

## Ep #517: Doing It Alone with Alessia Tenebruso



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Brooke Castillo**

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 517.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Brooke: I am so excited for you guys today. We are going to talk about being alone. Alessia here from One Girl Travel, and we are going to talk about all the things One Girl Travel and traveling by yourself, but I specifically want to talk about how that works with being alone with yourself, so I asked her to come on. I haven't given her any preparation. We're just hitting it. We're just going to have a great conversation. I think it's going to be amazing.

Welcome to the show. Tell us everything about you.

Alessia: Thank you so much, I'm excited to be here. So my name is Alessia. I'm a certified life coach and a travel coach. I have been solo traveling for 12 years now, and it has changed my life. And I have dedicated my life now to helping women feel confident and encouraging them to go solo traveling.

Brooke: That's amazing. Okay, so tell me, first of all, how you started traveling alone, why you started traveling alone, and then we'll get into how you turned it into a business.

Alessia: Sure. So I was in my first real adult relationship in my 20s, and it turned into a mentally abusive relationship.

Brooke: Oh no. Okay.

Alessia: So I lost myself during that process, and when the relationship ended I had no idea who I was anymore. I'm like, I depended on him for my fun and my happiness and everything. And now here I am by myself, I didn't know what to do.

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Brooke: How old were you?

Alessia: I was, gosh, I think I was 26.

Brooke: Okay. Perfect. Okay, so?

Alessia: And back then, and Brooke you know me, I'm pretty outgoing now, very social, but back then I was very shy. Very timid, very quiet, very just self-conscious, didn't really like myself that much. So the thought of being alone by myself was probably the scariest thing I could ever imagine. And that's why I chose solo travel to rediscover who I am.

Brooke: Well, this is hysterical because you think, I am insecure, I don't have a lot of confidence. So I know what I'll do, I'll travel by myself.

But I want you to know I had a very similar experience in my 20s too. And I was dealing with a lot of emotional eating. I was spending a lot of time binging on food and I could not figure out why. I couldn't figure out what was going on that I couldn't control that. And what I realized is I had had a bad breakup too and I was trying to deal with being alone.

I was trying to deal with my own company and I didn't know how. And so I was constantly escaping myself by eating all this food all the time. And I read this book by Geneen Roth and she talks about emotional eating. And one of the things that she recommended was really getting to know yourself by spending time alone and going to dinner alone and going to the movies alone.

And I mean, you have not really lived until you have gone and sat at a table, not at a bar, and sat at a table by yourself in your 20s and eaten a meal. It was one of the hardest things I've ever done. Same with going to the movies. I would go to the movies by myself. And over those years, it just had such an impact on my self-confidence too. I can't even imagine had I done the travel.

So will you tell us a little bit about your first travel experiences?

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Alessia: Yeah. So on my first trip, I decided to go to Florida because that was somewhere I was familiar with. My grandparents had a condo there. I never went there by myself before. So I'm like, I'm going to go there by myself, spend a week and just be alone. And from the moment I got on the plane, I was sat next to this guy who was around my age. And I'd never talked to anybody on a plane before until this moment. And we started chatting and he was a solo traveler.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: And he started sharing his stories and his photos and his trip experiences with me. And it just felt like the universe was guiding me. And I kept –

Brooke: Oh my gosh.

Alessia: I'm saying it right now because it was so powerful. And we talked the whole plane ride and I'm like, all right, I got this. Like I could do this. And throughout that whole trip, people just kept coming into my life where they were chatting with me out of nowhere. Never have I ever just talked up a stranger before until that point.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: And they were just coming up to me. And every time they would come to me, I just felt like I was on the right path. And it was so powerful. And from there, I just realized I want to keep doing this. I want to see what else I'm capable of.

Brooke: Yes, that's so good. So I'm going to be kind of the peanut gallery and say out loud what I think people are thinking. And you probably know better than I do what people are thinking because you work with people like this. But I think a lot of people would say, as a woman traveling alone, I don't feel safe. I don't feel comfortable. I'm afraid I'll feel way too isolated and lonely.

Alessia: Yeah. And all of those are very true things.

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Brooke: Right.

Alessia: So as far as safety goes, going to a different state is the same as your home state. You know, like nothing's changed. You have to be aware, you have to be smart, but you can't be scared to the point where you're not going to leave your house, you know?

Brooke: Right, right.

Alessia: So you just research and you be mindful, but don't let it overwhelm you. That's the biggest thing I tell my clients, don't get overwhelmed by fear. And then as far as loneliness goes, it's a learning process. I'm not going to say I wasn't lonely the first time I did it or the second time or the third time. But the more you do it, the more you get comfortable with your own company and you become your own best friend.

Brooke: Yeah.

Alessia: And that's so powerful.

Brooke: That's so great. I remember I went on a trip. I was married, my kids were younger and I went on a trip. I don't know, I'm going to guess I was like 33. And I was so incredibly lonely. And I had a lot of activities planned. Like I was going hiking. I was going to the spa. I had meals planned, whatever. And I felt like, I don't know, I just felt hollow inside being there without anything to distract me.

And I remember thinking, oh, I just need to be around people. I just need to connect with people. And even just going and getting a massage and talking to other people, even strangers. And I realized that did not take away that feeling at all.

And so I had this like reckoning with myself. I'm like, if you're feeling empty and lonely, don't try to fill that up with something else. Try to understand what is going on, because all through my 20s I was trying to fill that up with food and trying to fill it up with people I was dating and all of that stuff. And so to be on my own and to see that, I just felt like it was really kind of a

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profound way to check in on myself by being alone like that. And so that had a huge impact on my life.

But I think people are like, oh, solo travel. I'm going to have a reckoning with my own loneliness, that doesn't sound like any fun. But it's powerful. It can become like a self-development experience, adventure.

Alessia: That's exactly what it is, because through solo travel you're learning who you are. You're learning what you like and what you dislike. A lot of women especially, they don't take the time to really go inward and be like, I like this. I like at this time. You know, I like doing this activity. It allows you to focus solely on yourself. So it's self-care also.

Brooke: Yeah. That's so interesting, too. It's like it's just me, so what time do I want to eat dinner? And where? If it's just me, where am I going to eat? And if it's just me, what am I going to eat? And to see that maybe we don't know the answers to those questions if it's not reflected off of another person is pretty profound.

Did you have that experience when you started traveling?

Alessia: Yeah, because I was so used to my routine. And now it's like, okay, I get to do whatever I want. And I really thought of it as an experiment. Let me play around with this. Let me see where I want to dine by myself. Let me see what time I want to go. Let me see what I want to wear.

Brooke: Yeah, what am I going to wear if it's just me?

Alessia: I would show up in gowns when I would cruise by myself.

Brooke: I love it.

Alessia: Like full-on gowns. I really, like I practiced being my future self. That was really like a tool for me.

Brooke: Yeah.

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Alessia: But I just played with it and I learned what I liked and how I felt when I did those things.

Brooke: That's amazing. Okay, so you started doing this for yourself, it had a really positive impact on your life. At what point did you decide that maybe you would turn this into a business, become a coach around it?

Alessia: Yeah, so it was 2019. Actually, I was in Paris on Tonya Lee's trip to Paris, actually. I was with her. And I had this epiphany when I was there and it just dawned upon me. I'm like, I'm meant to bring women traveling by themselves. I meant to show them the power of solo travel. And since that day, I declared it to a table of women that day. The next day I started my social media.

And the funny thing is the name One Girl Travel I had for years prior.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: I owned the domain and I owned the email address.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: I always knew I was going to do something. I didn't know what it was going to be, but I booked trips using it and stuff. And as soon as I had that epiphany, I'm like, it's One Girl Travel, that's who I am. I grabbed the Instagram name and I just haven't stopped since that day.

Brooke: So what is it that you do? What is it your business does? How does it help clients?

Alessia: Yeah, so I have a membership, the One Girl Travel Club. And so every month I teach a lesson, I have workbooks, I do coaching. But basically it's to get women who are not comfortable doing things by themselves, and it's solo travel or going out to a meal by themselves. Just having that life where they don't have to depend on their friends or their loved ones to do it with them.

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I know I was sick of waiting around for people, so I want to make sure nobody else has to.

Brooke: Yeah, because it's like, oh, well, I don't want to go do that because I don't have anyone to do that with, right?

Alessia: Exactly. And life passes you by and then you have these regrets. Well, I wish I went to that show and now it's already passed and left town and then you missed out, when you easily could have went by yourself.

Brooke: So I have an example of this with pickleball. So when I was single, I never went to play pickleball because I didn't have a partner, I didn't have someone to play with. And as soon as I started dating my partner, we started going and playing pickleball all the time, right?

And so if I hadn't had him in my life, I don't think I would have been playing the sport. I definitely wouldn't have been playing it consistently. And now I go play pickleball by myself all the time. And I go and it's how I meet new people and everything. And I think about that, and I'm like, how many people are waiting like, I don't want to travel until I have a partner and I don't want to go try a sport or I don't want to do this thing or go to this restaurant or whatever until I have someone.

Or maybe you do have a partner and they're like, oh, I don't feel like it. I don't want to do that, right? You're not just working with people that are single, right? You're working with people that are in relationships, but just want to do stuff on their own. Talk a little bit about that.

Alessia: Yeah. I mean, so often like people's partners, they don't want to travel. They don't have an interest in it. And these women, they're sick of waiting around.

Brooke: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Alessia: They want to go out for a meal by themselves. Maybe their partner is away on a trip or something and they want to go and do something. So



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it's really about, you know, solo travel is a physical exercise of just learning to have that confidence in yourself to do anything you want by yourself.

And that's really the big message. It's just living a life of freedom through the practice of solo traveling, because anybody could solo travel. You can go in your local town and get a hotel room for the night and spend time alone where you get to manage the remote and watch whatever you want and do whatever you want, because not a lot of, women especially are my people, like when you take the time to do that where it's just about you and you get to recharge and focus on your wants and your needs and just things that you want to do?

Brooke: So the work that you do, I'm imagining it helps people plan an appropriate first trip, I would guess, right? Ask you questions about it. You have a lot of experience and insight into what not to do, what to do. Is that kind of how it goes or?

Alessia: So it's their first trips or it's their getting comfortable going out doing things by themselves.

Brooke: Yeah, right.

Alessia: So I'm also hosting group trips now.

Brooke: Oh cool, what's that like?

Alessia: Next month I'm hosting my first group trip to Italy. I have 24 women going with me.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: It's very exciting. Sold out the trip.

Brooke: So wait. Okay, wait. So 24 people are going. Now are these women that are coming by themselves maybe and going to be traveling with other women that they maybe don't know?

Alessia: Yep.

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Brooke: Okay, so it's still kind of a solo travel trip, yeah.

Alessia: Exactly, because they're all flying in on their own unless, you know, some of them did bring their friends with them. But they're still going to have time where, you know, there's a gap in the itinerary where they can go shopping by themselves or get a bite to eat. And they get to practice, but I'm there to guide them.

Brooke: Yeah, that's cool.

Alessia: Yeah, and then they get to experience it. And a lot of the women, it's their first time going to Europe. So it's a big deal.

Brooke: That is so amazing. That's amazing. I didn't realize you were doing group travel. So these are from the women inside of your membership.

Alessia: And outside also.

Brooke: Oh, and outside also, okay, that want to travel. Have you found that a lot of women are hungry for this kind of thing?

Alessia: Absolutely. They're hungry, but they're scared. They want it, but they feel like they aren't brave enough. I get that word a lot. I'm not brave enough to do this.

Brooke: That's so interesting.

Alessia: And everyone's brave enough, you just have to do it.

Brooke: Right.

Alessia: It's a puzzle, you have to work just like anything else. You have to feel uncomfortable. You have to do it anyway. You grow and then you just keep going and then it gets comfortable. I crave my solo time now. Crave it. I need a solo trip by myself, like totally alone so badly. And I can't wait to book it.

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Brooke: Okay, so let's talk about this because I think people are going to be fascinated. Let's talk about what a solo trip for you might look like. Like, where might you go and what would you do?

Alessia: Okay, so my favorite place in the world is Scotland. I've gone there  
—

Brooke: Scotland? Okay. Okay.

Alessia: You know I like all the weird places.

Brooke: I love it.

Alessia: Well, not weird, but out of the ordinary places. Scotland is magic. I've always felt like this pull in my soul to Scotland.

Brooke: Okay.

Alessia: And I actually went there for Hogmanay New Year's in 2019 to 2020. And for that trip I had nothing, like I was not on any tours or anything. I just booked and then I'm like, all right, what do I want to do? So I just got my flight and I got my hotel and I'm like, what do I want to do? Because I can do anything.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: You get to do anything you want. So I booked tours. I booked a firework show at the castle. I booked all these fun things because that's what I enjoy doing.

Brooke: So how do you do that? So you didn't plan anything, once you got there do you work with a concierge? Do you go online? How do you manage that?

Alessia: I've done it all by myself. I feel comfortable doing that.

Brooke: Yeah.

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Alessia: If you're just starting out and you're not comfortable, I would definitely work with a travel concierge or advisor or do group trips. So you can join me on one of my trips or you can join bus trips, cruises. I love cruises, it's a great way to see the world.

Brooke: Yeah.

Alessia: There are so many options out there. So I would say once you're comfortable solo traveling, then you can do your own thing. But I would suggest going with a group of some sort in the beginning.

Brooke: Yeah, that's cool. I think that there's something to be said for not having a bunch of stuff planned, because if one of the reasons why you're traveling alone is for the self-development, for the evolvment of you as a human, I do think the opportunities to get bored, the opportunities to be afraid like you said, to go and just walk around and explore by yourself. I think those are those opportunities that really give you the chance to get to know yourself, versus if you're doing back to back to back to back events, kind of distracting touristy type of things.

Alessia: I absolutely agree. I always recommend leaving room for just organic happenings. Whatever happens, whoever you might meet, you never know. And those are usually the most fun things that happen.

But yeah, also to the point of when you are booking group stuff, it's also pushing yourself outside your comfort zone if you're not comfortable talking to people. So if you're not comfortable talking to new people, that's where you need to be, because at least you all have a common interest. You're all there for the same reason.

Brooke: Yeah.

Alessia: Then you can practice, hey, what do you like about this? What else are you doing on your trip? Right? So it's kind of like you get to meet people, but you're also by yourself.

Brooke: So I recently went to pickleball camp.

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Alessia: Love that.

Brooke: As an adult, right? It was in Turks and Caicos. And it was very much like that, right? So I'm not a huge fan of small talk. Like going to a party and just be like, oh, hey, what do you do? Or meeting someone at a bar because you're sitting at the bar just talking, what do you do? But going to pickleball camp, I was talking to everyone about pickleball, right?

And then, of course, it leads to different conversations afterwards and you get to know people. And we met a lot of cool people. But having that one common kind of theme, I think, is really helpful and something to focus on. But again, you don't want it to be too structured so that there's not an opportunity for you to kind of be uncomfortable and be in those moments. I don't know, I'm always saying that I think the people that evolve the most are the ones that seek out opportunities to be uncomfortable.

So, okay, but back to Scotland, why is it your favorite?

Alessia: It's magic there.

Brooke: Is it really?

Alessia: That's actually where a lot of the Harry Potter scenes and people came from. So J.K. Rowling wrote in Scotland. And so that's why it really is magic when you're there. It's something, like I live in New York and it's beautiful, but there's so much history. And then you go to the highlands and you see these mountains and it's silent and it's beautiful. And it's just you can feel it in the air, like it just has this magic about it. I don't know how better to describe it.

Brooke: That's awesome.

Alessia: The castles and all the things.

Brooke: There's castles. Who doesn't want to go see a castle? So when you went to Scotland by yourself, how long did you stay?

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Alessia: So the first time, I was there for probably nine days. And I did a bus tour.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: Yeah, I did a bus tour around the whole perimeter. And then I extended it, so this is where the comfort and then the discomfort comes in.

Brooke: Yeah.

Alessia: So I booked the bus tour. So it was more comfortable with people. Did a whole tour and then I extended my trip by a few days and stayed in the city by myself.

Brooke: Wow.

Alessia: And that was where it's like, okay, now I'm alone. There's no one else here that I know.

Brooke: Yeah. There's no activity, yeah.

Alessia: Exactly.

Brooke: I like it. I like the combination, especially if you're going somewhere you've never been before, you don't know what to see. Because for me, I love seeing new places, but I don't like doing touristy activities. I don't like going on a tour. But I feel like, maybe you could give me some advice here. I feel like I don't want to go on a tour, but I also want to make sure I don't miss something I should definitely see.

So when you plan a trip, how do you decide where you're going to go and what you're going to do?

Alessia: So social media. I love social media.

Brooke: Okay.

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Alessia: And I look for all the things that really appeal to me, because I'm not traditional when I travel. Like when I was in Paris, I did a motorcycle sidecar tour.

Brooke: What?

Alessia: And I went to a Jimmy Buffet concert.

Brooke: A what concert?

Alessia: A Jimmy Buffet concert.

Brooke: In Paris?

Brooke: Yeah, in Paris. Yeah, so I'm not doing these average things, but I'm doing what is true to me and what I want to get out of the experience. So definitely stay true to yourself. If somebody else gives you this itinerary, oh, you have to go to Louvre, you have to do this, you don't have to do anything. That's the beauty of it.

Brooke: Right.

Alessia: You get to do what you want to do.

Brooke: Yeah. We went to Florence. They were like, you have to go see the David, right? You have to. And I just really didn't want to. Like I'd seen a lot of pictures. I was like, I'm good. I knew there was going to be a line. I just didn't go. And I didn't regret it at all. You know what I mean?

So it's like I feel like when I was in Rome, I went and saw the Vatican, but I was not inspired to go back to the Vatican when I went back there, but I was obsessed with the Colosseum, right? And so I wanted to go back there again.

So I love that you're saying that. It's like just because everybody goes to a certain place and says that it's amazing doesn't mean – If you don't feel like going there, there is absolutely no obligation.

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And I also want to say, I'm curious what you think about this. Sometimes when I travel, I spend the whole morning out walking, going places, looking at everything. And then I just come home and I usually stay at a really nice hotel and I just chill in the hotel. I don't feel guilty at all. I love it. Even if I'm watching TV, y'all.

To me, if you ask like, what do you really want to do? I want to spend half the day doing that. And the other half just totally, maybe sitting by the pool, relaxing, whatever. Not feeling like, oh my God, we got to go here and we got to go here and we got to see this. Yeah, that's great.

Alessia: Same. I like to do all that stuff, I'd rather do it in the day and enjoy myself. At night I'm taking a bath. I'm relaxing. I'll go out to a nice dinner and then everything comes off, I relax and I just take in the day. I reflect. So that goes into being alone with your thoughts when you're alone at night with your thoughts. And then that's where the work really comes into play.

Brooke: So do you ever run into people who are, you know, women who are in families? Maybe they're married, they have partners, wanting to travel on their own and wondering how to manage the budget around that, how to pitch this idea? What are your thoughts on that? Has that been a struggle for people?

Alessia: Yeah, and I think the guilt also plays a big role. The guilt of spending money on themselves.

Brooke: Yes.

Alessia: Taking a trip without their partner or children.

Brooke: Yeah.

Alessia: That's a big one. And that's why I remind them, like you are going for you. You're going to reward yourself. And when you come back, you are going to be a better version of yourself.

Brooke: That's so true. That's so true, yeah. One of my favorite quotes is from Abraham. It says, "One of the best gifts you have to give your children



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is your own happiness.” And I do think that you can travel on your own and share the experience with them when you come back and let them understand, like, it’s really important for me to do these things. I will share them with you.

And then obviously most people, when they go on vacation, and for many people it’s probably budget, but I mean, I love what you just said. Like, you don’t have to go to Scotland for 10 days. You can go to the state next door for two. Or even go in your own city to a hotel and just spend the day by yourself. You can still get the benefit of that recharging.

And for me, I think the most significant thing for me about travel is I feel like when I go on a trip, I can look back at my life with a new perspective. Sometimes we don’t get out of our life enough to be able to reflect on it and appreciate it in some ways and also maybe think about the things we want to change.

Alessia: That’s a big one. I always come up with all the things that I’m going to go home and implement into my life because I’m doing things that I don’t get to do every day in my regular life. And I’m like, I feel really good when I do this. I’m going to start doing that at home. Like, how can I take the lessons I’ve learned when traveling at home and implement it into my everyday life?

Brooke: That’s so good. My girlfriend, Shailene, went to Europe last summer. When she came back, she realized she’d lost like 15 pounds. She was like, how in the world? I was eating all this amazing food. And what she realized is they were walking everywhere. And so that’s exactly what she did. She decided, I’m going to start walking everywhere. I’m going to start walking every day. And so she brought that experience back.

And it’s like sometimes you go to certain hotels and they have like an afternoon tea or they have a spa thing or you do something poolside and you realize, gosh, this is really amazing. I could do this at home as well. That’s so good.

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Alessia: Everything from like the products to like the sheets, like just little things you can bring that home with you.

Brooke: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, what have I not asked you? What do you want everyone to know about traveling by themselves, traveling in groups by themselves, you know what we mean by that, what else?

Alessia: So I would say that the biggest benefit that solo travel has taught me was self-love. That was the biggest gift in this whole process. Like I said, when I started I was really insecure. I didn't know who I was. But because I got to treat myself –

So I had to practice positive self-talk because you're alone. And if you're being mean to yourself, if you're talking negatively to yourself, the trip's not going to benefit you.

Brooke: You're going to have a terrible time.

Alessia: You're going to have a terrible time. You're going to feel like crap. You have to learn to be kind to yourself when you're the only one there. You're your biggest cheerleader. So I truly learned that with every trip I took. Like if I made a wrong turn down a street instead of being like, oh my God, you're so stupid, you don't know where you're going. I'm like, all right, this is my first time here. I'm figuring it out, it's okay.

Brooke: Yeah, yeah.

Alessia: It's a process for me to fully think that way, but it is night and day from when I started to where I am now.

Brooke: Wow, that's so cool.

Alessia: And yeah, like I said, solo travel is self-care and I truly learned to love and appreciate who I am as a person through solo traveling.

Brooke: Okay, so if I'm listening to this and I'm like, "What? I want to know more. I want to understand more. I want to learn about traveling by myself.

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I want to learn about being by myself. I want to learn about these groups that you do.” Where do I go? How does it work?

Alessia: Yeah, so onegirltravel.com is my website. Everything is on there. I offer one-on-one coaching and then I have the One Girl Travel Club, which is my monthly membership. From there you can also find my group trips. I just opened up a Germany Christmas market trip for December.

Brooke: What is happening?

Alessia: It just went live today, so I’m very excited about that. There’s still openings.

Brooke: That’s great.

Alessia: So you can find that through my website as well. And I love social media, so you can find me on Instagram, @one\_girl\_travel.

Brooke: Amazing. That’s so awesome. And you’re posting on there. I follow you on there, you’re posting there on your trips and it’s so inspiring and so exciting. I’m like, oh my gosh. That’s why I DM’d you. I was following you and I was just like, okay, we have to be on the podcast for so many reasons. But mostly, I think, for women learning to be alone with themselves and like what you just ended with was just like loving yourself being alone.

It’s like when you enjoy your own company, you want to take yourself places. You want to see the world with you, right? You’re a good time with you. And it’s hard to know what you like if you don’t ask yourself. And it’s hard to know what you like if you haven’t exposed yourself to the options that I think this sort of travel and the way that you’ve set it up really does.

So I’m excited for each and every one of you to go and check out One Girl Travel, to go and maybe go have dinner by yourself, go to the movie by yourself. Some of you, it’s just like going shopping by yourself. Just hanging out with yourself and learning more about that. And if you’re struggling at all with that, get some coaching.

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Alessia: Come on over.

Brooke: That's amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the podcast and talking about this. I'm so glad you did.

Alessia: Thank you, I love doing this.

Brooke: I think people are going to love it. Onegirltravel.com. Have a great week, everyone. Talk to you soon.

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