Watch the trailer. Would you like to attend a conference like this? Why/Why not?

Back to Sounds Like A Cult podcast.

1. Read the transcript and try to find the correct place for each chunk. Listen and check. What does the picture illustrate?

a harmless blowhard went viral spew a bunch of bullshit

that's really predatory bravely stood up started talking trash

- Tony Robbins first occurred to me as a cult-followed figure about five years ago when my mom's best friend went to one of his conferences and went viral because this video spread around of her standing up to him. He _____ about MeToo movement: women were painting themselves as victims, that was ultimately disempowering them...
[Tony Robbins thinks women are victimizing themselves?!] Shocker!
And, so, she very _____ to him and was like "I think you're misrepresenting the MeToo movement, I am a survivor of sexual assaults. And the video of her standing up to him _____ and this is my mom's best friend from childhood. So I was like "Damn! [Who is this man?] – Yeah, I really heard of him before, and I thought he is just _____ ...



- You love that word! You called him blowhard like five times today.
- I do, he is the perfect representation of a blowhard.
- What does that even mean – the blowhard?
- It means like somebody who talks a lot of bullshit really loudly.
- Oh, I just thought about him something like asshole.
- Yeah, similar to asshole. Someone who is screaming out of their asshole.

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- Or blowing hard out of their mouth, but not sexually, just obnoxiously.
- So, I thought before he's just kinda taking advantage of people and if they wanna pay ten thousand dollars to hear him _____, that's on them. But then, this experience of my mom's friend had alerted me to this idea that his really spreading these super problematic ideas and these enormous promises to vulnerable people – in a way, _____.

2.Listen and fill the gaps. Explain in your own words the meaning of each missing one.

_____

- So, we know that he runs these conferences and people pay a lot of money to attend, – off the bat it gives me Keith Raniere vibes, [For sure, or Megachurch vibes] or Megachurch _____ , yeah, exactly. But when you showed me the amount of money that would cost to go to these seminars, when I saw five hundred to four thousand dollars, I was like 'that's how much Bad Bunny tickets cost'. I was like 'is this any different than paying a lot of money to see your favorite artist?'



- But then, it's not like you just paying for better seats at a concert, you are paying for _____, you're paying for _____ to this god-like figure.

- Yeah, and also the thing is like when you go to the concert, you _____ know you're going to receive a life performance of a studio album. And you're like 'Wow, this is great, I'm paying a lot of money because there's only one person who sings this song.' [You know what you are getting] - Yeah, you know exactly what you're getting. But when you sign off for these conferences you're promised like, I don't know...

- _____ , _____ , _____ , these things that like you can't track, is anybody following up with his attendees and being like 'So, did you become a billionaire?'

3.Listen _____ What did BuzFeed exposé reveal? Did it affect Tony Robbins in any way?



4. Listen to the snippet _____. Who is Kate Kennedy? Why was she invited to the podcast?

Read the transcript and try to fill the gaps with prepositions.

- So, we're going to be continuing to chat _____ Tony Robins _____ a very special guest,

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someone I've been wanting to talk ____ you ____ the longest time. She is also extremely interested ____ the wide spectrum of cult-like groups that exist ____ our culture.

- Yeah, so we're going to be talking _____ Kate Kennedy from Be There In Five podcast. She is a pop-culture commentator, author and host.

- She is just so incisive and eloquent, and she and I have an uncanny amount things ____ common, just the way that we perceive and write ____ the world. Kate and I were DM-ing _____ her coming ____ our podcast, and I was running ____ all these themes with her, you know, what do you wanna talk about? The cult of this, the cult of that...Tony Robbins was ____ the table when she was like 'I wanna talk about that ŧucking guy.'

Listen again and check. Was Tony Robbins literally on the table himself?

5.Listen to the snippet _____ . How does Kate Kennedy introduce herself? Unjumble the words and collocations from the clip:

alenmillni _____

lufl-mite boj _____

geistzeit _____

eth frepect rowd _____

snig of teh imets _____

ginths tath ew raec utoba _____

6. Listen and put the lines in order



___ - So, I grew up going to religious camps and youth groups not because of my family, but because of my friends. I was going to the Southern Baptist camps, and these megachurches.

___ A lot of my forming years were spent absorbing the truth of other people and kind of other people and kind of neuro-groups as the truth that I didn't really reconsider till my twenties. Like, is that right, is that normal, is that the right thing to think about myself, my body, my agency, all these things?

___ I was very mastering a community – the vernacular, the belief system, that I then got kinda to reconstruct in a very low-risk way.

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___ - I guess, if we wanna jump right into it, we were just wondering what first inspired your interest in cults as well as groups that seem like cults and what is your personal interpretation of the word.



___ I'm kind of obsessed with the BITE Model and think about really the biggest thing for me is the desire to control all your access to outside information and to other prospective on dissenting opinions, I think it's huge. Does it make your worship harder? Or do you have any ability to think for yourself?

___ And when I got older and started talking for a living, I just realized how much of that sort of model plays into everything we're doing – following influencers, following self-help gurus, following people like me.



___ The communities are developed around shared things, and they can be good or they can be really bad. There's like the spectrum, right.

___ You're so differential to authority when you're younger coz you just assume they know better. I think I had – the lack of a better word – luxury of getting just step back from that religious sector without losing my family, coz they weren't my connection.

7. Listen, read, translate and discuss _____

angril **–a word hybrid of angry and evil in which both are inter-related to a characteristic or personality**

speak in tongues **– to say strange words that no one can understand, especially as part of a religious experience**

hard and fast **– (of a rule or a distinction made) fixed and definitive**

facetious **- treating serious issues with deliberately inappropriate humour; flippant**

- Yeah, for those who haven't heard of the BITE Model, – this was a list of criteria that the cult-expert Steven Hassan came up with. He was an ex-Moonie,member of the Unification Church, he got out he's a psychologist, he de-programs a lot of former cult members. His school of that is a little bit controversial. I mean, so many ways the scholars think about cults, again, because there's no hard and fast definition, there are only just different ways of interpreting it. But it's spooky how you developed an interest in cults and cultish groups because it's so similar to me. I grew up like atheist performed Jewish, but I would go to my friends' Evangelical Megachurch and was just enraptured by their fanaticism, and their language, and then saw hints of that all over the culture, so freaky.

- Do you have kind of a predisposition to a – I'm not like a cynic necessarily – but like I have trouble the angrilling and obsessing over things and when people are raising their hands and like praising the Lord and nearly speaking in tongues ... I was like 'what's wrong with me? I groan (?) when I feel this.

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- Yeah, there's two different kinds of people – there's people who are like ultra-aware what they are in, and those people who just don't want to think, it takes effort...
- To scrutinize, and I think it comes very naturally to us. I too by nature and nurture push back and I always joke that like 'I'm looking for a cult to surrender to, it looks fun, but I just can't.'
- Nooo, you're not, Amanda, you wanna be like to cult leader!
- I'm being facetious ...

BITE Model of Mind Control

From *Combating Cult Mind Control* by Steven Hassan

Behavior Control

Instill dependence and obedience

Modify your behavior with rewards and punishments

Dictate where and with whom you live

Restrict or control your sexuality

Control your clothing and hairstyle

Regulate what and how much you eat and drink

Deprive you of 7-9 hours of sleep each night

Exploit you financially

Restrict your leisure time and activities

Require you to seek permission for major decisions

Require you to spend major time on group indoctrination and rituals, including self-indoctrination on the internet

Information Control

Deliberately withhold and distort information

Forbid you from communicating with ex-members and critics

Restrict access to non-cult sources of information

Compartmentalize information into Insider vs. Outsider doctrine

Generate and use propaganda extensively

Use information gained in confession sessions against you

Gaslight to make you doubt your own memory

Require you to report your thoughts, feelings, and activities to superiors

Encourage you to spy and report on others' "misconduct," often using a buddy system

Use "Big Brother" surveillance methods

Thought Control

Teach you to internalize group doctrine as "Truth" ("sacred science")

Instill Black vs. White, Us vs. Them, and Good vs. Evil thinking

Change your identity, possibly even your name

Use loaded language and dichés to stop critical/complex thought

Induce hypnotic or trance states to indoctrinate

Teach thought-stopping techniques to prevent critical thoughts and reality-testing

Allow only positive thoughts

Use excessive meditation, singing, prayer, and chanting to block thoughts

Reject rational analysis, critical thinking, and constructive criticism

Emotional Control

Instill irrational fears of questioning or leaving the group (phobia indoctrination)

Make you feel elitist and special ("love bombing")

Promote feelings of guilt, shame, and unworthiness

Elicit extreme emotional highs and lows

Label some emotions as evil, worldly, sinful, or wrong

Teach emotion-stopping techniques to prevent anger or homesickness

Threaten and harass your friends and family

Shun you if you disobey or disbelieve

Teach you that there is no happiness or fulfillment outside the group

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