

The Women are Unwell: Wellness and Consumerism

Feminist Rage Podcast: A project of Women Lead Network

Transcript

00:00:01

All right?

00:00:04 Denice

OK, everybody here we are.

00:00:07 Denice

It's Leona and Denice again hey, hey, if you don't remember us you should go back and take a listen to some of the exciting work we've run before.

00:00:18 Denice

Boy we've really blasted boy.

00:00:21 Denice

What have we blasted?

00:00:22 Denice

We blasted labor?

00:00:23 Leona

For flavor.

00:00:26 Denice

What was our other blast that, uh, we went on the whole thing over reproductive?

00:00:30 Leona

Correct reproduction, justice that that holds.

00:00:31 Denice

That was the thing, yeah yeah, yeah.

00:00:33

Right?

00:00:35 Denice

So so if you don't know who we are, you might have figured it.

00:00:38 Denice

Out already, just in the.

00:00:40 Denice

Like literal seconds that we've been talking to.

00:00:43 Denice

You this is a podcast about feminist rage.

00:00:48 Denice

It is a project of women lead network.

00:00:51 Denice

But as we promised you.

00:00:53 Denice

Last year we've been thinking really a lot about what to call our times when we.

00:01:00 Denice

We have conversations and all we can.

00:01:02 Denice

Come up with really is.

00:01:03 Denice

Rage, so I don't know Leona.

00:01:05 Denice

What are your thoughts?

00:01:07 Leona

I, I think we're this will this will be the fun thing like every time you listen to us we are like getting closer and closer to naming what we're doing but right now for this episode.

00:01:20 Leona

We are feminist rage and it sounds like a punk band, which I kind.

00:01:23 Denice

Of like oh hey, we are a little punk.

00:01:27 Denice

Sometimes we're country though.

00:01:29 Leona

So yeah.

00:01:32 Denice

So you know we talked, we decided this time around that we wanted to.

00:01:39 Denice

Talk about you know health and Wellness, but.

00:01:44 Denice

More than that, we're sort of titling the working title for this podcast is, you know the women are unwell.

00:01:53 Denice

We feel unwell.

00:01:56 Denice

I think that a lot of women feel unwell, and I know that Leona you were really interested in this topic of you know Wellness and consumerism and how they connect to each other.

00:02:07 Leona

Yes, absolutely.

00:02:08 Leona

And and particularly the ways in which Wellness is weaponized.

00:02:14 Leona

In our culture now and this the the idea that to be well has to be a very specific model and that that model is usually tied to consuming something.

00:02:27 Denice

Yeah, yeah.

00:02:28 Leona

And calls it that that creates profit.

00:02:30 Leona

For someone else.

00:02:32 Denice

I feel like.

00:02:33 Denice

We're gonna have this series of podcasts that really.

00:02:38 Denice

Points towards at least one thing that seems to just ruin everything else.

00:02:44 Denice

But we'll we'll save that for the future, otherwise we'll end up shut down, and you have all these algorithms banned from.

00:02:50 Leona

Right now, right then.

00:02:54 Denice

I don't know what the hell will be banned.

00:02:56 Denice

From but yeah OK.

00:02:58 Denice

Well, you know as as when you talked about that when you sort of posed this idea.

00:03:04 Denice

For our podcast.

00:03:06 Denice

I started to think about this within the context of, you know, sort of feminist theories and feminist ideas and what came to mind for me was you know this concept of the male gaze, right?

00:03:23 Denice

Well, most you know feminists are familiar with this concept of the male.

00:03:27 Denice

Phase which is.

00:03:29 Denice

The way that women are viewed within the context of male desire specifically right?

00:03:38 Denice

You know heterosexual, affluent, white, male desire and so you know I I was really struck by this thought as I started to dive into the rabbit.

00:03:50 Denice

Hole of research.

00:03:51 Denice

This podcast about how increasingly, as a result of this connection between Wellness and consumerism, that women

00:04:00 Denice

Then we ourselves are becoming the new face of the male gaze, right?

00:04:05 Denice

So no longer do you know, do we have to be subject to sort of men viewing us this way now?

00:04:13 Denice

We view ourselves this way.

00:04:16 Denice

So it's like, you know it was so you know, weird to me as I was thinking about this whole process that you know, we've sort of created a monsters in ourselves in many ways.

00:04:32 Denice

So I thought that I would just take a few minutes at the beginning of this to maybe contextualize this talk about Wellness.

00:04:44 Denice

You know, as someone who really?

00:04:49 Denice

Connects to the idea of my lack of Wellness and the you know, sort of wanting to feel better and to be more holistically healthy.

00:05:03 Denice

You know I'm a fan of searching for the things that make us more well and I did a little bit of research into sort of the foundations of the quote UN quote Wellness movement. And you know, the reality is that it was developed in our home state, right California?

00:05:22 Denice

During the 60s and 70s, by hippies counterculture right that it it really connected.

00:05:31 Denice

The concept of Wellness.

00:05:34 Denice

To the idea of equality right?

00:05:37 Denice

It it was one of the fundamental places that we began to really consider the realities of inequality in terms of, you know, lack of access to Wellness and it really developed.

00:05:53 Denice

As a call to action around, you know, ensuring that race, class, gender, sexuality didn't prevent people from accessing holistic self-care and and medical, you know.

00:06:06 Denice

And health health access.

00:06:08 Denice

And so it was kind of interesting to sort of remind myself of of the roots of, you know this this industry.

00:06:20 Denice

And I also.

00:06:22 Denice

Speaking of industry.

00:06:25 Denice

Was thinking about the way that we.

00:06:27 Denice

Got from there.

00:06:29 Denice

To here right?

00:06:31 Denice

And and I think industry really is the.

00:06:36 Denice

Linchpin of that right that that instead of.

00:06:41 Denice

Wellness, being a call to action towards equality right as health as a human right, it's developed into this capitalist industry, an industry that's you know.

00:06:54 Denice

Primarily an industry of women, it's the largest economic industry that women are involved in globally.

00:07:09 Denice

And you know, it seems like this has been the reality for.

00:07:16 Denice

Decades, I mean, you know, I think about things like Avon and Mary Kay.

00:07:21 Denice

You know that sort of had this Wellness feel.

00:07:25 Denice

I don't.

00:07:25 Denice

Know what are your thoughts on this?

00:07:27 Leona

I think I think that that so this there's multiple things.

00:07:29 Leona

I'm thinking, you know, I'm always, I always have an opinion around something and one I think you know the Avon Mary Kay aspect of Wellness is like one of those double edged swords.

00:07:39 Leona

Because it also created economic independence for a lot.

00:07:42 Leona

Of women so.

00:07:44 Leona

This was a way that they could, they couldn't.

00:07:47 Leona

They could.

00:07:48 Leona

Incorporate themselves in in a semi former economic market, right?

00:07:55 Denice

Right?

00:07:55 Leona

So you.

00:07:56 Leona

You could be.

00:07:58 Leona

You could be one of those personal beauty consultants.

00:08:02

Right?

00:08:02 Leona

And travel around and you can do things and it, but it was.

00:08:06 Leona

It was still, you know, housing.

00:08:08 Leona

This idea of you know beauty and Wellness for that particular male gaze.

00:08:13 Leona

But it gave a lot.

00:08:14 Leona

Of power, so I see it as something that is deeply powerful in one way.

00:08:18 Leona

But then because it is, it's really tied to present ability on an on an unrealistic scale.

00:08:25 Leona

It becomes problematic, and then I think about the Wellness movement coming out, saying, hey, we are people that are recognizing that the.

00:08:32 Leona

Fulfilled doesn't sometimes meet all of our needs, right for systemic barriers or things like that, and they go to cultural practices like indigenous cultural practices or talk about eastern medicine or things like that.

00:08:44

All right?

00:08:47 Leona

And they have the privilege.

00:08:49 Leona

Oftentimes because these counterculture hippies were predominantly

00:08:53 Leona

You know, young white people.

00:08:53

Right, right?

00:08:55 Leona

Who could you know?

00:08:56 Leona

Check out and disengage in a very unique way that other people couldn't, and so they bring these over.

00:09:01 Leona

But then, as you said, this industry starts being built around.

00:09:06 Leona

Other people's practices that are daily Wellness practices that are holistic as we've talked about and organic in the sense that.

00:09:15 Leona

You practice it, but it doesn't have to have a monetary value attached to it all the time, and it when it makes its way back to us then it.

00:09:23 Leona

Then this is where we start getting the industrial complex right?

00:09:26 Leona

Because it's like you can't just do yoga.

00:09:30 Leona

For yoga's sake, which is a spiritual practice, it's it's woven into a deeper spiritual practice you need to do it with this very specific Yogi and go to the studio and.

00:09:41 Denice

Right, buy the right clothes.

00:09:42

You have to buy the.

00:09:43 Denice

And have the right equipment.

00:09:43 Leona

Right clothes and you.

00:09:45 Leona

You have you have to have like you know all these things, but it's like it's a.

00:09:49 Leona

It's it's an what is it? 1000 something over thousands of years old?

00:09:54 Leona

Tradition hey people just do just do right and it's passed out but when it gets into this Wellness market and then the and then women are told not only do you do it in this particular way, but like you said you have to buy things and you buy from this particular brand.

00:09:59

Right?

00:10:09 Leona

And then and then.

00:10:09 Leona

It became we wore yoga pants without actually doing yoga.

00:10:14 Denice

Right, right, I mean I.

00:10:18 Denice

I do get the opportunity to go to a Community yoga class, but I wear my yoga pants beyond my.

00:10:23 Denice

Yoga class for sure.

00:10:25 Denice

Yeah, absolutely yeah.

00:10:27 Denice

And it's so interesting, right?

00:10:29 Denice

Because you know, you pointed out.

00:10:32 Denice

The importance of recognizing that that a lot of these Wellness practices are actually appropriated practices, right so you know, for example, when we think about, you know it could be yoga.

00:10:47 Denice

It could be, you know, natural remedies, right that were tied to indigenous communities.

00:10:54 Denice

Meditation acupuncture right all these things that seem to be very connected to this concept of Wellness are all things that have been appropriated.

00:11:04 Denice

By whiteness, right from these communities who had less access to power and and you know the thing that's so fascinating is for decades and generations.

00:11:18 Denice

They've been practiced, but practiced and looked at as fringe.

00:11:24

Right?

00:11:25 Denice

And here now we're mainstream.

00:11:27 Denice

I mean it, you know, I think it was maybe five years ago that you know California passed a law that said that you know you, that insurance companies have to have to pay, right have to include acupuncture.

00:11:43 Denice

I mean people have been doing.

00:11:44 Denice

Acupuncture for thousands of years, right?

00:11:47 Denice

And now all of a sudden, we've decided it's legitimized.

00:11:50 Denice

Yeah, no, those are like so critical and important, and you know.

00:11:56 Denice

Well, I think we talked, you know.

00:12:00 Denice

We used that language, the Wellness sort of industrial complex you made reference to that, and it reminds me of course, of Aaron Wright's work in 69 where they talked about the medical industrial complex.

00:12:11 Denice

Right?

00:12:12 Denice

And the medicalization of some of our sort of.

00:12:17 Denice

You know basic health needs like even you know birthing and you know, I know we're not allowed to say this word in public anymore.

00:12:27 Denice

But this is a feminist rage podcast.

00:12:31 Denice

Things like abortion, right?

00:12:33 Leona

Yeah, yeah.

00:12:33 Denice

Who that that are now so you know, medicalized within a medical industry, but you know, had historically really been community engaged practices.

00:12:47 Denice

So yeah, this sort of.

00:12:50 Denice

Commodification, right, of those practices.

00:12:55 Leona

And I think that commodification, then you know, because we live in a capitalist society, leads very quickly to the commercialization of it.

00:13:03 Leona

And so you you when you said this idea of people taking and then it, it gets woven in in this very particular way.

00:13:12 Leona

And it's.

00:13:13 Leona

And there's this idea of like oh.

00:13:15 Leona

It was fringe, but then it becomes hip to be fringe and then I'm gonna present this fringe.

00:13:20 Leona

I mean anyone who's on social media.

00:13:22 Leona

I mean, I'm not on TikTok.

00:13:23 Leona

Anymore because I.

00:13:24 Leona

Had to, Speaking of my own Wellness, that's.

00:13:28 Denice

Yeah, no kidding.

00:13:28

OK.

00:13:30 Leona

I had to leave.

00:13:30 Leona

It because I was like wow this.

00:13:33 Leona

This is social.

00:13:34 Leona

Programming and I, you know, I don't know if I can participate.

00:13:37 Leona

I mean, I'll still watch them if.

00:13:38 Leona

People send them.

00:13:39 Leona

To me, but I couldn't be nice.

00:13:40 Leona

Noted noted right.

00:13:44 Leona

But this idea, though, that someone will come on and they're like, hey, did you know this thing and they do the whole close up?

00:13:53 Leona

Or it's they're talking really fast and they've got a really funny song.

00:13:57 Leona

And it's this idea that it.

00:13:59 Leona

You know I saw right before I left.

00:14:01 Leona

I saw someone doing some.

00:14:03 Leona

I feel like it was like Vicks vapor.

00:14:05 Leona

It was something that like my grandma did like you got sick, they rubbed you down with alcohol and like wrapped you in like but you know what I mean.

00:14:11 Denice

Love vics.

00:14:14 Leona

And then they were like this new and it's like ah no.

00:14:18 Leona

I mean we did that because.

00:14:19 Leona

You know, my grandmother learned that because you couldn't.

00:14:22 Leona

Go to the.

00:14:22 Denice

House right exactly because it was so.

00:14:24 Leona

If so, so there are people.

00:14:27 Denice

Pushed out right, these were practices of.

00:14:28 Leona

No push down, it's like OK and you know, and if I go to the hospital they'll probably.

00:14:32 Leona

Just say take some Tylenol, right?

00:14:34 Leona

I think you know that.

00:14:37 Leona

What really is important and I I I'm actually going to transition talking a little bit more about that that commercialization because I feel what we're speaking to is this idea that mental health and Wellness and being able to focus on your mental health and Wellness and have that be culturally supported is a basic human right.

00:14:57 Leona

Like it, it is a big it's.

00:14:58 Denice

Yeah, I mean we.

00:15:00 Denice

Barely acknowledge that health is a human right, and we certainly haven't really talked about mental health as being part of that.

00:15:06 Denice

Yeah, for.

00:15:07 Leona

And so this idea, that being a basic human right, but then it sits within a medical model.

00:15:14 Leona

And that medical model that?

00:15:16 Leona

I mean I I am a licensed clinical social worker.

00:15:20 Leona

I teach students about the DSM.

00:15:23 Leona

Like I know about diagnostic criteria and I still have issues with the DSM, right?

00:15:29 Leona

Like we we have it because you know it can do a lot of good things in the sense that people can have a label and they have.

00:15:35 Leona

A name and that.

00:15:35 Leona

Means they can get care for it.

00:15:37 Leona

But then the bad is they.

00:15:38 Leona

Have a label and they have a.

00:15:40 Leona

Name and then that with them the rest of their life.

00:15:44 Leona

We have pharmaceutical companies like I feel like take your medication if you need to.

00:15:49 Leona

I'm not that Wellness guru that is like drink turmeric and your depression will go away.

00:15:54 Leona

It's like no take.

00:15:56 Leona

Take your pills, that's what.

00:15:57

Right?

00:15:57 Leona

You need to.

00:15:58 Leona

Do it's OK and don't take the pills if.

00:16:01 Leona

You don't need to, right, but.

00:16:04 Leona

When we look at how mental health is driven by pharmaceutical companies?

00:16:10 Denice

I think that yeah, I mean I think for me this.

00:16:14 Denice

Is you know this kind of conversation really makes?

00:16:19 Denice

Forces me to think about like my own beliefs around this like I've I have a lot of deep feelings about pharmaceutical companies and their influence on people, right and practitioners and I myself, you know, have you know been prescribed?

00:16:39 Denice

Pharmaceuticals that I felt was sort of an extreme jump based on sort of what I was talking to.

00:16:45 Denice

My doctor about.

00:16:46 Denice

And so you know, I have historically relied on, you know, more of.

00:16:54 Denice

You know trying to rely on some of the more natural remedies, but then I'm also not like, yeah, don't get your vaccinations right like I mean, there is a happy medium if like you said.

00:17:05 Denice

Like if if yoga and natural remedies.

00:17:08 Denice

Work for you.

00:17:08 Denice

Great, and if they don't take your medication.

00:17:12 Denice

You know, I.

00:17:15 Leona

And I, but I think what ends up happening is that because mental health sits in this medical model and medical models have historically been bad for a lot of people, right?

00:17:29 Leona

Particularly when we look at how you know mental health and relationship to women.

00:17:36 Leona

Or you know what I mean, like the color or or the fact that it was like a mental disorder to be queer like so that all carries over.

00:17:45

Right?

00:17:47 Leona

And so it means that people.

00:17:49 Leona

Are in a space to to.

00:17:52 Leona

What those Wellness practices, right?

00:17:55 Leona

They they want to look at alternatives because they don't feel heard.

00:18:00 Leona

They they get a psychiatrist and they meet for them for 15 minutes.

00:18:05 Leona

And then that's it?

00:18:06 Leona

Or it's just so hard to get a mental health professional to talk to on a weekly basis?

00:18:12 Leona

When it's cost prohibitive, or.

00:18:15 Leona

There's just, you know, not that many people in your community. So what do humans do when something's lacking they?

00:18:20 Leona

They look at how they can feel the void, and I was. I mean, I'm joking, but I'm also serious about platforms like TikTok where I feel like now Wellness because we are in a place where we do talk about mental health.

00:18:33 Leona

Far more than we did previously.

00:18:35 Leona

I think about when I went in, I started grad school to be a social worker and all these campaigns about let's let's encourage talking about mental health and now I see it as something that is in the lexicon of people more readily.

00:18:49 Leona

But the degree to which it's in that lexicon, I start getting uncomfortable with because people now take self-help and they present it as like a gospel, right?

00:19:00 Leona

Like they present it.

00:19:00

Right?

00:19:02 Leona

As like you know, this is the way that.

00:19:02

Right?

00:19:03 Leona

You have to.

00:19:04 Leona

Do mental health.

00:19:05 Denice

Right and and you know, as you're talking about this, I'm thinking about it.

00:19:09 Denice

We talked, we maybe briefly touched on this when we looked at at labor like it also gets framed like from especially around mental health, right?

00:19:18 Denice

Yeah, it also gets framed as.

00:19:21 Denice

If you in if you individually engage in these practices, you go see a therapist. You do, you know yoga, you take you know you eat right then your mental health is going to be better and it it completely removes the reality of people's lived experience. I mean we are living in a society.

00:19:42 Denice

Where there is.

00:19:42 Denice

War and inequality and people you know in the US we think the most recent statistic is that we work 17 hours more a week than you know people who are like us in.

00:19:55 Denice

EU right like?

00:19:57 Denice

I mean, none of these things.

00:19:59 Denice

Things become the center of the conversation in terms of our deteriorating mental health.

00:20:08 Denice

It's all about like you do these things and things will be better.

00:20:12 Denice

It's just individualized focus.

00:20:14 Leona

Well and if you do these things in these steps that I have organized for you and for the low low rate of 12.

00:20:20 Denice

And pay me for that, yeah.

00:20:22 Leona

And you can.

00:20:23 Leona

You can get it and then you look at the steps and you're like this is fat phobia.

00:20:28 Leona

This this is classes this is, you know like all.

00:20:28

Right?

00:20:32 Leona

These other things but.

00:20:33 Leona

It it is the destructive part because we we look at the advent of like you gave us that intro we talked about in the 60s and 70s.

00:20:41 Leona

The rise of the self-help movement and the advice movement and the positives that it created for people.

00:20:47 Leona

But as it gets moved further and further into a platform of, this is how I'm going to make money.

00:20:53 Leona

Me it becomes problematic and then we think of the digital age of of how this happens, right?

00:21:00 Leona

So people will listen to someone who has pretty graphics or fun song or is really compelling on social media and be like, yeah, this is what I need to do for myself because then other people in the comments are going.

00:21:14 Leona

Yeah, I'm going to do this as well.

00:21:15 Leona

And it and it's this, you know, void of real connection and you're can and you you have this platform that goes OK.

00:21:23 Leona

Well, this is how we're all going to do it.

00:21:25 Leona

UM?

00:21:27 Leona

Without any real checks and balances, and it's happening.

00:21:30 Leona

At the speed of.

00:21:31 Leona

Right and it makes it really difficult.

00:21:33 Leona

And then you get which is.

00:21:35 Leona

You know my other favorite thing then you get when I say humans like to fill in the void.

00:21:40 Leona

Now we're getting like even start up mental health folks, right where you know we go OK class and space like people can't drive.

00:21:51 Leona

To go to a.

00:21:51 Leona

A therapist they can't afford it all these things, so let's fill the void and let's create so we can get to that better concept of Wellness digital.

00:22:00 Leona

Let's let's telehealth startups that are created.

00:22:05 Leona

Bye yeah.

00:22:07 Leona

And it's you will.

00:22:09 Leona

You'll be able to just text your mental health professional or at at a low low cost and all those different types of things.

00:22:15 Leona

And I believe in it like I believe in telehealth, I think it's it's great.

00:22:20 Leona

But once again, what context is it sitting in and how are we still creating those checks and balances that it's not replicating?

00:22:28 Leona

Institutional harms

00:22:30 Denice

Right absolutely, and I I was.

00:22:32 Denice

Thinking you know, like.

00:22:33 Denice

In thinking about the sort of digital connection to Wellness and mental health right, it goes back for me to the comment that.

00:22:46 Denice

I started with earlier.

00:22:48 Denice

Around you know women becoming the perpetrator of this male gaze because we begin to then.

00:22:54 Denice

Late Beauty and health, right?

00:22:57 Denice

So you know, like just you know in this digital age of you know, Insta Wellness, right?

00:23:08 Denice

You have to have a beautiful image and people have to look a particular way.

00:23:13 Denice

And you know.

00:23:14 Denice

Historically, what we consider to be beautiful now, especially for women, because this is a podcast about women, right?

00:23:24 Denice

Especially for women.

00:23:25 Denice

Historically, those things have not been considered healthy, right?

00:23:29 Denice

Ness, paleness, right. None of you know there are. There are times historically that the none of those things have have been considered healthy, but when we are, you know, in a visual digital environment and then we, you know, see health, quote, UN quote, see health we.

00:23:48 Denice

See it as.

00:23:50 Denice

Beauty and those things are not necessarily the same thing, although you.

00:23:54 Denice

Know we're they're often sold to.

00:23:56 Denice

Us as the same.

00:23:56 Leona

Thing well, and I think this also speaks to that if your brand is the opposite of that, like this, this sort of I and you know I've seen this with certain creators where they're like OK, I'm not going to be the hyper stylized beauty with the, you know.

00:24:15 Leona

The yoga pants and my juicer and you know all these other things.

00:24:19 Leona

But I'm going.

00:24:20 Leona

To be a.

00:24:21 Leona

A stylized, disorganized chaos right so it's like.

00:24:25 Leona

Like my hair is messy in a very particular way.

00:24:28 Denice

You mean, unlike my disorganized chaos on our podcast?

00:24:32

Today, you know.

00:24:34

What I mean, yeah?

00:24:34 Leona

It's like it's still promoting this very stylized brand, and even when people are like I'm so anti, it's this idea that they're they're anti in this very conformative way where you can still find 5 to 10 other people.

00:24:51 Leona

That are presenting that same look because they know that this is gonna sell as well.

00:24:56 Leona

So I'm not gonna be the Wellness where it's like bright lights and everything is fun and.

00:25:02 Leona

I don't even know why.

00:25:03 Leona

I put that voice on.

00:25:06 Denice

Because it's the voice you embodied in that moment.

00:25:09

It's the voice.

00:25:10 Leona

When you're like I'm perky and this is great and you know, did you know that you can grind up onion in and make your own onion powder and I'm like or you can get a bacterial infection.

00:25:18

OK.

00:25:24 Denice

Do that.

00:25:26 Denice

Or you could be.

00:25:26 Denice

Exhausted at the end of the.

00:25:28 Denice

Day and the onions will just.

00:25:28 Leona

I'm getting sauce and it's.

00:25:29 Denice

Be at that one.

00:25:29 Leona

Like I'm I'm good and then my entire brand is me in bed with the covers around me and I and I'm talking to you and it's just like this is who I am But it's still like in that coat.

00:25:30 Denice

More thing, yeah.

00:25:42 Leona

Concept of Wellness.

00:25:43 Leona

We're talking about.

00:25:43 Leona

It's still the commercialization of I'm going to.

00:25:47 Leona

I'm going to either promote a hyper Wellness that is.

00:25:51 Leona

Not even it's not about being unattainable.

00:25:54 Leona

It's just.

00:25:54 Leona

It's not realistic when you look at the scope for everyone or I'm gonna promote this stylized unwellness where it's like, you know everybody is like I'm gonna be yore and this is going to be like the stylized way that I show being unwell and how it it we all.

00:26:12 Denice

Matt, I think your is my spirit animal these days, so let's not.

00:26:17 Denice

He's not the subject of our feminist rage.

00:26:20 Denice

I'm not sure that Eeyore should be gendered.

00:26:23 Denice

I feel like Eeyore is a broad gender, yeah?

00:26:27 Leona

Your it's just like I'm tired.

00:26:30 Denice

I'm tired, this is the the women are unwell, right?

00:26:33

It's this.

00:26:34 Denice

You are epitomizes what we're talking about today.

00:26:37 Denice

So you know it's.

00:26:38 Denice

So interesting, because this I think there is a connection in terms of maybe transitioning onto some other thing that I found really fascinating in researching.

00:26:48 Denice

This is the, you know, as you were talking about the use of digital media.

00:26:57 Denice

Right in in sort of promoting a particular view of mental health or how people brand themselves.

00:27:07 Denice

What I found so interesting and was really maybe just completely oblivious to was.

00:27:17 Denice

The connection between you know, sort of the the the Wellness industry and these really extremist ideas.

00:27:28 Denice

And even I mean I don't know if we want to go this far.

00:27:32 Denice

But even sometimes the radicalization of Wellness, right within the context of.

00:27:38 Denice

You know how?

00:27:39 Denice

People view vaccines or, you know, quote UN quote science in relationship to to Wellness. Yeah, and you know, I was thinking maybe on a.

00:27:53 Denice

On a spectrum or a?

00:27:55 Denice

Yeah, a spectrum of perhaps.

00:27:59 Denice

Most benign to you know most extreme the impact that this sort of commercialization or consumerism might have on women, you know.

00:28:13 Denice

We talked about we referenced this earlier right?

00:28:16 Denice

The vast numbers of women who are involved in Wellness related multi level marketing, right?

00:28:24 Denice

So things like Mary Kay and Avon you know.

00:28:25 Leona

OK.

00:28:29 Denice

Interestingly, in sort of thinking about this for this podcast.

00:28:37 Denice

I discovered and didn't really think about this that even though you know.

00:28:41 Denice

3/4 of

00:28:43 Denice

The participants in these Wellness related MLM's multi level mark.

00:28:48 Denice

Getting are women a majority of the CEO's of these companies and the boards are still men like. I really didn't even conceptualize that, and I feel like a bad feminist because I think conceptualize that cuz of course they are right.

00:29:04 Denice

They are and so you know like.

00:29:06 Denice

I this was particularly.

00:29:08 Denice

Which is interesting to me.

00:29:11 Denice

And you know also acknowledging.

00:29:15 Denice

That the reality of these MLMS or multi level marketing, especially around Wellness, are sometimes pretty predatory.

00:29:25

Oh yeah.

00:29:26 Denice

You know there was a a couple of studies that saw, especially during the pandemic, right?

00:29:33 Denice

So during the pandemic?

00:29:35 Denice

Women actually lost jobs at rates far exceeding those of men and in in these sort of multi level marketing companies began to do direct recruitment during that time and so it felt like it feels really predatory right?

00:29:54 Denice

Because you know, most people who get involved in these actually lose money.

00:29:59 Denice

I speaking as someone who you know as a young single mom who had a lot of need for money, of course, and a flexible schedule because I was working other jobs.

00:30:12 Denice

You know, like I did one of those.

00:30:15 Denice

It was like toys or something multi.

00:30:17 Denice

Level marketing and I was asked to pay.

00:30:21 Denice

A lot of.

00:30:21 Denice

Money right in order to be involved in these and so it feels particularly predatory sometimes, yeah.

00:30:27

Well, I.

00:30:28 Leona

Think I learned about like how it's broken down.

00:30:31 Leona

What is it?

00:30:32 Leona

Netflix has one of those explains.

00:30:35 Leona

Yeah yeah yeah, and I feel like it may be I feel like there is an explain on multi level marketing and it talks about that like.

00:30:44 Leona

It because you're.

00:30:46 Leona

It's the brand you're selling and it's getting people in so that you you get to get enough people who are working under you and it just it like keeps going and going and there will always be like just a very small number of people on top which basically like replicates our economic structure.

00:31:02

Right?

00:31:07 Leona

General, but it's always this idea of like.

00:31:07 Denice

Right, I know how realism.

00:31:10 Leona

It's always like.

00:31:10 Leona

Oh, but I could be the next.

00:31:12 Leona

No, you're not going to be the next millionaire.

00:31:13 Leona

You're just gonna keep keep being a little worker bee in this that I feel like it's that I feel like it's.

00:31:20 Leona

But I could.

00:31:21 Leona

Be wrong because you know I take a lot.

00:31:22 Leona

Of things

00:31:22 Leona

In and I forget no, I mean.

00:31:25 Denice

I was doing.

00:31:26 Denice

Like I said, yeah I was doing some research into into this.

00:31:28 Denice

And you know there were.

00:31:29 Denice

There have been all kinds of, you know, studies that have really looked at and and you know, as we always do folks, we will put our resources up on.

00:31:41 Denice

The website thewomenleadnetwork.org website so that you can you know dive in yourself and take a look at some of the things that that we look at.

00:31:48 Denice

But you know that that you know in some studies you know more than 75% of the people either don't make money or lose money.

00:31:58 Denice

And then there's.

00:31:58 Denice

Always right, those few people at the top that continue to like sort of exploit folks.

00:32:04 Denice

And so to.

00:32:05 Denice

Me right?

00:32:06 Denice

Even though this seems very profound and.

00:32:10 Denice

And horrible in many ways.

00:32:12 Denice

That was sort of the most benign in terms of the the potential impacts.

00:32:18 Denice

I mean, you know Wellness has been linked to anti vaccine, right?

00:32:23 Leona

OK.

00:32:24 Denice

It's it's been linked to, you know.

00:32:27 Denice

Thanks to.

00:32:29 Denice

Gwyneth and Goop right?

00:32:31 Denice

Her sort of pseudo progressive conservative, you know where she was so excited.

00:32:39 Denice

What was it like?

00:32:40 Denice

Wasn't there a quote where she was like excited that Trump got elected because?

00:32:45 Denice

It you know.

00:32:47 Denice

Told us that anything was possible, right?

00:32:49 Denice

Kind of stuff so.

00:32:50 Leona

I honestly just block a lot.

00:32:54 Denice

Block a lot of that, right?

00:32:56 Leona

I just I I have to block it out and you know it's just a behind the scenes thing.

00:33:02 Leona

Denice and I have notes and I she wrote in here neoliberal like and I just, you know, I I teach I, and here's another dirty word we're not supposed to talk about.

00:33:15 Leona

I teach critical race theory.

00:33:17 Leona

Oh, we don't.

00:33:17 Leona

That is CRT uh-oh uh-oh.

00:33:22 Leona

Ding Ding Ding Ding.

00:33:23 Leona

So I teach CRT and one of the things is that it is this critique of liberalism and.

00:33:29 Leona

So Wellness, I mean, I'm I'll make some kind of I'll make it fit, I'll shoehorn it in, but I do like when you're talking about this Wellness and this pipeline to like extremism.

00:33:45 Leona

It really is this idea that people are like we can just do anything and we're fine and.

00:33:50 Leona

You know this is this is your niche and you'll be OK and we yeah we just stole somebody's culture and we're mass marketing it. But we talked about them and it's OK and we're you know everyone's the same.

00:34:04 Denice

Yeah, yeah.

00:34:06 Denice

Yeah, I mean so anyway, it just like it was so fascinating to me because I really, I think contextually had no idea.

00:34:15 Denice

And you know, I think like at maybe the very end of the spectrum, like the most extreme, you know the Argentina who is a.

00:34:28 Denice

PH D who wrote some?

00:34:32 Denice

Works that we'll post online for you all to take a look at actually has called the Wellness industry pastel cuyunon because of the way that it connects.

00:34:44 Denice

You know, I think you know one of the things that they say is that there's a central distrust of authority, right?

00:34:53 Denice

That both the sort of Q Anon folks.

00:34:56 Denice

I don't know much about Q Anon.

00:34:57 Denice

Thankfully, I I can.

00:35:00 Denice

And get into sort of having that understanding.

00:35:03 Denice

Thank goodness, thank goodness.

00:35:04 Denice

For researchers who are willing to go through all that **** on a daily basis and inform us cause I couldn't do it.

00:35:11 Denice

Yeah, but but you know just the the sort of linkages that that these messages around radicalization like these.

00:35:20 Denice

He went on message.

00:35:21 Denice

Is literally were targeted towards Wellness community members and then adopted and sort of put out in the community so it it just I.

00:35:30 Denice

I was really.

00:35:31 Denice

I had no idea to be honest about.

00:35:33 Leona

Well, and we also I I just because I just realized that this is also going to go up during Black History Month and I just for the for our our black folk and Black History Month there are.

00:35:48 Leona

Wellness people who are doing providing information that is deeply harmful to the black community.

00:35:54 Leona

Black people where I just saw one where this black woman is talking about.

00:35:59 Leona

Like you know, if you have a vegan diet you you know you're healthier and we aren't meant to have periods and.

00:36:08 Leona

Like and it it it.

00:36:10 Leona

Everything she's talking about where I was like this.

00:36:13 Leona

This is not eating disordered eating and you should go to your doctor if you have not had a cycle in three to four.

00:36:23 Leona

Months or some kind of healthcare professional, but that this idea that it's also being woven into blackness and like.

00:36:27

All right?

00:36:36 Leona

Blackness means that you don't have these certain things like your Wellness has to look like this for you to be a true black person and you have to follow these steps to be a true black person.

00:36:48 Leona

And I know that that comes out of.

00:36:50 Leona

A lot of deep suspicion and harm that has been perpetrated against black people in the culture, but it's also exploitative because once again, for the low low price of 1299, I can teach you how to be a good black.

00:36:54

Right from.

00:37:04 Leona

Who doesn't menstruate?

00:37:05 Denice

Right, I mean this.

00:37:07 Denice

I think again goes back to some of what we talked about.

00:37:11 Denice

At the at the beginning of this.

00:37:12 Denice

Which it feels deeply predatory like we're.

00:37:16 Leona

Deeply produced.

00:37:16 Denice

Praying we're praying.

00:37:18 Denice

On our own communities and and you know, women queer folks you know, you know, black folks and communities of color, right?

00:37:30 Denice

We're praying on.

00:37:31 Denice

Our own communities as we are subject right to the whims of.

00:37:38 Denice

Those who are really in power freaking CEO's who are.

00:37:42 Denice

Running these companies.

00:37:43 Leona

Who are who are making making money off of you, making yourself unwell?

00:37:45

You know?

00:37:48 Denice

Right, right?

00:37:49 Leona

Because then they have another.

00:37:50 Leona

Product to sell to you.

00:37:51 Denice

Exactly, it's like I mean to me a lot of times it it feels like.

00:37:56 Denice

The tobacco industry, when they began to produce the what, is it the quit smoking patches or whatever?

00:38:04 Denice

It's like we're gonna hook you on cigarettes so then we can sell you something.

00:38:08 Denice

Else so you know, for.

00:38:09 Denice

Those who are listening.

00:38:10 Denice

You may if if you're continuing to listen you.

00:38:13 Denice

May see a pattern in.

00:38:16 Denice

Sort of how we end up where we end up, and I think this is a good opportunity to maybe.

00:38:21 Denice

Wrap this up.

00:38:24 Denice

In, you know, just closing out on some some thoughts that you know we have about this.

00:38:31 Denice

You want to do?

00:38:31 Denice

You want to start?

00:38:32 Denice

Just you know, where do we end?

00:38:32 Leona

Well, because like you know I always have.

00:38:35 Leona

Thoughts where they?

00:38:37 Denice

That's why we're doing this.

00:38:40 Leona

Just me and Denice and our thoughts.

00:38:42 Leona

Well, I I think what's.

00:38:43 Leona

Upsetting about me.

00:38:44 Leona

This for me.

00:38:45 Leona

Like I said, is I I believe.

00:38:48 Leona

Emotional Wellness, mental health.

00:38:50 Leona

All those types of Wellness.

00:38:51 Leona

Even access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

00:38:55 Leona

Access to A to what we think of as a healthy body that is a thriving body is a human right.

00:39:03 Leona

I just get really concerned when it is told that it has to your Wellness.

00:39:08 Leona

Has to look like this.

00:39:10 Leona

I mean yes everyone should drink some water.

00:39:13 Leona

It's good for you, right?

00:39:14 Leona

But not everybody has access.

00:39:15 Leona

Even the United States of America has access to clean drinking water and so the Wellness is all about you should drink water, but only this type of water that.

00:39:24 Leona

Has been taken from the special caverns of leprechaun forests and that becomes a problem.

00:39:29 Denice

Right?

00:39:33 Leona

Everyone should have some access to sunlight.

00:39:35 Leona

Everyone should be able to, like bring, breathe clean air, go for a walk.

00:39:39 Leona

All these other things, but.

00:39:41 Leona

When it's couched in, you should be having these many calories a day.

00:39:44 Leona

And you should be doing this and your body needs to be this particular way like that's fat phobia like leave people alone like it's like, right?

00:39:55 Leona

To let people be happy and healthy right to agree that they are happy and healthy is determinate on how they feel about themselves.

00:40:04 Leona

And I know that's not a really good conclusive answer.

00:40:07 Leona

It's pretty Pollyanna but I just I'm just sort of like can we just pull back and can you stop trying to sell me?

00:40:16 Leona

Wellness and happiness.

00:40:17 Denice

Well, and I think maybe you know my.

00:40:21 Denice

Wrap up is in relationship to that that you know.

00:40:24 Denice

I've been thinking about this a lot.

00:40:28 Denice

You know the social determinants of health, right? Yes, so you know only about 25% actually of how healthy we are has to do with our individual like DNA and makeup, right? And so much of the rest of our health has to do with societal and structural issues.

00:40:50 Denice

Right?

00:40:51 Denice

You know, if we think of health as the ability to thrive in a society, right?

00:40:58 Denice

The ability to you know to to feel comfortable and confident in your own body.

00:41:05 Denice

You know people who don't have access to productive healthcare, maternal health care, people who don't have access to healthcare in general.

00:41:14 Denice

People who live in violent communities.

00:41:16 Denice

No clean water, right?

00:41:17 Denice

So these are all.

00:41:19 Denice

Structural issues right, and so I think.

00:41:23 Denice

You know, maybe this is the same wrap up that we do every single time and honestly we don't do this intentionally, but to us it always comes back to this, right?

00:41:31 Denice

Yeah, but the emphasis it's a distraction, right?

00:41:36 Denice

The emphasis being on what, how many glasses of water you can drink or how many yoga classes I go to to make me healthy.

00:41:44 Denice

And feel well is a distraction from the fact that you know we don't have access to healthcare for everybody that we live in societies where there is extreme gun violence.

00:41:58 Denice

You know in California.

00:42:00 Denice

Yeah, we you know just a few days before recording this, you know, had two mass shootings in one day, right?

00:42:09 Denice

So when we talk about Wellness it seems.

00:42:15 Denice

You know wrong and inappropriate and frustrating to continue to focus on individuals.

00:42:21 Denice

And you know, maybe this for me is ultimately the you know what that comes down to is that we're also telling women.

00:42:31 Denice

Don't worry about all this other ****, don't worry about changing the world.

00:42:34 Denice

Don't worry about gun violence.

00:42:36 Denice

Just worry about yourself, right?

00:42:39 Denice

Worry about all the things that you are not and which obviously exacerbates the impact on us.

00:42:45 Leona

And worry about yourself.

00:42:47 Leona

Just don't worry about yourself in the context of.

00:42:50 Leona

I have to follow.

00:42:51 Leona

A model that somebody else's doing like keep yourself at center. Make sure that you're contributing to your emotional and mental Wellness.

00:42:59 Leona

But when it when it comes?

00:43:01 Leona

To you in a very pretty pretty.

00:43:02 Leona

Package and I.

00:43:03 Leona

You know, I like pretty pretty packages.

00:43:06 Leona

I'm not, I'm.

00:43:06 Denice

I do too.

00:43:07 Denice

I love them.

00:43:07 Leona

Things like and.

00:43:08 Leona

If you make it easier for me like OK, I'm not gonna lie like if you say, hey, here's a here's a package to go do some.

00:43:17 Leona

I did adult ballet go take some ballet.

00:43:20 Leona

That was really great.

00:43:21 Leona

It was for my Wellness, but all of a sudden I wasn't like.

00:43:24 Leona

OK, now my entire lifestyle has to be ballet and I have to make sure that I'm building all my well.

00:43:29 Leona

And if I deviate from that then I and I'm.

00:43:31 Leona

Not doing the this particular type of ballet.

00:43:34 Leona

Then I am not, you know, am I really?

00:43:37 Leona

Well, and it's like it's just all back up.

00:43:40 Denice

Here's here's the reality.

00:43:42 Denice

Neither one of us is.

00:43:43 Denice

Really well because.

00:43:45 Denice

The women are unwell.

00:43:47 Denice

Let's just be clear.

00:43:49 Denice

That being said, thanks for joining us again, you know we will post all of our sources up so that you also can take a look at some of the things we're taking a look at and you know, come to your own conclusions.

00:44:02 Denice

Although as we always say at the beginning of this, we.

00:44:04 Denice

Feel our conclusions are absolutely correct, but.

00:44:08 Denice

We are more than happy.

00:44:09 Leona

Are very non conclusive conclusion just just raging and rambling.

00:44:15 Leona

But you know?

00:44:16 Denice

Alright, alright so so until next time, which we hope will be sooner than it has in the past.

00:44:25 Denice

We will see you then this is Denice signing off and Leona.

00:44:31 Leona

With a little.

00:44:31

Song OK.