

Lucy Hutchings Hunt

LIVE THE CHANGE BY LUCY HUTCHINGS HUNT: FEATURING ALEXANDRA BADITA OF IMPRESSIVITY

Intro :

Hello beautiful listeners and thank you for joining me Lucy Hutchings Hunt for my podcast, Live the Change. My goal is to bring you powerful and authentic conversations from inspiring global business voices. Helping to share these fascinating stories about the magic and rewards that heart-led leadership brings, fuels my personal mission to support and motivate as many fellow business owners and entrepreneurs as possible.

Are you ready to get honest, step out of your comfort zone and step into your best heart-led business self? Sure you are. And if you're not ready just yet, keep listening to my guests' inspiring stories about how they personally Live the Change, and you soon will be. Today I am interviewing Alexandra Badita from Impressivity. She is a multi-talented coach and self-development guru and author of Write your Way to Happiness, which I have to say is a fantastic book and really worth reading. Yeah, so let's crack on with the show and get to know more about Alexandra Badita.

The Interview

LHH: Alexandra, I'm so delighted to be speaking to you today. Thank you so much for coming to join me.

AB: Thank you for the invite.

LHH: Oh, it's a pleasure. So, where are you speaking to us from?

AB: I am in Bucharest, Romania right now. I relocated here, which is my home country, so I'm back home.

LHH: So exciting. Now, Romania, I don't think I've ever been to Romania, but I have heard that they've got the most phenomenal internet infrastructure and that it's a really good place to outsource your IT support and your kind of digital agency support too.

AB: Absolutely, yeah. We are rocking on that side, so this is where the online businesses have to be.

LHH: But I think it's really interesting because, as I kind of explore different places to build, because I've got digital agency as you might know, and as I looked at different places to near-shore and far-shore, Romania kept coming up and it just seemed to have so many opportunities. I thought it was a really interesting place to potentially explore creating a team and I think it's interesting that you're based there and that you sort of feel comfortable making that connection with the British audience as well, which obviously you do in your products.

Interview cont.

AB: Yeah, absolutely. And I feel that it's definitely a privilege to have this, especially because most of my business is online in the UK and everywhere. It's an international business and my clients are still international.

Although I came back to Romania after living in London for three years. It definitely helps to have good internet and to have talented people as well because this is why so many companies are coming to Romania to relocate with teams, because also the workforce here is really talented. So yeah, we are in a very good place to start up businesses and to take over the world.

LHH: So exciting times ahead for Romania. I was looking at your bio and you studied journalism. Your English is practically immaculate. So at what point did you start to learn English? Was that at university or was that at school? How come you're so great at English?

AB: I started learning in kindergarten. I remember to this day, that my first word in English was duck. That's what we learned in kindergarten. You know, we started slow with animals and birds and everything, but I was definitely lucky to be in an environment where I could learn English throughout all my primary school, secondary, high school, and I think it kind of developed me to even think in English. Everything just comes easier in English, I don't know why.

LHH: I think that's really interesting, because what strikes me about the business that you run Impressivity, it's all about words and it's all about writing and it's so incredibly courageous that a) you've written a book in English in a foreign language and b) the whole basis of your mode of coaching revolves around words in another language. For me, I think that's just so exciting because I do speak a bit of French and I certainly don't speak Romanian, but the idea of writing a book in French and then working in French and teaching people to heal themselves through that language is just a total anathema so I have so much admiration for you.

AB: Thank you.

LHH: So we first met earlier this year, wasn't it, through social media and I'm so glad that our paths crossed and it was because you had written your book Impressivity and you were looking for like-minded people to connect with on that subject matter and then our paths crossed. So tell us a little bit more about Impressivity - what it is and why you've written the book.

AB: Yeah, and you know what, I definitely think that everything happens for a reason. So I'm really, really glad that we connected earlier this year and yeah, the book came to life because I felt that it was the right step to take in my writing journey. The book is Write your Way to Happiness and it's about how people can use writing to heal themselves and to know themselves better. And this has been part of how I started my personal development journey as well. I always loved writing and yes, I graduated from Journalism University.

Interview cont.

AB: I worked in media for a few years and then you know, I just felt that writing was always there for me. I then went into blogging and kept writing and it was healing for me, but I didn't know that at the time. It was more a way to practice my creativity and to keep my pen on paper so to speak, but you know, it was just something that I always enjoyed doing. And then when I started on this path of personal development and I made the connection of how writing can be so helpful and beneficial for our mental health and for getting to know ourselves better. I started doing workshops and I started getting interviews with people from this field and when the idea of the book came to my mind, it was like, wow, how did I not think about it earlier? It makes so much sense to write a book, especially because the process of writing, it was healing in itself and then being able to get this message across to so many other people learning about writing and journaling and all the other techniques to wellbeing and how to use pen and paper. That was amazing and I feel so grateful for being able to get this book out there. And of course they'll have it published in English and this way I can reach a wider audience.

LHH: Can I ask, did you write it in Romanian first or did you write it in English first?

AB: Straight into English. I don't know why, somehow words come out easier in English and I even catch myself thinking in English sometimes because I've been speaking English for so many years that, even when I had a journal in high school I used to write in English so that my parents wouldn't find it.

LHH: That's hilarious. Let's backtrack a little bit. Where did you study journalism? Was that in Romania?

AB: Yeah, so I studied journalism in Romania for my bachelor degree and then I did an exchange semester for my Masters in Finland in Helsinki.

LHH: Wow.

AB: And then I came back here to finish my exams and I started working throughout university because I loved writing. So I was passionate about finding a job where I could write, and my teenage girl dream came true when I got a job in a fashion magazine. I was writing for Cosmopolitan and Harpers Bazaar. And it was really, really amazing because...

LHH: ... can I just ask, did you say Cosmopolitan and Harpers Bazaar?

AB: Yeah! It was honestly my dream come true and you know, then I kind of shifted into project management, which was also very interesting. It wasn't as creative though, so that's when I felt the need to keep writing and because I was still in the fashion industry, I started writing about fashion. So I had a fashion blog at the beginning. That's how Impressivity started- it was just a fashion blog at first.

Interview cont.

LHH: That's so interesting, isn't it? Because I mean, I can understand why you might have called your fashion blog Impressivity. But because I didn't really know that bit about you, I just assumed that Impressivity was a brand name that you'd come up with since you'd started your coaching. It works really well with what you're trying to do, which is kind of getting people to express themselves and to be impressive. I think it's an interesting, very interchangeable phrase, which I really love. I have to say I loved the brand name Impressivity because it didn't smack of fashion to me. It's an act of self-improvement and evolution, I think.

AB: Yeah, it's crazy because when I thought about the word, I remember when I decided to do the blog, I was doing brainstorming for about two weeks and was just waking up in the middle of the night with ideas and I don't know, I came up with Impressivity and it just felt so close to my heart.

I had no idea that it was going to be represent me so much and it just became part of me and it was my personal branding. That's why I think when I went into coaching I just wanted to keep this because it was just who I was and I wanted to express this to other people and to let them know that they can be impressive as well. And you know, this whole Impressivity is part of who we are, but we just need to tap into it.

LHH: It certainly works for me and I think as a brand it has a real ring to it. So definitely hold onto that and I can see that your book *Write your Way to Happiness* is just the beginning of many kind of great books that will come out of Impressivity in terms of self-help, manuals and and various other exciting tomes of work that I'm sure that you have up your sleeve!

AB: Yes I do. And you know, it's scary at the same time because I still feel that my first book *Write your Way to Happiness* is my baby and I am scared to think about new books, but at the same time I have so many ideas that, you know, it will definitely come naturally.

LHH: Let's just backtrack a little bit. So you were working in fashion and then your blog took on a life of its own. At what point did you decide to make the transition into coaching from the fashion industry and then what led to the book? Tell us about the story behind the book, as it were.

AB: So, in between the fashion and coaching, there had been some other changes of jobs and I kept working in project management but in different areas in cosmetics and in beauty. And then I also started working for an agency doing digital marketing and project management in software.

AB: ...And I kept my blog alongside, which was just my corner where I could write about anything. It kind of went from fashion to lifestyle and relationships. It was just somewhere I would write about stuff that was happening to me, and when I moved to London it was the one anchor that kept me really in place because I felt everything else was changing around me. I was changing my environment, my country, my job.

Interview cont.

AB: I had no friends in London, so it was my blog that was keeping me anchored to my reality and after that it was getting into a new country that was also a shot of getting to know myself better. I had been into therapy before moving to London, and it was just the right time to start getting to know myself better and writing was there for me, as it has always been. So I started looking more into it and how it really helps and, after Impressivity I also had a platform that I had launched for women to talk about their relationships and to share about the guys that were in their lives, either in a good way or in a bad way. This was theguythat.com and it was a platform for everyone to share through writing and after that it was more about - okay, how can I bring this writing therapy tool into more people's lives and get people to know about it? So yeah, after the workshops and starting doing the training on coaching, reading a lot and attending a lot of events, it just clicked. It has to be a book.

LHH: Can you tell me what was the pivotal point for you? What was the critical moment? I've heard you share about this before and I know that for you personally, writing was a massive part of your healing journey. What happened, so that you had that light bulb moment where you realized that writing was the one thing that was going to save you from an emotional breakdown as it were?

AB: Yeah, well actually I did have the emotional breakdown and it was just writing brought me back to life... So it was about four years ago and I was living in Bucharest and from the outside I was living a perfectly normal life. I had a regular job, nine to five and I was in a relationship, you know, like a normal person having a normal life, but on the inside everything was wrong. I was feeling so disconnected and so separated from everything that I was flying on auto-pilot and it was simply not knowing who I was, what made me happy, what made me laugh. There was just this complete disconnection and I kept having panic attacks, but I couldn't really understand why until I had this massive panic attack while I was at home and it was really scary because I was alone and I didn't know what was going on.

AB: So the second I came out of it, I Googled a therapist. I found a really good therapist that helped me. I quit my job because it wasn't serving me anymore. I left the relationship because again, it wasn't serving me and I did this whole journey in therapy. I was so lucky that my therapist could see the part where writing was so healing for me because she started giving me exercises from one session to another, and that was what saved my life because that's how I started to come back within and reconnected myself and really looked into my thoughts and my emotions and could really understand why I got to that separation point.

LHH: I think that's really fascinating. I mean there's a big connection isn't there, between creativity and healing, and whether it's words or being creative through art or music...It's about being able to express yourself and I think for me personally, when I feel like I'm kind of bottled up or not able to express myself, that's when things start going pear-shaped because it all sort of get stuck in your head and the thoughts go round and round in your head. But when you're able to get them out, whether it's on paper or through singing or playing a musical instrument, or through drawing - my son loves to draw - there is just a route to exit those strong emotions, whether it's happiness or sadness. And I think people who don't naturally tap into those areas of creativity can really struggle with holding all of that strong emotion inside.

Interview cont.

AB: Yeah, that's so true. And you know, I keep saying to people who are still resistant to this kind of expression that, you know, just give it a try. Try writing and if writing is not for you, then try something else. You know, it will come naturally; you will feel called to whatever form of art you find more suitable for you, because not everyone likes to write, not everyone likes to sing, not everyone likes to draw. But it's natural from our core - it will come. You will be attracted to that one activity that really represents you and that makes us express our most hidden feelings and thoughts. And yeah, for me it's writing and I completely love and honour everyone who does any sort of art, or any form of expressing themselves, because this is pure understanding of themselves and it's so, so important to do that.

LHH: I think that's really interesting because I heard someone say once that when society is really broken, that is when art and creativity is stifled. You know, when a government, maybe a dictatorship, puts a cap on how people are able to express themselves, whether it's through music or through words, and essentially what that does is it stops people from being fully human because if we can't express ourselves freely through words and music and creativity, then we're actually being stopped from being fully human. It was an interesting analogy, this idea that that's the point at which society is in real danger is when freedom of creativity and a lack of respect for the arts is completely disabled.

AB: Yeah, absolutely. And we are living right now in a place where we have this freedom of expression, and sometimes we really don't see it as this beautiful advantage that we have and we can use it, but you know, so many people get scared when they hear about creativity and they feel that, oh my God, I'm not a creative person. I'm just very pragmatic and I just like everything in a box, and just following the rules and everything. But I'm always seeing this in my workshops that it's not necessarily trying to be creative in the sense of creating something fictional or using art in a way that doesn't suit you. Just when you start writing, especially you can just express yourself. This is why I always call my workshops expressive writing workshops because we learn how to express ourselves through writing. It doesn't mean that we need to write a novel in order to express ourselves. It doesn't mean that we need to be a great writer and expect to, all of a sudden, come up with poems or something that will get, I don't know how many awards, it just a matter of putting everything that is already inside of us, all the thoughts and all the words that are going on in our minds and just putting them on paper and that's the first step. Like in any art, it starts with really going deep inside and getting to know ourselves better. That's the first key, and in personal development, this is the main thing and in my coaching programme it's something that I talk about with all my clients.

If we learn how to be self-aware and to be conscious about what we do, what we think and how we feel, then we start to sort out our problems and there aren't any more limiting beliefs, there are just opportunities.

LHH: I love that. That's so beautiful.

AB: Thank you.

LHH: Alexandra, tell me a little bit about the practicality of the book. How long did it take you, once you had the idea for Write your Way to Happiness, how long did it take you to kind of go from idea to product?

Interview cont.

AB: So the idea just came when I was in India and it was the moment when I started connecting really well with mindfulness, meditation and Yoga and you know, I just figured, oh my god, a book! It's so easy. It's like how could I not think of it? And after I came back from India to London, I started doing the research straightaway and I started interviewing people from the field.

AB: I interviewed the father of modern writing therapy, Dr James Pennebaker, and he was so open to talking about it, he's done so much research. Having the support of so many mentors, it was really great because it accelerated the whole process of research. And then the writing part was the most natural for me and it came in the easiest way because you know, once you have all the materials it just comes through. After just writing it, then going into editing and everything else because I decided to go down to the self-publishing route. So it was, I think, about a year in full.

LHH: I think it's really interesting that you said it will just come through you because I often refer to that sense as a divine download. Now, whether or not you believe in a higher power or God, for me there are moments where I get that sort of light bulb of inspiration and I just put my fingers to the keyboard or I start talking and literally every word that comes out of my mouth, all the words that come through my fingers onto the keyboard, it's almost as if I didn't write them. They're just coming from somewhere within and it's quite a powerful and magical process to allow to happen to you. Would you identify with that?

AB: Yes, and I love what you said, allowing it, because we get these signals, the universe has so many gifts, but we need to allow them to come through us and give ourselves permission to really enjoy this gift and you know, by actually allowing this flow of inspiration to come and then just connect with the paper or with the keyboard. It's really magical and it's really important to be aware and just allow it to happen.

AB: I really felt like that, because it was insane. I would just sit for half a day in a coffee shop in London and type for hours and hours and I would leave from there and be like, oh my God, I wrote my first chapter! And then a week later like, oh, I have a second chapter! Yeah, it was really great. The whole process and when I got my first batch of printed copies at my door in London, it felt like Oh my God, I had the baby delivered! Less painful, but the emotion was, oh my God. And yeah, I think it was about one year and having this deadline in my mind because I had decided, you know that in February 2018, that's the month when I'm going to have my book out there. That was also the month when I had decided to go full-on with my business with coaching and that was when I quit my job and it was like, this is the new beginning.

LHH: Oh, I'm so happy for you. And really, I would thoroughly recommend that everybody reads the book or follows you on social media because you do some really brilliant video blogs as well, which are just great and I mean it's a really lovely way to sort of get some of your ideas by osmosis. Just let them sort of flow over you, and you know, I've done that many times. I remember I lay in the bath for a while watching one of your video blogs once just thinking, oh, I just love listening to your voice and hearing your positivity. And that's actually my personal favourite time for digesting podcasts and video blogs - it's my private moments where I'm lying in the bath and it's just me. The children aren't there and I have all my bubbles and candles and I thank you!

Interview cont.

AB: Thank you so much.

LHH: Thank you for being there and for doing what you do. So I just want to ask you a couple more questions before we wind up. You've done lots of things in your life. You're still quite young. I don't know exactly how old you are, but you look incredibly youthful in all your pictures. Clearly you've done a lot already in your life, but what would you say success looks like to you?

AB: Ah, I really like this question! Yeah. I mean I think that success is not a destination. I really like to enjoy success on, maybe if not on a daily basis, really enjoying every little step. Every little win is a success for me and you know, it's definitely every time I get something that really makes my heart feel with joy, like running a course or being on stage and delivering a speech, these kinds of things that really make me see everything as a success and I feel like, oh yeah, this is where I'm meant to be.

AB: I'm 29 and I feel that, you know, this is just the beginning of the journey and everything that I've done before, that was a beautiful part of my life as well. I feel so blessed that now I'm on this new path and I feel that there are so many more things to come. I like thinking that success is not something that I'm running towards. It's something that happens every day, or at least on a regular basis.

LHH: I think that's something that everybody should hold onto. And actually, I've noticed that you do that on your social media. You know, when something positive happens, whether you've got a magazine article published or your book's been talked about somewhere, or somebody has said something positive about you. You're not afraid to share that and you're not afraid to celebrate that in public. I personally find that really powerful because I think women so often are inclined to hide their light under a bushel – especially English women – they might say, I don't want people to think I'm boasting, but actually when you do that, a) everyone is impressed and excited for you, and b) it gives other people permission to celebrate their success too. And I think it's so important that we do celebrate our successes, because we can all have bad days, especially as entrepreneurs and in life can have ups and downs. So when you do have a win, it's really important to yes, feel it in your heart and feel proud of yourself, but also to share it with other people and kind of go, yeah, it's been a good day, something cool has happened.

AB: Yeah, of course. And at first it felt I had that same voice in my mind, you know like, oh are you really going to post about this? Who cares about your little win and who cares about your little article or stuff like that?

LHH: I do!

Interview cont.

AB: But then I realized, you know what? This is something that I'm proud of and it's something that I really want to share. Yeah, just like you said, we have good days and bad days, and I've come to realize that it's important to share both sides because it's also great to show people that we're not only achieving ticking the boxes and achieving all of this cool stuff, but there's also the human side where we can get vulnerable and I have bad days and I have times when simply my mind just freezes or it just needs a break and I have really bad times and you know, after I recover from them, I share them because I know after that, so many people reach out and they say, oh my God, how can you be so open about it? How can you talk about it? And you know, it's just part of life and it's just as important to share the wins and to also share what we're going through because you know, it opens up the conversation and I feel it's something that we really need to do more of.

LHH: I think especially on social media when it's so easy to look at the kind of photo-shopped people with a million followers on Instagram and you kind of think, oh, it's all right for them. But what you don't see, and I actually I love sometimes when you see these behind-the-scenes pictures where they've got 10 people holding them up in that yoga pose or you know, they're actually in makeup for an hour before the photo has been taken.

AB: Yeah exactly. That's the fun part. And I think it's good to see what's behind the scene because so many studies have been made on social media creating anxiety for people because they see everyone being happy and having a better life than they have. When in fact, it's not like that at all. That's why it's important to share both good and bad and not just keeping the mask of, oh look I'm going on this beautiful holiday and I'm eating this amazing food at this amazing restaurant. It's also about the times when we struggle and it's also the times when things don't work out as we want them to work out, and why not? This is what keeps us close and I know that it's something that I've seen that you are posting as well and it's amazing to open up and that's why I really felt so connected with you as well because you are being very authentic and that's something that more people need to do.

LHH: I think so. It's my son's birthday today and I'm meant to be taking him to the cinema. Nine I can't believe he is nine, but yeah, I mean I could talk to you for hours but I do have to wind up so I'm just going to ask you before we wind up, and I haven't primed you for this question so it's completely off the top of your head. What are the three top gems of advice or tips that you would give to a woman in business or somebody that is kind of trying to find out what they should be doing in life? What are the three top things?

AB: This is really good question. It takes me back to the time when I had to kind of figure out what it is that I want in life, because I had tried to escape the nine to five system three times before I actually went down this entrepreneurial route and what I've learned is that:

AB: First of all, you have to give it time. You have to be patient because nothing happens overnight. You know, we don't just start a business today and then one week later you have £10K in your account. You really need to take it step by step, so have a lot of patience.

Interview cont.

AB: The second thing is to really just dive into it and don't wait for all the accreditation or certificates. There are so many people who just postpone taking action because they feel that they're not ready and they still have something to learn. We all have something to learn constantly and we're always learning. This is what I love about this journey, that every day there's something new that I'm learning and it's really important to just take action and to start doing whatever it is that you want to do.

The third thing that I found really important, for me at least, is to be surrounded by the right people. Because either it's friends or family or finding the right community, finding the mentors, the people who can really help you and support you. This way, even if you don't really know what you want to do, someone from the outside might be able to guide you towards that and really show you the path and you can try out things and see what works for you. See if you feel good, because this is the beauty of being your own boss.

You can actually change things. You can tweak things in your business. You can actually make it so that it represents you. At least that's what I love to consider, especially as an authentic leader. You are responsible for doing your business in the most authentic way that represents you. And surround yourself with people who are really there for you and who can celebrate the wins, who can support you when something doesn't go right and who are there to also guide you and give you the right support, or at least point you in the right direction – point you to another resource.

LHH: I think that's brilliant. So patience and supportive people. I love it. Really good tips! And actually pretty much whenever I ask somebody that question, it's more often than not that one of the top three tips is 'surround yourself with good and supportive people'. Get a coach, get mentors, you know? Yeah. You're not the first person to say that.

So thank you so much, Alexandra. It's been such a privilege to speak to you. Don't you just love the way you can be in Romania and I can be in Scotland and we can know each other from having met online? We have physically met up in London, but our relationship is basically completely nomadic and global. I just feel so privileged to live in an age where these friendships can be forged without boundaries. It is just so beautiful.

AB: Yes, we're definitely privileged and I'm really grateful for this and I'm really grateful for knowing you and thank you so much for inviting me.

LHH: It's a pleasure. Just before you go, where can people connect with you? Where can they find you?

AB: Well, everywhere. Social media, facebook, instagram. On facebook, my personal profile is Alexandra Badita or Impressivity on instagram, and my website AlexBadita.com.

LHH: You're all over the web, excellent! We will put that in copy on the blog post as well. So listen, I am so grateful to have spoken to you. Thank you so much. I had better get my ass to the cinema, I'm going to watch Johnny English tonight.

Interview cont.

AB: That's a classic!

LHH: Have a beautiful evening and thank you again for your time.

AB: Thank you so much for having me..

Live the Change - Message

I really hope you enjoyed listening to this episode of my Live the Change podcast. If you did, I'd be so grateful to you for emailing or texting a link to the show, or for sharing it on social media with those you know who might like it to. My mission is to share heart-led business experience, strength and hope with as many people as possible. I'm proud to be building a sharing, caring and service-focused business movement that I'm so glad you're here to be part of. If you haven't done so already, help me build by following me on social @LucyHutchingsHunt or by getting on my list at LucyHutchingsHunt.com. And remember, we rise by lifting and being of service to others and by finding our own unique and personally fulfilling ways to Live the Change. Til next time.