

## The Tim Smal Show – 9 May 2020 transcript

*Candice Winterboer, a life and business coach, talks about codependency and self-care.*

**Tim Smal (host):** Hi folks, welcome to the show today. My name is Tim Smal and my guest is Candice Winterboer. She is a life and business coach currently living in Hoedspruit in South Africa. Her life story involves a lot of travel – she's lived in the UK, in the USA, in Switzerland. She also started and ran her own business for eight years in the online marketing industry. So Candice, welcome to the show.

**Candice Winterboer (guest):** Great, thanks. Thanks for having me Tim, it's great to be here.

**Tim:** So Candice, you've lived all over the world, but currently you're staying in an area called Hoedspruit in South Africa. Can you tell us what it's like to be living there?

**Candice:** Yeah, of course. I think it's supposed to be the second most visited town in South Africa, besides Cape Town. Because a lot of people fly in here to visit the Kruger National Park, so we get a massive amount of foreigners coming through the town. So it actually feels quite cosmopolitan – which is, I think, why I chose it over Cape Town. I don't know if I'd live in very many other small towns in South Africa, but this one felt very 'vibey' with lots of different influences and cultures. But of course, now it's all dead, with the coronavirus. And people are just hanging on and hoping that things kick-off again soon.

**Tim:** Sure, well, it's certainly a time for self-reflection, no doubt. But you've got quite an interesting life story. You've been involved in the marketing arena, with copywriting, you've certainly got a creative slant to your work. But somehow you've landed up working in coaching, which is a passion and an interest that you've developed over time. Can you tell the listeners a bit about your life story and your journey through all the different arenas that you've been involved in, in terms of your work?

**Candice:** Sure. So when I left school, I didn't know what I wanted to study and I didn't wanna waste time or money studying something just because I needed to choose. So I left South Africa and I went overseas for a couple of years and when I got back, I still didn't actually know what I wanted to do. So I went to a career guidance person at University and he said to me, at that point, "People were changing their careers at least three times in their lifetime." And so he suggested I just choose something that I enjoyed at the time. Because I felt paralysed trying to choose something that I'd be doing for the rest of my life – that was the thought I had.

So I studied a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and Tourism Management. And then I moved to Cape Town and worked in marketing. And then I had the opportunity to go overseas again, so I went to America and I was there for a couple of years, just working randomly on ski resorts and in hotels. And when I got back to South Africa, I thought "Now I must get a real job" and I started in traditional marketing. And I just moved from there into social media – it was when social media was really just taking off and I had started a blog to try and motivate myself. I had committed to running the Comrades Marathon and I wasn't a runner at all. And so I started a blog and through that experience, I got a job as "Head of Social Media" at a media agency. And in that position, I realised that content and copy was gonna become massive – there was gonna be a massive need for it. And I've always been quite entrepreneurial-minded and so I thought, "Awesome – this is a great business idea, let's go for it!"

So I set up my business, which was called “Alfalfa Content Generator” where I had a whole bunch of freelance writers writing for me. I profiled all of them, so I knew exactly what they were good at – I knew where their experience lay. I knew what their interests were, because of course, you're a better writer if you're enjoying the topic that you're writing on. And then from the clients side, I approached agencies and businesses and said “Look, if you need copy, if you need blog posts, web content, newsletters and later, if you want social media, then we can provide you with the content.” So that's how my business started, that was in 2010.

And we grew and ended up hiring a full-time salesperson and a full-time operations manager – it kinda just grew organically. But I never really felt like it was my passion. I felt like I was doing it because it was a 'gap in the market' and I knew how to write anyway and I knew what to look for in good copy. So I guess I had like a – I don't know if you'd call it a quarter-life or a mid-life crisis, but I just felt like “OK, I've been doing stuff... not out of obligation, but I've been doing stuff that's not perfectly aligning with my passions for too long and I need to now make big changes.” So in 2018 I sold my business. I was actually lucky enough to sell it to the person I had hired as my operational manager, so the transition was quite seamless. And I moved into coaching. I studied throughout 2018 and I was just finding my feet and making sure that I became a proficient coach. And that's kinda how I got into coaching. And of course, I have clients who come to me for business stuff because they know that I started and ran my own business. And then I have clients who coming to me for life stuff because I feel like I've had a lot of life. And so that's how it kinda all fits together.

**Tim:** What I find quite interesting about the work that you do is that, you're not only focused on the business side of things, but you're also bringing the arena of self-care into that too. Can you tell us about your interest in, essentially, looking at both of those arenas at the same time?

**Candice:** Sure. I mean, we're not either “at work” or “not at work” – how can I explain this? We're not perfectly siloed as human beings. Our lives, sort of, melt into the different areas. So our career is not separate from our life. And our life and career are not separate from our relationships. It all intertwines, because what is a business without the person, without the human element. And often, if that business is yours, it does get very enmeshed – or it can get very enmeshed. And so I like the topic of self-care, because for me in my personal life, I feel like it's had a massive impact.

From when I didn't even know what self-care was... When I was in therapy and my therapist asked me, “What do you do for self-care?” and I actually didn't even know... I had nothing for her. I was like “Well, I go to the hairdresser every six weeks to make sure my hair is neat” and she's like “yeah, that's maintenance, that's not self-care.” And I began this journey of unpacking “What is true self-care?”

And then I realised, “Well it melts into all sorts of areas of our life.” And it's really interesting to see how it all fits together. If we're not feeling good in ourselves, our businesses can suffer. Plus, if we're not feeling good in our business, our home lives will suffer. So it's just about finding that balance: How do we feed ourselves in a way that's nourishing, that helps us stay motivated and on track, and keeps us connected with ourselves? Because, for me, that's the key: The more connected we are with ourselves and with our own needs and wants and dreams – the more likely we are to live happy, fulfilling, joyful lives.

**Tim:** Yeah. And I like the way that you put it, because if I think of all the different people

out there in the world – of course, everybody is different... they've all got their own individual dreams and aspirations, which are an outworking of their personality and worldview, etc. But there's this idea that people can become quite self-critical, or they can be hard on themselves – essentially, they tend to hold themselves back from their full potential.

And there's really nothing more wonderful than seeing somebody at their best – operating at the highest level of their potential. But often there's this, kind of, block or this challenge that people have, because they can't quite figure out what it is that's holding them back. They have an idea of what it is, but they, sort of, fall into the trap of self-sabotage, if you will. And that looks different for each individual person.

So would you say that, at least an aspect of your work, is helping people to move past those blocks – to identify those areas where they are tripping themselves up, so that they can have a breakthrough experience and start to live within their full potential?

**Candice:** Of course. Awareness is the key here, right? We don't know what the problem is without actually just bringing our awareness into where we're struggling and then trying to figure out the ways to lessen that struggle or to modify that behaviour. I can say, categorically, one of the biggest issues that I deal with on a daily basis as a coach, is helping people with negative self-talk. You know that voice that just tells us “We're not good enough. This isn't done perfectly enough. We should be doing this. We must be doing that.” We are our own worst critics.

And if you can bring awareness to what you're saying to yourself and how you're bringing yourself down... and if you can modify that, your experience is 100% different. I've seen it in my own personal life and I've seen it in clients lives – just changing your negative self-talk, can mean the difference between depression and living life with lightness and joy.

**Tim:** Yeah. And that's when you experience a breakthrough. Because let's say, for example, an individual has that “block” – they have those issues that are holding them back and they're aware of it to an extent, but they can't figure out a way to actually move past that. Once they are able to minimize that negative self-talk – essentially disarm the self-critic, then they're to break through into their true potential.

And I think that's when life gets really exciting, because now instead of being held back, the individual is able to truly realise their potential and work on exciting projects and really have an even bigger impact on the world. And essentially, just experience more success in all the aspects of life – so not just business, but also, say, their personal relationships. And even their relationship with themselves.

So I get really excited about that concept, because I find people that are operating from that place in life to be very inspiring. And the more people we can have living in the world with that kind of mindset – it's just really inspiring for everybody, because we're going to see good work, we're going to see good collaborative relationships forming.

Would you say that, some of the people that you've worked with in your career, you've actually seen this happening – you've seen people have these breakthroughs and you've watched them actually achieve amazing things as a result of being able to break through those barriers?

**Candice:** Of course. It's the most beautiful thing to be with somebody as they realise, “Oh

my gosh – this is the block and this is how I can move through it. Or this is how I can reach what I want, knowing now what this block is.” Their whole being lights up. It's physical – you can actually see it in somebody. Of course now everything is online – you can hear it. It's unmissable. And, you know, blocks don't need to be these massive stumbling things. They can just be tiny – they can be very nuanced. But once there's awareness there – once there's a realisation of “Oh, OK, this is what it is,” access to the solution is so much easier.

So I've definitely seen it happen in a business context – how to manage a business. I've seen it in life context, I've seen it in relationship context – I've seen it in my own life many times.

The one interesting thing I'd like to say about blocks, is also that sometimes they're hidden – not hidden, they're in a blindspot, let's say. And you can just feel this dis-ease, or you feel like there's something wrong, or this is where patterns come from – patterns in relationships, patterns in behaviour. And even if you think about “Where is this coming from? I just don't understand why I keep going for the same guy,” for example. Or “I don't understand why this keeps happening in my business.” Often it points to a block that is unseen. So then it's quite useful to talk it through with somebody, because they would act as a mirror. And often just that acting as a mirror can show you suddenly where that blindspot is, or what is in your blindspot.

**Tim:** Very interesting. And just reflecting on relationships in general and patterns of relationships, I believe that one of the areas that you are quite interested in, is this area of codependency. Could you tell us a little bit about what that is and the work that you do within that arena?

**Candice:** Sure. Codependency is a – you know, they put it, I think, in the psychological realm. In everyday society, codependency is a tricky thing, because in my experience and how I've come to look at it and frame it, is that it's not... you know, they package codependency often with addiction: you have the addict and then you have their codependent which helps keep them in addiction. But codependency has many faces and you can see it across many different things.

But in society, specifically our society with gender roles being quite firmly entrenched as they are, we're taught – and I'm not saying this is just a female thing, this goes across the board – but we're taught that: to be selfish or to turn inward, or to first provide for your own needs is wrong, or is somehow selfish. And because of this conditioning, the way it displays later on in life, or it can display later on in life – is this giving... this giving, giving, giving, but not expecting anything in return. It's not so much an expectation, but not feeling like you're important enough or good enough to have needs, or to have expectations. So this often turns up in relationships, that's the easiest place to see it. Where you have one partner that just gives and gives and gives, and another partner who doesn't give all that much, or just takes. And the result is resentment and burnout and failed relationships.

And the remedy is self-care, which is how those two now fit together. So certainly in my own experience, I was in a relationship with somebody who had struggled with an addiction. And while I never felt myself the true codependent, because I never felt like I enabled him to be able to act out... what I did do, is I didn't have very high expectations of men, in general. And so there were certain behaviours that I never called him on. There were certain behaviours that I never stood up to. And certainly, my needs, I never expressed. I never communicated, because I didn't know how. And when I felt like I

needed to, there was this struggle in myself, like “Am I asking too much? Am I allowed to ask? What happens if he leaves if I ask?” And then, of course, boundaries comes into anything to do with codependency. Boundaries a very common challenge that many people have.

So learning how to communicate my needs, learning appropriate boundary-setting. I count myself extremely fortunate to have had that experience – while quite intense, I would have never learnt this stuff or I wouldn't have learnt it as quickly, I think, if it hadn't been that I was married to somebody who was struggling with addiction.

I think to go back to codependency... It's also, in my experience – or the way I've framed it, I feel like it's “You're not codependent – it's not either or.” I think lots of people have ranges of codependency that are acceptable. It's when it goes beyond that range that it becomes damaging – not just to yourself, but to the person that you're maybe codependent on. So a healthy person is able to give, but doesn't give to the point where they fall over. Whereas, if you're on the negative side of codependency, or the unhealthy side of codependency, you're just giving and giving and giving, and you're heading for a breakdown or a burnout or a relationship failure, because you're getting so resentful.

**Tim:** So what I'm thinking about as you're speaking, is this interesting concept, that as a coach, you are working with people that come to you from all different walks of life. So people of all ages and genders, at various points in their lives and their careers and their relationships. They would come to you with a variety of issues from: figuring out their work-life balance or their business values, or making life decisions, like whether to have kids or not. And I think – or at least the way I see it is that, based on your own personal experience that you've mentioned now, with regard to your relationships and learning more about codependency, it's almost as if it has helped you so much in order to understand the process of decision-making, to understand how people are making these life decisions and why it's difficult for them. Perhaps for one person, making a decision is easier than the next, but for the person that is struggling, it's a really big issue – they're not sure whether to move countries, or whether to have kids or not, or whether to start a business or not.

So it might be a very obvious question that I'm asking, but would you say that your experience of your life, I guess, has really helped you to relate better to people and to empathise with them and to essentially assist them on a practical level, in helping them to make better decisions and move forward with their life.

**Candice:** Absolutely. I've mentioned to you before that I've always known that I would be in a helping profession. I've always known that I would be in mental health of some sort. But I just never felt when I was younger, I just didn't feel equipped enough – not just from a skills point of view, but from a life experience point of view. The theory of psychology and counselling and coaching, is that you don't have to have gone through that experience to be able to add value to your client. OK, that's the theory.

However, in my case, I feel like it's really helped to add that extra level of value. Just thinking about empathising with somebody – it's so much easier to empathise because I've been through that thing. That's not to say that I can't empathise with them because I've not been through that experience, but I think my rich life experience has helped me connect much better with my clients. It's certainly helped me to empathise with them.

As a coach, it's not my job to tell you what to do – it's my job to give you the space and offer the structure and the framework through questioning and through listening really

attentively, that will help you figure out what the solution is for you – because you're the expert in your life. I'm not the expert, you are.

But what it does do, is if a client wants to know what I did, or would just like some direction, then it's very easy for me to call on my own life experience to be able to offer something that's valuable and that isn't just random advice giving. This was obviously the approach that I took and it's not everybody's approach, but for me it was really important to have a lot of life experience before entering into or embarking on a career in the helping profession.

Not just that, but also I think it was really important for me to have dealt with my baggage. And I'm not saying that my bag is empty – not at all, because this is a journey. But it was really important for me to make sure that I had gone through the issues that were causing behavioural stuff, faulty thinking stuff. I basically needed to make sure that I had dealt with my big issues before moving into helping somebody else. Because, let's say, I hadn't dealt with my codependency stuff – it would have been so easy for me to fall into that “I'm saving them” kind of mentality.” Which is the reason why a lot of people go into these, sort of, “helping professions” – they want to help and I'm sure in some cases, they really can.

But you have to manage yourself so fastidiously, when you're dealing with somebody else and their emotions... and their lives and their dreams and their goals. Because you don't want to put your stuff on them. You certainly don't wanna push your values and your dreams on them. You don't wanna live through them. But all of this requires awareness of the self and of your own stuff, your own baggage. For me that's been really important in this journey of becoming a coach.

**Tim:** Yeah, I like the way that you've put that. Would you like to connect with the listeners and just let them know a little bit more about your services at this point in time. I believe you are offering some free online coaching sessions?

**Candice:** Yeah. Because of COVID-19, hundreds and thousands of people have lost their jobs. And then they're thrust into a really difficult situation – there's a lot of uncertainty with us being locked up at home with partners and children. You know, working... not working... you know, insecurity around jobs, the future of your career – all of that stuff. I think a lot of stuff is bubbling to the surface.

But because money, for a lot of people, is an issue... I decided to offer 100 hours of free coaching to anybody who is interested. Obviously it is online, it doesn't matter who you are or where you're from – I'd be willing to coach you in whatever it is that you are looking to, to look at.

The offer is open to anyone – if you don't feel like this is something for you, but you know somebody who may benefit from this, then please just pass this on. Because I think it's really valuable at this point, especially if you're feeling a lot of uncertainty – if you're feeling a lot of “stuckness.” If you're feeling quite despondent or unmotivated around your life at the moment or where you gonna go or what you're gonna do, then a couple of coaching sessions can really help you get back on track and give you a couple of actionable steps to take, which helps with motivation and gets you moving. So that's my offer and it's open until the 100 hours are done.

**Tim:** Great. So what's the best way for the listeners to get hold of you?

**Candice:** So you can email me at [candicewinterboer@gmail.com](mailto:candicewinterboer@gmail.com) – I have a website which is [www.candicewinterboer.com](http://www.candicewinterboer.com) – I'm also on social media, all under my name. It's pretty easy – you can drop me a line on any of those platforms or just directly on e-mail. And I will respond and we can set something up.

**Tim:** Candice, thanks again for coming on the show. I'm sure the listeners really enjoyed finding out more about your life story and the work that you do. It certainly makes me quite excited just to think about all the people that you've worked with and how they've gone out into the world and been able to realise their full potential, ultimately making an impact on others around them. So it's certainly an exciting arena of work to be involved in and I wish you all the best for the future.

**Candice:** Thanks Tim. And thanks for having me here. I really appreciate it and I appreciate the work that you're doing on this platform and helping people – just connecting people with what's going on.

**Tim:** Great. Well, enjoy the rest of the day in Hoedspruit and hopefully we will see you in Cape Town at some point in the future.

**Candice:** Yes, you will. Thanks Tim.