned your husband there, where did you actually meet your husband? You're living in the Czech Republic, you come from the USA, is your husband Czech?

A: He's not, he's Irish.

P: He's Irish!! And so what' an Irish man doing in the Czech Republic? How did you meet together? How did you come together?

A: He has been living here for about fifteen years now but we did actually meet in Mexico.

P: In Mexico! Wow!

A: So if you believe it. It's a wild ride.

P: That's a very romantic situation there. Anyway, it's been love ever since?

A: Ever since, lots of happiness lots of love

P: Fantastic, fantastic... well it seems that you are very joyous in your life, you seem very content and happy within yourself, you feel good.

A: I do yeah.

P: I get that energy from you, that energy is coming across.

A: That's good to hear... fantastic yeah

P: Okay, listen Alexandra it has been a great, great pleasure speaking to you and it has been a great honour, you being the first on the Neboj podcast, the first guest and I'm absolutely thrilled.

A: An honour and a pleasure.

P: My pleasure! Listen, I wish you, your husband and your son every success, every good wish going forward. Take very, very good care of yourselves and radiate love for each other. Thank you very much Alexandra, thank you.

A: Thank you... bye, bye

P: Bye, bye.

Wow, wow, wow that was a most enjoyable conversation, the energy from Alexandra was totally pulsating wouldn't you agree?

Answering her calling, giving up all that she had to start anew, confronting an unknown culture and language is certainly inspirational.

Which puts me in mind of the renowned American mythologist and writer Joseph Campbell and his concept of the Hero's Journey, his quote:

"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek."

Meaning: - True growth comes from confronting the unknown and the feared within oneself.