

Boysen Hodgson: This is Boysen Hodgson, I am the editor of the Mankind Project Journal and I'm here on the phone tonight with Michael Brown. Michael is a spiritual life coach, he helps people turn their blocks into blessings and take the energy of those blessings to propel themselves forward manifesting the essence of their heart's desire. Mike's been coaching people for about four years now and working in service and working with folks in transformational settings for almost 15 years. He has coached hundreds of people individually, lead groups of men, women, and teens on topics of spirituality, personal growth and transformation. Tonight we are going to talk about his new book, "You are a Gift to the World: Blessings from my mom." This book is available at [youareagift.com](http://youareagift.com). So Michael, welcome and thanks for joining me.

Michael Brown: Hey, how are you doing Boysen. Thanks so much for that introduction, I appreciate that and it's an honor and a privilege to be here and talking to you doing this interview brother, thank you so much for asking me for this.

Boysen Hodgson: You are most welcome and as we kind of touched base before we got started here, this is a new kind of endeavor for both of us so we're just going to play along with it and talk about the book. So, tell me something about "You Are a Gift to the World," How did you, what is this book about and what inspired you to write this book?

Michael Brown: Well, what the book is about is you know "You Are a Gift to the World: Blessings from my mom," and it has really two parts that it is about. I would say one part is how I dealt with the loss of my mom, my mom passing away. How I know she got cancer, how I heard about her getting cancer and then just the process of dealing with her passing away and staying connected with her. After I lost her, my mother was probably one of the biggest things that I could lose in the physical world. It was the biggest thing to me. So, it was dealing with that.

Then the other part of it is just that I share stories about that and then the second part of it is sharing stories about my own personal journey. Like my own personal transformation and the most impactful things that, or transformational things that happened in my own life around transformation and what changed or altered my life in a significant way. So that is kind of like two parts of it. What really inspired it like the title, "You Are a Gift to the World," it was my mom because when I was growing up and when I was a kid, it's something that my mother used to

say to me and Boysen she didn't just like say it to me, you know she didn't say, "Michael, you are a gift to the world."

She would say this to me and try to imbue it into me like with all of her energy. You know she would say, "You are a gift to the world," like she would just try to put this message into me man like you know, I was a kid and to be quite honest with you, it kind of freaked me out a little bit when she would say it to me because I would say, "What are you talking about? I'm a gift to the world. You know, I'm just a kid. I'm not a gift to the world." She said it throughout my whole life, man all the way until when she passed away.

I have got to be honest with you, I didn't really completely but into that for most of my life you know, it was just like, "Yeah, I don't know about that." But, there was something you know being my mother maybe all mothers see their child this way. I mean they don't. I don't really know that. It was as though she saw something in me that I wasn't seeing in myself that was already there. At some point in time, I started to actually see that myself and belief it like started to buy into that belief in a real way that transformed my own life and impacted my life in a real way. Now I had to do my work myself to actually see that.

You know, it was a wonderful gift that she offered me to say that to me. But you know, I still had things that I went through just living life, things that came up that had me not believing that. So I had to do the work to get to that place where I actually started saying, "Wow, I am a gift to the world." So that's what really inspired me from it, that title and just all the blessings that she gave me all along the way because my mom was also not just my mom, she was like a very dear, close personal friend to me and I feel blessed that way. I realize how rare that is in the hundreds of people that I work with, I know that that's not always the way it is between you know with mothers and fathers. So I was blessed in that way.

She was also like a spiritual teacher to me. My mom she was just like an interesting kind of spiritual teacher because she was a chain smoker, she smoked you know, two packs of cigarettes a day for 50 years and she drank coffee and she died of lung cancer. But, interestingly enough she was, well I explain it in the book. She imbued a lot of spiritual ideals and principles in me and I share those in the book. But, those aren't about smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee.

Boysen Hodgson: It has always been incredible to me that the packages that my spiritual teacher show up in don't necessarily fit the mold of what the archetypal spiritual teacher is supposed to look like.

Michael Brown: Yeah totally, totally. You know, one of the biggest gifts I got from my mom Boysen that you mentioned right now and it is a very intangible thing. It's like hard to put my finger on it, but my mom had this incredible ability to listen. I can remember how she did that, she didn't get paid to do this. She wasn't like a trained therapist or psychologist or anything, but I just saw her do this with her friends and people came to my mom's house and she would sit there and just listen to them for hours and not say a word. I am talking about intense listening. She didn't try to fix nothing, she didn't try to offer them suggestions, she didn't even coach them. She just listened with everything she had man. So it was like I watched her do that and somehow I learned that or I got that from her, this incredible ability to listen. I know more, I am always learning more about listening but I know now that like listening, you know really listening to somebody can facilitate transformation inside of them and you don't even have to say a word, it is an incredible thing and that's what she did the best.

Boysen Hodgson: Great. So there's one nugget right there, there is one gift offered from your mom.

Michael Brown: Yes.

Boysen Hodgson: Tell me some of the other things that you are hoping that people will get from this book. What are they going to learn?

Michael Brown: That is a great question brother. I wrote this book to a specific intention. Like before I even wrote one word of this book, what I did was I got present to an intention. I imagine, you know, have you ever like read a really great book or watched a really great movie and at the end of it, there's like a moment at the end when you walk away and you're like you know you're different. You know that something has been altered about you because you watched this movie or you read this book. You just know it forever.

Boysen Hodgson: Yeah, absolutely.

Michael Brown: It's like an instant, it is like a moment in time and so I got present to that instant and that moment before I even wrote this book and what I did was I did like a meditation and I imbued an intention and the intention is that the reader will have an experiential knowing that they are a gift to the

world. An experiential knowing that they are a gift to the world in a way that will propel them forward to manifesting their purpose with grace and ease. So when I got clear to that intention, and that was all my focus that I poured everything into that intention like every word that I wrote in there. Because that's what I, it's like the underlying thing that I want the reader to walk away with, That they're going to be touched, moved, and inspired in such a way that it's going to profoundly impact their life.

Boysen Hodgson: Nice. It sounds to me like that was the gift that your mom gave you even if you weren't able to hear it at the time and that by writing this book, you're hoping to be able to offer that gift, pay it forward. Offer that gift to others.

Michael Brown: Yeah totally. If I may share, there is a story from the book that I would like to share that really like brings that out. Like it is really central to the whole theme and story, you know the whole message of the book. When I was about 10 years old, I remember sitting at the kitchen table with my mom and my mom had me painting. I was painting, she was painting we were painting these trees and scenery outside. About halfway through you know I was into my painting and I was really working on it and halfway through I looked over at her painting and I looked back at mine and I looked at hers and then I started comparing this tree that I was painting to her tree and her tree looked like a real tree, you know like a real tree. My tree looked like a lollipop or I was saying this in my mind.

All of a sudden I started to not like my tree because it didn't look like a real tree. I remember I got really upset and I started saying to her, I got angry and I said, "I don't like my tree because it doesn't look like your tree." She was like, "Wait, no, your tree is fine Mike." I remember getting up and getting angry and I was like, "No, I'm leaving, I'm done." I got up and I was about to leave and walk away from the table and she said, it's interesting how I remember this so she said, "Mike, Mike let me show you something, let me show you something." So I said, "Okay, okay what? What? What? She said, "watch this and she took a little bit of color and she just like dabbed a little bit of color in my tree like some orange or something and she put it in this tree and she said, "Look, do you see that?" and I said, "No, I don't see anything." I was just like, I was angry.

She said, "Okay, let me show you something." She took a little bit more color and dabbed some color in the tree and she said, "Look do you see that, do you see that Mike?" and I looked and I said, "Maybe I do see something." So then she said, "You get some color." So I got some color you know, and she said, "Do whatever color you want." So I got, I don't

know what I got you know, some red or something like that. I started putting it in the tree. Boy, we kept working on this tree for I don't know for like the next half hour or 45 minutes and I am putting color in it and she is putting color in it, we are just like working on this tree together man and I just remember like being done with this tree and when we were at the end of this man, I thought it was like the most beautiful tree in the world. I can remember like that feeling in my heart was like, "Oh my God, look at this tree, it is like so amazing, it's so beautiful."

She was saying it was so beautiful, we were both like celebrating this tree, that we painted together and we put it up on the bulletin board you know, it hung up there for I don't know a month even years and something that we talked about you know, throughout the rest of my life and what I got present to Boysen was once I got into counseling and coaching and doing what I do with people, this is after my mom passed away, I was remembering that story and I just found myself sitting one day and remembering that story and I just got really present to whatever it is that my mom, I can't even really explain it other than sharing that story with you, but whatever it is that she did with me at that kitchen table, it's like the very thing that I do with people.

It's like the gift that I have and she somehow transferred some kind of gift to me and it's the gift that I have to give to people. It's my own unique gift, it's how I'm a gift to the world. It's really like the essence of my gift. I'm telling you Boysen I was so present to that in such a way like I just man, I just started bawling man, I was just like crying and so grateful and I was saying, thank you so much mom, thank you. You know, I was thanking her for whatever it is that she did. I don't know if she was consciously doing something you know, she was just being who she was. That was it man, that's what I do with people. I take people through processes or I do this and I do that and all of this other stuff but really it's that thing that she did with me at that kitchen table man.

Boysen Hodgson: It sounds to me like you know if I had to put language to the idea of that gift, it sounds just like a deep intense focused presence.

Michael Brown: Yes, yes.

Boysen Hodgson: Getting present with exactly what we are looking at right now. Getting present to the exact nature of the next hue that we're applying to the picture. Beautiful story, that is really nice. So something I didn't share as we were introducing ourselves to one another is that my mom also passed

away. My mom died of cancer in 2002 and I have been struck over and over by what I continue to wake up to as I am getting older, I keep learning lessons that my mom was trying to teach me. Becoming aware you know, years and years later, “Oh, well, I’ve got this story and now I see what she was trying to offer me.” So would you say that your book is kind of an offering for a lot of, I’m seeing your book as an offering for a lot of us to reconnect with or to remember on some level those lessons that our moms offered to us whether or not we recognized them at the time that we can wake up to as we grow older, as we grow more mature, as we reach that level of when we need that lesson it shows up.

Michael Brown:

Yeah, that’s brilliant that you say that man because I think that’s a big part of the fulfillment of the intention that I had, it’s not so much that you read my book and you say, “You had a great mom.” You read the book, like you just telling me that whether you read it or not or you read the chapter is that that’s what I wanted to do. I wanted to have an impact on a person where they look at their own life, they have their own experience offered in such a way like you are just reflecting like with your mom noticing the lessons that you had with your mom.

Interestingly enough, one of the other things we are putting together is something called celebrating your mom, celebrating your mom so that we want to put together, we have a team. This is not our yet, but we are working on getting this launched for Mother’s Day where people can come to a website which will be called [celebrateyourmom.com](http://celebrateyourmom.com) and they can just celebrate their moms. You know, whatever your relationship was with your mom. You know whether it was great and wonderful like it was with me and everything wasn’t great and wonderful for me and my mom, but I just focused on that in this book, I focused on that aspect. You know people have horror stories, everything between my mom was the greatest and my mom was terrible. But either way, we want the website to be a place where there could be either forgiveness, healing, celebration, completion, you know clearing with your mom That is what I get from you’re saying is you’re having some kind of completion or some kind of understanding or, “Oh, I see what she was doing,” and being able to celebrate that, there is something in the sharing of the story.

There is incredible power in the sharing of the stories, I think especially in particular about our parents. You know our mother or our father where we can take, in our culture we spend a lot of our energy and time clobbering our parents and we’re saying, “why didn’t they do this and why didn’t they do that?” and you know just take the time to celebrate that and say,

“Wow, they did do” and I really believe, this is a belief I have and maybe everybody listening does have this belief. No matter how horrific it was, they were absolutely doing the best that they could with the tools and the resources they had at that moment in time.

Boysen Hodgson: Right.

Michael Brown: So yeah totally, I totally agree with what you’re saying there.

Boysen Hodgson: So another thing that we kind of checked in around is, so I’m kind of inspired by this idea that you, well how long did you spend writing the book? How long has this taken you to get it to where you are now?

Michael Brown: It took me about three years to write it. It’s been a long process, three years. It was wonderful having completed it and putting it out. It’s straight from my heart, it’s like putting my heart in the world, it’s a little scary.

Boysen Hodgson: And brave, an opinion that most of us we honor, most men you know we talk about our moms there is certainly a lot of cultural kind of significance to the mom you know, “Don’t you talk about my mother that way” kind of energy that goes into a lot of things that we see in the popular culture. Then there is another whole level of interacting with the mother figure, of interacting with the kind of archetypal mother figure that men don’t go to. That we don’t go to, you know that deeper look at maybe what the spiritual offerings or the spiritual teachings that our mother was trying to transmit to us, we don’t go into the tenderness that we have reflected in us that we took on from our moms or on the other side you know, men don’t always get honest about what wasn’t so pretty about their relationship to their mother. So, the real authentic relationship to the mother figure, to the mom is difficult for some men I think and I think it’s really brave that you’ve kind of taken this step to lay it out there. It’s like here’s my story and hope my story helps you and the willingness to connect at that level.

Michael Brown: Yeah, I mean that’s basically the whole purpose of it and even all the work that I did in the men’s group, you know, that really helped to facilitate that too. That was a big part of it. I thank all the men, even in the acknowledgement I thank the whole entire Mankind Project. Every man that I have ever known that I have come into contact has been, that’s a big part of that book getting done man, I can’t overlook that by any threats of the imagination. So, I acknowledge all the work that I have done and everything that I have learned from men in that organization and continue to learn. So, thank you to all of them. You know, it’s really cool I had an opportunity to actually email Rich Tossey, one of the founders and he

actually emailed me back and I shared one of the chapters with him and he was like, “Wow, this is great,” and I just thanked him for creating what he created for all of us to have. That was a really big gift to the world, to just create that entire organization like he did. So we were blessed to have that acknowledgement and interaction with him like that.

**Boysen Hodgson:** Cool. So, let me thank you for that. I echo the appreciation for the Mankind Project and what it has done to kind of drive my own growth by having a group of men around me who are kind of challenging me and supporting me to step into whatever is going on. So from here, from the vantage point of your book is now out, your coaching practice is going, your promotional efforts are going, what are you looking down, what’s your vision for the future for you? Where are you headed now with your life and with the book?

**Michael Brown:** That’s a great question. I think you know, part of my vision is to, it’s to stay open as much as possible to whatever comes. It’s to continue to put that message out there because like, I’ve got to be honest with you boys and I know I’m idealistic, I know that I am and I’m cool with that but really I want people to get that message man. I want, I could say it’s my mission that everybody knows that they are a gift to the world man. Like I want everybody to know that. Not as a nifty, that’s a cute little saying or thought, like I want them to know it. Because I know that in the knowing of it, that people will be moved to change the world, to change their life, to so whatever it is that they’re here to do. Like I believe that everybody has a purpose, they have, there’s a reason that they’re here and I know people that walk around and say, “I don’t have a purpose because I don’t know what it is. I don’t know why I’m here, I don’t know whatever.” Even in all that, I still believe or just feel like I know that there is a purpose. So I want to get people present to knowing that they are a gift in that way and I think in that knowing, people are just moved into their purpose. They are just called to it because they can’t pretend to be small anymore. They can’t walk around and say, “Oh, I’m nobody and nobody loves me and you know, when you have that knowing, then you can stop pretending. So like when I look at people and I hear them say that, that they’re nobody and they are nothing and that nobody loves them, to me, it’s part of it, and don’t get me wrong, I acknowledge people where they are, I am not saying that they are in the wrong place and that they’re bad. I’ve been in those places you know what I’m saying? I’m not saying that they shouldn’t be there and I don’t mean that, it’s just my intention for people to get that message. So I am going to do whatever I can do to get it to as many people



as I possibly can. Whether that's through you know, and this is just this interview you know you contacted me saying, "Hey, can we do an interview and put the book up on the website?" Thank you so much for doing that. Just being open to saying, "Yes, yes, I will do that. Yes, I will do that," and keep extending myself out there and stay focused on the message.

Boysen Hodgson: Cool.

Michael Brown: So, [Inaudible 25:56] however, I need to do it.

Boysen Hodgson: So you said something that kind of brought up a question for me about letting people be where they are and the fact that you've been there. So with this idea of authenticity and just showing up fully. I have a deeper question for you which is, what did you really have to, what beliefs did you have to confront in yourself to come to the understanding that you were a gift to the world before you could create this offering to the rest of the world? What are some of the things you had to overcome?

Michael Brown: Oh man, that's a big question brother. You know, I could sit here and probably tell you all beliefs that I had like I had this belief and I had to overcome this belief for that belief, but ultimately I think and I'm going to answer this with like one kind of fell swoop, this is really the essence of the question without going into all that, just coming to a place of knowing. This is really, I feel this is a knowing, this is not even so much a belief to me is that we're making it all up man. Like all of this is just made up, we're just making up meanings, we're making up interpretations, we're making things up as we go along and we use our words to make stuff up. We say, hey I think I'm great or hey, I think I'm terrible, or I think and it's in them making up or whatever we are making up that makes it real. Not real in reality like physical reality, but real in our experience of reality. I teach classes in the Law of Attraction, I used to say that we create our own reality through our thoughts, feelings and actions. But actually now I believe we create the experience of our reality through our thoughts.

Boysen Hodgson: I like that distinction.

Michael Brown: Yeah it's the experience to our reality so the realm of our thoughts and the realm of our feelings and even the realm of our actions, it's within our dominion and it's something that we can work with. So, I don't know if that completely answers your question, but I think that once I got present to, "Hey, I'm just making stuff up." Like when I start thinking that I am not good enough or nobody loves me, it's just being generated you know,

the neurotransmitters in my brain, neural pathways that picked up that thought or that memory from an early experience in childhood where I told myself that, you know. My mommy didn't give me a brownie, so I am not good enough because I didn't get a brownie. So you know whenever I come across anything that is like a brownie or a cookie and I don't get it, then you must not love me. That's a message I'm saying to myself. So I think I am just more and more present to, those thoughts still come up for me. Sometimes I still think that I'm not a gift to the world, no I'm not good enough, no they don't like me and then to be able to just step back and say, these are just thought patterns that are based on earlier experiences that I had where I told myself I wasn't good enough.

Boysen Hodgson:

Yeah.

Michael Brown:

Then I can just say, now what do I want to create?

Boysen Hodgson:

Excellent thank you.

Michael Brown:

I think we're always in a state of creation in the present moment. Is it through repetitive thoughts, what I would call negative affirmations, "I'm not good enough, I'm not good enough, nobody likes me, nobody likes me, nobody likes me." It's not so much getting rid of those thoughts as noticing them and just choosing another thought, another sponsoring thought that we want to use and we want to imbue our energy and our emotion in that thought and then that is going to create a real experience, I know this for sure. I've had this experience and I've seen other people have that as well.

Boysen Hodgson:

Nice, thank you Michael.

Michael Brown:

You're welcome.

Boysen Hodgson:

Well, we're coming to the end and I just want to thank you Michael Brown for showing up tonight and for taking the opportunity to have this conversation with me and I will plug your website for you one more time. So, to get the book, "You Are a Gift to the World: Blessings from my Mom," [Youareagift.com](http://Youareagift.com) and I have been speaking, this is Boysen Hodgson the editor for the Mankind Project Journal and we've been speaking with Michael Brown. Michael, thank you so much for showing up tonight.

Michael Brown:

You're welcome, thank you so much Boysen.