

The Lovelight Stories

PODCAST

Ep: 6 | CARING FOR YOUR SOUL WITH MANDA CARPENTER

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00:01.20

lovelightstories

Manda. Thank you so much for joining me on the Lovelight Stories Podcast today.

00:05.23

Manda Carpenter

Thank you for having me. It's so exciting to be here with you. I feel like we're really across the table from each other.

00:13.31

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, exactly me too. And you've been someone that I've wanted to have on the show and things like that because I've watched what you've been doing and followed all of your work for quite a few years now, and I just love what you do. The type of topics you talk about, the social justice issues, the foster care, all of that and so um, before we dive into the rest of the conversation, can you just help us understand the work that you do a little bit.

00:42.38

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, yeah, you know it was easy when I was a public school teacher, I could just be like I'm a teacher and everyone knows what that means. We've all had a teacher we can picture. My work now is a little bit different, and so ah, the best way to explain it is I am a writer, speaker, and advocate. I write books among other things. I speak on a variety of topics. I have a podcast, so similar to this. I do lots of speaking both in-person events and then on the podcast or virtual events. And then the advocacy - the advocating part of my work is typically focused in the child welfare space. So a lot of foster care related things. I am a foster parent but I also just am involved at a state level, well county, sometimes state level, it depends. We. We moved about a year ago and so things are shifting. Ah, but basically yeah, I'm really passionate about using my gifts. To hopefully make a difference in the world and it's so fun, but it is like not a traditional 9 to 5 so. It's really weird to tell people what I do and you know the question that most people are really wanting to know is like how do you make money and I'm like oh gosh that's a whole other conversation because there's just so much to it.

01:50.13

lovelightstories

Yeah, and I would have to echo that you do so many different things and 1 of the things that you did more recently was launch your book, Soul Care to Save Your Life, and if you didn't do anything else I think this would be such just the prize of your career probably because it's just chock full with so much of what you've learned and the things you've walked through in your own life. Can you tell us what was the main purpose behind writing this book when you first started out?

02:22.69

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, thank you that was really sweet. You know the main reason I wrote that book is I think it's the book that had to come out of me so there are other books I'm currently working on that I'm really excited about as well. There's such a difference though that soul care to save your life was my first traditional book. And so it reads like a memoir it reads very much like my story but we didn't sell it as a memoir. It's not angled that way. It technically is not a memoir. In fact, it is very much angled to be 15 practices of how to care for your soul. So it's a self-help book for lack of other words. And I wrote it because I really it's like I wanted to say so many things and teach people so many things based off my own lessons that I learned. Um but the best way to go about it was to just approach it the way that things happened in my life. The way that they played out in my life was that. I hit a rock bottom and then from there I learned that nothing matters more than the condition of your soul and it was upon that realization that I went down just like this long journey I mean I'm still on it right? It's never ending but that's essentially the book that I wrote was I wanted to write.

Because I would run into so many people and even someone from high school I'll just share this like really short story but I ran into someone from high school and she said oh my goodness like it's been a decade or maybe even more at this point but at least a decade. She's like and you like I don't even recognize you. And she wasn't talking about the way that I look I actually still look pretty similar to how I did in high school I just lay off the tanning beds. But um, but she was talking about I wasn't recognizable in terms of who I became and I was a little thrown off by it at first I kind of felt like it was you know...

Not a compliment right? like almost an insult and I was like what does that mean, but then she went on to say you know it's really beautiful to see the way that you've turned out like the ways that your life has taken form and without giving it all away soul care to save your life is the book that I wrote for people who like me. Want a better future than our past want to not be defined by our past mistakes but want to be able to break free from that and actually create a new destiny a new legacy and make our life meaningful and matter and it starts with caring for our soul so that was way long of an answer. Yes.

04:50.48

lovelightstories

Though I love it that is. It's so powerful starts with caring for your soul and um, you mentioned you hit rock bottom What did that look like? what was that?

05:01.51

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, rock bottom was when I was newly married to my husband. He's still my husband today. So spoiler alert we stay together. Um, but I stepped outside of our marriage and I was unfaithful and I would say that in itself was a rock bottom.

And then I would take it a step further in saying that the fact that I was so ashamed of what I had done and I thought there was no coming back from it. There was no way that we could heal from it or that I could it like there was just so much shame that I kept it a secret. Um, for almost a year and that secret nearly killed me. It took such an enormous toll on my mental health and that's where like I would say the darkest part of my rock bottom like if I if I could explain like I thought it was at Rock bottom when I committed that mistake when I made. That terrible decision and then keeping it a secret and day after day like kind of harboring this guilt and the shame just it left me isolated and I felt like that's when I was like on the cold floor of Rock Bottom. That's the best way for me to describe it. There was ah and I even write this in the book. But like there were no good days.

Like it got to the point where every day I didn't want to be here anymore.

06:22.37

lovelightstories

That's a really profound thing to get to that point and to feel that and feel so alone and ashamed and I'm sure it was just like you said such a moment of how do I get out of this? and how did you start to climb out of that? because like you said things are good today. So how did you get out of that?

06:46.54

Manda Carpenter

Yeah I mean gosh Obviously it's hard to capture it all in in a couple of sentences. But here's what I'll say for me, it came to a point where my mental health I already. Like genetically and biologically was predisposed to anxiety and depression and that was already a struggle for me. So then you couple that with a mistake like infidelity and my faith which I I wouldn't say caused more shame but I would just say the holy spirit was kind of like nagging on me like you need to confess you need to confess put all that together and.

07:22.40

Manda Carpenter

Yeah I was in a really bad place and I didn't want to be here anymore and it was really as dark as the best way I can explain is I had suicidal ideations I thought about what it would be like to not be here anymore. I thought about how I would not be here anymore and for anyone listening who may be in that Place. You know there. I am so thankful we have so many resources abundant resources available and so I'm sure you can link those in the show notes. But for me. Thankfully there was a woman in my life who is a mentor of mine and yeah through what I would describe a series of Holy spirit-led events. She and I grew so close and I grew to trust her and to feel safe with her and I Finally one day decided I was either going to end my life or I was going to tell the truth and when that day came it felt almost like a random day but I think it was a Tuesday.

Like texted her and I just it was like it had to come out of me so I was like hey can you meet me here. Let I need to talk to you right now and like she somehow miraculously was available. We sat down and I just gave like a thousand disclaimers like I think I said things like. Hope you don't view me like any differently I hope you don't think this whole time I've been living a lie or a double life like I I probably offered so many disclaimers and then finally I just blurted it out like I just said it was a while ago but I cheated on my husband and I felt so guilty ever since and I literally don't want to be here anymore because I don't think there's a way out of this.

08:53.46

Manda Carpenter

And I screwed up and things will never be the same and what if I can't even heal from this What if I'm this person forever. What if I can't even be in a monogamous relationship where do I go from here right? So I was just in like a total despair but what I will say is that the minute that confession came out of my mouth out loud to another human being in that moment something really divine did happen and I felt lighter I felt freer there was there was hope and it's not like my mentor gave me hope she actually I would say in a really wise way.

09:29.63

Manda Carpenter

She really didn't make any promises or any grand gestures of like or yeah Grand promises of you know he's going to stay with you. This is all going to be fine because she couldn't say that she didn't know right? So in wisdom, she just said I can't promise you a happy ending, but I can promise you a life worth living and she of course cared for my mental health and checked in and made sure like I wasn't going to act on a plan which was super important and then from there I think it was just 15 minutes between that conversation and driving to my apartment in Chicago where my husband was home waiting for me and I said I walked through the door I was crying I looked a hot mess. My armpits were sweaty and I was just like I have to tell you something like I have to get off my chest and you're gonna hate me and you might want to leave me but I just need to tell you and I just said it. And it was obviously a very profound moment. Um, it was huge.

10:29.53

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, what in in in your book. You talk about ease response Eric's response and I think that is such an important piece to this because it it was ah said with a lot of grace. Can you share what that was?

10:43.47

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, the very first thing out of my husband's mouth when I said I cheated on you and I'll tell you everything but I have to get this off my chest and I'm so sorry I've been harboring it. It's not even recent. It's been almost a year but and I'm not repeating it. You know I gave said all these things and as soon as I so basically shut up. He said but I still love you. It was just like that like there was heartache and heartbreak and devastation and almost this like how could you? it was ah it was almost like a question but I still love you and the reason that has never left me even though the details of the rest of that day and that interaction feel very blurry and fuzzy and I don't remember a lot probably because my mind is like repressing it. The reason that has never left me is because it was so profound. It was the first time that in that year I've been hiding this thing that I'd done in the secret of sin it was the first time that I felt like what god or through the holy spirit had been like kind of whispering to me all along became true became true in a tangible way like the words of my husband in that moment matched what god had been saying to me all along.

11:47.68

lovelightstories

Yes.

11:59.21

Manda Carpenter

Not that God or the holy spirit had said like your husband's going to stay with you but just that that on the other side of truth on the other side of this horrible sin this thing that was literally killing me that that it didn't need to be death on the other side of that was actually truth and love

and Grace and mercy. Um, and. I want to give a disclaimer because I never want to paint an overly romanticized picture of what confessing something like infidelity in a marriage looks like it wasn't just that right in the days that followed in the hours that followed there was yelling there was cussing. There was how could you and I'm angry and I'm. Sad and I will never forget the sight of him curled up on the couch sobbing I don't ever want to remember that but I can't erase it from my brain like there was real consequences for the behavior and so.

12:54.81

Manda Carpenter

Yes, there was grace and mercy and it aligned with God's word and it was still a really hard journey towards healing for both myself individually and in our marriage as a couple.

13:05.81

lovelightstories

Right? And that's what's so powerful too about confession is there are consequences and it's both and but at the end of it like you said it on the other side. It wasn't death. There was life and abundant life that can follow. Um, when you're. Following God's word and and moving forward and so um, that's just a really powerful thing to realize that this doesn't have to be your life forever.

13:33.26

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, no I Totally agree. Yeah.

13:42.19

lovelightstories

Yes, um, so I think also in your book I thought it was really profound you talking about the root cause of how you came to realize why you were unfaithful to your husband and can you share a little bit about that. And what led you to make those decisions.

14:01.85

Manda Carpenter

yeah I love that this is coming up because I think no nobody wakes up one day and just says I think today's a good day to screw up my whole life right? Nobody wakes up one day and says I think today I'm going to get a Dui or I think today I'm going to steal money from my company or I think today I'm going to gossip about my best friend or I think today I'm going to cheat on my.

14:12.26

lovelightstories

Yeah.

14:20.89

Manda Carpenter

And right we don't wake up one day. Yes, these are decisions that are made and their poor their poor behavior. You know they're horrible choices. But I just want to like really for people listening I hope it's like a oh yeah, that's so true like nobody wakes up and just decides today's a good day to screw up my life or to make a bad choice that's going to hurt somebody else.

14:38.24

lovelightstories

Yeah.

14:40.20

Manda Carpenter

However, we get there because we're not living Consciously. So What happened is during my after I made that confession to my husband. We started going to counseling I was we were already actually going as a couple which is really interesting and kind of another layer to this onion but I needed to start going individually. Um, to really dig deeper because I wanted to know I think I started because I wanted to know like could I be healed from this I realized that I was really addicted to the affirmation of men and through therapy it became evident Why it's not an excuse to justify the behavior by the way this is just. Context that is important when we know ourselves we can transform we can Change. We don't have to repeat the sins and the behaviors and so at the root of my addiction to affirmation from men which unfortunately was sought outside of my marriage at that point at the root of it was this unhealed child.

15:37.24

Manda Carpenter

Who wanted her dad to be in her life and he wasn't there who wanted him to be there emotionally physically um, really just in any way and again it doesn't mean that everyone who has a has a lack of a father in their life is going to have daddy issues and it's going to come out the same way mind dead. And that's just 1 example but like when we don't do our inner work to heal from childhood wounds. It'll show up one way or another in your life and for me, it showed up as in stepping outside of my marriage and looking and ah and just really enjoying the validation and attention of men. At any cost and so it was really important to get to the root in order to heal.

16:19.15

lovelightstories

Yes, isn't that so interesting too because like you said, not everyone will end up with the same issues as they get older. But I Do think when you look at a lot of societal issues. There is roots that stem way back to childhood and family up. Bringing and all that and I know you've even talked about that through your foster care platform and all of that. But it's really so true and I think the fact that that is the case means we do have to offer ourselves and others more grace because we're just human beings and we're doing the best that we can.

16:47.82

Manda Carpenter

And.

16:54.36

lovelightstories

Um, yet at the same time we do need to have that inner awareness to work on our soul right? And here's a plug for you as you do soul care retreats and lots of soul care things. Um, so for people that want to dig deep and become intentional with their lives and their inner work.

17:11.74

Manda Carpenter

Yeah I am so passionate about soul care and doing and when I say Soul care I'm talking about just taking care of the inner parts of yourself that no one else can see taking care of those that resentment that bitterness that envy that whatever it is.

17:13.46

lovelightstories

Yeah, it's all so powerful.

17:30.60

Manda Carpenter

Because nobody can see what's motivating you to behave the way that you behave or what's you know What's this context of your childhood that informs the way you show up in the world today. None of us can know that about each other only we can know that about ourselves when we look inward and do that work and 1 other thing I'll say is that. Going back to when I said you know nobody wakes up and just says today's a good day to script my life. So how does it happen then well I think it happens because it's a series of really small tiny decisions tiny yeses along the way that feels seemingly innocent but ultimately lead to the big thing for me. It's you know like flirting back with the person in the coffee shop just thinking. Oh it's harmless like he's just complimenting my dress and I'm just kind of giving him those eyes I'm like thank you, you know like whatever for me, it starts like that for somebody else. It might start by I'll just have 1 drink. It's just 1 drink for somebody else. It might be oh, it's just 1 purchase.

18:26.32

Manda Carpenter

Right? It can look so different and so I hope that people who are listening aren't just thinking this doesn't apply to me I don't need soul care like I'm not in danger of cheating on my spouse or I'm not even married. It's not about that sole care is about caring for the inner parts of yourself that no one else can see and we.

18:40.22

lovelightstories

Yep.

18:44.46

Manda Carpenter

All have worked too. No one is exempt. No one is immune to sin and so that's why yeah I offer retreats I wrote this book. It's so much of my work is rooted in this because I know that at the end of the day our follower count on Instagram doesn't matter. Our wardrobe to some extent. You know it's like what matters but does it really like what really matters at the end of the day is that we live a life. We're proud of in a life of integrity and the only way to get there is if we're willing to do the work of caring for our soul.

19:04.31

lovelightstories

Yep.

19:13.13

lovelightstories

Yes, Amen that is very powerful. Yes, Ok so when stepping back to like sharing about your platform sharing about your sharing about your story and your platform I mean. How did you like for other people who might have something in their lives that they're wanting to share to help others become intentional with their lives. How did you decide what to share and how to actually share it.

19:44.23

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, this is a hard one because we're not like I would not say that everyone needs to blast their stuff on the internet right? Not everyone needs to write a book about it. Um, so I think we all have to just live within the truth of who we are and who God's created us to be so for me.

19:58.96

lovelightstories

Yeah.

20:01.85

Manda Carpenter

I've always been living publicly. So therefore when it came to this. It was sort of like well it's going to be no different. You're going to share this publicly because you kind of share everything publicly. However, wisdom still withholds. So I didn't share it in real time. There was you know, almost seven years between

20:13.79

lovelightstories

Yeah.

20:18.52

Manda Carpenter

Things going down and me deciding to share about it. Publicly. Um, which to some people still wouldn't be enough time. That's okay, we're all different. My husband and I made the decision together for what we felt comfortable Sharing. We also were really intentional and took it to. People that we felt like were wise counseling our life as far as how much how much of the details need to be revealed. What? What's really worth we. We asked ourselves at the end of the day. What how can we share this. How can we allow God to use this because it's totally a testimony right? It's totally this thing where I'm like God has healed me God has renewed my marriage and restored so. Many things. How can I tell the world about it because to be honest, people are tired of hearing about others proclaiming God's goodness and God's grace if they're not willing to expose what God has brought them out of and what God has brought them through like don't tell me God's great, but don't but without some context of why is God Great. What is what is God done to change you? How does your life look different because of your relationship with God? That being said, we just we started to say well is this necessary? No remove it, right? And so we kind of got rid of the stuff that just felt like juicy details that were really just Clickbait drama. Whatever.

21:28.81

lovelightstories

Right.

21:30.83

Manda Carpenter

And got to the heart of what needed to be shared but it is. There's a discernment piece and my best advice if when debating on how to share and be vulnerable is you can't rush it. You need to invite someone wiser someone that you maybe someone more seasoned in life someone who you hold in high regard for 1 or more reasons to speak into it and um, and again if it's not you have to question your motives. What's your motive like if I'm sharing this I've had people who have accused me along the way of saying like.

21:51.32

lovelightstories

Yeah.

22:07.13

Manda Carpenter

Oh goodness what did they say oh things like it's not that's not something to brag about like why would you brag about cheating on your husband. It's like wait a second you think I'm bragging like I'm proud of this like I'm not proud of this. It's really hard to share I don't want to share it but I'm willing to go first because when we get vulnerable when we expose our junk.

22:25.57

Manda Carpenter

And reveal god's goodness and glory and all those things. Um, it is powerful. It gives other people permission. It takes people out of isolation and out of shame and hiding and secrecy and so I want to do for someone what I needed in 2015 when I was.

22:43.79

Manda Carpenter

Struggling and down and out and no one really knew because I was so good at putting on a mask.

22:47.37

lovelightstories

Yes, and let's talk about like vulnerability and the power of shame and also the power of grace through your story because I know in your in your book I've wrote it down because I thought it was so powerful. It says Grace transforms the person receiving it. But also the one giving it. And we talked a little bit about um how Eric responded to you but but can you shed light a little bit more on like the power that that grace in that moment like was healing for you but also for him.

23:19.93

Manda Carpenter

yeah I mean I could give a million examples but that 1 in particular is an easy an easy one for people to grasp just because of the weight of the sin and the hurt but obviously for me the grace that was given was was.

23:30.41

lovelightstories

Yeah.

23:38.66

Manda Carpenter

Was relief that was palatable. It wasn't relief like I'm off the hook I'm just going to go do it again which I think somewhere along the lines like people think like oh well, if we give Grace then they'll just think it's okay and they'll just do it again and again I would actually argue it's the opposite I would argue that when we feel the needs like reprimand and scold.

23:42.60

lovelightstories

A.

23:58.44

Manda Carpenter

That puts someone back into a place of shame to where they're more likely to repeat the cycle. But if we can actually meet them with Grace and mercy and in a way that people from the outside looking in go that doesn't make any sense is beautiful. It is powerful. It is going to change everything.

24:01.53

lovelightstories

Yeah.

24:15.69

Manda Carpenter

Know like for example with my own with our son. We have a toddler a little boy and if I am like no shia. Don't do that that was naughty. He gets very upset I think he gets very ashamed. Obviously he's still learning to communicate because he's not even too but he will do it again like let's say he's hitting or something he'll just do it again and like no shia.

24:35.64

Manda Carpenter

What I've learned is if I actually say like oh shy that really hurts like let's not do that mommy I forgive you but we're not going to do anymore right? like taking a totally different approach a gracious approach that seems to be much more effective when we revert to tools of shame. Thinking that that's going to change the behavior. It does the exact opposite of what we want and so yeah, it's life-changing when we receive grace and then I would also argue that with Eric like he would tell you if he were sitting here today that.

24:56.60

lovelightstories

Yes.

25:07.35

Manda Carpenter

Yes, we shouldn't ignore or suppress our feelings like he went through the cycles of the stages of grief essentially right? The sadness the anger all of the things and after going through all of that he chose to forgive and to give Grace and he repeatedly chooses that when. When this comes back up and he needs to revisit it because um, holding on to it like a grudge is actually just harming him. It's not especially at this point like years have passed and I'm I've like moved on so has he if you know.

25:33.90

lovelightstories

Right.

25:42.73

Manda Carpenter

If he were to let's say bring it up when we fight he doesn't do this but I know couples that have gone through what we've gone through and it seems to be like the thing that the spouse throws in the other person's face every time they fight about anything they could be fighting about a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and the way that it's being made and the other person's like but you cheated it on me years ago. Whatever.

25:51.93

lovelightstories

Yeah.

26:00.73

Manda Carpenter

We haven't experienced that but when we've talked to couples who are at that place What we've noticed and what we've tried to speak to them about is that it's not helping. It's not hurting the person like there. It comes from that phrase, hurt people hurt people, right?

26:14.54

lovelightstories

Um, yes.

26:17.74

Manda Carpenter

So they're just reacting from a place of hurt and there's clearly a wound that still needs to be tended to and um, but when we when we show grace like it's radical I think it's why our healing journey for Eric and I again we're all still on our own journey. So I'm not saying we're fully healed and we're perfect.

26:34.26

lovelightstories

Yep, yeah.

26:34.49

Manda Carpenter

But it's why I think we were able to recover as quickly as we were and then move on with our lives. We didn't stay in it for years where he said but how could you? It's like feel the feels deal with it just like I needed to feel my feelings and deal with it and get help and I had to like rebuild trust and that's a whole thing but also like you know. If 5 years from now we're still talking about whether or not you trust me? That's an issue so there comes a point where it's like you, you almost just have to decide am I going to move forward in Grace or not and that's that determines for us that determined obviously where our marriage went next.

26:56.58

lovelightstories

Right? right? Yes.

27:13.93

Manda Carpenter

And so it yeah we chose grace and we have no regrets.

27:19.29

lovelightstories

That's wonderful and the intentionality I think shines through all of that What you've done with your lives and just what I see through your platform too and how you've continued to grow through that and um, it's really important So okay, let's switch gears really quickly. We don't have to spend a lot of time on this. But um, I've seen you speak about different things culturally and I think you have really unique views and I think um, culturally, it's just so prevalent right now to be

able to speak on them and so one of the things is just the idea of cancel culture and this is like a whole can of worms probably but what is your view on cancel culture and how we should engage with things. We don't agree with online specifically.

27:57.16

Manda Carpenter
And.

28:07.90

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, yeah, love this question and you know we were just talking about grace. So I think it totally translates into this conversation I'm a I'm a big believer people who follow me and who have read my book will hear me often say there isn't a single person we wouldn't love if we knew their story.

28:10.84

lovelightstories
Yeah.

28:27.69

Manda Carpenter

I Really believe that I believe that when we know the whole story. We our hearts are softened. Our eyes are opened. We have a little bit of compassion. Maybe empathy. It doesn't necessarily mean that it changes our mind about the thing that we disagree with it doesn't mean that it cancels a mistake and we're just supposed to you know turn a blind eye.

28:32.94

lovelightstories
Okay.

28:46.72

Manda Carpenter

I'm not saying that. But I think Cancel culture is toxic I think it's wrong I think it's unhelpful I think it's doing what we just talked about a little bit Ago. It's trying to use shame to advocate for something and shame isn't a good tool for advocacy in any way. So For example, if you follow a brand and they really screw up and you just cancel them and you're bashing them on the internet and you're throwing away your clothes from there and you're I Guess their clothing Store. We're just gonna go with that and you're throwing away your clothes from there and you um, you know I just think I guess I'm curious like what do you want to come from that because I just.

29:18.67

lovelightstories
Right.

29:21.60

Manda Carpenter

Don't know like if what you want to come from it is for them to learn from the mistake and to do better I Think there's a better way of approaching it I think you can write an email to the brand and sincerely and wholeheartedly express your concern I think you can um you can privately say to yourself.

29:26.11

lovelightstories
Bright.

29:37.46

Manda Carpenter

I don't I'm gonna Boycott I'm not gonna shop there anymore and this is a choice that aligns with my integrity about something cool do that. But I think if you're going to be someone who publicly proclaims your love for God or the fact that you're a Christ follower and then in the same breath. You're going to bash and cancel and like it.

29:57.69

Manda Carpenter

Technically shame whether it's a human being or a brand ran by human beings I think we're misrepresenting the gospel I think we're doing a disservice and I don't think that if Jesus were here in 26023. Whatever that he would say yeah, that's how we're going to That's how we should change that. I I think Jesus would probably say what are you doing and why are you doing it. Jesus was also a fan of questions. That's why I phrased it in a question right? And so I know that's a long answer but all that to say is I don't think cancel culture is the same as ah.

30:18.60

lovelightstories

Yes, yes.

30:33.50

Manda Carpenter

Or what I'm trying to say is I think I've spoken to cancel culture. What I'm trying to say though is if you don't like something someone's supposed to see on the internet am I saying that you have to stay following them forever endeavor no I don't think so um, but 1 thing I do and I talk about this in soul care to save your life because I don't just talk about deep things like infidelity I talk about. A wide spectrum of things and so even on a more surface-y level when somebody I follow starts to really bother me I don't like what they're posting or what they're saying maybe how they're dressing. Whatever it is. It's causing a reaction inside of me. The first thing I do is ask myself. Why does something that has nothing to do with me causing such a big reaction.

31:11.79

lovelightstories

Yes.

31:12.63

Manda Carpenter

Inside of me and I sit with it and I look inward and I really wrestle with all of the truth of myself first because sometimes it comes what comes out is oh I think that they're actually showing a part of myself that I don't like It's like a mirror and I'm seeing a part of myself like oh I feel like they brag a lot. Oh gosh. That's really annoying and then I sit with it long enough I'm like I think it's a mirror for the very thing in my own self that is not that is not healed or not healthy anyways. So all that to say I just think we need to have discernment.

31:51.79

Manda Carpenter

And the way we go about things Publicly in particular is really important and that's why I'm not a fan of cancel culture I Just think it does no good and doesn't actually advocate for change which is what I think we want when we're when we're canceling someone or company.

32:07.16

lovelightstories

Yes, yes I totally agree and ah ultimately what it's doing is like you said making the link to shame. It's shaming other people or brands or what have you. And at the end of the day. It's rather than opening up conversation. It's shutting the door for conversation and when you do that you can't move forward at all because it's just a dead end and. And like you were saying reflecting is opening conversation within yourself first to be able to see and then to come to a place of awareness in yourself to then be able to have effective conversations with others and um, that's part of why I think it's so harmful is because it doesn't allow us to move forward in society. It just causes more anger and frustration and divided and polarizing views. Um, yes.

32:54.88

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, cancel culture treats people like they're disposable and the reality is we're all making mistakes. We're all evolving and learning and changing and growing and we are bound to make more mistakes we are. The goal is not perfection and yet social media has created a space. Where if you say the wrong thing 1 time or you ah say something that you wholeheartedly believe in the moment and then later evolve and change your feelings about it either people don't like what you said initially or they don't like the direction that you evolve and you're not going to please everybody and we shouldn't try to but it's like why? why.

33:27.52

lovelightstories

Yes.

33:33.96

Manda Carpenter

Does the internet. Why has the internet created and like actually tell you my theories on why we won't go there but it's sad that the internet has created a space where it's become so easy to announce we I no longer value anything about you. You are disposable to me see you later I Just it's so sad.

33:47.10

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, it's demeaning. Yeah.

33:51.90

Manda Carpenter

And with mental yeah and with mental health struggles as prevalent as they are. It's I think this is not helping. It's certainly not um, not making it any better. Yeah.

34:03.70

lovelightstories

Um, yes, yes I agree.

34:15.24

lovelightstories

Okay, I'm going to jump back to your book. So um, jumping back to your book really quickly before we wrap up, you've talked about the fact that a gift. Okay I'm going to start over here. So jumping back to your book.

34:28.52

Manda Carpenter
Good.

34:32.42

lovelightstories

Really quickly before we were we wrap up in your book. You talk about a gift that you've had that blinds you and I'm really curious to know what that gift is.

34:40.10

Manda Carpenter

Yeah I think a lot of us have this gift. It is such a gift I don't want to give it up. It's a great gift but it blinds us and that is the gift of privilege the gift of privilege is it can be white privilege. It can be a financial privilege.

34:53.23

lovelightstories

Um.

34:59.75

Manda Carpenter

It can be the privilege of a 2 parent household. It can be that privilege can look like a lot of different things and hopefully by now we all know that privilege does not mean that nothing bad or hard has happened in your life but that privilege just means that certain things haven't been a barrier. So for me I'm a white woman. Color of my skin has not been a barrier doesn't mean I've never been through anything hard in my life I have but um, but I have white privilege. That's one area of privilege that I have and it is such a gift. Um I benefit from it. Ah, but it blinds us and what I mean by that is when we have privilege.

35:19.17

lovelightstories

Yes.

35:34.94

Manda Carpenter

Is often very impossible or very difficult nearly impossible for us to understand or see the world outside of the context that we know so my privilege for a long time led me to believe that there was absolutely no excuse. No reason.

35:44.64

lovelightstories

Yes.

35:54.83

Manda Carpenter

Why a woman should ever get an abortion and I would still to this day say I'm not a fan of abortion I don't want that for people I want to live in a world where we don't then no one chooses

that and that's not something that ah that anyone would even need. But because of my experiences as a foster parent because of my experience being in proximity with people who don't look like me who don't talk like me who weren't raised the same way as me who don't have the same privileges that I have the proximity to those people has opened my eyes and illuminated.

36:21.85

lovelightstories

Yeah.

36:28.99

Manda Carpenter

Oh my gosh this whole time I've been blind I've been blind to the reality of their circumstances and so it's blinded me from being able to even understand outside my own nose right to be able to see past my own little bubble and so yeah Privilege is a gift and it blinds us.

36:29.40

lovelightstories

Yes.

36:40.18

lovelightstories

Um, yes, that is so true and so powerful. How essentially what you're saying is interacting with others who don't have the same privilege as you have. Has helped you create this understanding of empathy and what it is like to be in their shoes. It's really powerful. Okay, so.

37:03.80

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, yeah, it is and I and it goes to so many things not just abortion. Obviously I just brought that one thing up where it's just like I used to see it as such a black and white thing and I'm like wait. Maybe it's a look. Maybe there is room for gray. Maybe there is this just part of any Issue take any hot topic button you know, hot button issue and maybe there's something in the gray for us to Consider. Um, but yeah, it's taken. It's taken that I'll go back to the phrase that I always say there isn't a single person we wouldn't love if we knew their story. So Whoever it is that you have a really hard time liking a really hard time finding grace for and get to know their story. It might change everything. Thanks.

37:46.94

lovelightstories

Yes I Love that and I agree with that So wholeheartedly and one of the things that I say is everyone has a story in the world needs to hear it and that's the whole premise of this podcast is being able to create space where we can take those beliefs that we have out of the box and. Put them in a construct of through seeing others through so seeing through others' lives and their eyes and being able to better empathize and inter and be able to create that space for transformation within ourselves to better change how we view things and how we show up in the world and I I just couldn't agree with that more. So. Okay, so last question if you could have titled your book yourself. What would you have titled it and why.

38:31.70

Manda Carpenter

Um, yeah, you know I went through a number of titles at 1 point it was actually titled what we have now as the title of chapter 6 impressing is exhausting because that was sort of my mantra That's where this all started was this. Ah. This fake but very felt need to project perfection to the world and to hide anything that wouldn't be perceived as perfect and then I actually shifted and I was going to title the book I don't get full decisions on these types of things when you when you are traditionally published. You. Whole team that helps you decide so we land it on soul care to save your life and it very much fits the book. But I do like this question because another way of looking at it would be if we had gone with a different title that I once had it as a tentative working title and that was 15 things. Your friends aren't telling you and.

39:22.92

lovelightstories

M.

39:26.88

Manda Carpenter

People listening may be like wait that sounds like a totally different book. Yes, it's it's the same book. But it's just angled differently and what I what I would have done is instead of writing as these 15 practices to caring for your soul which it still is I would have said here are the 15 things. Your friends aren't telling you. You know you're not aware about this thing this addiction we see that you're addicted to affirmation from men but you don't see it right? You're not aware of this right? So would have taken a totally different angle a totally different approach who knows maybe it would have ah it would have done better. Maybe it would have done worse but it's fine titling a book is so hard but is.

39:54.12

lovelightstories

Um, um.

40:06.12

Manda Carpenter

So fun and ultimately this is a book about soul care and I didn't want someone who maybe doesn't have a lot of close friends to be like well I don't even have close friends. So what do you mean? they aren't telling me things I thought it was maybe a little too abstract, but it was It was fun to play around with to say the least. So.

40:19.32

lovelightstories

Right? Yeah I love the title of the book and I think it's very much position for anyone who um from all walks of life and it's very open-ended in that way because we all need to tend to our to our souls. So um. Very wonderful. Okay, so Manda I just want to thank you so much for joining me on the love light stories podcast I like I said I followed you for quite a while I feel like the topics that we care about and want to advocate for are similar and that's part of why I just had to have you on here because um. You have so many good viewpoints and you're so well spoken and you're able to get those out into the world. So I wanted to be able to ah let that happen here on the show and just thank you so much for joining me.

41:06.80

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, thank you so much for having me I Love what you're doing on this podcast.

41:11.63

lovelightstories

Yes, and I want to ask you to where can people follow you if um, they want to learn more and keep following along.

41:17.12

Manda Carpenter

Yeah, on everything I'm Manda Carpenter so MandaCarpenter.com on the internet, on social media @mandacarpenter. I'm usually on Instagram so come say hi.

41:26.54

lovelightstories

Yes, awesome. That's wonderful. Thank you, Manda.