

## Sawbones 432: Anthroposophy

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**Clint:** *Sawbones* is a show about medical history, and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** Hello everybody, and welcome to *Sawbones*: a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your cohost, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** And, um, I'm so excited to be here with you, my wife, my best friend.

**Sydnee:** Thank you, hon.

**Justin:** To talk about another chapter of medical history.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Um, I am going to have to, like, take several runs on the name of this episode, because while I have practiced saying it repeatedly, for some reason this is a word that, like, my brain cannot hold on— you know? Sometimes there's a word you know how to pronounce, but then every time you go to pronounce it, it just gets mushy in there?

**Justin:** When I was a kid, until I was about 15 I couldn't reliably say "mischief." It would always come out as "mishfish."

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** I didn't have to say the word "mischief" a lot. I mean, if you think about it, you probably haven't said it much. Honestly, me telling this story is the most I've said it in a few years. But...

**Sydnee:** Mischief?

**Justin:** Mish— Mischief.

**Sydnee:** Uh-oh. Uh-oh. You've lost it again.

**Justin:** I'm back.

**Sydnee:** Look at the— can you see the title of my notes? Do you see the title?

**Justin:** Umm...

**Sydnee:** How would you say that? See? 'Cause every time I look at it, I have to say it in my head three times before I say it out loud.

**Justin:** Hold on. Let me see what wild way you've decided to share documents with me currently.

**Sydnee:** I just shared it with you on... Google Drive!

**Justin:** Anthro— anthro— anthroposophy. Anthroposophy.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that's it.

**Justin:** Aw, man. I don't have my—

**Sydnee:** Anthroposophy.

**Justin:** [crosstalk]

**Sydnee:** Anthroposophy. Anthroposophy. Yeah.

**Justin:** My— my— I used to have a vuvuzela that was great when I had a rare success.

**Sydnee:** I want to, like— sometimes I get started with the wrong, like, um... I say anthroposophy, and that's not right.

**Justin:** Well, yeah, no. You want to say anthroposo—

**Sydnee:** No. Anthro— anthropo-sophie. That's what— that's what I've almost said several times. Then I'm like, 'No, that's nothing. That's nothing. That's not what it is.'

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** For some reason it's just not... I'm gonna work on it, though, 'cause I have to say it a few times in this episode. Thank you, Hannah, for both blessing and cursing me [through laughter] with this topic.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** 'Cause it's very interesting, even if it's hard to say. I've never heard this word before I received this email about it.

**Justin:** No, me neither. It feels like— it's not the hardware place, right? Or the clothes...

**Sydnee:** Anthropology?

**Justin:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** No, it is not anthropology.

**Justin:** I was thinking of Restoration Hardware, not Anthropologie. 'Cause I always see tho— those are— [holding back laughter] that's how I know that I'm in a fancy city. If I go to their mall and like, "Whoa. Anthropologie and Restoration Hardware? Look at me! Look, Ma, I made it!"

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [choked] I don't know what either of 'em do!

**Sydnee:** I don't know.

**Justin:** If Restoration Hardware had had clothes I wouldn't have been surprised! [wheezes]

**Sydnee:** It's far away from our mall where we have that one store that has all those t-shirts out front with guns on 'em. I don't know what they sell there other than t-shirts with guns on 'em.

**Justin:** We used to have a great shop called Excalibur that was all—

**Sydnee:** Aw, man!

**Justin:** —Excalibur was all swords and glass figurines.

**Sydnee:** Uh-huh.

**Justin:** It was amazing.

**Sydnee:** And sometimes things made out of, like, metal. Like, you know, like...

**Justin:** Yeah. Hammered metal.

**Sydnee:** Hammered metal.

**Justin:** Dragons!

**Sydnee:** It was a cool store.

**Justin:** Crystals!

**Sydnee:** It was scary, though. You walk in— it was one of those stores where I would walk in and, like, hold my hands together.

**Justin:** Yeah, do the kid, like—

**Sydnee:** And, like, make myself real small, just so I don't bump into anything. But really pretty.

**Justin:** God, I'm glad we don't have that store anymore. Can you imagine how much, A) our kids would want to go in there and B) would rack up the damages.

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] They would break everything, mm-hmm.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** So, I want to say, like— I'm gonna talk a lot about this— okay. What anthroposophy is, and how it relates to medicine. 'Cause this is— this is a wide-ranging sort of concept. Like, philosophical understanding of the world. It's like a whole sort of system of understanding.

**Justin:** It is a, to use this useful word that we're reclaiming, a holistic approach to education.

**Sydnee:** Yes, to everything.

**Justin:** Oh!

**Sydnee:** To the way we think, to the way we treat each other, to the way we— our social movements, to science, to politics, to government, to education, to medicine. And that's the thing we'll focus in on is, like, anthroposophical medicine, because that is one branch of it. Um, but like, I just want to start off with, since I'm gonna be talking about how the medicine is considered pseudoscientific and not based in an actual, like, evidence-based understanding of diagnosis of treatment... [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** Pretty presumptuous, considering the episode has just started, Sydnee. Let's wait to find out.

**Sydnee:** Well, it's not. But...

**Justin:** [wheezes]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I mean, it's just not! And I've— well, I feel like it's important to preface with that. I'm gonna talk you through the different ideas about it but, like, it's not. Um, I don't have a problem with people who sit around and think and talk about this stuff. Like, I think it's interesting. I used to do it a lot... before we had children. [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** You mean like philosophers?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. But this is beyond just philosophy. Like, obviously it's philosophy, but it's like applied philosophy, right?

**Justin:** Nothing's bigger than philosophy, Sydnee. Philosophy is the superstructure under which all other constructs exist.

**Sydnee:** But, like, this is beyond just, like, putting that— like, talking about that construct. It's like, how can I apply that to specific areas of actual life?

**Justin:** You're saying it's applied— it's applied—

**Sydnee:** Yes, it's applied philosophy.

**Justin:** —It's applied ph— applied philosophy. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So that's what you're doing with this. It's not just about, like— because in college we all would, like, sit around and talk about this stuff, right? But, like, we didn't do anything with any of that.

**Justin:** No, you just thought about it and drank about it.

**Sydnee:** Yes, and then moved on, and felt really smart. [laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** For, like, five minutes. Um, I love that.

**Justin:** Until you grow up and you're like, "Wait, none of that was anything! Oh no!"

**Sydnee:** And that's certainly— not always, but in many ways how we move things forward, right? We sit and we think and we talk, and we think and we think and we think, and then all of a sudden we start seeing things differently. Especially if you're effective at communicating and spreading those ideas. So I don't have any problem with any of that.

Um, the problem lies when you get that sort of, like, new world view, and you decide that you can apply it to everything, including something like medicine or healthcare. Like, "Oh. Well, I'm just gonna completely, without any medical expertise whatsoever, revamp medicine, because I thought about it enough and it's different now." [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That's... that doesn't work as well. Um, so I want to talk about Rudolf Steiner. Uh, if you've heard this name at all— which a lot of people aren't as familiar with Rudolf, I wasn't— Rudolf Steiner, it is probably because you are familiar with or attended, perhaps, a Waldorf school.

**Justin:** Uh, I— no.

**Sydnee:** You know anything about Waldorf schools?

**Justin:** No. Is it— is— unless the old Huntington High or the new Huntington High are Waldorf schools.

**Sydnee:** They are not.

**Justin:** Those are the two that I went to, so.

**Sydnee:** The map that I saw showed no Waldorf schools in West Virginia.

**Justin:** That is shocking.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** We don't have any Jack-in-the-Boxes. We don't have any Restoration Hardwares. And now this.

**Sydnee:** They're pretty elite, um, private schools.

**Justin:** [simultaneously] Like Restoration Hardware and Anthropologie.

**Sydnee:** They, uh— there is tuition involved, obviously. These are not public schools. These are private schools. At least in this country. Now, I don't know— there are a lot more of them when you go overseas. In, like, Germany specifically there are tons of them. And so I don't know if maybe there's a different... obviously the US has decided that you have to pay for anything that is a basic necessity. [laughs] Including education and healthcare and all that. So, um, we— so it might be different if you go outside of this country. But at least in the US, it's a pretty— it's pretty posh. Like, if you're gonna go there, you gotta have some money. I think there are probably scholarships. Most of these places have 'em. But generally speaking, it's gonna be something that more, like wealthy— and

especially if you're more, um... left-leaning is usually the association, more liberal. Somewhat artsy or in-tune with, like, all of the other parts of education.

**Justin:** Maybe even artsy-fartsy.

**Sydnee:** No. [laughs] Like dance, music, art. Things that are great. I support all this. We should all— all our kids should have access to this. But, like, all of that is incorporated into it. And then there's extra stuff that I don't know everybody would know about. Like, you hear Waldorf school and you think, "Oh, Tony Private School." But it's more than that. Um, it's an entirely, like, unique system of education. It's mainly in, like, sort of the New England area, and then out on the West Coast. There are ones throughout the South and other parts of the country. Obviously none in West Virginia, but...

**Justin:** Your— your— okay, Sydnee. As your husband and your cohost, you're working really admirably hard to not be classist right now with your language, and I want to say I celebrate you and I support you. Literally everyone that can hear your voice right now [through laughter] knows exactly the human being you're talking about. No question, could pick them out of a lineup of a thousand people. We know exactly the human being that is going to this school.

**Sydnee:** A lot of— there are a lot of, like, um... they have a lot of alumni that are famous.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** So.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** You can look up lists if you feel so inclined. I don't wanna call people out for going to a fancy school, any more than I would call somebody out for not going to a fancy school.

**Justin:** And it doesn't matter if you were, say, on a break or not on a break any time you went to the school.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] So what is— what is anthroposophy? Because that's what—

**Justin:** Say it— wait, one more time. [laughs]



**Sydnee:** Anthroposophy. That is what this, like, educational philosophy at the Waldorf schools is built upon, and then this medi— medisal— medicinal— medi— medical...

**Justin:** [clicks tongue] Now it's—

**Sydnee:** Pseudoscientific medical theory.

**Justin:** It's spreading! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It is a view of human nature that's— they call it, like, a spiritual science. So the idea is like, okay.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Sydnee:** I can perceive that— I can perceive this thing— I can perceive you with my eyes because of sight. Like, I see you.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** My eyes are seeing you. I'm perceiving you. I can perceive this coffee I'm drinking through my taste.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** The idea is, like, we— our thinking about things is another perception. You can perceive ideas and the spiritual world and human potential through thinking. Thinking is another sense. I mean, it's like a scientific approach to the spiritual world, and it has to do with sort of expanding what we can sense and observe as humans.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Like, unlimited potential of sensation and observation, into the spiritual realm.

**Justin:** So this is...

**Sydnee:** Using a scientific sort of approach.

**Justin:** I mean, you are describing ESP, right? Like, that's what you mean. Right? It's extrasensory perception.

**Sydnee:** I— well—

**Justin:** You're perceiving things that you could not with your five senses, six if you're Spider-Man.

**Sydnee:** It— yes. Yes. It is a way of—

**Justin:** Six if you're the kid from *Signs*.

**Sydnee:** It is a way of connecting our—

**Justin:** Oh, sorry. [through laughter] I said the kid from Si— I can't believe I messed up the name of the movie! It has *The Sixth Sense* right in it! You know what I mean.

**Sydnee:** I know what you mean. It is a way of connecting the scientific and spiritual world. It's like, let's just fuse it all together and say, you know, we don't have to... like, belief is part of it, but through that belief you are actually experiencing the spiritual world.

**Justin:** Yes. Your thoughts have an impa— your thoughts are not mere... neurons firing.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Like, we have a power that emanates from us that is stronger than just... um, the physical.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Or the observable with the naked eye. That kind of thing. Does that make sense.

**Justin:** Yes, I understand.

**Sydnee:** Rudolf Steiner was from Austria. He lived from 1861 to 1925. He was the one who developed the field. He was a real Renaissance sort of guy. Had an interest in art, music, dance, theater, social activism, architecture, like he

designed buildings. Um, he was an occultist. He, uh, like, saw a ghost once when he was young.

**Justin:** Nice.

**Sydnee:** And felt that he was clairvoyant. He felt that clairvoyance is part of this. This, again, perception of the world that is beyond what we think we can perceive. Um, he did get a doctorate in philosophy, so yes, obviously philosophy is a part of this. But he studied sort of everything, and did a lot of writing and editing and lecturing. Um, which I guess is what you do if you're a philosopher, right? Write, edit, lecture.

**Justin:** I mean— I mean, it ain't shovel coal, certainly.

**Sydnee:** Um, he ended up lecturing to the Theosophical Society, which I think I've mentioned briefly in a different episode when we were talking about therapeutic touch.

**Justin:** Hm.

**Sydnee:** I think we mentioned that with Droz.

**Justin:** Sounds familiar with Droz.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, we did. Droz was into therapeutic touch. Um, and one of the presidents of the Theosophical Society developed therapeutic touch, and many, many years later Droz would be into it. But that's another episode. We've already done that. Um, he went and lectured to them, and he liked their whole thing. Which the Theosophical Society had to do with, like, living in harmony and reaching the apex of human potential. Similar kind of ideas, but without this sort of, like, "And now let's make it a science and change the world with it" kind of thing. Like, it's more like "Let's come together harmoniously and be our best selves." as opposed to "Now let's develop a new system of farming and medicine."

**Justin:** Okay. I'm into that. I like being our best selves.

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] Which he's going to do.

**Justin:** Makes sense.

**Sydnee:** So you're unlocking your spiritual potential. This all sounds very... I don't know. I feel like *The Secret* eventually arrives in this narrative. It doesn't. But, like, it feels that way, right?

**Justin:** I mean, what you're— a lot of what you're talking about parallels, like, law of attraction and *The Secret* pretty closely. This idea that your thoughts can, like, shape the external world.

**Sydnee:** It's very similar, it's very similar. And it's very individualistic. This focus on oneself as a spiritual being, and all that. I mean, that's very much part of it. Although at the same time, Rudolf Steiner would say that, like, the ultimate goal is for what I do to be shared with my community, and what others do to be shared with me. Like, you are a member of a society. Like, it is not wholly divorced from society. Um, but anyway, he wanted to put his own spin on it. Like, he liked that sort of thing but he was like, "Ah, I got some other ideas." So in 1912—

**Justin:** [laughs quietly] "I got my own twisted point of view."

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] He formed the Anthroposophical Society. It became pretty popular, despite the fact that—

**Justin:** With local jocks.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Who just said like, "Come on, wedgies aplenty, guys! Come on in."

**Sydnee:** [laughs] So a lot of people joined this. A lot of people liked this movement. Um, we are, like, now in Germany, and we're moving into, like, the 1920's.

**Justin:** Uh-oh.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. And, um, it's interesting because, like, my understanding when I first heard about Rudolf Steiner is that he was somehow connected to the Nazis. Um, but it's really convoluted. The Anthroposophical Society was definitely banned under Nazi rule. Like, definitely not okay with their sort of, like— did not meet their worldview. And Rudolf Steiner did, um, like, reject and denounce

antisemitism. But it's real complicated, because... they were largely left un, like... unbothered? By the Nazis. Even though they were banned. But, like, also sort of allowed to continue to exist— you know what I mean?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And then there were some Nazis who were very much, like, in favor of anthroposophy. And, like, the Waldorf schools especially that would arise. So it's a really convoluted sort of connection, there. Um, here is the— so I feel like that's worth mentioning. Because there's a lot of talk about that. And certainly— and I have not read everything that Rudolf Steiner wrote. I cannot do that for this podcast.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** But there were— as much as he rejected antisemitism, there seem to be a concurrent idea that everybody should sort of assimilate into the same worldview. And, like, yes, we should live in harmony and we shouldn't harm each other. But at the same time, we should all be the same. Which is... not...

**Justin:** Not...

**Sydnee:** It has to— it's very much "I don't see color."

**Justin:** Yeah, same vibe.

**Sydnee:** That's the thing that I got to this. Is, like, we are shaped by our race or our religion, or where we're from, but it is not— and so it is part of us. And, like, the color of our skin may have something to do with the resonance of, like, our spirit or something, our spiritual evolution through time. All this weird stuff. But at the end of the day, none of it mattered, because we're all the same.

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Which is...

**Justin:** It's troubling.

**Sydnee:** We now know is not, like, a great way to approach diversity. Like, "I don't see color." That's a problem.

**Justin:** It borders on that great American melting pot kind of thing, where it's like you see these images of people coming in in native outfits and then— like, native to their country, where they came from. And then, you know, they— have you ever seen these demonstrations that they used to have? Where people would, like, literally walk into, like, a big melting pot, and they'd walk out and they'd be dressed like a white dude in a business suit. [holding back laughter] And it's like, "Look, we're all... "

**Sydnee:** "We're all the same."

**Justin:** "We're all the same!"

**Sydnee:** As in, we all look like a white dude in a business suit, yeah.

**Justin:** As in, "[through laughter] Abandon everything that makes you you, and just get on board."

**Sydnee:** Yeah. And I mean, so it's very much that very deeply problematic "I don't see color, we are all the same," you know, sort of worldview, as opposed to recognizing our differences and celebrating each unique individual for those differences. That kind of thing. Anyway, um, I want to now focus on just the medical part of it.

**Justin:** Oh, good.

**Sydnee:** Okay?

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Just the medical system that would be developed by this. But before I do that...

**Justin:** I'm just looking at you with anticipation!

**Sydnee:** ... let's go to the billing department.

**Justin:** Let's go!

[theme music plays]

[Halloween music plays]

**Jesse:** I'm Jesse Thorn. On the next *Bullseye*, our annual Halloween spectacular, we'll interview Ana Fabrega from *Los Espookys*, Monét X Change from *Drag Race*, and the great RL Stine, creator of *Goosebumps*.

**Speaker 2:** You know, I don't really get too deep into the real fears. It's a lot safer to do a dummy coming to life.

**Jesse:** That's on the next *Bullseye*, from Maximumfun.org and NPR.

[music and ad end]

[cheerful music plays]

**Jesse:** Hi. I'm Jesse Thorn, the founder of Maximum Fun, and I have a special announcement. I'm no longer embarrassed by *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*. You know, for years each new episode of this supposed advice show was a fresh insult. A depraved jumble of erection jokes, ghost humor, and— frankly, this is for the best— very little actionable advice.

But now as they enter their twilight years, I'm as surprised as anyone to admit that... it's gotten kinda good. Justin, Travis, and Griffin's witticisms are more refined, like a humor column in a fancy magazine. And they hardly ever say bazinga anymore.

So, after you've completely finished to listening to every single one of all of our other shows, why not join the McElroy brothers every week for *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*?

[music and ad end]

**Sydnee:** So, here is the breakdown on the medical end of things. Because as I said, like, there were a lot of different fields that would be developed from anthroposophy. One was a medicinal branch. So, the belief is that a human is formed by four forces. [pause]

**Justin:** Earth?

**Sydnee:** There's, like, the physical—[laughs]

**Justin:** Wind.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Justin:** Water. Fire. And then we discovered Heart.

**Sydnee:** There's the physical force, which is like your cells...

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** There's growth forces. And, like, think about this in different... so, like, physical forces are what bring an object together.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Right? Cells or atoms or whatever. The structure of something.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** There is the growth force. Which, like, this would be like a plant. So a plant has a physical force and a growth force. It lives, it grows, it changes. Right?

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Then there's the next thing, which is like, uh, what we would think of as the soul.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Something that interacts with the other two forces and gives us, like, sensory and motor and nervous systems and all that. So, like, animals have this. We have this, animals have this too, right? So that's what differentiates an animal from a plant in this sort of structure. Does that make sense?

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And then finally you get to the spirit. And the spirit is what makes us human, and it's the capacity for, like, reflective thinking.



**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** So we have these four formative forces that make a human.

**Justin:** So we got... life, growth... spirit...?

**Sydnee:** And soul.

**Justin:** And soul.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Um, and then there is the threefold model of human constitution. [laughs quietly] Which interacts with these four forces. So you have to understand these sets of ideas and how they interact to understand the human body. Uh, and beyond. I shouldn't just say the body.

**Justin:** And beyond!

**Sydnee:** The human... entity. Uh, these three subsystems are basically that you can kind of think of them as in different parts of the body. There's the nerve sense system, which is sort of your head, brain, nervous system kind of thing.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** But not just physical, again. Like, it's beyond that. It's your sense. It's everything that senses the world around you, thinking and feeling and being and all that. There is the motor-metabolic system, which is in your arms and legs, which is what, like, makes you move and, like, function. And then there is the rhythmic system, which is what we think of like breathing and circulation and sort of—

**Justin:** Stuff that happens without your...

**Sydnee:** And it connects us all.

**Justin:** What's that called? The parts that... things that don't require conscious thought to do? There's a medical term for— like breathing and—

**Sydnee:** Autonomic.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Is that what you're thinking? Yeah. Um, so yes. And, um, all of these force— the four forces interact differently with the three subsystems. So, like, if in the nerve-sense system, so you think of your brain and your feeling and your thinking and all that, um, the physical and growth forces are very separate from the spirit and the soul.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Okay?

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Which allows us to move beyond the physical, and perceive of that which we cannot see, but can understand through the power of thought. [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** Sight beyond sight, like Lion-O. Yes!

**Sydnee:** There is the... when we talk about, like, the motor-metabolic system, it's very—they're very closely tied. Because the things that we are moving and interacting with and sensing and seeing and spir— and, like, all of that stuff. It has to do with, like, I think about moving my arm, my arm moves. It's very entwined, right?

**Justin:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** And then when you get to the rhythmic system, it's a fluctuation. So, like, breathing and circulation, it changes how entwined those things are, depending on what you're doing. Are you riding a bicycle, and so you're moving quickly, so your breathing and circulation is very much tied to the physical movement and the physical world, and it's all connected in what you're sensing in that moment? Or are you breathing faster, or is your blood pumping faster

because of... you've interacted with something that scared you, or made you excited, or you've had a revelation of some sort. Does that make sense?

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Okay. All of that is how you— so if you see the body in this term, that's how you come up with, like, what is pathology, then? What causes disease? And from that you derive treatments.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** So it's a totally different way than, like— I mean, it mirrors some of the ways we look at the human body in, you know, allopathic, osteopathic, more traditional medicine systems. But it's not the same, obviously.

**Justin:** It has a little bit of— it has a little bit of humors flavor to it, right?

**Sydnee:** It does. Well, I mean, it pulls in pseudoscientific and occultist thinking. I mean, like, that was part of what he thought. Like, he believed he could sense ghosts. That's part of it. [laughs] Is the thought that, like, Justin, you too could see a ghost.

**Justin:** [unintelligible]

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] Like, it's not just a gift— in the sense that he understood time. That's what he said. Even at 15 years old, he fully understood time as a concept.

**Justin:** That's cool.

**Sydnee:** And so he was able to be clairvoyant because he had already developed a full understanding of time. If, Justin, you could ever master a full understanding of time, you too could be clairvoyant.

**Justin:** Man. Are you telling me that the Edge, Bono, the whole gang could be clairvoyant?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** If I— wait! Are you saying if I put the work into understanding time, then Bono and the Edge and all them could be clairvoyant?

**Sydnee:** Oh, I get what you just did there. You just made a pun 'cause I said U2. [laughs quietly] I'm sitting there thinking, "Why is Bono in this?" It feels kind of Bono. I mean, like, it all feels like— Bono may be into some of this. I don't know. [laughs] It feels like a U2 song sometimes.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Um, that's no shade on Bono. I don't have beef with Bono or anything.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] Um, anyway, so—

**Justin:** He seems uniquely Bono [wheezes] to me.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Justin:** My read on him is that he's extremely Bono. Almost irrepressibly Bono. Relentlessly Bono.

**Sydnee:** So basically, when these systems get out of whack, you get sick. When the interactions between these four formative forces and the three subsystems are out of balance, when something is too deeply intertwined or too disconnected, then you get sick. And so in order to fix that, it's like— it's not just, you know, you have hypothyroidism, here is a medication that will increase the amount of active thyroid hormone in your blood. Like, it's nothing that pragmatic.

**Justin:** It's tough to treat if it's so amorphous, right?

**Sydnee:** Yes. It's— it's, uh— it's a multi-modal therapeutic system that we will apply to your entire person in order to allow you to heal yourself. We will regulate your systems, and that will heal yourself.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Okay? So it's not a cure-all. It's a whole system of medicine.

**Justin:** It's— it's—

**Sydnee:** You don't go and get, like, the anthroposophic pill. You go to a doctor who practices this, or a nurse who's been trained in this, or a hospital that just does this, or a clinic that just does this. Or it's integrated into some traditional hospital.

**Justin:** Not cure-all diseases, cure-all body. Cure the whole body.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** In order to— well, it's in order to allow you to cure yourself.

**Justin:** Okay. Yes, of course.

**Sydnee:** At the end of the day, you have to have the will and the responsibility of doing it, but we will give you the tools that will allow you to.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] Every time I say this stuff I get mad at myself.

**Justin:** [laughs loudly]

**Sydnee:** I'm gonna give you— I mean, listen to me! "I'm gonna give you the tools that will allow you to take control of your health." I mean, you hear— gosh!

**Justin:** People say we live, what? 70, 80 years? That's wrong!

**Sydnee:** You hear this echoed in so much pseudoscience today.

**Justin:** Expand your mind!

**Sydnee:** Ugh. Anyway. So they do use some— and like I said, some of this has been integrated into hospitals the way we think of them in, like, traditional medicine. And then some of these are freestanding sort of things. So it's either an alternative medicine, a complementary medicine, it is regarded as

pseudoscientific because it's not based on evidence, or studies, or rigorous clinical research.

**Justin:** Or anything.

**Sydnee:** Just sort of a philosophy that has been put into a medical field.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** They use some— what I would think of as, like, actual medicine, like traditional medicine. You know. Things that were tested and trialed. That can be part of it. I'm not saying they would never give you an antibiotic. They might. That could be part of it. But then they also have their own pharmacopoeia, which has, like, herbal medicines, some, um... homeopathic remedies are part of what they do. They developed their own sort of medicines derived, like, from a specific mineral or a plant, and they can be compounded en masse. Like, "I need the thing that's compounded for this disorder," or you can ask specifically, like, "My patient has this, this, and this, so I need you to compound this substance and this substance and this substance, put it all together, and give it to them to take as a tincture or apply on their skin or whatever."

Right? Do, like, a compress. Poultice, if you will. [laughs quietly] Um, again, you're looking at the whole— when you do these, like, herbal medicines, a lot of the times— okay. So, we know that we get medicines from plants. We've talked about it on the show. Medicines that were derived from plants.

**Justin:** True.

**Sydnee:** Digitalis, foxglove. We've talked about this stuff. However, what we do is we isolate the active ingredient. What's the thing that's causing the effect? And we put that into the medicine, right?

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** That's why we don't tell you, like, "You need digitalis, go eat this flower." We give you a pill.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Okay. Well, they believe that, like, it's the whole plant, not just the active ingredient, that can provide the benefit. So we would never just remove the active ingredient and give you to like a medicine. You need to consider the entire thing, and whether or not it contains the formative forces that you need.

**Justin:** Hmm, yes, yes!

**Sydnee:** For your condition. Alongside the quote-unquote "active" ingredient. Which they would argue is, like, only— only a piece of it. "Active" implies it's the thing that's acting, whereas the whole thing is acting.

**Justin:** So you don't wanna just, like, treat something with a coconut. You wanna... *consider* the coconut.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Well—

**Justin:** Consider its leaves.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] You have to consider whether the coconut has the right forces along with whatever active ingredient might be inside it.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** 'Cause maybe it is not the appropriate delivery mechanism for what you're trying to do.

**Justin:** Maybe it's a Bounty bar. I mean, you don't know.

**Sydnee:** Lemon and quince are good for allergic rhinitis, like a runny nose from allergies.

**Justin:** Oh, didn't know.

**Sydnee:** Because of not just whatever active ingredient their talking about. Like, I don't know, 'cause they're citrus? I don't know. They're also talking about how their formative forces are good for allergies, 'cause they counter the type of formative forces that cause allergies. You want to counter them. A little different than homeopathy where like cures like. Now you're countering forces. Although sometimes they are homeopathic, so.

**Justin:** You tell me. [wheezes]

**Sydnee:** Also, mistletoe treats tumors.

**Justin:** Oh, whoa!

**Sydnee:** There's no more information I have on that other than that sort of...

**Justin:** I mean, that's huge, though!

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It doesn't, but...

**Justin:** But what if it did? [wheezes]

**Sydnee:** Beyond, like, these sort of compounded specialized medicines, there's also, like— there's specialized nursing training you can go through. That's a big focus of it is, like, as— a nurse is not just tasked with what they consider, like, the exterior of the patient. Which would be, like, cleaning— helping your patient get cleaned up. Um, you know, giving them an IV, making sure a wound is bandaged. Like, the outside.

**Justin:** I get you.

**Sydnee:** But that a nurse is tasked with the interior of the human as well. And so, like, you need to be considering their soul and their spirit and caring for those things at the same time. Which I would argue, you're kind of doing already.

**Justin:** Sure, right?

**Sydnee:** I don't think we ever look at nurses and say, "Could you go take care of that patient's soul for me?"

**Justin:** Right. But they... do.

**Sydnee:** But they do.

**Justin:** But they do, right.

**Sydnee:** I mean, when you are being, you know, kind and caring compassionate, I think this is just a more rigorous way of applying that.



**Justin:** Did you get any sort of read on, like, um, psychotherapy and psychiatry? Like, it—

**Sydnee:** Mmm, I'm gonna get there.

**Justin:** That's a big focus for, I know, other groups that may or may not be in any way similar to this.

**Sydnee:** I know where you're going.

**Justin:** Okay, good.

**Sydnee:** I had the same thought. Um, I will get to psychotherapy. That is a piece of it. Uh, so there's also art therapy, music therapy can be part of it. These are all, like, if you go to a hospital where they practice anthroposophy, those would be part of it.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Some special things just for this is eurythmy, which is a set of exercises that you do. Like, they give you these movements. You get, like, 12 to 15 treatments with an instructor. Each one is 30 to 45 minutes, then you have to do the movements yourself. They're movements that are related to sounds of vowels or consonants, sometimes musical intervals, and sometimes soul gestures. And you can do them in groups or singly. I think they do this at Waldorf schools, I believe. This is part of what they do at a Waldorf school are these movements where you, like, visualize the sound of words.

**Justin:** I think it's also where they got the name for the Eurythmics.

**Sydnee:** Really?

**Justin:** I mean, 'cause I—

**Sydnee:** Well, it makes sense.

**Justin:** I googled Eurythmics and the first hit is Eur—Eur— Eurythmy.

**Sydnee:** You move your body to... the sounds of words or intervals.

**Justin:** Alright.

**Sydnee:** In very, like, pre— like they tell you exactly what to do. The movement's already decided. You don't just do what you want to do. They tell you how to move your body. There's also rhythmic massage, which is kind of like massage. [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** [wheeze-laughs]

**Sydnee:** Except they're balancing polarities and regulating systems. They say that they use the grip and touch method.

**Justin:** [snorts] [strained] I tried that in middle school—[wheezes]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Let's stop there. It can treat your soul and spirit as well as your body. Um, and of course with a lot of these things they'll say, "And because we use these rhythmic methods and not just regular massage, it can be used for asthma or angina or [incredulously] degenerative diseases of the nervous system."

**Justin:** Yikes.

**Sydnee:** Tumors, um, psychiatry and special needs.

**Justin:** Okay. Yeah.

**Sydnee:** There's also specialized psychotherapy, so that is an entire branch of it. Where it's... I couldn't get into, like, what actually are you doing. A lot of it were case studies. Like, you can read these case studies where we applied this, and then it's like "scientific research is ongoing." Meaning we don't have any studies. We have some, like, cases we can tell you about. Which are also called anecdotes. But, like, basically you apply the principles of the formative forces and the subsystems along with life after death and life before birth, and the fact that our life has cycles of seven years, and every seven years is like a different stage of life that we must address and adjust to. And you use all of that, and then talk to people about it.

**Justin:** I keep imagining you at, like, a party and you're by yourself and people will wander up and you're just like, "So anyway, where was I? Right, okay. So the body has an energy that you... "

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Steiner also developed, in addition to this— and I should say, like, he laid the groundwork for all this. A lot of people since then have built upon this work and developed all of these very codified sort of systems and, like, there's tons of— there's over 1200 Waldorf schools. There's quite a few hospitals and clinics and doctors and nurses who practice this kind of medicine. And they may do it—

**Justin:** Unnerving.

**Sydnee:** They may do it in conjunction with, like, you get a traditional medical degree and then do this, too. I actually think for some of these, like for the psychotherapy I think you have to go either become a psychologist or psychiatrist to then get this training on top of it and do it. And so in that sense I would say— and especially when you look at, like, Germany is very into homeopathic medicine, more so than a lot of other countries. And so they regulate it more. Whereas here, like, you just throw these homeopathic things up on the shelf next to actual medicine and just sort of sell it all together. I think it's a little more codified there, and so this would probably also be more codified in Germany than you would necessarily see in the US, where we just kinda throw things at the wall and see what sticks.

Um, he developed biodynamic farming, which was sort of like organic farming except also you put these special compounds in the soil that would balance life forces of the organism that is the farm and stuff. So there were principles that are applied today in organic farming, but then there was some, like, pseudoscientific occultist thought to that. Obviously the Waldorf schools. Which were named that because Emil Molt invited him to come lecture to his workers at the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory in 1919, and after that the Waldorf school was developed and named for that. That's why it's named that.

Um, and Rudolf Hess was a big patron of these schools. That's part of the tie-in to the Nazism thing, yeah.

**Justin:** Oh, okay.

**Sydnee:** So, um, anyway, this me— medicinal field... whatever you think about...

**Justin:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] ... anthroposophy...

**Justin:** I can tell it pains you to say that.

**Sydnee:** Whatever you feel about anthroposophy, the idea that you can sense the spiritual through thinking... I don't know. I mean, if that helps you in your day-to-day life...

**Justin:** Hey, go for it, pal!

**Sydnee:** I have no problem with, like— you have some weird ideas, Justin, and I love you very much. And if they serve you well—

**Justin:** Whoa!

**Sydnee:** —I'm not gonna criticize you for it.

**Justin:** Wow! That's, like, the most general thing to say about a human being that's also extremely damning. "You have some unconventional beliefs that we're not gonna dig into on the podcast right now." What is that?!

**Sydnee:** Well, I don't mean anything bad!

**Justin:** Give me one example.

[pause]

**Sydnee:** I don't know. I'm not gonna—

**Justin:** Go on!

**Sydnee:** I don't wanna share your weird ideas with the world. [laughs]

**Justin:** I just want to allude to them... [wheezes] you wanna share the existence—

**Sydnee:** We all have weird ideas— we all have weird things that we... you know. We all have our own— our own thing. And that's okay. I don't mind that. And if you find, like, a system of thinking and believing that helps you live a happy, healthy life where you do good and no harm, I think that's great. I think the problem is that this sounds to me like a philosophical system that was sort of crammed into a medical structure without any evidence for any of it. There's no— I mean, like, all of this— I don't have any clinical studies or, like, anything to tell you that any of this works. I don't know if eurythmy works. I don't know if rhythmic massage works. All these medicines that they're talking about. I couldn't even find lists of them easily anywhere. 'Cause it sounds like it's very, like, individual. And I think the problem is that that's very seductive to patients, the idea that your treatment plan is individual to you.

**Justin:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** We all want that. We all want to think that our, you know, provider is looking at us as a unique human and trying to find what works best for us.

**Justin:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** But there are limits to that. Sometimes you need this kind of medicine for this condition, and it doesn't really matter who you are. Now... how can we best help you live with that, and take that treatment, and monitor that treatment, and what's the best delivery method? All that might change from person to person. But it doesn't change basic science underneath it. And the two can live together, not necessarily in this way. But anyway, thank you, Hannah, for telling me about— I have never heard of this. And there are hospitals where they just do this.

**Justin:** Are they clearly labeled? [wheeze-laugh]

**Sydnee:** Yeah, yeah.

**Justin:** Okay, good.

**Sydnee:** No, they're clearly labeled. And I think that there's also, like, integrative medicine systems. So if you go somewhere where they're like, "We

practice we integrative medicine," I'm not saying this is the kind of thing they're integrating, but this is one of those, like, alternative medical systems that you might toss in there with conventional medicine, and... I don't know. You can always ask, though.

**Justin:** Yeah. Just tell 'em you prefer medicine medicine, if they do that kind. Just— you'd like that kind of medicine, please.

**Sydnee:** As far as I can tell, if you want to avoid this, you can come to West Virginia. [laughs quietly]

**Justin:** Hey, right? Hey! Number 50th in a lot of stats, including representation of anthroposophy.

**Sydnee:** Or Waldorf schools. We don't have those, either.

**Justin:** Thank you so much for listening to our podcast. We hope you've enjoyed yourself, hope you learned a little something. Um, thanks to The Taxpayers for the use of their song "Medicines" as the intro and outro of our program. And thanks to you for listening. We really appreciate it, and we hope you have a good one. That's gonna do it for us this week. Until next time, my name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** And, as always, don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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