

## The Brave Files Podcast

### Katherine North: Fear is Nothing More Than Practice Being Brave!

#### Episode 157

Heather Vickery 0:04

Hi, everyone, this is Heather Vickery and you've tuned in to The Brave Files Podcast, I'm so excited to have you here with us today. In just a few days, you have an incredible opportunity to participate in something that many people have called life changing, and even transformative. That's right, I'm hosting The Brave Method Workshop. Again, this is the workshop, where I break down my patented coaching platform, the brave method, the event starts on March 16, and you don't want to miss it. You can join us to get started unlocking a bigger, bolder, more fulfilling life. Yeah, you can run a business that has a positive impact on yourself and the lives of others. And yes, you can do hard things. In fact, you do them all the time. But guess what, you don't have to do them alone, registered today and experienced this truly unique hands on interactive community building life giving workshop with me, and a whole bunch of other people who are ready to finally get unstuck and build the life of their dreams. In this workshop, you will have an opportunity to identify areas that you're stuck, embrace your fears and finally begin to make the brave leap. Oh, and did I mention that it's completely free. It's free, but you have to register to join us. So visit [VickeryandCo.com/workshop](http://VickeryandCo.com/workshop) to save your spot right now. Most of you know that I'm a big fan of learning. I love to read, listen to podcasts, take workshops and courses. Continuing Education is really, really important to me. And I almost always find something really wonderful as a takeaway, but rarely am I so moved by a piece of work, that I find myself dreaming about it. And that's how I felt when I read Holy Heathen, the memoir of today's guest, Katherine North. Katherine doesn't believe in being fearless. She and I are aligned in that way. In fact, she's scared every day. She's scared of professional phone calls, of being vulnerable. Even little things like bugs despite the fact that she lives on a farm. So when she decided to write a memoir, Katherine was naturally terrified. But rather than let fear keep her from telling her story, Katherine stepped into her brave and wrote a raw and real memoir about her extraordinary life as a third culture kid raised in Japan with missionary parents, oh, and not feeling aligned with her parents religion. Now she's here to encourage you to do the hard thing that you've always dreamed of doing, because it's worth it. And you're worth it. Katherine and I have a really great conversation. We talked about her book, we talk about her life, her coaching, her amazing, beautiful, wonderful family. We even talk about our shared love of baby chicks because we now both have them. Y'all stick with us. This is a really incredibly fun conversation and I cannot wait to share it with you.

Katherine North 3:13

Mystic, scared, stubborn.

Heather Vickery 3:18

This is Heather Vickery and you're listening to The Brave Files, stories from people living courageously. When we choose bravely and big and small ways, it powerfully elevates our lives. I hope these stories connect with you and encourage you to embrace bravery in every possible way, day after day. Together, we can build a movement of courageous living that enriches both

our lives and our communities. And if you enjoy the show, I asked you to please share it with others. Maybe think of someone who you want to choose bravely right alongside you. Thanks for tuning in. Now, here's the show. Hey, everyone, this is Heather Vickery. Welcome to the brave files. Okay. I get accused on occasion of being a fan girl, when I do podcast interviews for some folks, and I'm going to go ahead and let y'all know right now that that's going to happen. You should expect that from me right now, and I make no apologies for it at all. Today's guest is a woman named Katherine North and Katherine is the author of a book called Holy Heathen, a spiritual memoir. It's a story of her metamorphosis from scared missionary girl growing up in Japan to thriving heathen mystic who helps women around the world flourish and it's one of the most beautifully written books I have ever encountered. And I read a lot. Katherine says that she has Tell Me Your Secrets tattooed on her forehead and invisible ink. She's a queer feminist, a mother of five and she and her husband made this really beautiful award winning documentary called just another beautiful family, we will link to it in the show notes. You're going to want to watch it - have tissues. And they did this crazy thing and moved to this really small island off the coast of Canada. I can't wait to talk with her about that. She swears a lot but cries at a diaper commercial. So clearly she's my spiritual twin. And ya'll like, I've just I'm so excited. I could literally pee my pants. Katherine, welcome to The Brave Files.

**Katherine North** 5:24

I'm so happy to be here. Yay.

**Heather Vickery** 5:28

Oh my gosh, I'm yeah, my heart was like racing, leading up to it because I just finished your book. And I was so outrageously moved. I mean, your story is incredible. And it's worthy of reading. But girl, you can write.

**Katherine North** 5:43

Well, thank you.

**Heather Vickery** 5:47

Really, really, really beautiful. Now I first this is kind of a funny, convoluted story. I first was introduced to you because I interviewed your husband Nick on the show. That episode is called Becoming Dad. We're gonna link to it. It's also amazing. And something very cool that happened, I don't think that you know this yet. One of my lifelong dear friends said, Oh my gosh, this interview with Nick North. I've never heard of him before. But I get Katherine's email. And she's amazing. And I'm so excited to listen. What a fun small world. And so Jennifer, if you're listening, shout out to to that awesome introduction.

**Katherine North** 6:26

Hey...

Heather Vickery 6:27

I know, right? So when I got your book, which full disclosure I grabbed, just out of support, I think your family is awesome. And I know your husband, and I was like, let me just support this author.

Katherine North 6:41

I appreciate that. I'll take it.

Heather Vickery 6:43

We'll take it anywhere we can get it. I was not prepared. I was not did not read the description. And I fully expected it to talk about your life as it is now, which is not the case. So hopefully, there's a second book. Hopefully. And so I would love to know, I mean, there's just so much. We're gonna start off with, will you share why you decided to end the book where you did, given the fact that you have kind of a public family at this point?

Katherine North 7:15

Yeah. You know, I started writing this book before Nick and I fell in love actually, before we even met, I have been working on this book for about 10 years. You know, you sometimes have a creative project that is like clawing its way out of you and it's torturing you. And you're not like oh, I'd love to write a book. You're like, Oh, my God, this book is killing me from the inside slowly. This book was that. And so actually, I have a completed manuscript done when Nick and I fell in love. And so he was one of the very first people to read the full manuscript.

Heather Vickery 7:52

Oh, wow. But so that's been a lot of years. So what took you so long, my love?

Katherine North 7:58

Well, Well, I appreciate you saying that I can write because I have always wanted to be a writer, I have always been a writer, I've been writing these weekly love letters to this amazing community of people for like, 10 years, no longer actually. And I really believed in this book, I had people who believed in in it, I hired the best to help me with it. And I could not get an agent for the love of anything,

Heather Vickery 8:27

They're sorry. They're so sorry.

Katherine North 8:30

Yeah, you know, and so for a long time, because it's such a personal story. It's such a raw story. It's a story that is still painful for people in my family. Although I have been so lucky to have their support. I felt like I didn't want to self publish it because it felt gratuitous. You know, if I had gotten a big fancy new york publishing deal, it would have been like, sorry, Mom and Dad, but you know, fame and fortune are calling I have to go, right? That felt like one thing, but to just be like, I'm gonna pay myself to have this story sent out into the world felt mean, and it didn't feel necessary. Accept that, then I realized that it actually was necessary. Yeah, yeah.

Heather Vickery 9:18

Yeah. You know, it's fascinating that you say that to me, because I know if a client was you, coach, I coach different kinds of coaches, but similar vibe, right? If a client came to me, and I imagine if a client came to you and said that you would help them work through all the ways that couldn't possibly be gratuitous, and it was so important, but it's hard to coach yourself. Yeah.

Katherine North 9:41

Yeah. I had to grieve. I had this dream. I was gonna be, you know, Glennon Doyle or Liz Gilbert. It's so embarrassing to say this, but this is The Brave Files. So I'll just say the squirmy embarrassing thing right? I had this dream of this like big fancy publishing deal that was gonna save me and make me, and then I would finally feel like a real life writer. And that didn't happen. And so I had to kind of grieve that dream, I think. And I had to really wrestle with like, Okay, if nobody else in the world wants to read this book, do I still believe in it anyway? And it took me a while to come to yes. I did get there. But it took a while.

Heather Vickery 10:23

I can totally appreciate that. And I honor that process. And I imagine it was very cathartic and therapeutic for you to get this out. Because it is very raw and very personal. How now that it's out, what kind of reception have you gotten for it? How has your family received it? What's the scoop?

Katherine North 10:49

My family has been amazing. And of course, I showed it to them before, like I showed them the manuscript before it went to press, and I asked them for their feedback. And I asked them if they would like to weigh in. And it was awkward. It was squirmy, it was uncomfortable. It was painful. But it was worth it. And there were a few places where they were like, you know, while there was like a bunch of details that I just had flat out wrong, which I appreciated those, you know, corrections. And then there were places that were kind of tender to talk about and like, Oh, I remember this moment differently, or I wish that hadn't gone that way. I mean, it was kind of awful. Like, like I'm squirming in my chair, as I remember. Like how, it just like squirmy is the word like cringe. Like, Oh, my God, it's so uncomfortable, right?

Heather Vickery 11:38

It's hard. But you do a really lovely job of addressing that in the beginning of the book of addressing that these are your memories, as you recall them. And you're not telling anybody else's story. You know, And that, I think you very clearly describe, you know, one particular scenario where you see it one way, and your brother saw it one way, and your sister saw it another way. And I really appreciate it that. Memoirs, of course, are always supposed to be like that. But there's something in in the clarification of, this is my journey through my memory. And it's not perfect. Yeah. You know, business basics here, you refer to yourself as a third culture kid, I consider myself a fairly smart lady, but I've never heard that term before. Can you tell folks what that means?

Katherine North 12:28

Yeah, I probably get the definition slightly wrong.

Heather Vickery 12:34

What does it mean to you?

Katherine North 12:37

So it means for kids who grew up in a culture that is not their own, and is not their parents. So for me, for example, my parents are American. I'm an American, but I grew up in Japan. Now, I did not become Japanese. But I didn't, really feel like an American either. Because I'd never lived there. I didn't know any of the pop culture. And so what kids like that do is they create this sort of third culture. And it's like this hovering in between world. And so they often feel most comfortable with other people who don't quite fit anywhere else, either.

Heather Vickery 13:12

It makes sense. Is that a culture of not a culture but a community that you're still active in? Do you still engage a lot...

Katherine North 13:19

Not really. I should. They're amazing people, but no, not really.

Heather Vickery 13:24

Should. What do we do with shoulds? We get rid of them. That's silly. So I've actually interviewed a number of people who have gone through religious journey, religious trauma, if you will. And one thing that a lot of them have in common is this sort of unwelcoming, unloving family that they grew up in and I find it so, that is not your story. It from from what I read, from my perspective, it is perhaps maybe what you had in your mind. But in reality, your family was not unsupportive and, and unloving is that do I have that right?

Katherine North 14:05

My family are amazing. My parents I say in the acknowledgments that I think that they are the heroes of this story, and they truly mean that. They are such sincere, earnest, loving people of integrity and kindness. And so my my struggle was never with them as people although of course, we struggled like all parents and children do. My struggle was with this institution, this belief system, this culture of religion. And the funny thing is to them, it's, it's not a religion for them. It's just their faith. It's their belief. It is this thing that is infused in everything they do, it informs how they you know, are in the world. They have such big hearts, such beautiful, beautiful hearts and I was so allergic to every part of this world that they love so much.

Heather Vickery 15:03

Yeah, I mean, it's fascinating. So I grew up what we call a Christor. Like we would go to church at Christmas and Easter and we didn't you know, we I know the Lord's Prayer because we said it before family holidays and gatherings. But that yeah, that's about about it. But how much do you think of you're allergic is just the way that it landed on you and the way you interpret it. So

there are so many scenarios in the book that I'm having a hard time pulling one out, but okay, you went to a school, a kind of a homeschooling pod. And they were very violent in their punishment approach for seemingly really innocuous things. And somehow you knew that was wrong, and you were afraid to tell your parents and I get the distinct impression your parents would have been pissed.

**Katherine North** 15:56

My parents would have been horrified. In fact, they were horrified later when they found out.

**Heather Vickery** 16:01

Right, and so it landed differently for you than it does for them. Religion like like what what was being indoctrinated? What was being? I didn't say that word right

**Katherine North** 16:10

Doctrinated.

**Heather Vickery** 16:11

Indoctrinated. I don't know. That's such a fascinating thing to..

**Katherine North** 16:17

Well, I think that that is part of why I wrote this book is because I was trying to pull apart. How is it that people who love each other can still hurt each other so much? Both ways. Right? How is it that a system that feels so life giving and life affirming and loving and wonderful, to some people can feel like, just death? To someone else? How is it that, you know, kids can grow up in a family and have such different experiences? How is it that people can live in the same house and be inhabiting such different realities?

**Heather Vickery** 16:52

Yeah, there's so much gift in that, because all of those things are true. And sometimes even just within ourselves, you feeling conflicting emotions of joy and sadness, and all of it. So I mean, I think it's such a gift that you put that out. I love your, I love your dad. I'm in love with your dad, that the letters from the key writes you and your siblings letters from the cats. I'd love you to share that. Will you share that with listeners?

**Katherine North** 17:20

Yeah. So there was a period in the book where I had sort of blown up my life very dramatically. I'd gotten a divorce. I had quit my job. I had left the church. I was drinking a lot and smoking a lot. And and I was sort of estranged from my parents at this point. But this is the thing about my parents is you can't flunk out of my family. And, you know, but we also like, we don't always love the like, intense, earnest head on conversation. So my dad would periodically send us emails or letters from our family cat, whose name was Barkley, and it would be like, you know, dear children. There's been no mail recently. The fish are rotten. I'm going to throw away your family inheritance. Love Barkley. Right like...

Heather Vickery 18:08

No, but I love it because it just deflates. I mean, maybe it's full of avoidance, but it deflates. Like, whatever fear, I imagine trepidation, oh, is dad gonna be mad? Or am I going to get this haunting email or message that I don't want to read? And it's like, nope, we he just wants to talk.

Katherine North 18:26

And I think that both can be true, I think that there will be an undercurrent of awkwardness, or unspoken things or unreconciled, irreconcilable viewpoints or worldviews, and yet, there can still be love, and there can still be loyalty and there can still be care. And I think that humor is this amazing access point that helps us, you know, puncture, right through all of that stuff. And find each other.

Heather Vickery 18:52

Yeah, absolutely. So having gone through the experiences that you've been through, and and now seeing, maybe, of course, we can't change any of it, but but maybe how it could have been different if you had felt that you could confide in your parents who loved you fiercely. How has that informed you as a parent?

Katherine North 19:13

Oh my god, it terrifies me every minute of every day. Like, truly my parents are the most lovely humans, and they're such good parents, like everything I know about good parenting I learned from my parents. And so if this could happen to them, how do I know, what if my my beloved children are going through something horrible, and I'll never know or I won't know for 20 years. It's terrifying and horrifying. And I also think it's just that it's just the risk of loving people. They're always going to have their own experience. We don't always have the words or the opportunity or the language to talk about what's happening in us and I think sometimes things, things just break and all we can do is go around mending them.

Heather Vickery 20:01

Wow, I'm gonna sit with that. See, she talks like she writes, I am obsessed with your writing style.

Katherine North 20:06

I mean, I wish just nothing would ever break. Like, can we all just wrap everything in cotton wool? Like I'm a total scaredy cat. One of my words was was scared. Maybe I'm jumping ahead and maybe when I was talking about this, you know, like,

Heather Vickery 20:16

You're okay.

Katherine North 20:18

All the time, like I'm terrified of something happening to my kids. I'm scared to call the nice ladies in the school office, even though they're so kind. I'm scared to call the bank. I'm scared of



filing my taxes. I'm like, afraid of bugs and the dark and ghosts like everything. The adulting feels so scary to me.

**Heather Vickery** 20:36

Okay, so this Yes, you did not skip ahead. There's no particular order. It's fine. But I have a question that's way down on my list. But because you've said that now I'm going to I'm going to go here, right. So brave is my business. One of my favorite passages from your book speaks directly to that and it would it be alright with you if I read it? Oh, yes. Okay, so we're scared, right? But But we do it anyway, that so here's what you wrote that I just I've read it over and over and over again. "But instead of recoiling from fear, I can feel my own tender arms wrapped around my heart. I know, honey, I know you're scared. It's okay for you to be scared because you have lots of practice being brave. And in that moment, I can make space for my fear. Even treat it gently. Because I am so much more than the fear."

**Katherine North** 21:35

The thing about people who are scared a lot, you got a lot of practice at being brave.

**Heather Vickery** 21:41

So beautiful. And it's so resilient. And they don't think they are ever brave. People who are afraid a lot think that that they live in that fear. And yet you still do it. You still call the nice ladies at the school, you still file your taxes, you still leave your house. And that's the definition of brave.

**Katherine North** 22:04

I see people who talk about being fearless. And I'm like, Oh, I don't understand that at all. I'm afraid of everything all the time.

**Heather Vickery** 22:12

I literally have an entire speech called fuck fearless. And it's the title of my book that's about to come out.

**Katherine North** 22:18

oh, my gosh, that's so exciting. I can't wait to read it.

**Heather Vickery** 22:20

Yeah, well, thank you. Because I agree with you fearless is, So first of all, it just doesn't exist. But it's for sociopaths and three year olds, right? We are scared. We feel fear. You describe in the book, just sort of a knowing, an awareness of.... presence. The nature speaks to you, the trees you feel the energy of people who aren't there. It was beautifully written and described. Can you speak to that? For a moment?

**Katherine North** 23:03

Yeah, I didn't have words for any of that when I was a kid. Now I would say, Oh, I'm an empath. I'm someone who really feels other people's feelings, whether I want to or not. And I've done a



lot of work with that. So that I have some boundaries. I have some skin. And I mean, I'm I'm just I'm a mystic. Like I feel like this world is humming with energy. And it doesn't mean that I'm like, always tuned into it. But I do always feel that it's there. That I am the one who gets disconnected.

Heather Vickery 23:40

Is it ever overwhelming? Is it too much? Or is it always just right there where you need it?

Katherine North 23:47

I mean, I find life very overwhelming. Like everything is overwhelming.

Heather Vickery 23:53

I think when you are as an empathetic and and sensitive, highly sensitive as you are, I could see that.

Katherine North 23:59

Plus, I have five kids and like a zillion chickens, you probably can hear my roosters.

Heather Vickery 24:05

One of my questions is, do you love the chickens as much as Nick loves the chickens? Nick loves the chickens.

Katherine North 24:11

No, I love our chickens. But no, I do not. I wanted to have like, like a dozen chickens. Like maybe 10. Maybe, maybe 12 if we were going to go real, real crazy. Sorry, I'm trying not to say crazy anymore. Maybe like 12 if we were going to, you know, be real wild. And we have like 50 or 60 or something that just absolutely absurd

Heather Vickery 24:31

Babies last weekend. Can you tell like I clearly follow your beautiful family? On IG which Nick does Instagram which which Nick does really, really well. In fact, I messaged him the other day because my neighbor and I are getting chickens together. I was like, oh, we're getting chickens and I don't know what to do.

Katherine North 24:48

They're so fun. They're so fun.

Heather Vickery 24:51

They are, they are fun. So I'm sorry, we totally got off. You mentioned the chickens.

Katherine North 24:56

Everybody loves the chickens. They're actually watching them right now. I'm sitting up in my my room, which is also my office, and I'm looking out and I can see them like wandering around our property.

Heather Vickery 25:07

Your property is amazing. Okay, well, let's just play with that for a second. This is not related to the book. But you all left a major city and moved sight unseen to a house in the middle of nowhere. It's been a big adjustment, right?

Katherine North 25:24

It's been it's been like the last few years, I feel like I've just been like riding the waves and just one thing at a time. And so, you know, at the end of my book at the end of Holy Heathen, I am this like, happy solo mom, but me and my one daughter. You know, life is dreamy. And then I fall in love, right? And I moved to Canada, and I go from being like, Portland, Oregon, kind of city girl to the prairie suburbs. And I go from, you know, being a single mom of one kid to a married mom of five kids. And I go from like walking from all the hipster coffee shops to the hipster artisanal bakeries to driving a minivan to Costco. So like, it was a big shift.

Heather Vickery 26:11

It is a really big shift. Tell me about that. I mean, I imagine you never anticipated..

Katherine North 26:20

My gosh, no. Like, I didn't even believe in true love. I was like, yeah, that's like this gross Hollywood thing. It's not for adults. It's not even a real thing. There's like spirits in the trees and the rocks, duh, of course. But there's no such thing as romantic love, like, come on. Let's be grownups here.

Heather Vickery 26:35

Yeah, well, and if all of you are curious to hear Nick's perspective on that he does talk about meeting and falling in love with you in the interview that I did with him. And so it's beautiful to hear the other side of that, how has blending your families been? I mean, it's, it's hard, right?

Katherine North 26:55

Yeah, it's definitely been an adventure. And, yeah, it's been like 74 different adventures, you know, there's like, the threat of like, which seems so silly and, and consequential, but like going from living in a small city to living in the suburbs, or like being a parent of one kid to being a parent of five, or, you know, being a single person to being married, and but you marble them all together, and then you throw in gender transition. And it was just a lot of change. And he had some medical things happen. And some of it went well, and some of it did not go well. And we ended up making a documentary about some of that. And it was just a lot of upheaval. And I one thing is about Alberta, we're where we moved, where I moved to, is that it's really beautiful. It's, you know, the mountains. It's incredible, but I could not feel the earth like that humming that I talked about, that I could feel every where, I couldn't feel it in Alberta. It was like I lost my connection to I don't know the energy in everything. And I'm still kind of trying to process that and unpack that. And life just kept happening and things kept shifting. And we decided, Nick and I with the agreement and cooperation of the kids other dad, Nick's Ex that we wanted to move and have a totally different kind of lifestyle. And then it was like COVID was happening

and everything was like it was just like such a wild weird season. And so we ended up buying this little house sight unseen on this tiny island called saltspring island off the coast of Canada. Ah, and here we are. With our like a million chickens.

**Heather Vickery** 28:41

It looks beautiful and terrifying to me.

**Katherine North** 28:44

It is both of those things to me too.

**Heather Vickery** 28:48

Yeah, I mean, you've done amazing stuff. It's been fun to to watch you. It's so voyeuristic. Does it creep you out. I think Nick drives the bus on making sure that all of that stuff is public.

**Katherine North** 29:00

He is more of a sharer then I am actually quite private, which is sort of funny considering that I told all my deepest darkest secrets and this like really, you know, salacious book. That's not salacious, but I'm kidding. But like, I have this private Patreon community called rich juicy starry beauty and I will like write a poem for them and I'll just like slip it into their inboxes so quietly that's like my way of like sharing my heart. And my husband's over on Instagram, like, "Let's do a house your." So..

**Heather Vickery** 29:29

Yeah, you're a trooper, though. I always got that impression that you're like, you kind of just sort of smile and be like, okay, honey, I love you. So I'm gonna do this for you. So it's super creepy to be like, and I watched your family do this. And I watched your family do that. And I see all that.

**Katherine North** 29:46

Like, it's all storytelling, right? Like, right like the documentary ended up being mostly about Nick but I mostly made it like obviously I didn't make it physically but like I really drove that story and I was the one who really wanted to tell the story about our family. And so it's interesting, we both push each other in different ways to share different pieces of our lives.

**Heather Vickery** 30:09

I love that. And you both have such wonderful strong things to share that connect and touch the hearts of other people. I mean, you're all of your story, your story that you share in your book is, I think, so important. And there are so many people who need to hear it, and see it, and feel it so that they can do their own healing and their own growing and, and next story and your story with Nick and blended families and transitioning. And all of that is so important. What would we be in the world if we didn't have people brave enough to share their stories so that the rest of us don't feel alone?

Katherine North 30:52

I mean, I love stories. The stories are my lifeblood. And so it makes sense that I want to tell mine too.

Heather Vickery 30:58

Of course, you seem to have a really good grasp on self compassion. It's actually an area that I've been doing a lot of work in growth in I love Kristen Neffs work. It's hard, hard, hard, and you didn't seem to always be great at it, like what cracked open for you so that self compassion was something that you could more readily tap into?

Katherine North 31:24

Good. question. I think what cracked was that I cracked. And I'm thinking of that moment, when I was in my early 20s. I had married this, you know, good Christian man, we were trying to live this good Christian life. And I was so deeply, deeply in despair, that I thought about ending my life all the time. And the gap was so painful between how I thought my life was supposed to work and how it actually felt. And I was convinced that the prob, that the problem, the gap was me, you know, and if I could just be good. And if I could just love Jesus, and if I could just control myself. I could make it work. And I just I tried to control myself so hard that I almost broke myself. And I think that that was the moment where I was like, Am I gonna? Am I gonna end here? Like, is this just gonna be it I died of failure, or am I gonna walk out of here still feeling like a failure? Like a total failure? Like, you may not be able to flunk out of my family, but you could sure as fuck flunk out of my church.

Heather Vickery 32:35

Right? Well, yeah.

Katherine North 32:36

Right. And so it felt like the ultimate failure to me and yeah, I there was just something in me some little PIP of energy. I would say that it's that humming that's in everything, that lifeforce It was like, nope, we're going to walk out of here, we're going to take you horrible failure, shameful, you know, scrap of a terrible woman, take you out of here, and we're gonna just see what's next. Like, I didn't have any real hope that there would be anything so good onn the other side of it. I just knew that I couldn't do that. And you know what, sometimes that's enough. Like that got me out. And it took me to this wonderfully healing season of like living this kind of bohemian life in Chicago and drank a lot of gin and I smoked a lot of cigarettes. And I had sex outside of marriage and like, I did all these bad things. And I started to finally heal. And I went to therapy. That was very important.

Heather Vickery 33:35

That's good.

**Katherine North** 33:36

Yeah, I started to heal. I started to heal. And I started to, I mean, it's so funny. Now look at me. Now I live on this little green island with my husband, and our five kids and like a million chickens. Never ever, ever could have seen that coming.

**Heather Vickery** 33:48

Yeah, it's definitely not where anyone who doesn't know you today would read the book and imagine went, that's for sure. And we there were some bizarre parallels in our life. You were born in Indianapolis. You were there. Yeah. So born and I was I was born and raised in Indianapolis. I've never been to Japan, but then you were in Chicago, in lived in the same communities that I lived in, quite possibly at the same time. Which is really random because your

**Katherine North** 34:21

Lakeview lounge

**Heather Vickery** 34:23

I did hang out.

**Katherine North** 34:25

We'll probably drink taps on like.

**Heather Vickery** 34:29

I wasn't a beer person. I will say that. And then you move to Oak Park and I live right next door to Oak Park. So it's very random. I've also only I don't think you could say I've been to Canada, it was like except a foot and Niagara doesn't even count. I did have to go through the border. But so that was kind of funny, random, small world. And then the way you describe landing at coaching, is that it, my interpretation is that it really it found you and I always say that about myself. Like it came to me it was I was not. I was surprised and even a little bit hesitant. Share with us how you knew that was that was where you belonged and and how you get to get over any? Or did you ever have any imposter syndrome or any of that in order to be able to do this work that is so powerful and important?

**Katherine North** 35:27

I mean, I definitely had imposter syndrome. But I think I had something that is way worse, which is snob syndrome, where I was like, listen, I'm smart, literary and business consultant, and I would never be caught dead dabbling in that like embarrassing self help world stuff, like I'm a super snob. There's no nice way to say it. But at the same time, like, you know how at every party, there's like the people dancing, and sometimes I'm the people dancing, but more often, there's like someone in the corner crying, I was always the person sitting with the person crying and and I'd be like, I just really want to go get some more red wine. And they'd be like, and then when I was 17, this is the thing that happened to me. And like I was always like, Why do people tell me their trauma? Like I'm not a therapist.

Heather Vickery 36:11

Not a hairdresser?

Katherine North 36:15

I don't know. I don't understand. I joke about it that I have, tell me your secrets tattooed on my forehead. But that's sort of been my experience my whole life. And I think some of it was because in such a strict culture that I grew up in like, I always felt like there I had this like secret rebel flag. I didn't even know I was flying. I was trying really hard not to fly it but I think we could like spot each other. And I just think, I don't know, like, there's just something about me. People want to tell me their stories, and I want to hear them. And I, the thing for me with coaching was I, there's so much about the self help industry that feels so slimy and icky to me. And this is still true, unfortunately.

Heather Vickery 36:53

Yeah, no, it is definitely.

Katherine North 36:55

And yet, like there is just this alchemy that happens. You know, like I learned tools, I equipped myself. And I learned that my instinct as an empath. When someone told me their pain or told me their story, it was to enter into it like, Oh, you, you feel sad, I will feel sad with you. I will soak up all your pain. I was like a dirty bar sponge just

Heather Vickery 37:15

yeah, that's not sustainable.

Katherine North 37:18

No, it wasn't. I didn't I didn't know that at the time. Right. And so the gift for me of becoming a coach was learning how to hold a space for someone where they could tell a story. Or they could they could they could enter into something that felt really intense for them. And I could sit with them, but not go into it with them. And of course that's infinitely more helpful.

Heather Vickery 37:40

Of course it is. Yes, of course it is. I love that. I think it's beautiful. How do you find clients? How do they find you because you're such a unique, I know, a lot of coaches and some of them are amazing. And some of them are like ones that you've described it in that sort of icky toxic positivity fo culture. How do you connect with the with your people?

Katherine North 38:07

So the the lifeline from my work has always been my weekly missive. So I send it out every Saturday morning, it's gone out for years and years and years. And it's just it's it's a story, or it's something I'm thinking about, or it's just something that I think might be useful. And often, like I sort of confound most marketing advice, you're not supposed to do it this way. It's not supposed to work this way. But mostly people will like get on my email list. And then one day, they'll write me and I'll be like, I've been reading your emails for seven years, you've never heard from me

before. I've never taken any of your classes. I'd really like to hire you as my coach. And I'm like, Okay, let's get on the phone and talk.

**Heather Vickery** 38:44

I can see that I am a new subscriber to your newsletter, because I was like, I just want to, I want to bathe in your writing, I sound like such a drama queen or such a freak show. I described it to, well my friend Jennifer, who has been getting your newsletter. And then also, another good friend of mine who currently has my copy of your book. And I said reading the way that Katherine North writes, for me is like finding the sun spot in my house. It's like the way it feels to hear music or poetry. It's like, yeah, I felt it so viscerally.

**Katherine North** 39:27

That makes me so happy. Well, all I've ever wanted to be was a writer, and I love coaching. And it's how I support my family. I'm so grateful. It's profound, profound work, but also like, I just I want to keep writing my whole life. And actually, it's interesting right now what's coming through is not the second chapter of the memoir of how Nick and I met and fell in love, even though I think someday we'll probably write that book.

**Heather Vickery** 39:49

Oh, please do.

**Katherine North** 39:50

I've got like all these just like poems that are coming through and I've never really been a poet. I've never thought of myself as a poet and I'm going to do a shout out for my, my community rich, juicy, starry, beauty, which is on Patreon. Because it's this amazing space for a creator, where I can try stuff out with them, I can be like, okay, here's like a really shitty first draft of this. But I'm going to share it with you. And it's it is this amazing form of, of connecting.

**Heather Vickery** 40:19

I love that. You do talk about being in college and telling one of your professors that you want to be a writer and she was like, dont. No, don't do that. Yeah, how much did that fuck with you? Because that sucks.

**Katherine North** 40:33

Well, and then she died. It was so sad. It was so, so sad.

**Heather Vickery** 40:39

It's really sad. It is

**Katherine North** 40:40

I'm still I'll be honest, I am still trying to figure out like, I felt like the universe was like write this book, write this book, write this book. I felt this like, urging. And then when I couldn't find an agent, and I couldn't get it published. I was so confused. Like, well, I don't understand. It's like



you led me down this path. And then it was just a dead end. What now? What am I supposed to do?

**Heather Vickery** 41:00

You ended up though rallying your community, your Patreon community to get the financial support and and all the other support.

**Katherine North** 41:09

Yeah, they helped me publish this book.

**Heather Vickery** 41:11

So for anybody out there listening, first of all, you can self publish, y'all, like do your thing. But you have any tips or tricks or suggestions for folks who might be in a similar situation?

**Katherine North** 41:23

That thing that you think is killing you from the inside. And you wonder if it would just be easier if you can get it out? It will.

**Heather Vickery** 41:32

Yeah

**Katherine North** 41:33

You know, like, I was like walking around and like, in labor, like I was pregnant with this book for so long. And it was like the baby was like, hanging out halfway between my legs. I'm like, it's fine. It's fine. Everything's fine. Like, Oh, my God, just push the baby out, like, get that book or whatever, screenplay or song or podcast or whatever. Like, you got to get it outside of you. And like I do, I feel this immense sense of like peace, like, okay, I did the thing. And I know new things will come and I'll be writing forever, probably making stuff forever. But there is this huge, there was like this sharpening inside me all the time. And that's not there anymore.

**Heather Vickery** 42:15

That's the best testimony on I'll use that word, tongue in cheek. But that's like the best testimonial for anything for doing the hard thing, for showing up and being brave is when you do it the monsters go away a little bit, they might come back, but they go away. A little bit. Oh, my goodness, I love it. I don't ever want to stop talking to you. I just want you to be my best friend Katherine.

**Katherine North** 42:42

Deal.

**Heather Vickery** 42:45

I love that. You, one of the things that you talk about, and I can really relate to in the book is that your family is big on celebration. And mine was always the same. And I do the same with my

kids. And just so happened that I ask every guest on the brave files, how they like to celebrate. And I'm so curious to hear for you. From all of the things from big things from notable family things to just moments in your day that feel like a win. How do you like to celebrate?

**Katherine North** 43:18

Like, are we talking holidays, or just anything?

**Heather Vickery** 43:22

Specifically, when I ask that question, I'm just talking about your moments, your wins those personal things, but you can answer it however you want.

**Katherine North** 43:33

So I have a very mean voice in my head, that is always postponing the celebration part. It's always like, it's always like, you know well, you did that that's fine. But you didn't do this other thing. Well, you probably could have done it better. And I'm saying that because I know I'm not the only person who has that voice in her head. And I've done a ton of work about with this voice. And actually, one of my huge breakthroughs became this program I teach called the Queen sweep, which is all about clearing clutter and like doing adulting stuff, but also bringing in beauty and like nourishing ourselves with beauty and bliss and celebration and the energy of celebration is this thing that I have to learn I had to learn how to do it is I'm trying to say, it didn't come naturally to me. And my bent toward like melancholy, and anxiety, and fear is like intense and strong. But I learned to counter it with equally immense and intense doses of like, love and beauty and tenderness and compassion. And sometimes that is celebration. And so one of the things we do in the Queen sweep and I tried to bring this into my family although currently I'm not succeeding as we do something called called we brags. And that's where we brag on something that seems so tiny. Like I finally picked up that sock off the floor that's been there for like two weeks.

**Heather Vickery** 44:50

I love that.

**Katherine North** 44:52

I didn't reply to the email, but I opened it and I read it and then everyone in the group is like, you're amazing.

**Heather Vickery** 45:01

I love that.

**Katherine North** 45:02

It's weirdly, like it shifts. It shifts things, but I have to work at it.

**Heather Vickery** 45:07

Yeah, it does take really faithful intention. I interviewed a woman a few weeks ago, who has a flag, she made flags for herself and her best friend that say, yay, me, and that it's the same

concept like little bitty things. And they wave their flag. They're like, Yay. And I said, I loved it so much that I commissioned it to give to all of my clients in the intentionally brave entrepreneurs program. And I just I'm like, I want you to find a million ways a day to wave your yay me flag.

**Katherine North** 45:38

Yeah, because we think that we're going to like motivate ourselves with that mean voice. It's like a little more or just one more thing.

**Heather Vickery** 45:44

She's an asshole, that voice. Does yours have a name? Do you name her? My clients love to name their limiting voice, like some sort of

**Katherine North** 45:53

A bunch of them.

**Heather Vickery** 45:58

Like, shut up, Carol. I'm not playing your game today. Sorry, if your name is Carol, and you're listening, we're not trying to. That is so funny. But that's interesting, too. Because you you did have and you, you can tell me if you still do or not, really large holiday family celebrations, and yet finding the things to celebrate in the mundane. And in the every day, I think, based on you know, my expert knowledge of you is that it felt shameful to be celebrating things that felt good.

**Katherine North** 46:37

Mm hmm. Yeah, I had a conflicted relationship with with beauty. You know, I will do like such champagne tastes like I can unerringly walk into a store. And I'll be like, 74 things in it and I walk up to this one simple little black thing. And I'm like, Oh, this is pretty. And they're like, well, that's from our couture collection. It's \$80 million.

**Heather Vickery** 46:56

You are definitely my cosmic twin. For sure.

**Katherine North** 46:58

Yeah. It's so frustrating. And I, you know, I felt so conflicted about that. And we didn't have a lot of money growing up. And we were very conscious that there were people who were so much, you know, that we were really lucky and well off because we had food to eat. And there were no soldiers at our door. And like, I just felt so guilty, because I had this craving hunger in me for beautiful things. And it's, it's taken a long time. But I've learned to honor that part of myself that like, it felt like a crave and hunger, but only because I was so hungry, like I was starving right. And so while I do have mean voices in my head, that tell me I should work harder. And I'm never done and it's never good enough. I also have this part of myself who has learned to like, be like, whatever Shut up, I'm putting on beautiful music, and I am putting on a silk dress and I'm going to walk around putting flowers all over my house. And one of the things that I do with my clients is we work with something called the banquet table. And it's just a simple, gentle form of parts work, right? Where you imagine all the different aspects of yourself coming together at

this big banquet table. And it's like you get to call, like a High Council. And so you've got your like warrior self, and you've got like your wise crown self, and you've got your beautiful self with the silk flower, or the silk dress and the flowers, you know, and then you've also got like the scared little girl, and you've got the bitch and you've got renewal, and we all these different aspects of yourself. And I think what has been so healing for me, and will probably continue to be my work for the rest of my lifetime is getting all of these parts to talk to each other and work together and have each other's backs.

**Heather Vickery** 48:35

Yeah, to honor each other. Yeah, that's really lovely. That's a really lovely, visual interpretation of honoring all the parts of yourself. You you've recently went on a solo retreat. I'm a big fan of the solo retreats. I have four kids, my partner has one he's not with us all the time. But I go quarterly for usually about five days because my kids are with their other parent. And it's the only thing that gets like my full life source right now. And I know that you and Nick are doing that you're taking turns doing that, which is I think such an important thing to do to support one another. But you did something that was so notable to me and and it probably wasn't even Well, I don't know. I'm very curious. You took your favorite coffee mug with you? To me, that's a form of celebration, like this thing makes me happy and it's going with me. Was was there thoughtful intention behind that or you're just like well, yeah, of course. I'm taking my coffee mug.

**Katherine North** 49:39

I think that that is that that part of me that I talked about that I had to be allowed to grow up and be cultivated, who loves beauty, and who it's such a simple thing but doesn't want to drink her tea out of an ugly hotel, tiny mug that like doesn't feel good in her hands. I want I want that beautiful, luscious, heavy, wonderful piece of beauty.

**Heather Vickery** 49:59

I I loved it so much it's just such a it's such a claim on I shall be surrounded by things that bring me joy.

**Katherine North** 50:07

Yeah, why not? Why the hell not?

**Heather Vickery** 50:11

I'm with that I am totally with that, why the hell not? Okay well since we can't talk forever because we all have all of these wonderful lives that we need to be leading Can you share with folks I've to two questions before I asked you about your favorite charitable organization. One is tell everybody how they can connect with you if they want to get your lovely weekly. You call it a missive anything or they want to learn more about you. How can they do that?

**Katherine North** 50:41

Yeah. So I am Declared Dominion across all platforms. So my website is DeclaredDominion.com. I'm Declared Dominion on Instagram, which is probably my favorite place to hang out these days. Same thing on Twitter or Facebook, all that jazz but come to my

website, my there's links to my book there. There's links to a podcast I made you can sign up there for my weekly missive. It's free. You should totally come join my rich juicy starry beauty community it is like so tender and beautiful and intimate and wonderful and juicy. Yeah.

**Heather Vickery** 51:16

And everyone really do yourself a favor and get a copy of Holy Heathen and clear your calendar for you probably only need one good day and just get your favorite coffee mug out and buckle up because it is so spectacular. It is I just like I said, I'm even sick of myself for gushing over your book so much, but I can't help it

**Heather Vickery** 51:42

I appreciate that. Alright, so the the other question I have is, if people are feeling fear, anyone listening is still feeling trapped in that afraid to explore their joy, and afraid to to do these things that are so hard. What is the first thing that you would recommend they do to sort of crack themselves open?

**Katherine North** 52:09

Take pen, take a piece of paper can be a notebook, but it could just as easily be like the back of a grocery bag and just start pouring it all out on paper.

**Heather Vickery** 52:21

Yeah. I love that. Alright, Katherine North, what is your favorite charitable organization to support?

**Katherine North** 52:31

I love the organization Together Rising, which was started by Glennon Doyle and I believe that Cheryl Strayed and Elizabeth Gilbert are involved in it too, somehow. And they are this really nimble organization that is sort of, they're always on the watch. So they were really helpful helping refugee kids who were separated from their parents. Last year, a couple years ago, right now they're sending help down to Texas. They're the small organization, but they've raised a ton of money. And I love them, because they focus on small donations from real people. So most gifts are like \$25. And I love the metaphor of that because Glennon's whole thing is that together, we can make a huge difference. And she has proved her hypothesis.

**Heather Vickery** 53:20

I love that. So they will be our charity of the week and listeners, I ask you always, every week to whatever you have, if if all you have is to get to know them and like and share their social media do that whatever you can do to support because they really believe in the power of coming together. I do believe that together we rise. And funny side note for anybody who doesn't know this. I had a whole Twitter exchange with Glennon Doyle a few weeks ago that started as a argument and entered in a love fest if you're curious enough to go and check it out. But it was one of those. It was very scary situation for me.

Katherine North 53:56

Oh, I want to hear so much more about that.

Heather Vickery 53:58

I adore her. But I disagreed with something that she said and I disagreed with it publicly. And it made Glennon mad. She did not like that. And when she got mad via Twitter, I really just wanted to like throw my phone across the room and crawl under my covers and delete and hide. And I was like, No, fuck that. Like, she's not the only one that can be vulnerable and do scary things. And I said that I was like you, you're not the only one that can be vulnerable and, and do hard things. Glennon and I can disagree with you if I want to. And she was like, I like you. I think you're brave. And if you were my neighbor, I would peek out the window and wave at you. And here's a picture of me and Abby and I was like, Oh my God.

Katherine North 54:36

Oh my goodness, I have to go find that now.

Heather Vickery 54:40

This is pretty wild. And the funny part my partner was like, well, we need to send a picture back and I was like, I'm gonna leave Glennon Doyle alone now. she's like, no, but what if she thinks you're straight? Anyway,

Katherine North 54:56

Did you send one back?

Heather Vickery 54:58

I did not send a picture back because I didn't really need to prove anything to anybody we did exchange, I am going to, I am going to ask her to be on the podcast to talk about the thing that we were talking about, which was gratitude. And it turned out we were actually saying the same thing and in different ways that gratitude is life changing, but forced gratitude, the kind of gratitude that you grew up with really the kind of gratitude where you do things because you're supposed to do them and dammit, you're going to be happy about it and be grateful is very unhealthy. And also that women can have a disagreement on Twitter and work their shit out. I love without it being a big fucking deal. So I don't know if she'll say yes or not. But I am going to ask because what do I have to lose?

Katherine North 55:44

Yeah, why the hell not.

Heather Vickery 55:46

I know, Katherine, this has been such a treat. Thank you so much for spending some time with me and my listeners and for sharing all of your gifts with us. We're so lucky.

Katherine North 55:58

What a treat to be here. Thanks so much for having me.

Heather Vickery 56:03

Oh, I'm supposed to ask you your three why I got so wrapped up. I'm supposed to ask you to share your three words one last time.

Katherine North 56:07

Okay. All right. My three words are mystic, scared, and stubborn.

Heather Vickery 56:16

Yep. I love them. I love them. I love you.

Katherine North 56:19

Like it's hard to just say them and not be like, but let me explain

Heather Vickery 56:24

I ask for folks to repeat their three words, because if it didn't get clearly communicated in the interview that I do want to discuss it. But I just think you're three where you know you and you know yourself and your story. And those three words. so beautifully summed up I mean, you couldn't, you couldn't have done all of the things that you've done and still be this wonderful gift to the world if you weren't stubborn as hell. Because you would quit. You'd be so you'll be done. You would have given into that voice. All those years ago. So I love it.

Katherine North 56:56

Just don't quit.

Heather Vickery 56:58

Just don't quit. And there's your sign that you're brave and resilient is you just keep showing up. I love that. Well, I hope that connects with all of you out there. I hope you've had a lot of fun. Go grab your copy of Holy Heathen. If you enjoy this and you enjoy conversations with people who are trying to live out loud, live bravely, with their fear, you know, tucked in their pockets. Come hang out with us in the Brave on Purpose collective, it's house and Facebook, all you have to do is go into Facebook and search Brave on Purpose. It's free. We would love to have you there. It is such a treat to be part of your journey. So this is Heather Vickery reminding you today and every day to go out and choose bravely. Hey, friends, I want to share something really exciting with you. We already know you enjoy listening to podcasts because you're listening to this one. But I'm also betting you enjoy audiobooks. And hey, listen, if you don't already enjoy audiobooks, then it's time to check them out. That's why I'm really excited to share libro.fm with you. They are an incredible new platform for listening to audiobooks. And by choosing libro.fm over other audio book services, you are supporting a local bookstore of your choice and investing in your local community. libro.fm offers over 150,000 audio books via their primary



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**Heather Vickery** 1:00:48

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