**45. A Good Death Requires a Life Well Lived with Leadership Coach & Comedian Pam Dibbs**

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:00:00] I want to get to the end of life feeling like I've left nothing on the table. To do that you need to know that there's a table and you need to know what's on it for you. You need to be looking at that and recognizing that tomorrow is not guaranteed. This time we have is really precious.

**Intro**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:20] Hello and welcome to ALSO in PINK. The podcast all about lifestyle design. How we live, the clothes we choose and how we organise our space. I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, a certified KonMari consultant and personal stylist. I'm here to guide you on your journey to live a happy, fulfilled life.

Every Tuesday you'll get new insight on what it means to live well. Plus actionable tips.

Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.

Our guest today is leadership coach and comedian Pam [00:01:00] Dibbs. Pam has been an entrepreneur for 30 years, and her latest undertaking is The Good Death Project, based on the premise that a good death requires a life well lived. We explore how having a relationship with your own mortality leads to living a fuller, more vibrant life.

We talk style and certain fashion disasters as Pam recalls the day she spent many years ago, with The People's Princess. Yes, that's right. Princess Diana. Pam, welcome. Thank you so much for being here. I'm delighted to have you on the show.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:01:39] I am so happy to be here. I just so appreciate you reaching out and inviting me.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:01:45] Yeah, pleasure. And we're both part of this entrepreneurial community and on a recent group call, I remember you saying something that really spoke to me. You said a good death requires a life [00:02:00] well lived. And I thought, yes, please. I must have you on the podcast since ALSO in PINK is all about exploring what it means to live well.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:02:10] Yeah, you honestly couldn't have picked a juicier topic for me. I hope that you've got the rest of the day free. Cause you know, we might need it.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:02:23] That's the enthusiasm I like.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:02:26] That premise that a good death requires a life well lived, is a lifelong journey for me in discovery. I was somebody that grew up with a mother that had been diagnosed with young onset Parkinson's disease, and was sort of very much aware and reminded daily of the fact that tomorrow is not something you can take for granted. That sense of preciousness about [00:03:00] today was something that I just grew up with and I'm so grateful for. It really has helped me live a life where I am bold. I'm able to let go of things that are dead in my life. The other piece of this is that I spent quite a lot of time with people at the end of life. One of the things that is very well known is that people often get very clear about their priorities at the end of life. And there isn't time to do anything about it then. So I want to sort of fast-forward that prioritisation reckoning that people have while there's still time and to make life count while there's still time.

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:03:47] Absolutely. I think that's such an important concept making life count while there's still time. And that's what I'd like to do with my business as well. I think you can approach it from many angles. It's still a [00:04:00] challenging thing perhaps to reverse that dying with regret trend. So why do you think it is that so many of us wait until the last possible moment to really look at our lives and think, oh, we could have perhaps done this. Is it procrastination or have you found in the people you've worked with?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:04:20] You know, I think there are a few things. Western culture certainly, death is still something that's still quite taboo. You know, it really is seen as quite impolite in many conversations to bring it up, and people get really uncomfortable about it. And I think there's a lot of, well, the best thing is, you know, to just be in denial and not think about it, and I think it costs us a lot when we do that. And those costs are quite invisible until we get to the end of life, if we don't have some kind of relationship [00:05:00] with death. I'm not saying that we have to love the idea. That's probably going to be a stretch for most of us, but having some kind of relationship with it. For instance, Steve Jobs had wonderful practice every day and he would look at himself in the mirror every day and say, if today was the last day of my life, what I want to do what I'm about to do today? And if the answer was no for more than two days in a row, he would drastically change what he was doing. And he credits much of his success and his achievements in life with his relationship to death. So for me, it's like, let's get a little friendlier with it and actually have it be force for good in our life.

And I think one of the things that this can sound like, which I hope it [00:06:00] doesn't is that it's about getting busy. What I usually find it means when you get really clear about what's very important in your life is it means the opposite. It means slowing down and really being present in our relationships with our loved ones and taking time to smell the roses, or even notice the roses. And there's something about being touched by life when we are present to it.

 Just yesterday, I was doing the very important task of, you know, putting out the bins. And I notice that this tree that has obviously been in my yard for 16 years had these red berries on it that I'd never seen before. And I was like, wow, every year it's been doing that. And I've never noticed until [00:07:00] today, And how many times have I walked past it to get in the car? There's something about this endless opportunity to be touched in such amazing ways when we're more present to how amazing it is that we're here and how short and precious it is.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:07:21] I think that opportunity to be touched by life is a really powerful concept. And it's certainly a very KonMari concept as well. I remember when I was training to be a KonMari consultant with Marie Kondo and her team, the first evening were all together, there was this lovely activity where we were in bustling New York. And they said, whatever your feelings about, you know, big city life, since there were quite a few people from all parts of the world who weren't used to, that kind of bustling, diverse city. And they said, Go out this evening and see how you can find [00:08:00] joy in unexpected places and people had these amazing stories the next day of just the simple things that they noticed, which perhaps they would have overlooked before, or even some who weren't so fond of New York had a newfound appreciation just by, you know, taking that time and actively looking for something positive. So I think that's powerful idea. Absolutely.

 **Pam Dibbs:** [00:08:25] And it can seem so simple that I think that can mask how powerful it is. I do a lot in the corporate world and I'm not sort of brought in as, hey, come and talk to our leaders about death. You know, I haven't had that phone call yet. You know, I'm still waiting for that one.

But this is weaved into everything I do. So I'll give you an example, which I think might be helpful for listeners to think about how to use this.

 [00:09:00] Recently a client I'd work with a while ago reached out to me and I hopped on the phone with her and she was in a pickle. She'd been offered this amazing new job, which on paper looked great, and as I was hearing her talk about it, I was hearing her energy get lower and lower and lower until it was in her boots, and so I asked her if you knew this was the last job you would ever take, would you take it?

But she was like, hell no.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:09:38] Yeah.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:09:42] It was a full body no. Just when you notice that you're trying to convince yourself to stay in a job that really hasn't been working for you. And you're a full body no, and you're trying to convince yourself and [00:10:00] justify why to stay or why to stay in a relationship that really has come to an end, or it might be just even your relationship. with your own health. Think about, if this was the last week of my life, or this was the last day or the last month what would I decide? And so I think that's a great place to start is just to start to bring in a little bit of this knowing that our time is really precious here, and we really get a lot of choice and autonomy in how we show up, what we choose to do and don't do and changing our minds, it's like one of the greatest gifts of the human experience. It's like we get to make a decision and then change our minds about [00:11:00] it. We can bless and release. You can bless and release careers. We can bless and release relationships and be so grateful for what they've brought to us.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:11:13] I mean, that's the ultimate question, isn't that really, is this the last job you would ever take or if this were the last week of your life, is this the choice you'd make? I think it puts it into perspective, doesn't it?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:11:26] It really does. But let's be able to talk about death with a little more ease with each other. Be able to raise it with our aging parents. Be able to have conversations about end of life, rather than trying to figure it all out at the end when somebody is really sick. And that adds so much stress and burden to families, the way we're doing it right now. And why are we doing that? We're trying to be polite, so we [00:12:00] just don't bring it up or we do something funny like: hey Dad, I'm going to make some toast. Oh, I cremated the toast... while we're talking about cremation, have you ever thought about it? You know, like we try to sort of slip it in. you know, squeeze it in to the conversation. It's not working.

**How do you talk about death?**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:12:23] So addressing that elephant in the room, then? How do you broach the subject? How do you start talking about death in a helpful and even life affirming way?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:12:34] I just think really coming from your heart and you might start with, hey, I wanted to have a conversation about something that's probably going to be hard for us to talk about and I've been struggling to bring it up. And I wondered if you'd be open to a conversation about it. It doesn't mean we have to have it now. I often think priming for these kinds of [00:13:00] conversations is really helpful. So that you don't kind of bombard somebody in the moment because it's on your mind, but ask you know, this be a conversation that you'd be open to have, and then have it another day, if it doesn't feel like today's the right day. But really being in relationship about it is the key thing. I don't think there's any sort of set way to start it or to say it, but I think gently as an approach and priming and asking permission and taking somebody with you on the journey, and just coming from your heart.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:13:38] And that reminds me so much of marketing or branding. It's that kind of awareness stage where you don't just plonk someone with your offer right away, because they won't necessarily be ready for it. But if you broach the subject a bit and see how open people are to it and then gradually bring it around, I think [00:14:00] that makes a lot of sense, really.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:14:02] I think when conversations are tough and we start to talk about it, we can easily ambush, because it's been top of mind for us for awhile, you know, we so grateful to start talking about it. And so I would resist the ambush and really sort of check for where the other person is that how they respond. And if they're really not open to the conversation, they're really not open to the conversation. It doesn't mean they won't be at a future time, but you know what? Most folks who are aging in my experience really relieved to talk about it. It's on their mind a lot. And they don't know how to bring it up. I think bringing it up is just seeing that you're being in service and it coming from love. I don't know [00:15:00] how we could go wrong.

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:15:02] That's a wonderful and very helpful way of looking at it, I think.

**Life's too short for bad wine and cold fries.**

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:15:07] The other day, my husband and I went out for a meal, so exciting post lockdown to be in restaurants having a meal. Oh and he'd finished his food and he looked over at me and he said, oh, you haven't drunk your wine or eaten your fries. And of course he looks very shocked because I'm Irish by descent and potatoes are generally not safe around me.

You know, they will not be left. And so, I said the fries are cold and the wine's not good. And life's too short for bad wine and cold fries. And you know, it really is.

**Review Ad Spot**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:15:49] Well, hello. Can I just say, thank you. Thank you for listening. And if you're enjoying the show, it would mean the world to me if you'd rate [00:16:00] and review ALSO in PINK. I'll make it super easy for you and you can even win a prize.

Submit your review on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts, for a chance to win a 20 minute one-to-one virtual coaching session with me. Pick my brain about life, KonMari or style. I'll announce the monthly winner on each Ask Alexandria episode. So be sure to listen out to see if your review gets picked. All you need to do is: go to ratethispodcast.com/alsoinpink. And rate and review the show. Want tips on how to win? Write something genuine. Be thoughtful and let your personality shine through. Bonus points for a dash of charm.

And for your weekly dose of podcast joy, subscribe to ALSO in PINK, so you never miss a show. Thank you so much. You really are a star. [00:17:00]

**Death & Comedy**

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:17:03] So one of the things I do is stand up comedy. So I talk about death using comedy. And I find when we have more of a relationship with death, we are lighter about life. Like we don't sweat the small stuff. We have more of a sense of what really matters. And we find more humor, in just daily life. It's what I call being like-minded having this lightness and levity. I don't know Alexandria, whether you've ever noticed this when you've lost a loved one, but there's often a lot of humor as well as sadness. As people share stories about them that often share funny stories, Recently a few months I lost my father and even losing my father in London while I'm in Seattle, my sister's in Canada, [00:18:00] my brother's in Italy. And, you know, during the pandemic with all of the added restrictions that put on us, it was amazing for the few people who could get together at the funeral to just notice that lightness and humor was there. Of course, the sadness of the loss, but also that levity was there as well.

**Celebrating Life**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:18:24] And the levity could really honor that person's life as well. So it's not just all about you and your sadness, but celebrating them. And yes, and finding that little spark that they offered,

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:18:38] Yeah, absolutely. And I think it's really natural for us to do that. I love the fact that we're moving more to have celebrations of life. We actually call it that often and, you know, we really are looking at sort of celebrating what this person brought to us, cause none of that goes away. [00:19:00]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:19:00] Exactly. And I love that comedy is part of your arsenal as well. I imagine that's very handy speaking about death, which could potentially be quite a heavy subject and uh, finding those places to lighten it. And I think you've also spoken at leadership events and use humor to help people see how they can get in their own way perhaps, and then give them that little nudge and reminder that they could do things differently. So do you have an on stage experience you'd like to talk about?

**The Perfect System Exercise**

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:19:31] I find the human experience endlessly funny. It really is. It's also wonderful, but the more we understand the weird, the more we experience the wonderful. So using humor to sort of point to how much burden we put on ourselves, whether it's stress and pressure, which often look like they come from our circumstances, but actually never [00:20:00] do. They really are optional, but it doesn't look like they are. So I totally get how we get fooled. And that's part of the weirdness of the human experience, you know? And so to just point to that and make fun of it. One of the exercises I love is from a coach called Steve Chandler and it's called the perfect system. So whatever it is you're struggling with, you have created a perfect system for that thing. Because every system is perfect for the results it gets, right? From systems theory. So, you know, give you an example, let's just say I'm thinking about a client I had. He comes in, we'll call him Jim. He's completely overwhelmed he tells me. I'm just up against it, you know? My blood pressure has gone up. I'm now on medication. He's in it. And it looks very real to him. And I say, [00:21:00] so, Jim, it sounds like you have a good system for overwhelm. I want you to teach your system for overwhelm to me as if I've never been overwhelmed before in my life. Like what's the first thing I would do in the morning? And he got really into it and he's like, Pam, well, don't get a good night's sleep. Wake up, skip breakfast. You want to go straight to email, then be in fact back to back to back meetings. Don't do any forward planning for your calendar. You'll just deal with that tomorrow. skip lunch. Cause you know, like hydration and lunch, it's just for lightweights. And if you think you're going to get sick. I want you to ramp up the pressure on yourself because you could be out in a day or two, And then, you should volunteer on your team. Volunteer for some tasks and new projects. I'm like, why would you volunteer? And he said, because you have to have your peers understand the true [00:22:00] magnitude of your martyrdom. And he started rolling around laughing at himself because he started to see how he was creating his own overwhelm. And because he started to see it, he started to see how he could uncreate it too. But humor, allows people to cope, create and connect. It's kind of this magic. I think it's underutilized in life and leadership and relationships. I have been married for 28 years. and I credit humor for being in a happy marriage for that long and continue to just, adore my husband and, you know, of course we have our moments But to be in a relationship for that long and to still really [00:23:00] enjoy being in that relationship. And we actually run a business together too. So, humor is the superpower for me, relationships superpower.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:23:12] Yeah, so speaking of comedy then, do you have a standup routine or a sketch or something comedy related that you'd like to treat us to?

 **Pam Dibbs:** [00:23:21] really like to make fun at the human experience and how we are in life. So like right now I've been doing a lot of stuff around menopause, because that's an experience I'm going through. I've been hit by the menopause truck. One of the pieces I do is around what would it be like if men have the same symptoms that women do. during menopause, well, it would be called manopause and it would be this huge rite of passage and this amazing time in life. You know, if a man had a hot flash in a meeting, he would just rip off his shirt and people would come in and mop his brow and [00:24:00] remember names for him, and then Ford would manufacture an F-150 manopause truck. And men would brag about the hot flushes, you know, hey, Carl, how many have you had today? they would see it as a sign of deep insight and wisdom and people would gather around and applaud them, but just having a lot of fun with how we are in life. And so a lot of my comedy is just about what is Pam noticing in her own life? And then my little funny quirks, you know, like I was noticing that there's an unprecedented use of the word unprecedented, and that had me chuckle for a good week, you know, just noticing these weird things like being in lockdown. There was one day where I was driving my car and I was staying five feet from the car in front of the traffic lights, you know, like, which were so confused. You know, we don't know what to [00:25:00] do. And so we've just got this, I've gotta be five feet from any anyone. you know, and I'm just like, what am I doing? You know? but yeah just finding fun and lightness. I think one of the things I've always done is looked through life through the lens of what's funny about this?

So my husband and I would write comedy. If we were bored on a plane, we would just write comedy sets. And I thought every couple did this. I started asking couples, what do you write comedy about? They're like, what? We don't write comedy. I'm like, you don't write comedy sets about your life? Yeah. This is like a really missed opportunity and relationships. and so, it's been like this really amazing thing in my relationship. And my husband's mission in life is that every day to make me laugh once and then everything else is gravy.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:57] That is a wonderful mission. I think [00:26:00] we could all adapt that

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:26:03] Does it, he really, really does it. He's the funniest person I've ever met. Yeah he's hilarious. It's usually just weird quirky things like the other day. I'm obsessed with the Olympics. So I'm watching the Olympic trials and if I have bags under my eyes, that is why. This week the gymnastics has been finishing and getting on the gymnastics, US Olympic team is harder than getting a gold medal. But I was watching some of the track and field and my husband happened to be like walking past the TV when the gun went off for the 200 meters final for the women's and he happened to be carrying a couple of cushions. And so he made out that, he'd been shot and he did this like dramatic fall to the floor onto the cushions. Cause the gun had gone off just the timing of it was so [00:27:00] perfect. was crying with laughter. But that's our lives, just laughing about silly stuff.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:27:11] So has he got his humorous bit in yet today? Or I guess it's a bit early for you

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:27:16] It's a little bit early. Yeah. A little bit early. He's not a morning person.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:27:21] Okay. Well, we can forgive him for that then

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:27:26] Yeah. I was also noticing with the gymnastics that we kind of suddenly become an expert, because we've been watching the Olympics a few times, you know, I'm like, yeah, she really under rotated on that volt. I have no idea what I'm talking about, you know, but we just pick up these terms from the commentators and then we use them. It just cracks me up. And how disappointed are we when they do that amazing somersaults, back flips. And it's just [00:28:00] incredible. You just don't even think that a human could do it. And then they land and they take a tiny step and we go, ah, blew it,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:28:08] Yeah, exactly.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:28:10] like as if everything that went before was irrelevant because of the tiny step.

 **Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:28:18] In psychology, isn't it, the end of an encounter that kind of solidifies your memory of it?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:28:23] It is.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:28:24] Oh, I find that idea fascinating. So maybe it's an extreme version of that. We've forgotten everything else and just focus on that landing.

**Celebrate Endings, in Work & Life**

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:28:32] And that ties into one of the things we talked about earlier, I did that, we get really funky about endings. So we hang on to things that are dead in our lives, you know, because we think to end it would say something about what it had brought to our lives. Would have some kind of judgment about what had gone before. But I actually think endings are really [00:29:00] amazing times to celebrate, whether it is the loss of a loved one. I love the fact that we're celebrating more the life and what people brought to us. also would love to see people having some kind of moment when things end to reflect maybe, a ceremony. I actually had a team we did a ceremony, a death ceremony around a project that had to end and it had to end in a really unexpected way, like a new decision got made and the organization was moving in a completely different direction. And it was really tough for the team because they had a lot of sunk cost bias. You know, we've invested for a year in this project. We can't just walk away, but it was actually a really good decision to walk away, so we created a ceremony, memorial, if you like, I think for the project and we really celebrated, well, it had brought a Mo they had learned [00:30:00] from it. And how much teamwork was involved. And none of that gets lost. That all gets taken into the next thing you do as a team. Just so much richness in endings.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:30:15] Oh, I love that. So much richness and endings and having a death ceremony for all sorts of aspects of your life, whether it's a project that didn't go quite to plan. I think that's rather wonderful because it adds the humorous element as well. I mean, you could literally burn it if you wanted to, or

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:30:36] Yes! You could do all sorts of things. Yeah, you can just have a lot of fun with these events, whatever you want to call it, a ceremony or some kind of ritual, but yeah, I think it adds a lot.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:30:49] That makes me think of rather an unintended one in my life. And this was a couple of years ago just when I finished my KonMari training course. And [00:31:00] several years before my first kind of entrepreneurial venture was to write and illustrate this book, which was a beautiful thing, but I didn't know anything about branding or marketing at the time and didn't figure out how to sell it effectively. And so we still had about 4,000 copies of the book, mostly in storage and, I got a phone call from my husband in the middle of a train journey through Delaware on my way back to New York. And he said that there had been a fire in a warehouse, and it happened to be the one that had all of my books. And so they all went up in flames. It kind of brought some sadness, but also a sense of satisfaction and ability to really fully move on. So even though it was a kind of death ceremony that I didn't control, I still enjoy the fruits of it, I [00:32:00] guess.

 **Pam Dibbs:** [00:32:00] I love that. That even though it was not something you would have chosen, isn't that life, unexpected, unwanted events should be our expectation. How is it happening for me rather than to me? Can we hold them with some curiosity and some lightness, and let go of the grip of how we expected it to go. Like, there's a lot of gripping. and a lot of our anxiety and stress, I think is all rooted in our messed up relationship with death. If you really bring the layers back and back and back. It's my belief that our messed up relationship with death is costing us our lives because for so many people this sort of running on high functioning anxiety I see it so often in organizations. It's sort of a status symbol to be really [00:33:00] overwhelmed and exhausted in most organizations. It still is.

**Lockdown Realisations**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:33:05] It will take quite a cultural shift to think of work and life more holistically. But I think we've proven in the last year and a half that we can adapt to change more quickly than perhaps we thought. So there's nothing like living through a global pandemic to make us all face our mortality in some ways. So how about you? How has the pandemic affected you? Have you had any kind of lockdown realization that's changed your perspective or your priorities?

 **Pam Dibbs:** [00:33:36] It's been a really rich time for me. In coaching, we're always looking to disrupt the status quo. So, really this level of disruption. Not just the pandemic, but everything that's going on, the disruption climate change, you know, just all of the disruption that has been really front and center for the last 18 [00:34:00] months, it's been this enforced disruption and I think it's forced us all to slow down and reflect. And like you say, face mortality in a way that in our busy-ness, we didn't have to. You know, when our lives are so full, you really can just be moving from one thing to another to another. And when all of that got taken away I think it was a beautiful opportunity and sent .Me for me. One of the things I loved about it was that it busted some of my own myths. So I would have said to you 18 months ago that I could not run my leadership coaching business without being in person. And I would have been really wedded to that as the concept. And I completely busted that myth. So within a month I had migrated everything I did in person to virtual. And I even made one of my programs [00:35:00] better by making it a virtual program. And so I am taking 150 leaders through a program and an it group in a fortune 50 company.

And that all came out of me really just taking a fresh look at how I ran coaching skills for leaders. And I can do it from anywhere in the world. So it's really opened up for me a lot of opportunity, We're thinking about doing some more traveling cause really I can be location independent. And I would never have said that was true 18 months ago. So I love that I've just busting my own myths and self created rules. The one thing I don't love doing remotely is up comedy. So, being in a Zoom room with everyone on mute, it's a little brutal for the [00:36:00] comedian.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:36:00] Oh gosh. Of course, but you need that feedback don't you?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:36:05] Yeah. Comedy is really two way experience.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:36:09] And so have you tried it without having everyone on mute? Does that work?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:36:14] No, because I usually do comedy sets to big groups. And so you get a lot of background noise. But everything else I do, whether it's one-on-one working with teams or running. leadership programs. actually, I could say confidently now I have made it better by bringing it online. So that has been just a huge, huge gift. And then the other thing is my husband hasn't been traveling cause he's in film production and works on location a lot. And so, it's just been lovely. I'm now sort of going through my second summer where he's not traveling a ton and that's been really unusual for us and I've just been [00:37:00] loving it, just having him around and hanging out with him in the summer, cause I don't really usually get to do that much.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:37:06] Yeah. And will that change when we're truly post pandemic do then? Cause he realized that he would like to be home more?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:37:14] He's talking about maybe traveling less, but also now that I can be anywhere, I could actually be with him more. So, that has really just opened up some fun conversations about what's possible.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:37:30] I think that's wonderful. To see what might at first seem like quite a huge setback as an opportunity and having that curiosity to take it forward and explore. And, as you've done, find a solution that actually works better for your business and even your relationship going forward.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:37:49] Yeah. I think one of the things that has been a gift is that everything's uniquely unfrozen and it doesn't have to [00:38:00] land back the way it was. A concern I have is that people are rushing back to some kind of idea of the old normal. I'd love for us to never waste a good crisis, you know, is to really look at fresh what do we want now? Like bringing people back into organizations, you know, they have become used to so much more autonomy and so much more empathy. Well, let's not lose that as we bring people back into the office, cause it's been delightful. You know, it's been really amazing to see that. There's just a lot that we can benefit from by things being uniquely up in the air.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:38:46] Uniquely up in the air. That's a wonderful way to look at it, Yeah, I think that would be more than a shame. I mean, it would be a tragedy really to have everything go back the way it was. But I think that's why [00:39:00] it's so important to keep having these conversations and challenge one another to really explore this new opportunity we've been given,

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**Interview Resumes**

**Princess Diana**

And I see on your website that you spent a day with Princess Diana. So I feel like I have to ask you more about that.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:41:12] Well many, many, many years ago. back in the UK, I was working for the health educational authority for the no smoking day campaign. And so this was when the UK was first bringing out its legislation around having smoke-free workplaces and we were kind of late to that party. And so, I was involved in the no smoking day campaign. So I said, well, we need a VIP. Why don't I write to Princess Diana and everyone was like, oh, you won't get her. You know? And I was like, well, who knows? So I wrote, and she said, yes. And I hosted her for a day and it was amazing. She was [00:42:00] delightful. I honestly felt like I could have just gone down the pub with her and had a decent glass of wine. Not a crappy one, but, you know, she really. was very interested in me and what I did and fascinated by the work we did and just very engaged. And, she spent some time with folks that had smoking related diseases and she was so loving and compassionate and present with everybody she met that day, including me. It was very powerful.

But you know, my main memory from the day is that I was helping a friend out who'd gone through a really tough time and I'd actually spent two nights sleeping on her floor. The two nights before this event. And I didn't have my outfit with me that I was meant to wear, you know, so I bought an outfit and I didn't have that [00:43:00] and I didn't have any of my hair stuff or, you know, my shoes, you know, like I didn't have any of it.

So this is like a style crisis. and I was like, you know what? I prioritize helping my friends. And let's just say somebody was having a bad hair day and it wasn't the princess. So there's these photos. And I just laugh when I look at what I look like. I'm like, I really did show up looking like that to host Princess Diana. This is true.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:37] Oh, that's wonderful. Well, that makes it even more memorable and special.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:43:41] It was very memorable.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:43] And I'd be surprised if she noticed at all, so,

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:43:47] Absolutely, yeah. Talking about style, cause I know that's one of your favorite topics, she just had this incredible style and there was one point [00:44:00] where I realized I was like staring at her skin because it was completely flawless and it wasn't makeup. I've never seen skin like that before. Like it was just flawless and she just had such an elegance and style, stylishness about her that, that added to this very big heart.

**Fashion & Style**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:44:27] And speaking of style, you have some rather fabulous blue streaks in your hair So, yeah, how would you describe your personal style?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:44:36] Oh, I I'm a lover of fashion and yeah, the blue hair, it's become a kind of signature thing where it was actually my husband's idea. And he was very specific about the shade of blue. It had to be this cornflower blue and when I first went to get it done they did a more teal blue [00:45:00] and it just didn't work. And he then started to mix the color for me. so

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:06] Amazing.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:45:07] he,

I know, I know. So it's a very particular shade that you can't just buy. It has to be mixed. So, for a while I stopped having it, just for a change. And it was so funny because lots of the men in my life complained. They love the blue hair, you know, like coaching friends and, they're like, where's the blue hair? We love the blue hair. So, it was really interesting how much reaction I got when I didn't have it. And so, yeah, I've had it again for probably about a good two years.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:44] What was that like at the height of the pandemic then? Are you able to do it yourself at all? Or do you need to go somewhere to have it then?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:45:50] have it done professionally, like every couple of months, two or three months, but then I, can actually keep it maintained myself. So it really, [00:46:00] wasn't a huge issue. I had my husband do it during the pandemic. He did a great job. He's so good. He would have a second career for sure. as a hairstylist, he did it,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:46:10] Oh, fantastic.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:46:12] Yeah. And then just in terms of style, I, think growing up in London, it would be hard not to be influenced by fashion. It's just part of the culture and it's in the air, and so for me as a kid, not being able to afford to buy clothes that I wanted and I had a couple of friends who were really into it as well. And we would go into shops and endlessly try things on that we couldn't afford to buy. It's such a joy and just seeing how they looked and putting things together, you know? So we probably drove the store assistants crazy, you know, because, just the sort of customers you don't want, who've just spend hours in the fitting room and then never buy [00:47:00] anything. And we get very excited when there was a sale, we might be able to actually purchase something.

And so when I became an adult and I started to have some money and I could actually pay for some clothes, it was just such a treat for me to do that. And you know, there are a couple of brands that I really love and there's a brand called Elie Tahari. I just loved their clothes and staff are really well-trained. So I have like a personal shopper in the California store. So she will actually call me and say, hey, Pam, I think you're going to love this. And she'll actually put me on FaceTime and show me. And sometimes she'll try it on because she's a really similar size and she'll show me what it looks like. And so that has been just a lot of fun.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:47:49] How delightful. That's the relationship we all need to cultivate, in our favorite shops.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:47:54] Yeah, absolutely.

**Daily Joy**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:47:57] And do you have any kind of daily habit or [00:48:00] ritual that brings you joy?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:48:02] Oh, I would say that rather than having a daily thing that I have to do for my joy, my ritual is to be tapped in to what today is calling for in terms of joy. because it really varies like this morning I woke up strangely early, which is really unusual for me. And I just spent some time sitting on my deck while it's nice and cool. Cause we're having this strange heat wave. here in the Pacific Northwest. So It was 110 degrees a couple of days ago, and we don't have air conditioning in these parts. But the mornings have been cool and especially today it's cooling off and I just sat on the deck with my two cats and just listen to the birds and just really enjoying that early morning, quiet. So that's what it was today, but every day it's [00:49:00] something different and I'm just sort of tapped into what's being called for, or what's the opportunity in this moment.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:49:09] Yes, that's the ultimate daily habit that brings you joy, I think. To really be tapped into what you need in the moment. That's wonderful.

**Top Tip**

And what's your top tip for living well? Something listeners could take away with them and apply in their own lives?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:49:26] My top tip for living well. I would say is having some kind of relationship with death and bringing that into your decision-making to start to talk about it more and just be with the discomfort of that in the beginning. It gets easier, but even just being with yourself about it first, and just having some kind of relationship with it Yeah, that would be my top tip and the other, can I have a second?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:49:56] Please, go for it.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:49:57] Breaking the rules. That might be my third top [00:50:00] tip. There's a lovely quote from Eckhart. Totally. That really changed my life a number of years ago. And it is: worry pretends to be necessary and we confuse it for caring. Yeah, honestly, it was, you know, one of those like somebody had hit me around the head moments when I read it. and it has just been a really powerful understanding for me. It's really easy to think that by worrying about stuff that's going to happen or has happened or people in our lives or loved ones that's how we care for them, but actually we can care without worrying. We're actually more caring when we're not worrying.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:50:44] And so what's the best way for listeners to connect with you and have more Pam in their lives?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:50:50] Oh. if you want to see some little funny comedy clips go to Instagram or YouTube, I have a few of those up. Pam Dibbs. You [00:51:00] can also sign up for my mailing list on dibbsonlife.com. And there will be much more coming about the Good Death Project. That's the best place to sign up if you want to hear more about that.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:51:15] So Pam, you're the founder of the Good Death Project based on the premise that a good death requires a life well lived. So how do you educate and support people through the Good Death Project?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:51:28] Well, Alexandria, you have the scoop here because this is really new and fresh. So you heard it here first. Yeah. It is a movement actually is my hope for what this is. I'd really love to start a global conversation about death and mortality to create more ease and have people live fuller lives. and, you know, really for me, I want to get to the end of life feeling like I've left nothing on the [00:52:00] table. To do that you need to know that there's a table and you need to know what's on it for you. You need to be looking at that and recognizing that tomorrow is not guaranteed. This time we have is really precious. Initially, what this is going to look like is I'm working on a documentary and then I'm also going to have a podcast. Yeah. I'm getting into the podcast game.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:52:28] Exciting.

 **Pam Dibbs:** [00:52:30] And they'll be a number of other ways to be engaged and connect. I'm thinking that there will also be a membership. I'm hoping to encourage people to have ending events and ceremonies and coach people through what that would look like. And I'd love for all of that to be community led rather than relying on a lot of Pam.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:52:54] So really starting that spark and then having it live on its own and develop.

[00:53:00] **Pam Dibbs:** [00:52:59] Yeah. So I'm writing a TED talk and doing more comedic speaking about this topic, especially how much it can help leaders and teams and organizations. So, that's what it looks like initially. You heard it here first.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:53:16] Yes, that's very exciting. I think that is such a wonderful concept that could really transform the way we look at life as well. And take action on living the best version we possibly can of our lives. Watch this space. I'm very excited.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:53:34] Yeah, me too.

**Quick-Fire Questions**

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:53:36] And so now we've come to the finale. So I have few quick fire questions to end the show. So what's your most treasured possession and, of course, no judgment.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:53:49] Oh, I would say. it's actually this little pen that I have.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:53:56] Ooh.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:53:57] So I've noticed that having lost both of my [00:54:00] parents in the last three years, anytime I find something that they either gave me or somehow I acquired that reminds me of them or is from them just means so much. this pen is actually a pen. My cousin, who himself died young, gave to my mother and had it engraved. And so it's a gold pen and I sort of keep it safe. I use it when I write cards. It's just that lovely reminder of her and him. Yeah, I find that I'm much more sentimental in my old age with the items that really mean something.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:54:40] And what's your favorite article of clothing or accessory in your current wardrobe?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:54:46] Oh, this is tough. I have to pick one. I would say, it's a shirt that I bought. it's one that I've [00:55:00] worn to a couple of facilitation and speaking gigs. Yeah, it's just really colorful feels really comfortable. It's got that form and function thing going as well as the beauty. Yeah, I just love it.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:55:14] And what color is it?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:55:16] So it's got a number of crazy colors in it. It's kind of gone like a cream base and then lots of blue. I always love lots of blue and I surprised that the blue hair and then a little bit of purple as well. It's very, very colorful. I love colorful shirts and dresses. That's one of my things is just to kind of mix it up with a lot of color.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:55:40] And where do you go to get inspired?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:55:45] Whew. I watch comedy shows. You familiar with the Shea Fleabag?

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:55:52] Oh, I love Fleabag. I'm a huge Phoebe Waller-Bridge fan. So yeah.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:55:57] Me too. [00:56:00] I actually got to meet her.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:56:02] Ooh. Oh, you might have to tell a little anecdote about that though.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:56:07] These are meant to be quick fire questions, but So, I am also obsessive flea bag fan and it's something I go to, to just admire the comedic genius. Cause again, she's also somebody that deals with death in a lot of her writing. And she has that way of dealing with it where she's having you face it, but she's doing it through levity and comedy. and yeah, I think it's genius. And so I can't tell you the number of times I've watched both series and I also saw the live show in London.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:56:45] Oh, oh, I'm jealous. I'm officially jealous.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:56:49] Yeah. And got, some meet her afterwards. And, It was one of the biggest gifts that my husband gave me. cause he set that all up and we had a wonderful [00:57:00] evening. She's amazing. she is more incredible. Imperson

Yeah, I also think Ricky Gervais says show Afterlife was a really, really great look at death in a fresh way with lots of comedy, but lots of heart, in both of those shows. That's kind of where I go for inspiration, especially during the pendant where we haven't been able to get out and about and go to live shows. and then from, my husband, like I'll come up with an idea for comedy and helps me write it. And so we spark a lot off each other where we'll develop ideas and we'll kind of bake the idea between us over a few days. I find it very inspiring to have that partnership to bounce ideas off and just have that back and forth. Cause you know, as much as I love my cats, they don't offer a lot in that department.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:57:55] They can only do so much when it comes to comedy. Although the internet will tell you another story. [00:58:00]

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:58:00] Oh, I know, I know, but they're not really impressed with my comedy these days. No, in fact, I have been rehearsing for Zoom gigs by rehearsing in front of my cats because there's no tougher audience. So if I can make it through with the cats, yawning and walking off, you know, looking very unimpressed, then I can do a Zoom gig with everyone on mute.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:58:27] Genius advice for any aspiring comics out there.

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:58:32] Pam's top tip. Rehearse in front of your cats. My husband said, do you know, do you want to rehearse in front of me? I'm like, no, you're you're going to smile laugh. No, no, no, no, can't have it. Yeah.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:58:48] And what's one book or resource that you'd recommend for everyone?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:58:54] Oh, the app called we croak

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:58:59] Oh, [00:59:00]

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:59:00] And it will send you five times a day, a reminder that you're going to die. Quotes, funny sayings. It's brilliant. So simple. Yet so brilliant.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:59:15] And it does it in a way. It's sort of inspiring as opposed to uh, dragging you down?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:59:21] Yes. They're really interesting. yeah, I love it. I think it's genius.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:59:27] And here's a very KonMari question for you. So what are you grateful for?

**Pam Dibbs:** [00:59:36] So much. I am grateful for this. And you inviting me to join you on your show and having a chance to talk about one of my favorite subjects for a couple of hours is just amazing. And then I'm also really grateful for my friends. I have, a group of coaches. We call ourselves the fab seven and [01:00:00] once a month we meet. And we've just started being able to meet again at each other's house. And we've been doing it for, I think over 10 years, and they're coming to my house tonight. I'm hosting the five, seven tonight. just really grateful for the friendship and love and fun and good wine and hot fries.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [01:00:26] That's all you need.

**Pam Dibbs:** [01:00:28] Yeah.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [01:00:30] And finally, Pam, what do you love most about life?

 **Pam Dibbs:** [01:00:36] I love, love. Most, I mean, it's just incredible that we can be in relationship with each other and be so connected and bring so much to each other's day-to-day experience. and you know, when we mess up, [01:01:00] I love repairs. I just love the power of a repair in a relationship, how it can make it stronger. But to me, leadership has an act of love. Most of what we do in our businesses for our clients is an act of love.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [01:01:18] Absolutely. Love and connection really are the keys to life.

Aren't

**Pam Dibbs:** [01:01:24] Yeah. And when people get to the end of life, most of their realizations about what's important is that love and connection are what really matters. And so if we can know that earlier, it really changes the decisions we make and, not sweating the small stuff and what the priorities are. And I think having that clarity for me has been really, rich.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [01:01:52] Well, Pam, it's been an absolute pleasure. I'm so delighted to have you on the show to chat about being in touch with your [01:02:00] mortality and tapping into what you need each day and yeah, having that connection with the people around you. So thank you so much.

**Pam Dibbs:** [01:02:09] Oh, thank you so much. It's been just so much fun and I really really am grateful. Thank you.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [01:02:16] Pleasure.

**Key Takeaways**

Well, I hope you enjoyed that chat with leadership coach and comedian Pam Dibbs. Be sure to check out the extended show notes on alsoinpink.com. There are some wonderful photos, including one of Pam having a fashion moment with Princess Diana.

So here's some key takeaways from our conversation. Our time here is limited and we all need to have some kind of relationship with death. Bring that into your decision-making. Use your [01:03:00] mortality to live the best possible life you can live now.

Ask yourself. If you knew this was the last job you'd ever take, would you take it? And if this was the last day, week or a month of your life, how would you spend it?

And remember the results you get are perfect for the system you have created. So if you're feeling overworked and overwhelmed, explore what it is you've done to create that. And what can you do about it? Yes, you always have a choice and you can always change your mind. And isn't humor a wonderful thing? See if you can find something each day that really makes you laugh.

 That's our show then. Thank you so much for listening. I'm Alexandria, and this is ALSO in PINK. The podcast, all about lifestyle design. If you enjoyed the show, please subscribe to [01:04:00] ALSO in PINK, wherever you get your podcasts. And the absolute best way to show your support is to write a review on Apple Podcasts or iTunes. This really helps more than anything to promote the show. And, of course, tell all your friends. Thank you so much for your support. Until next time, have a wonderful week. Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.