

[Transcript] The Diary Of A CEO with Steven Bartlett / E230: Simon Sinek: How To Deal With Loneliness In A Complicated & Messy World

When my friends are struggling, I don't say take your time.

When my friends are struggling, I say go on.

When my friends are crying, I say go on.

I live my life by that code.

He's back!

Simon Sinek!

Leadership and communication expert.

Author Ted Speaker.

His unconventional views have made him one of the most sought-after speakers on the planet.

There's no one quite like him.

Simon.

How are you doing?

I'm actually feeling quite lonely.

I'm struggling to communicate or present myself in a way that people will get who I am.

I feel like nobody can help you.

And the first thing that a lot of us should do

is reach out to a friend and say,

I'm struggling.

You should never cry alone.

We live in a world where most people are ill-equipped

on how to be there for a friend who's struggling.

The first mistake people make is they try and fix.

Don't need them to fix me.

I just need them to sit in the mud with me.

So I don't feel alone when I'm sitting in the mud.

The fact that it's such a loud conversation about mental health

is a spotlight on the fact that we do not know how to

build deep meaningful relationships.

But the way I manage it, which is different than most,

is I, you know, I wish I had these skills 10 years ago.

Is the design of the modern world making it more difficult

for us to find love and to keep it?

The problem with it is it's grass is always greener

because it's so easy to just go swiping.

Something's out of balance.

And I'm going to say this over and over and over again,

which is successful relationships are.

Ladies and gentlemen, I interrupt this podcast

with a very special announcement.

Something I've always dreamed of doing.

Obviously, I've had Simon Sinek on the podcast three times now.

He holds the record for being the most prolific

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Diary of a CEO guest we've ever had.
And to celebrate that and also to celebrate his brilliance,
we're doing something special to raise money
for an incredible cause.
Myself and Simon will be holding an event
in London where you can come and see both of us
in conversation on stage with audience engagement
and questions live in central London on July the 5th.
This is a one-off event,
something that will probably never happen again,
unfortunately, because of the nature of both
of our incredible schedules,
but something I'm incredibly excited about.
If you want to get a ticket,
all you've got to do is put your email address
on the waiting list below in the description of this episode.
Tickets will operate on a first-come, first-served basis,
so put your name on that list
and come and see myself and Simon on stage in London live
for a very interesting evening of vulnerability,
discussion and insights.
Simon, congratulations.
You are the Diary of a CEO record holder.
You've been invited back more than any other guest,
and it's for a very, very good reason
which is that your episodes are always the most adored
that we have on this podcast.
They are the two episodes of the conversations we've had
are both in the top 10 of all time on the show,
and I always feel after our conversations end
that they could have gone on longer, so here we are.
Well, thanks for having me back.
I enjoy coming.
My first question for you today is,
and this question is often asked quite flippantly,
but I'd really like the real answer, which is,
how are you doing?
You know, I think when somebody says, fine, they're lying.
And so my instinct is to say, I'm fine.
I am going through some ups and downs.
I'm in a period of flux, which is fine.
That genuinely is good.
I like a little bit of chaos in my life.

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It's where creativity comes from,
and if I look back at my career, you know,
I would take a job, I'd have a fast moving career,
it'd get to a great point, it would plateau,
and then I'd quit, and I'm sort of at that point.
You know, I love a steep learning curve.
I love a difficult situation, and I like trying something new
and building something, and so there's,
I'm shifting away from in-person public speaking,
which I think surprises a lot of people,
but recognize that I never considered myself
a public speaker in the first place.
It's just something I did to advance my cause.
It was never my chosen career, so not doing it
as much as I enjoy it, and I know, is not that difficult.
So what next is a little bit of an unknown?
I have some ideas, and I'm testing some things out,
but I don't actually know where I'm gonna go.
Why are you shifting away from public speaking?
Give me the context as to why this is a sort of a pivotal moment.
Um, there are multiple reasons.
Um, you know, I consider myself a preacher,
and when I set out on my journey many years ago,
I was espousing a vision of what business could look like
and what the world could look like,
what our careers could look like.
What our careers could look like, that was different
than the world that we lived in.
You know, talking about purpose at work
was some hippie-dippy stuff, you know?
And now it's a completely normal conversation,
and I'm really proud to have been a part of that movement.
And so when I would stand on the stage,
I was preaching to people who had never heard of my work,
who had never heard of these concepts,
at least not explain the way I explained them,
and I was converting audiences.
You know, that was...
And the good news is the movement is...
has its own momentum,
and I don't know how many...
I'm converting vastly fewer people now
when I walk into the room.

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Now they're looking for tools, now they're looking for, you know, which is great.

And so I want to now pivot myself so that I can start having significant impact again, so that I can start affecting greater change, not just maintenance, not just reinforcing, but just affirming change, impact, is what I'm looking at.

So that's a huge part.

COVID, in some respects, was a gift.

It created a marketplace for online, and so, you know, I can do things that I could never do before, which is I can be in Chicago in the morning and Kuala Lumpur in the evening.

That was impossible before.

I have the energy to give to more people.

So I'm doing that, which is great.

And at the end of the day,

I want to learn.

I want to be in a situation where I'm actually not familiar, where I'm not very comfortable.

You know, I'm good on the stage now.

I've honed my craft,

and I want to be uncomfortable again.

The personal side is different.

You know, I know that mental health

is a big and important topic right now,

and I had a conversation with somebody recently,

and I realized I actually don't like the term mental health.

You know, it sounds like a fixed destination.

It sounds like, you know, if you don't have health,

like if you're not perfect, there's something wrong with you.

So any kind of divergence or sadness

means you're imperfect, right?

And that's not true,

and I think it's an unfair standard to call it mental health.

And I think, because at the end of the day,

think about your body when you go to the gym, right?

We call that fitness.

And some days you have good days at the gym,

and some days you have bad days at the gym,

some days your body feels amazing,

you can lift huge weight,

and some day for whatever reason, you've got enough sleep,

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you're eating well, you're hydrated,
your body's just not working that day,
and we're all familiar with that.
And it doesn't really bother us.
You're like, oh, bad day today, and you move on,
and you allow that to happen.
And our mental fitness the same way.
Being a human, you are 100% mentally fit
if you have sadness,
and if you have joy,
and if you have doubt and uncertainty and insecurity,
that's what it is to be human.
Your body sometimes has pain,
there's nothing wrong with your body.
And so I like to call it mental fitness
rather than mental health, right?
I'm always working on my mental fitness.
And I allow for periods of darkness.
So right now,
when you said how are you,
the space that I'm sitting in is I'm actually
feeling quite lonely.
And I learned about
how to manage mental fitness
during COVID more than I ever had prior,
because we had to deal with so much shit, right?
And so prior, I would have been embarrassed
by saying I'm feeling lonely.
I would have hit at it, suppressed it,
don't like negative feelings.
Whereas now, I'm just sitting in it,
not worried about it.
I'm allowing it to go through me,
like I'm allowing myself to have a bad day at the gym.
And weirdly,
even though it's not necessarily fun,
weirdly appreciative of it,
because it makes me human.
It just reminds me of a story
earlier on in my career.
I was invited to speak at an event
where there's the Association of Meeting Planners.
So there's an American Meeting Planners Association,

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whatever it is.

Literally, everybody who hires speakers from every big company in association has their own association, and they come and have their own event.

So to get invited to speak at this event is like, if you nail it,

your career is set for the rest of your life, and if you blow it, your career is over, right?

Because literally everybody who hires all the speakers for all the big events is in this room.

You got invited. Huge honor, right?

And I'm just back in the start with why days, and I'm good at start with why.

Like, I've done this thing probably thousands of times. I know my stuff.

So I get up there, I'm doing start with why, and I lose my train of thought.

It's okay. I'm a professional.

I know how to deal with losing your train of thought.

You go quiet, you relax, you get your thoughts back, and you pick up where you left off.

No problem. So I do what I know how to do.

I go quiet, and nothing comes in.

And now the panic starts.

Now the heart starts pounding.

Now my life is flashing before my eyes.

Now I'm recognizing, oh, my God, my career is over, you know?

And I look at my pad,

and I look at the audience.

I cannot remember what I was saying.

I don't know what to say next.

I don't have a joke. I've got nothing. I've just got panic.

So I turn to the audience,

and I say,

do you ever have that feeling,

that sinking feeling when you lose your train of thought,

where your heart starts pounding

and your hands get clammy,

and your life flashes before your eyes?

I said, I'm having that right now.

And I'll tell you,

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I am so grateful for that feeling right now,
because it makes me feel alive.
And the audience exploded with applause.
I said, right.
And they just tell me what I was saying,
so I could pick up where I left off,
and somebody screamed something out,
and I went, thank you.
And I picked up and I finished.
The point was,
I could have suppressed the panic,
but I was open about the way I was feeling,
and what I learned was everybody was there to support me,
because I acknowledged that I'm human,
and it's relatable.
And so that's how I feel right now.
I'm more open about being in a darker space,
in the shadows right now,
because it makes me feel,
quite frankly, normal.
It makes me feel human,
and it's part of mental fitness.
And if I didn't have off days,
or off weeks,
then how would I know what to work on?
How would I know what good-good looks like?
How would I know how to appreciate the happy days,
if I didn't have some days that were down?
So I'm weirdly grateful
for what I'm going through right now.
It's a very long answer to your very simple question.
No, it was absolutely perfect.
Obviously, we always do long answers here, as you know,
but the context is so incredibly important,
and the subject matter is even more important.
I know this because I've done a few talks
over the last couple of years or whatever,
and when I talk about the subject matter of loneliness,
what will happen afterwards is,
I will have a young man,
who will come up to me,
when people are asking questions afterwards,
when you're taking pictures or whatever,

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he's very close,
because he's scared of anybody hearing him
on his right and his left,
and I remember this visual in my head of it happening recently,
and he'll whisper to me,
A, a message of thanks for talking about my own loneliness in my life,
but also asking for some kind of path through the jungle
of loneliness, some kind of solution.
And then when I look at the statistics around loneliness,
in the UK and in the US,
it's absolutely incredible.
I've often cited that Theresa May was the first Prime Minister
to appoint a loneliness czar
for the country.
I think the statistic, which I've often quoted,
is that the medium American used to say
they had three people they could turn to in a time of crisis,
and now that answer is zero.
And we're heading in that direction
at a very sort of global, often western world level.
So I think the subject matter of loneliness
is an incredibly important one.
My first question on that topic then
is what is the symptom of loneliness?
How does one know if they are lonely?
Because it's so easy to confuse it with another feeling.
What's your sort of symptoms?
So when I say I feel lonely,
and I think when people say they feel lonely,
I think what it is is that we're social animals
who want to feel included,
but also feel like people see, hear, and understand us.
And I think my symptoms of loneliness
are feeling misunderstood,
or like people don't get me, or worse,
I'm struggling to communicate or present myself in a way
that people will get who I am.
You've heard me say this, you know,
there's an entire section in the bookshop called self-help,
and there's no section in the bookshop called help others.
And what we're desperately needing more than anything
is a help others industry.
We do not teach people how to help each other.

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We do podcasts and write books about how you can find love
and how you can build your business
and how you can become a millionaire,
and how you can find the job that you love.
It's all about me, me, me, me, me,
and there's not enough about how can you help somebody else
find love?
How can you help somebody else find commercial success?
We don't do that, we don't teach it.
And those are the skills that are desperately needed
for each of us to find mental fitness,
because we can't do it alone.
You know, when you find darkness,
whatever, however you want to define your darkness,
you know, you feel alone, you feel like nobody can help you,
you feel like you have no agency,
you feel like you lack of control.
And the first thing that a lot of us should do
is reach out to a friend and say,
I'm struggling, or I need help, or I'm lonely,
or I'm depressed, or I'm sad, whatever the feeling is.
And that person, do your friends, do your colleagues,
do your teachers have the skills to know how to hold space?
So the first mistake people make is they try and fix.
Don't try and fix.
It's not a fixing thing, you know?
It's like I had a bad day at the gym, nothing to fix.
You know, nothing to fix.
But then do you know how to listen?
Do you know how to hold space?
And I think one of the reasons more of us are struggling
with mental fitness is because we ourselves lack the skills
to help our friends who are struggling with mental fitness.
And the more that we as a society are equipped to help each other,
the more that there are other people there to help us.
So, you know, if..
And I have a rule with my friends.
My rule is no crying alone.
My close friends all know this, and we all obey it.
Like, I'll get a call from somebody who's a significant person
in the world that people know who they are,
and they'll call me and say,
do you have a minute?

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And I'll be like, yeah, what's up?
They're like, I just... I think I need to cry.
I'm like, go.
What's on your mind?
And they'll tell me what's on their mind and they will cry.
And that's my rule.
My rule with my friends is no crying alone.
Because if you're at the point of absolute frustration, exhaustion,
whatever it is that you can't hold it in,
I'd rather you call me or one of us and you do it with somebody.
You should never cry alone.
And so I'm really good when I'm in a place like this
of calling somebody and telling them,
I don't want to go through this alone.
And some of my friends do have the skills
where they can say, how do you feel?
This is how I feel.
That must be really frustrating.
Yeah, it's really hard.
Tell me more about that.
Well, I'm sort of going through this and that.
And they know how to hold space.
That's all I need.
I need somebody to sit in the mud with me.
Don't need them to fix me or clean me off
or give me a towel.
I just need them to sit in the mud with me
so I don't feel alone when I'm sitting in the mud.
And it's, I think it's our responsibility
to be able to have that skills,
that skill set to do it for our friends
and the people we love or our colleagues.
We don't teach listening.
We don't teach difficult conversations.
The fact that there's so much conversation
about mental health right now is not,
is of course in part because we've just come
through this crazy ass thing called COVID
and lockdowns and exaggerated politics
and divisions in our countries and et cetera, et cetera.
Social media, sure, you can pile that on if you want.
But I think really what it is,
the fact that there's such a loud conversation

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about mental health is a spotlight on the fact that we do not know how to build deep meaningful relationships. I think it is an indictment on our current state of affairs that not only do we not have the skills to be there for our friends, but we're, the way we're reacting to it is by trying to seek resources to help me rather than teach me how to help my friends. I think we're going about it half-assed. I was really surprised when you gave the answer regarding when I said the symptoms that I've indicated to you that you are feeling lonely. I think even in my head I was expecting it to sound more like an absence of other humans around you. And that's the whole distinction between being alone and being lonely. Your answer was about how you feel like you're not understood. By who? Is this friends or is this the world or is it... I'm a middle-aged man who hasn't been married. Not that I care about marriage, but I haven't even had a 10-year relationship. And I'm realizing some of it is self-inflicted. I chose a career path that made me pretty undatable. I was on the road so much. It was difficult to have a relationship, but some of it is also managing the effects or the symptoms of ADHD, which wasn't a thing when I was a kid, so I couldn't be diagnosed, which I'm glad for, quite frankly, because I had to learn to manage certain things myself, because I became strengths as an adult. So, not bitter about that. I wasn't diagnosed until I was 32. So, pretty much in life, you know, and one of the things that I've... And I've learned how to manage it really well professionally. Like, I know how to manage my ADHD

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in a professional context really well.
I'm only now learning some of the symptoms,
how it affects personal relationships
and how I show up in relationships
that I didn't even realize.
In my whole life, I'd be in relationships,
and women would tell me,
you're so hard to read.
And I was like, I'm an open book.
What do you mean I'm so hard to read?
I'll tell you anything you want to know, you know?
And what I've learned is people with ADHD,
not all of them, but some of them,
do something called stonewalling,
which is an accident.
It's not something conscious,
where you're telling me something about your day,
whatever it is, or about our relationship,
and I have nothing to add.
Nothing.
And I've acknowledged it.
This is fantastic and wonderful.
This is great, but I have nothing substantive to add,
so I just add nothing.
And so the accidental effect is,
did I say something wrong?
Did I offend him? Does he not agree?
And so I know that about myself now.
So I can say to somebody,
if you're not getting the reaction that you need,
if you need any reaction,
just ask me for a reaction.
How does that make you feel? Is that okay?
Right? And I'll give it to you.
Or I'm really blunt
and forward with questions.
For example, I have a friend,
she's an entrepreneur, she's a solopreneur,
she offers services to people,
and I think she's priced too low,
and I was having this conversation with her,
and I said, what do you charge?
She told me the price, and I said,

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why do you charge that?
That's how I asked the question,
why do you charge that?
And she was telling me about this
and in my mind,
that's a perfectly legitimate question.
In her mind, it was such an aggressive
affront, like what do you mean, why do I charge that?
And I'm like, you're worth more,
why do you charge that?
I said, well, how should I have asked that question?
And I guess normal people would have said,
oh my God, you're worth so much more than that,
why do you charge that?
But I don't, I'm just like this.
So I recognize that in a professional context,
it's one thing, people can deal with questions like that,
delivered like that in a meeting.
But in a relationship, not so much.
And so, like,
sitting in this space,
I'm like going through all of these mistakes
or things that I've done over the course of years,
and I'm a little annoyed by myself,
you know?
Now, I know you don't want to live life in a rear-view mirror,
but I mean, I can still take account.
And I'm annoyed, you know?
I wish I had these skills 10 years ago,
you know?
So I'm just sitting in a period in my life
where I just, you know,
I would have liked to have had some of the experiences
that I haven't had yet.
And, you know,
my friends who are in fix-it mode,
they're like, but think of it as an opportunity,
now you have these skills,
thank you, I know that.
But allow me to mourn the past.
That's my loneliness, I'm just mourning.
I'm a period of mourning.
I have to say something.

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I can mourn loss, can't I?
You know,
allow me to just like mourn,
and then I'll move forward.
I'm okay, I will move forward,
but allow me to mourn loss.
And that's all I'm doing,
is just allow me to mourn the loss,
and I'll be fine.
Just hold space for me,
come and sit in the mud with me.
Ask me how I'm feeling, ask me how I'm doing,
just let me vent.
Just sit in the mud with me.
And, you know, again,
where most people are ill-equipped
on how to be there
for a friend who's struggling.
Can you give,
I learnt this term the other day, which I love,
I learnt it from Lex Friedman,
can you give the steelman argument
for your friends
that are telling you to
try to offer advice in your mourning process,
and try to get you to be more future-orientated?
As the steelman argument,
I mean, is can you give the argument
for why they're doing that,
a good thing?
Emotions are good.
It means you're human.
Like I said, I believe in mental fitness,
not mental health.
Like your body,
you have to work out, you have to eat well,
you have to sleep all the time.
It's not something you do, and then you're done.
We've used that analogy before,
you and I, which is what the infinite game is.
It's like, I want to be healthy.
Okay, well, you're going to have to do it
for the rest of your life. It's not an event.

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And our mental health,
our mental fitness is exactly the same.
Which is, it's constant.
And it's ups and downs.
And it's only a
challenge or you need to start
involving professionals
if you get stuck.
Like if you get stuck in sadness,
you cannot get out of it.
That's a different conversation.
If you get stuck in depression,
if you get stuck in loneliness,
and you cannot get out of it.
We need to start with the
idea of a place where we can
have multiple conflicting feelings
simultaneously.
I am lonely and optimistic simultaneously.
My optimism,
I pride myself on my optimism.
My optimism has not diminished in the least.
Optimism doesn't mean that I can't sit in a dark tunnel.
Optimism means
that I believe there's a light at the end of the tunnel,
even if that light is far away.
I mean, I want to be here and I can be excited and I can hang out with my friends and I can have an
amazing time with my friends and
Then go home and still feel lonely like you can have simultaneous and conflicting feelings. That's
allowed
In fact, it's it's it's normal, but I I cannot stress
I think that the way that I manage this differently than most I don't usually talk about it on podcasts,
but whatever
But the way I manage it, which is different than most is I I I don't wait for the phone to ring I
Call a friend and say do you have a minute?
Can I can I talk and if a friend is ill equipped if they start fixing?
I'll interrupt the conversation. So listen, I love you. This is not what I need right now
I love you. I love you. I'm gonna get off the phone right now. Okay, because when they go into fix it
mode
It actually makes me feel worse sometimes
The friends that are some of the best equipped people
Are folks in the military?
You know

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They know how to manage
Shit better than almost anybody. I know
I've cried with more people in uniform than I've ever cried with people in suits
And the way that we talk to each other like I have a friend who's a general
I've known him for a million years. So it's fun been fun to watch his career. He's now a general and
When we say goodbye to each other, we say I love you and
and
When we get on the phone with each other if it's been a long gap, he'll say to me. Hey, man
He'll first of all, he calls me brother. Hey, brother, right, which means something. Hey, brother
I really miss you and he says things that a lot of guys don't say to each other, you know
He talks to me like sometimes I talk to my female friends
There's it's full of emotion. It's full of honesty and there's no machismo whatsoever and yet he's a
warrior
He's a combat veteran, you know
And he'll say hey, man, I miss you. It's been a while. I go. Yeah, I miss you too
And then we'll get off the phone and say hey, I love you. I mean, I love you too. I'll talk to you soon
and
Though he will I would I mean he and there this is more group like him
You know, I would call him in my most in my darkest times and I know he would call me
Um, um, I have another friend and he's going through some shit and I'm honored
That when I called him and said hey, I haven't talked to him what you've been going through
You know, I just realized I haven't talked to him in a while and I went hey
What are you putting going through and he just let it all out and I could hear the frustration I could
hear the pain
And I didn't try and fix it
I just encouraged him to keep talking. What else go on tell me more. What else? Oh my god, that
must that's really go on
Yeah, what else and just sat in the mud with him and it was an it was an honor
I'll tell you it was an honor that he felt comfortable enough
To do that because I guarantee it he like so many are really good at hiding it faking it suppressing it
he's a pro in fact, I'm sure he is where he is partially because he's a pro and
You know, if you have the skill set to hold space for someone you will have an amazing sense
of gratitude
that your friends
Trusted you and loved you enough that they would go there in front of you
And I think that's a standard that we should strive for
Like I said, we're also preoccupied with ourselves, you know
There's no
Greater honor
There's no great honor
Than being able to serve a friend in need
When I see, you know, a friend sees you sat in the mud a friend sees me sat in the mud
their

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ill-informed

Love reaction is to try and get me out the mud of course, you know well intention. I don't knock it. I know it's well intention

How do I get out the mud? I'm the reason I ask that question is because I know there's someone listening to this right now

Who is sat in the mud

In many respects in my life. I'm sat in the mud

um

The the thing we're all looking for is we want

Empathy in the fact that we're sat in the mud, of course, but we're desperate for a way out of the mud, right? That's understandable

Where do where does the plan come from? Where does how do we get out of the mud? So I

If it were a prescription you and I wouldn't have to work anymore

um

On the subject matter of loneliness because it's easier to

To focus on right so I I I

I think in large part like any

cooperative effort like any relationship and a friendship is a relationship, right?

um

Having colleagues is a relationship

In some part it's it's it's it's um co-created

Right, you know, you want to show up in any kind of relationship professional or personal and make it a co-creation

and

You know, I think when somebody first calls you I I don't think they're looking for

Solutions they're looking for

Companionship and and catharsis

They're just looking not to feel

like overwhelmed

and at some point

um

You can either ask can I offer some pointers you're not ready for that yet

No, I'm not ready for that yet

Versus yeah, yeah, go ahead or

The person will ask themselves, you know

What do you think is what do you think? How do I like what do I do?

You know, or I'll know what to do. I don't want to do it like I know what to do

I just need to do this and the person can just say I'll do it with you

And just offer again companionship most of us

Believe it or not have more

Knowledge about how to get out of it than we think because we've dispensed the advice in the past

Probably, you know, I think most of us have a sense like

It's

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Again, I think part of part of it is allowing ourselves to feel the feels
You know, I think if I suppress the feelings they would last longer
But allowing myself to feel the feels I know as part of the solution
You know, it's
Like if you try and suppress feelings, it makes it just it's not good. Yeah, you know, I mean the
signals right there's signals
They're just that's all they are
And and maybe they're telling you other things like maybe maybe all of my loneliness is telling me is
like simon you idiot
Just get some sleep. Maybe that's all it's telling me. Maybe I'm feeling lonely is because I'm just
freaking exhausted
Turns out I've been sleeping better and turns out I feel better, you know, maybe I've been eating
crap
You know, maybe I'm full of freaking sugar and fat the social expectations play role
I am this age and I should be this by now
Oh, um
I think
I think that I think we we have to say yes, right and like
The midlife crisis is a known thing
And you sort of expect, you know, you hit middle life and you're like, all right, you're gonna start
Evaluating everything, you know, you're receding hairline. You're sagging body, you know, you're in
a new comedians joke about it
We joke about it
But I I think the new thing is the quarter life crisis
You know, the number of friends that I have that are in their mid 20s
Or or like barely pushing 30
And they are suffering all the things that somebody in their midlife would suffer
And their evaluation is different. It's not like, oh my god, I'm closer to the day
I'm gonna die than the day I was born
It's not that it's more like, oh my god, I'm at this age and I haven't achieved
All the things I said I was gonna achieve or
I'm just getting started or I'm and and they and I and I think now
The quarter life crisis
Is like a real thing. Yeah, and unfortunately older generations scoff at it
You know, but I think it's based that is very much societal expectation
Like I'm supposed to be here like the number of young people I know who I say
Your entry level
Don't worry if you're running the place yet. Just
Even if this is a bad job
If it's toxic it out, but there's very few jobs that are super toxic, you know, if you just have a bad boss
Like stick with this and learn like the learning you're gonna get from a bad like my first boss was a
bad boss
And I was there for a year and a half and it was one of the best educations I got

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And by the way the camaraderie that I built in my team because we all shared the same bad boss was amazing
Right. So I learned teamwork. I learned having each other's back. I learned people taking care of each other
We learned how to manage and how not to do things
I didn't just abandon it because my boss was bad. My point is is when I say stuff like that to young people
They immediately interpret that as the worst advice ever because I'm wasting time
Or take a gap year. I can't I'm wasting time like wasting time from what like what race are you who are you comparing yourself to?
What standard like, you know, I won't achieve the thing by by by what like what imaginary Scale are we working on here? You know, but there is this very clear imaginary scale by which younger people young people are pegging their life against
And the only thing I can offer is my own is my own experience
And I know it's the worst thing to do because you know when you're in it, you're in it
And you nobody can think that far ahead, but I and it's fun to think about right because I remember When I was young in my career and things were just starting to move though
This one guy I used to go to for advice who was very much more successful than me
um really buttoned up really sort of you know operations oriented
and
he would constantly give me advice
that
Either he was basically either telling me I was an idiot or made me feel like an idiot by all the things I wasn't doing or wasn't doing right or should be doing or could be doing
But it never felt right to me
And he would say stupid things to me like I won't get out of bed for you know X amount of thousands of dollars. I'm like
I do stuff for free all the time, you know and
and
If I didn't have my sense of purpose and cause if I didn't have my north star
My why my my vision to guide me I would have listened to him
And it would have been to my detriment
um
uh
because
He was very finite minded and it was very sort of like hit this target hit this target
And thank goodness I ignored all the advice and flash forward my career has completely eclipsed his
It just took longer
um
and that's the point is the point is is that

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The reason people don't follow my
My ideas the people the reason people reject my books
Is because they want my my advice so they want my perspective to work this year
And and I and you've and I you'll hurt I've used this analogy all the time like I will tell you how to get
into shape
I will tell you have to exercise 20 minutes a day every day
You have to eat healthy and you can have you can only have sugar in days that start with s
You know, I like what mark hyman says, which is you know treat sugar like a recreational drug, you
know
And if you do these things 100 percent you will be in shape and you'll be healthy 100 percent nobody
wants that book
Right, but the problem is you have to do it and there will somebody will say well
When will I be in shape and the answer is I don't know
100 it works
I don't know when and when I discovered
the why
And I first articulated the why and this is also important. It wasn't just the why I also discovered
Emmett rogers work on the law of diffusion of innovations, which I did write about also
in start with why
The that combination of starting with why and following the law of diffusion
I realized that 100 it was going to work
By starting with why I was going to attract early adopters and early adopters would make the
tipping point
I didn't know when I just knew it would work and I just stuck with it
And I and I disconnected myself
from any arbitrary
time-based
achievement
Which freaks people out, especially if you're on a quarterly or annual
financial schedule
But I disconnected I knew it would work and I just stuck with it
Turns out it worked some of it worked quicker than I expected some of it worked slower than I
expected
but it worked
and young people
Myself included when I was their age
I I'm not saying I had some like I was a hundred percent the same it had to be a discovery for me
And that discovery didn't come to my early 30s
So my 20s were me being that person going you're an idiot. I got I can't waste time
but there's something magical
about
Being on the path and just sticking just sticking just being disciplined and just sticking to
And a funny thing is as we're talking about this. I don't even I don't think of myself as a disciplined

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person

I'm actually very undisciplined like I'm I don't have an exercise regime like like I go in and out sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't and I'm just not a very disciplined person and I have so much I have so much respect for people who are super disciplined when they commit themselves to something they're they do it and they're just

Really good at sticking to the plan. I'm useless at sticking to the plan, right? and

But I'm realizing now the only discipline I had was

I trusted in these two theories starting with y and law of diffusion so apply that to the topic of

Someone who is let's say 35 years old. Yeah, 36 years old 37 years old. Yeah, and they are They're lonely. Yeah

I can't tell you how many friends I've got and how many conversations I have to the point that I I was considering writing a book and going on the process of research Who are saying to me right now that they are single. They are lonely

Um, their biological clock is ticking

Um, and they and the pressure of them trying to find someone is so intense that it's causing them to maybe become

less capable of finding someone. Yeah

So I'm trying to figure out what what those people that are listening need

To help them get out of that. Look, there are people who are better equipped to answer these questions than me

We can but you know, I can wax philosophical like so many things

You know, and I'll use another military analogy, right? Which is

These wonderful human beings who volunteer to wear that uniform

Are willing many of them are willing to risk their lives

To save the life of someone they don't even like

But they love

Right or they trust

And what people

Neglect or forget is that that deep intense trust that they have for each other does not show up

When they arrive on the battlefield, they've been building it

and the and the

And the organizations for whom they work

Know how to

Build that trust that the trust exists by the time they get into combat

And this is when I talk about command and control, you know, like I talk about asking people and getting feedback and all these things

But the reality is is command and control also is a real thing

So, you know, if you're a marine and you show up in combat, they talk about that as managing chaos

That's they they refer to combat as managing chaos

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Sounds a lot like an entrepreneurial venture. That is managing chaos, right?
And there are times where you have to be command and control
But the problem is is you can't be command and control before you've earned somebody's trust
So the you when you're back at home, you're building trust building trust building trust building trust building trust
So that when we are in chaos and I yell and order at you. I don't have time to ask you your feelings
I don't want your feedback. I don't need your ideas
I need you to do as I'm telling you right now and you have to trust that I'm making the best decision that I can
I'm not going to put your life
recklessly at risk and I even may make a mistake
And people will die because of my mistakes my mistakes and that's still okay
But you can't do command and control all the time. It's episodic
And it's earned and so when when covid struck and we first went into lockdown
I went into command and control. I even made an announcement to my team like hey, listen
I know we have a culture where there's a lot of feedback and if you're not if those feelings hurt like we have that mechanism
And I want to hear all that stuff, but I can't hear it for another two weeks
Save it up if I'm if I'm a bit of a if I'm a bit blunt in a meeting
Tell me in two weeks
I just I don't have the bandwidth right now because what we're doing is survival
And it worked fine that command and control because I built up the trust it worked fine
The problem is leaders who believe they can be in command and control all the time, right?
so what I'm the reason I'm telling you this is
You're asking two different questions one, which is more difficult which is
We need to build these skills when we're healthy
And in a good state of mind so that when we're in the mud
We ourselves have some equipment and some tools and our friends that we're going to call have some equipment and some
Tools, right?
You're asking with no equipment and no tools and I'm sitting in mud. How do I get out?
That is an entirely different conversation that I'm probably the least equipped to answer
There are professionals who are much better equipped to answer that and what I'm saying is is is um
For so that we don't find ourselves in that situation
Right now with big smiles on our face. How's your day? Great. I'm great things are great
When are you taking that listening class?
when are you going to practice
mindfulness
and meditation
And have you have you tried meditation? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah
My girlfriend's like a yoga meditation. Okay, so you're forced to do it. Yes, exactly. Got it. I have to get away from it
Right. Okay. So for if anyone has ever practiced meditation

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You sit still and you focus on one thing when they say clear your mind. That's not true
You don't clear your mind. That's impossible
But you do focus on one thing could be your breath. It could be your mantra
It could be a dot on the wall. It could be a sound. It doesn't matter
The point is you focus on one thing
And when you get distracted or you have another thought like oh, did I leave the oven on?
What you do is you label that a thought and you push it out of your mind and you say I'll deal with that later
and you go back to focusing on the one thing
and
there are tremendous benefits to the self of
uh, of of being present and and calm and
clear-headed
By practicing meditation, but that is not the sole purpose of meditation just so you can be present
In fact, I believe that you are not present until someone else says you are
Right. So the reason you practice meditation is so that when you're sitting with a friend
And they're telling you about their good day or their bad day
You are focused on one thing and one thing only what they're telling you as opposed to waiting for your turn to speak
And you may have thoughts and you say that's a thought I'm going to label that and deal with that later
And you remain so focused and there's a bang in the background, but your eyes don't leave
Your friend because you're so present at the end of the conversation. They will say to you. Thank you for listening
They will say thank you for being present. They'll say thank you. I feel heard congratulations. You were present
Congratulations. All that meditation was worth it now the practice of meditation though it has benefits to yourself
The reason to practice meditation is as a service to others
The ADHD point that you raised and you've talked a lot about exactly that which is
Being able to sit and listen and and and hear
How did you
Because it's almost sounded like you'd you self diagnosed that is being a playing a part in your your historic relationship challenges
How do you how do you know?
Because I you know what I mean because if you if you make that sort of self diagnosis
And then you build a plan around that and it's the wrong self diagnosis, you know, you end up in an in another
Unfortunate place that makes sense. So if I'd if I'd self-diagnosed myself based on that experience with my parents
Um, I could have been aiming at the wrong target
So it's about the this question is about self-awareness. How does how does one develop the self-awareness? Is it feedback?

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I think there's a difference between
introspection
and awareness

With accountability versus victimization versus victim hood, right?

By the sound of it, you didn't say my parents did this to me

No, right not useful

But that's victimization. It's the same. It's the same thing, right?

I can't have a relationship because my parents fucked me

Yeah, because they didn't give me an effective model and they didn't love me enough and they didn't hug me enough

And so the reason I can't have relationships is because of my parents disempowering. It's disempowering. It's also victim hood, right?

Uh, whereas

Um, okay. Well the cards that I was dealt

Um, I got a lot of good cards for some things and in some places

meh

Maybe I got to work a little harder on this one. So the cards that I was dealt from family. I hold no grudge

I'm not angry at them. They didn't have the tools. It's okay

And um, I don't I don't curse them for they didn't have the tools, but um, I'm gonna have to learn the tools

You know other people learn it from their parents. I'm gonna have to learn it from other sources

And I could say the same thing about listening skills, you know

Some parents are really good at holding space for their kids

And those kids will learn how to hold space with their friends because it was modeled by their parents

and some parents

Don't have the tools to hold space for their kids

Or maybe they work in really really horrible jobs and so they come home and they're short-tempered and so you know

That there's a chain of causation there and um, and the kids

Aren't learning those skills. They're gonna have to learn it from somewhere else

That's why I say we have to teach it at work

We have to teach these skills at work because we or in universities

Because we cannot take for granted that people are learning these skills at home or with their friends

What if I just smell though?

Like and I totally fucking miss the target and I just stink like I just like I have really bad body odor

But I thought do you know what it what it is is I'm

I'm just too picky. So I'm trying to figure out how we become more self-aware

As to what the real issue is now you it sounded like you'd spoken to some of your exes or something

I have great relationships with many of my exes and as one ex I have in particular where we broke up

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We got back together. We broke up properly
and
She hated me for a while
Uh, I probably blamed her for the breakup. I'm sure we blamed each other
Then at some point we sort of like calmed down and we went out for dinner
And we sat at the bar. I even remember the restaurant. We sat at the bar
And we literally dissected the relationship and we didn't do it with accusation
What we did was we didn't say I we didn't sit down and say you did this you did this you did this
Which is how we were for the previous, you know, whatever six months
In our minds we sat down and said, oh my god. I'm so sorry. I did this I did this and I did this
And sometimes the other person affirmed. Yeah, you did that, you know
But we showed up with accountability rather than accusation and at the end of dinner
We we hugged each other with immense gratitude because it is so rare
that you get to sit down with an ex and
Take not only take accountability for the things that you screwed up but learn
about other things you screwed up
And learn about how you were received even if you thought you were doing things right and you
know in everything else
If you have a failed business venture you sit down and you you have a hot wash
You sit down and you sort of like go back and see what went wrong. So you don't make the same
mistakes
You do that in almost every respect of our lives
professionally
But very rarely do you ever get the opportunity personally because usually
The two people don't want to talk to each other anymore, right?
But we sat down and by the way, there was no expectation that a friendship was going to come out
of this
We just sort of like I don't know why we showed up, but we both did
And we would both admit that it was one of the greatest things we could ever have done
Um
Because we got to find out how we were in the relationship, which usually you never find out where
you are
So go go back to your point. I think feedback is the thing
You know, um, you know, the only common factor in all our failed relationships is us
You know, you could you know, you know, it's their fault only lasts for a period at some point
There's some accountability to be had and if you don't know what it is
There's something to be said for picking up the phone and calling an ex
And I don't mean the one that just ended up like a week ago
But like give it a give it some time like calling an old ex and say I I know you're probably surprised to
hear from me
And by the way, you know, it's it's been a long time
I know and the reason I'm calling is because I'm really taking myself on
and first of all, I

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Uh, I probably owe you a bunch of apologies for how I showed up in the relationship
But I really want to learn how I showed up. Are you willing to have a conversation and just
Just give me some some point of view that I don't have
Do you know if I did that with my ex, right? Yeah
um
I
I don't believe
There's anything that they would say that would surprise me. However, I do think they'd say things
that I've never acknowledged
Does that make sense? Um at my core. I think I'd go yeah
Oh, you said it. You do you know what I mean? Yeah, okay. So that's a real so then it gives you a
space
Look, you can't screw up that relationship. It's screwed up. Yeah
So in that space you can be like, yeah, I did that and you're not risking anything
Even the most introspective people in the world
Don't have total objectivity on themselves and can't see all the angles
Um, you don't have to agree with things. That's the thing, you know, which is just because somebody
says something
It doesn't mean that it's true
The way the way we when we do 360 degrees
feedback sessions in our company, for example
the the council we offer is
You know, you have to listen to what the person is saying the only thing you're allowed to say in
response is thank you
Because they're giving you a gift by giving you this feedback
That they would rather not give you because it's easier for them not to give it to you. So just say
thank you
Don't argue. Don't give excuses. Don't explain. Just say thank you
And you don't have to agree with it. You can ignore it
However, we say if you have an emotional response to it like anger
It's probably true
Did you have an emotional response to some of that? Sure, of course. And if you just if you disagree
you just
You say you listen to it and you go no, that's not true
right, um
But if you have an emotional response to something where you start getting agitated or angry or
wanting to defend yourself
Hmm that nerve that they touched. Hmm
Maybe there's a there there
I wonder if you have a thought of an opinion on this one of the conversations. That's adjacent to this
probably do you probably do which is great
Um, one of the kind of adjacent conversations that I've often had with my friends when we're talking
about love and dating

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I think when we go for dinner we often have this as well is
Is it becoming harder because of the design and the nature of the modern world for us to find?
love
and to keep it
Because you know once upon a time argument what might assert that we lived in villages
There was 20 people that I told a story the other day to my team that I worked in this call center in
manchester
20 of us in this call center many many years ago and
First couple of days in didn't wasn't interested in anybody. I got six months in fell in love with the
girl next to me
And I I almost equate that to like the village. Yeah, I have a very small context. So it was easier to
find love
Is the design of the modern world making it more difficult do you think for us to find?
love
so I think
Well simple answers. It's definitely added a layer of
Complication because now love is treated like shopping, you know, we shop for
Partners like we shop for shit on amazon, you know, it's like you scroll through you find one that
looks good and you click like
Good reviews and you yeah good reviews
Look, it's definitely convenient and it's definitely made life a lot easier
And you never have to deal with rejection because you don't know if they swiped left on you
You just assume that they never saw your picture, right?
Like it doesn't actually say reject it, you know
I think the problem with it is is it's grass is always greener because it's so easy
You know to just go swiping
Uh, and you know, sometimes you treat it like instagram
You know, I've done this where I've sat in my bed late at night because instead of looking at social
media
I'm looking at a dating app
And I'm swiping right like I'm clicking like on a post and then it says you're connected. I'm like, ah,
damn it
Because I don't actually want to like go through the effort of like connecting. I was just
I was just liking the post, you know
Um, scott galloway talks about this. Uh, I can't remember what the numbers are
I can't remember what the numbers are but the part the point is is there's a massive disparity of men
that just don't ever connect
um, and
There's nothing more dangerous in a modern society than a lonely man
right and if you look at
terrorism and if you look at
mass homicide and things like that
It's very often a lonely man, you know

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and you add in sex and

um, uh

and

Um

And in cells and you know, you know the middle east for example, you know, it's 25 percent

At during the height of terrorism, you know a bunch of years ago

It was 25 unemployment in the region in a shame-based society

We have young men living at home and who are unemployed

And they've never had sex because there's no sex before marriage

And how are you ever going to meet a girl when you live at home and you don't have a job and then all of a sudden

That stress comes out somewhere and I think we don't talk about

sex and sexuality as a part of

Um our other behaviors and I for some reason because we we think it's bad to connect

You know sex life with how people show up in the world

But you take somebody who's sexually frustrated a sexually frustrated man

in their mid to late 20s

um

And all of that pressure and insecurity and you know now desperation like it comes out in horrible ways and the the need to exert control

Comes out in horrible ways different conversation Scott Galloway. I said, you know has some fantastic numbers on this. So I think um,

You know the dating apps

uh

aren't necessarily

There that's one thing, you know, it's not like everybody's going to find somebody but I do think that there's something wrong with shopping for people

um

And I the thing that I lament about dating apps. That's really and maybe this is just me

Uh, because I hate first dates

um

The worst um, but the reason you know what you hate them pre pre pre pre dating apps or let's not pre dating apps

It's just when there's no dating app being used the way that we traditionally would meet somebody is

You meet them at a party at a dinner party you meet them at the pub you

You know you bump into them at a museum you make small talk or you eye them up from across the room and there's some attraction

And then one of you musters up the courage to go up and start flirting and have a conversation

And at some point you say

Can I get your number? I'd love to I'd love to continue this and they'll say yes or no

And the flirting and the initial trashing has already happened

And so the first date is actually the first date after the initial attraction and flirting now with

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Dating apps the flirting the initial attraction the attempt to court someone is all happening simultaneously on the first date

There's a lot. There's a lot of pressure

For a first meeting where you know when you meet somebody in in irl. It's like you know

It's happened because the initial attraction has already happened

Um, there's no expectation that they're not they're not going to look like their picture

They're going to look like exactly what they're going to look like when you met them and it's dinner

So there could be three hours allocated. It could be expensive meal or whatever it is. Um

I don't I think there's nothing quote-unquote wrong

With online dating. I just think we we like everything like there's nothing wrong with online shopping

But there's the reason that bricks and mortar stores still exist and that amazon is opening stores

It's because people like to go shopping. It's a hunter-gatherer thing like there's entertainment

It's more than the than the purchase. It's more than the transaction. It's the browsing we enjoy

You know, it's it's in our dna

You know and and and I think that there's nothing wrong with online, but I think that that

Making an effort to do, you know in real life things

Should be should be included should be balanced, you know, it's like I like everything in the world

I'm a great believer in balance. I don't usually rail for or against something

I'm usually about talking about balances and imbalances even social media like much so much has been said about

You know what I've said about social media and millennials, etc. I'm not against it

I'm talking about balance and it's out of balance, you know

You know even corporate culture, you know, I'm not against many of the modern things. I'm against the imbalance

You know capitalism is unbalanced in in its current form. So

When we usually feel discomfort or anger or frustration, it's usually due to the imbalances

Um, isn't that what where this conversation started, you know that you know feelings of loneliness some things out of balance

You know, and this is why I call it fitness rather than health because fitness is the attempt to maintain equilibrium

to find balance sometimes it tips one way and sometimes it tips the other way and it's you're constantly working

To maintain balance. That's what all of this stuff is

Business is the same. You're an entrepreneur. It's feast or famine like it's never the right amount

You know and you're constantly working on balance and I think that's why that's the strongest argument for playing the long game

which is

It's always teetering

That means you have to constantly be alert and constantly be working because if it tips too far good

It's gonna tip the other way. Don't don't rest on your laurels

Make make sure you have got money in the bank like stock markets. Just don't go straight up. It's

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not how it works

Right at the same time

When it goes the other way, it's like don't worry this too shall pass

This also won't last start working on some skills that you maybe haven't worked on start reaching out to people start apologizing

You know, if you've been so self-involved with yourself

And now you're in a lonely place

Sometimes being lonely like is calling up a friend and saying I've been an asshole

And I am sorry and I'm looking I'm in a really dark place right now

And I'm just looking back thinking. Oh my god. I've been so self-involved

That there's no one around me to be there for and I am so so sorry

You know and again, it goes right back to everything we were talking about which is it's a color. It's accountable for my

It's accountable for me versus victim of me

You know that that I'm not a victim of the world around me, you know, um

What impact does that have on your self-esteem?

the

The realization the awareness that you are you are feeling lonely

Has it had any impact on your self-esteem at all? Does it especially some of those confronting some of those tough truths from the past?

It's a good question. You know, again, I'll go back to what I said before. I'll go back to what I said before

which is um

You can have we can have

multiple

Feelings at the same time even if those feelings are opposite. So I can be

Insecure and confident at the same time, right? But so much of it is situational, right?

I'm not insecure every moment of every day. Of course not nobody is but I'm not confident every moment every day

Of course, not nobody is and if you're stuck in one of those things

Then there's a problem of like if you really are overly confident every moment of every day with no actual self-doubt in your mind

There's something wrong there. There's something

There are divergence going on there, right?

We know this we know that narcissists are actually filled of self-loathing

You know for all their bluster and power they hate themselves, right? We know this

um

And again, I think it's all situational

I think it's all and so and I've I've talked about this which is

Which is I don't believe in you and I've talked about this which is I don't believe in strengths and weaknesses

Or right or wrong. I believe everything is contextual. So, you know, people do these evaluations.

What are my strengths?

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What are my weaknesses? No, what are your characteristics and what are your attributes?
And then once you know those things you have to know in what contexts those characteristics or attributes are advantages
And in what contexts those attributes are disadvantages and work very hard to put yourself in context where you're going to be working to your strengths
So if you have a natural capacity for maths, right, you're just really you're just really good
Like people say out numbers and you just add them up in your head immediately and you don't have to pull out your fingers
Right, you're just good at it, right?
Put yourself in a situation where that's an advantage if you are
Maths like incapable
Don't become an accountant no matter how many people tell you it's a good thing to become an accountant
Right, it's just not going to go well for you
So you can go down the list of our personal attributes
and I have attributes
um, where for example
I think out loud
Is that a strength or a weakness?
Context context dependent, right put me on a stage
Ask me a question. Let me wax philosophical. Give me a podcast on a microphone. Give me one question and four hours later
You know, I'm still talking
you know
advantage
right
Sit me down on a team
When I'm having a team meeting and somebody says something and I'm thinking out loud. I'm now dominating the meeting
Maybe I need to learn how to
Scale that back a little bit
In the Diary of a CEO, we have hundreds of questions that have been left by our guests and we've put them
on these cards
And on these cards
You have the question that's been left in the Diary of a CEO
The name of the person who wrote the question and if you turn it over
There's a QR code if you scan that code
You can see which guest answered the question and watch the video of them answering it every time
I've done this podcast and every time we've asked the kind of questions we ask here
I feel a tremendous sense of affinity to the guest
And our aim with these cards is that you can create that sense of connection
Through vulnerability at home with the people you love the most and I have some good news for you

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as of today

You can add your name to the waiting list to be the first in line to get your own set of conversation cards at the

conversationcards.com that is the conversation cards dot com

over the last couple of how long maybe four months

I've been changing my diet. Shall I say many of you who've really been paying attention to this podcast will know why

I've sat here with some incredible health experts

And one of the things that's really come through for me, which has caused a big change in my life

Is the need for us to have these superfoods these green foods these vegetables and then

A company I love so much and a company I'm an investor in and then a company that sponsored this podcast and that I'm on the board of

Recently announced a new product, which absolutely spoke to exactly where I was in my life

And that is Huell and they announced daily greens daily greens is a product that contains 91 superfoods

nutrients and plant-based ingredients which helps me meet that dietary requirement with the convenience that Huell always offers

Unfortunately, it's only currently available in the u.s. But I hope

I pray that it'll be with you guys in the uk too

So if you're in the u.s. Check it out. It's an incredible product. I've been having it here in LA for the last couple of weeks

And it's a game changer

What are those layers that you've you've peeled off recently? I can think of layers that I've peeled off in the last

You know a couple of months with with people close to me that I was always scared to peel off before

But I've had to in order like what?

Um, so with my girlfriend

I you know I reflect and I get I don't think I ever told her truly that I'd ever had like a bad day

Or that I was like feeling bad about anything. I think I'd always just had this wall up

I thought because part of me stupidly thought that

If I tell her what I'm having a bad day or I'm feeling anxious or whatever

Then she'll start talking about it and I'll make me more anxious and then I'll have to calm her down

So I just give it to myself

And then in the last you know in the last three to six months when I felt anxious. Yep

I've told I slowly ran the experiment of what happens if I just tell her a little bit of it

Yeah, that experiment went well

So I told her about a little bit more and to the point now where I've told her completely how I'm feeling

Yeah, even on my best and worst days

Um

And I would never have done that before because it made me feel weak. Yep

It made me feel like I was like not the tough masculine boyfriend that she would be attracted to

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Obviously and I have to say this surprisingly
It's caused deeper connection. Of course and deeper understanding, which is exactly what I needed
I needed understanding
I needed and I also
Created a space where we could say listen when I'm feeling like this. This is how I'd love you to to
respond
Which often is just like
Just just listen just sitting the mud with me. Yeah, exactly. Don't don't don't necessarily say anything
Don't try you know your point about fixing it
My girlfriend she's so through all of her love and and I'm the same with her
And I'm just the same with everything. I'll always try and fix. Yeah
It meant men are worse than women. It come when it comes to fixing
Uh, I I've been on the receiving end of that
I dated somebody who if I asked her how are you great was the only answer she ever gave me that's
all I've ever said to people
and uh
And it actually made it very difficult for me to get close to her
because
I knew that she was having bad days. I could tell when she was frustrated and she
And so when somebody puts on that brave face and always wants to be great for their partner
It's the most selfish thing you can do because you're denying them
That awesome joy of being able to be there for you
Remember as social animals, we want to take care of the people we love and how dare you how dare
you deny them
that the unbelievable honor
of getting
to sit in the mud with you
You know, it is it is a joy that human beings get to experience and one of the things if you can by the
way
The biology proves it that one of the things that releases oxytocin, which is that feeling of love and
connection and trust
is shared struggle
shared struggle releases oxytocin, which is why when
Families go through tragedy. They get closer, which is why since when societies go through
hurricanes
There's intense, you know politics get put aside and we support each other
Right and it's the same in a relationship, which is if you allow someone to sit and struggle with you
It actually deepens the relationship
biologically
um
So but what we're talking about is risk what we're talking about is
being vulnerable
Making, you know, and it requires more courage as you've learned that actually requires more

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strength to say
I'm anxious today than it does to lie and say everything's great. That's the irony
superficially
It's stronger, but in reality
It's cowardice and by the way that doesn't make it easy the words are easy
And I've definitely been there and you've been there
um
But I I think that if we like someone
Um, and it only and I always say leadership is about going first. That's why we call you leader, right?
Doesn't mean you're have the answers. It doesn't mean you're right. It just means you
Stepped first into the unknown that we
Took the risk to go first and so in a relationship one of you can take the lead
One of you can go first to set the example of what it looks like and feels like to say
I'm having a bad day today
and
I don't need you to fix it
I know what I'm going through
I want you to I want to tell you all of this stuff because I want you to be there with me
And I want to be there with you
Because I don't want to feel this way alone and that key second step which I I learned literally in the
car this weekend with my partner was
You then need to work with them to educate them on
and vice versa
On how you would like to be held correct in that moment, which is actually a really difficult thing
because um,
For example, I give you an example with me my partner when i'm going through those moments
I go really quiet. Yep. I shut down. I'm glued to my phone and so
If she says something to me
I my brain almost viewed it as like why is she bothering me in my hard moment?
So I might say something like babe. I'm just dealing with something
And then it's it always seemed to me like should ask me more questions
Of course. Hey, babe. Look at this come look at this. Look at this. I'm just trying
I'm thinking I just told her that yeah, I'm dealing with something she's making it worse
She's trying to give me more stuff to deal with. Yeah, so I had this conversation with her. I go
I said to her let's let's just create a safe space here
This is how I feel I feel like when I'm going through something and I'm dealing with something and I
shut down
Look at my phone the amount of irrelevant questions you ask me then increase considerably
And then she gave me her perspective on that situation
Then we kind of um formed a deal about in those moments
The first thing I'm doing wrong is I'm going babe. I'm dealing with something
I'm saying with a certain tone right and a lack of love and empathy
That's immediately making her feel abandoned and rejected. Of course. So I'm going babe. I'm

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dealing with something

So she said to me if you say it in this way if you say babe

I love you, but could I just have five minutes because something's something's up

I just need to work through this her reaction would have been totally different

Of course and it and having that second stage of like let's find a solution together

And understand each other was so difficult back to my question

Well, it goes back to what we said before which is business partnerships

Personal relationships friendships are acts of co-creation. Yeah, and so I have definitely been guilty of check listing people

professionally and personally

Oh, they have this they have this they don't have this

Uh, I guess I could do without that one, you know and and the problem with a checklist is people can feel it

You know, um, and I keep complaining this I said I have a bad picker

It's because I would show up with my checklist early in my in my in my 20s

And you know, if they were strong, which is the kind of person I want to date

They would be like this idiot has his checklist. I can't meet everything on his checklist. He's not for me

Right

And so what I ended up was attracting is people who would mold and bend to fit my checklist and then I'm like

But then I don't even know who you are

Bad picker my fault, right take full accountability

But the point is is like I go to pain saying I might have preferences

I have a couple of deal breakers, you know, I think everybody shouldn't know their deal breakers but the amazing thing is is

We actually I actually have fewer deal breakers than I thought I did what are your deal breakers not talking about you set that up

No, that's my that's for me. That's for me. This is not a dating. I can tell you my deal breakers great I'd love to hear them. So, uh

Uh, I mean look there's some obvious ones, right some of my deal breakers, you know

I

somebody I want somebody who who who's who's who's taking themselves on

They're in they're in constant growth and constant improvement, right somebody

I think they've got it all figured out. This is not going to work out, you know

Um, obviously, you know integrity somebody who lives a life of service

Is really matters to me like when somebody like all they're driven by is money cash fame fortune success

You know like anybody who posts a picture of themselves on a private jet on a dating app is an immediate no, you know

It's like right like of course those are some basics because those are my my values

I'm service oriented and I and I I don't I and I need to

Some what I need to date somebody who's passionate about something. It doesn't matter if it's been

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commercially successful or not

That's not what I care about, but you have to have a love for something

Hmm a passion something that like excites you and gets you out of bed

Even if you don't get to do it all the time. I don't care if you're a painter

I don't care if you're trying to change the world. It can be big. It can be small

Just have a love for something

Should I give you my three that I know please please so I was through my early 20s

I love that you wrote them down and you know them because there's only three of them

They used to be 300 so it'd be like this color hair this color height this color this

I want it to be this shape and this size and then I was like, how do I consolidate this down?

So I came down to three things are important

First one is quite surprising to some people but sexual attraction of course because I've had physical attraction without the sexual attraction

But I've never had it almost the other way around distinction

So I've had physical attraction where I've dated someone who's absolutely beautiful and then there wasn't sexual chemistry though

So I prioritized sexual attraction which I think is important the next one is intellectually stimulating Intellectually, which is what you've described where they have a passion

I might not even believe it's true or like it or care

But the the fact that it stimulates me and they can we can have a conversation. They can teach me.

Yes, exactly

Yeah, me and my girlfriend she believes in all these things. I don't believe in but she'll sit there and tell me that you know

Something with crystals in this glass of water. I don't believe it

She has doesn't doesn't have an expectation that I'll believe it

But I'm peering into a new world of breath work and spirituality and right. I do believe in breath work

And the third one is that we

Make each other better people really I'm going to be honest. It was a bit more selfish

It was actually that she makes me a better person, but I'm willing to give that back obviously and I want to give that back

And what I mean by that is in my mission in the work that I love to do they support me

So those three things I think if I can find someone that has all three

So I think you've you've summed up my three as well. I went way more specific which is why I rejected the question

But if I take it up a few thousand feet, okay sexual attraction

100% and I think you're it's a great distinction between physical attraction sexual attraction

So I I agree with those three. Those are my three two the way I used to describe or I still describe relationships

I think great relationships are based on what I call three plus one

Which is you have to have

Uh

And it's the same list. That's the funny thing you have to have uh intellectual compatibility

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Which is you teach and learn you have to have emotional compatibility where you're showing up to grow together, right?

You can find vulnerability in the whole space for each other

You have to have sexual compatibility, which I consider part of creativity. So creative and sexual camp

Which is not physical attraction

It's sexual attraction and create and like I said creativity

And you can have a good relationship with one and a half or two of those

But you kind of have a great relationship without three. Yes, because they they're not all on high at the same time

They sort of they go up and down and they they wax and wane

And so you need the others to hold each other hold the others up when one is down. That's a good point

Yeah, that's why you need all three because like I said, you can have a ton of fun with one or two of them

Yeah, but great requires all three and the plus one is circumstances

Ah like timing location like I've met people who are threes

And they're married and their kids and they're happily married and we look each other and go at a different time

It might have worked but definitely not now and we just smile and we go on

Or I've met somebody who lives on the other side of the world and I'm not moving

They're not moving and you shrug and you go, uh, if circumstances were different

And you know, it's like and you just it's not a it's not a sad thing. It's just it's a smile

You know, it's like I've met I you know and and by the way

I've dated one and a half some twos and they're amazing people

But they're those three things it's so true. The reason I know that that's so funny that my three plus one is yeah

Is your three? Yeah, it's exactly the same list

Well, I've I've dated the only reason I have those three is because I've dated someone who had two right and I've had

So you've had all the permutations of two, but there's always been one missing. Yeah, and so I remember thinking

In the woman that I thought I was going to marry that was missing this one thing

Um, if she just had that one thing then I genuinely believed I would have been happy and I'm thinking about this particular person

From many years ago. She's married. She's got a kid now and everything. I think I'm I am lost out there

But I'm very very more happy myself

But she just missed one of those things and then I can think of my previous race like oh if they just had that one thing

So now I found someone who I genuinely yeah

Whether she's listening or not has all three and I go that's me. Let's go to the till

The thing the thing that I'm appreciating there's two things that I'm appreciating one

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She has all three but you have to have all three for her
Oh, I hope so right because
Like she has to find you sexually attractive
She has to find you intellectually stimulating and she has to make she has to find that you're emotionally available for her
Which means when you're having a bad day, you have to say I'm having a bad day not be great all the time
Otherwise, you're only a two to her if you're actively being strong all the time
Then you're only a two to her and you'll only ever be a two to her so there you go
So it's all fine and good for you and I to have our our three plus one
But we have to have the three for them too and that's the work that fluctuation point is so important
Yeah, because sometimes we just we have two in our relationship. Yeah, two of the three. Yeah, but the other two are very important
to hold us through that and they and they and it's unpredictable as to when they go up and down and sometimes
you're not sexually compatible and you're just
Snuggling and that's all you want to do and you don't want to do anything more than that
But that's okay because the the vulnerability is so deep and the intellectual is so high that it's okay
Like it the relationship is really very very good. You're both very happy
Should we make this dating app or should we let someone else steal the idea? Because there's gonna be someone out there
That's gonna get you know the three plus one. I think we should I think we should make it. Okay
Um, and we should call it three plus one
I love that so I guess I do know my list and that's that's three and I've I look back at my my failed relationships
And again personal accountability included, you know, I think that in some cases I definitely did not present myself
in one of those things
Um, or like I said the act of co-creation is really I'm this is to me is like
Like the biggest insight that I've learned about myself and my own dating life, which is which is
And I love what you said, which is I'm not into her crystals and all of that stuff
And she knows that you're not pretending that you are right
And you're okay with the fact that
You know she wants crystals to guide her life and she's okay with the fact that you don't
And I think that's really important, which is the number of people I meet who say well
I'm into crystals and he's into crystals
This is gonna work and I'm thinking
Maybe but or worse they go he's not into crystals. I could never date him
Right, and it's not a question whether they're into it or not. It's a question whether they
Are open to learning from you
And they're not rolling your eyes
When you start speaking, you know, uh, or vice versa

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Um, you know, there's I've forgotten his name. There's a famous relationship therapist who can tell in the first five minutes
If a couple that's come to see him
Are gonna survive or not
And the test is when one of them starts talking and the other one rolls their eyes. It's over professor
drum courtman. Is that yeah?
I did a you did a thing with him. I did a thing on him. So like so good, right? Yeah, it's a contempt.
Yeah, it's it's contempt
It's kind of and and and what it is. It's not just contempt. It's it's intolerance
Right, like you idiot or how can you be so stupid and addressed resentment or or oh god, you know
And I think when somebody starts talking about their crystals and you start rolling your eyes
It's over if somebody talks about their crystals and you can say it's not my thing
but
Tell me I genuinely I genuinely want to learn
And I'm open to some of it
I want to learn things. I know nothing about I like
My my my last girlfriend is so good at the thing. She's passionate about she's so good at it
and
She'll send me pictures when she's working on something of something she's working on and I just
like I'm so blown away about
How good she is at the thing she does I get joy out of seeing her be so good at her thing
You know, it's I'd love it
Um, uh, do you miss her? We're still very close friends. Have you experienced heartbreak?
Like yeah
Yeah, yeah, I have
You mean like yeah, yeah romantic heartbreak. Yeah, sure
I think I mean like I think I've had all the things
I think I've posted something the other day about just how it's the most incredible
Incredible feeling not as in it's awful. Yeah, but it's an incredible because it's so deep and so
prevailing
That I actually think it teaches you a lot about the nature of what it is to be a human
I think this is a perfect. We've got on a beautiful circle here, which is to experience heartbreak
though awful
um
Again, it goes back to balance right in all sadness. There is lesson and joy in all happiness. There is
um
Um
There's a cost
Right always there's a cost for everything good in our lives and there's less on an opportunity to
everything bad
Or negative, right?
So, you know, all of the things that I've done that have brought me tremendous happiness
tremendous joy

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I I know some of those costs and
It's only bad if the cost wasn't worth it
But in in most cases the cost was worth it and I did it with eyes wide open, right?
um
And when there has been pain or loneliness, I'm learning about myself. I'm learning about my friends
um, I'm learning about how I want
A need somebody to show up for me, which means that in those good times I can equip them
And I can be better equip myself. I can say hey listen if this ever happens
I know I know what I know how you can hold space for me. You just have to say these three things
I need you to do this and you'll be amazed how how responsive I can be
In that situation to your point about learning how to communicate with your girlfriend
You know about when you're feeling anxious and you need five minutes to yourself, right?
And as I I'm going to say this over and over and over again, which is successful relationships are acts of co-creation
And to have a successful act of co-creation
You both have to be really equipped to listen
And and and to volunteer information to help the other person in other words when we talk about what we need
We're giving somebody tools and when we learn to listen we're gaining tools
And the goal is to help them fill up their toolbox and to work very hard to fill up your own
So filling up your own is about listening and filling up theirs is about being an effective communicator
And now when you both have tools you can go build something together because if only one of you has tools
The thing you're going to build is going to be weak
And a business partnership a creative partnership
A personal partnership they're acts of co-creation and that
That insight has come from failed relationships
And thank goodness some very strong smart wonderful women who've told me do you know what your problem is?
And I listened
And I asked you 20 minutes ago what wall you'd broke you'd pulled down
I said, you know the layers of the only you've peeled back. I shared mine. Yeah, I said with my girlfriend
I've started to tell her when I'm when I'm really feeling yeah, I've never done that before what are those walls that you've
Recently pulled down so that people can come inside. I've become much better at understanding
How some of my symptoms of ADHD show up in relationships, which I just was unaware of
And so instead of taking total accountability, which I do I take accountability for showing up
I'm now able to explain them so somebody can look for them and point them out when they're happening
Happening so I can take accountability because it's about some of it's about awareness

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Right, and so I literally can say very early in a relationship. You may experience this with me
Dot dot dot if it happens. I know that I do it
Please just point it out and I will know I have the tools. I'm just sometimes unaware that it's
happening
right and
So I'm asking for co-creation. I'm saying look I'm in this I'll take I take all the accountability for my
own behavior
Sometimes I just need you to tell me when I'm doing it
And so I'm asking for help right
um
And like I said leadership is about very often just going first and if either person in the relationship
goes first
It gives a safe space for the other person to say well, let me tell you about me
um
And I think being open to
Feedback allows you to give feedback too
um
But for me the huge insight that I wish I'd known before
Which is even though I may have said it
I didn't know how to do it the act of co-creation
You know I I would ever I hear relationship like really successful relationships. You always hear both
the partners say it's a lot of work
Yeah, and like I never really understood that like if it's such a like I look at my great friendships
I mean I wouldn't say there's a lot of work
You know they flow and but I guess the difference with the difference with a friendship is like I don't
have to see them every moment of every day
and
And I think the work
Is that active co-creation? I thought the work was sacrifice when I had great relationships going. Oh,
it's a lot of work
I thought well they're not sleeping at night and right he can't watch the football every time he wants
to watch it
I didn't think it was active work. I thought it was the stuff that you didn't get to do
That's funny. Yeah, it's it's not sacrifice at service. Yeah
The and and again
You know, it's really funny, you know my experience with the military versus private sector
So if I do anything pro bono
in private sector
And this is since the dawn of time, right?
If I do anything as a favor to a company almost always they will continue to take and take and take
and take until I put my hands up and go
Okay, we're done. This is enough, right?
The military it's the total opposite. I'll do something

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As a pro as a favor to somebody and I will never hear from them ever again
And the reason they don't call me is for fear that they will look like they're taking advantage
And I have to sit down with these people these wonderful human beings and I found a way I said do
you realize?
I got a I found a way to get them to call me which is I'm like do you realize when you don't call me
You deny me the opportunity to serve my country
And that gets them every time
But the reason I bring it up is it's the same in a relationship
Which is when you don't call me and ask me for help when you don't call me and say I need to cry
When you don't call me and say I'm in the mud
You deny me the opportunity
the joy
the honor
of sitting in the mud with you
Not joy honor. You deny me the honor because it's not always fun
You deny me the honor of sitting in the mud with you
And I remember telling one of my close friends. I said we were riding bikes somewhere
And I just out of the blue. I don't know why it hit me. I turned to him and I said, you know
You're one of those friends that if I was really in the shit, I would call you
And his reaction is he didn't say thank you. He said I'd be mad if you didn't
And I've done that to friends
I've done that to friends a
Friend of mine who who is struggling. I said when we got off the phone. I said
Hey, listen, I know you're in a bad place
So don't be an asshole and deny me the joy or deny me the opportunity to sit in the space with you
moving forwards
Okay, like if you if you need to call me in the middle of the night, you call me
Don't deny me the opportunity to be there with you
If you've previously handled the moment when they did call you by being trying to be a fixer or
anything
They're just not going to do it regardless of what you say
So, do you know what I'm saying?
Correct and the reason why I know this is because I said this to one of my friends recently who had
opened up to me
Um, he was in he was in he was it back in London and I remember going to say to him. Oh, man
Please tell me next time this happens. You know, you always seem to tell me when it's and then I
reflected and went
Do you know why you're a fixer? I'm a fixer
So he doesn't want to fucking call me exactly because because he doesn't like the way that I
Exactly hold space for him. I'm trying to correct everything correct
So even if I'd gone you fucking better call me next time. Yeah, he would have in his head go
But what you can say now is I realize in the past. I was ill equipped. I didn't have the tools and how
to hold space for you

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Yeah, and I realized in the past when you've called me
I've tried to fix everything which is hardly an incentive for you to call me again
And I want you to know I've been working really really really hard on that skill set
So give me another chance if you're ever in the shit
I'm
I am better equipped. It won't be perfect
It's a work in progress
But um, I want you to know that I want to be there for you and I think you'll be surprised
I'm a lot better than I was and if I'm not you can tell me
okay
Because I would want somebody to tell me if I if they're in the shit and I start going to fixing mode
They go Simon. You're trying to fix me. I go. Sorry. Sorry, and I can back off immediately because I
know what's happening
Because you can correct this is the great thing about human beings is where's like
It's kind of like the difference between public speaking and writing a book right public speaking is
really forgiving
I can have screwed up grammar. I can
And misspeak and people are tracking I can bounce from subject to subject and people are fine if I
do that in a book
It's unreadable
Right and so it's the same having a conversation with someone like it's a very forgiving process
Like when you're trying to fix something and then you're doing and that's not what they need and
they go stop trying to fix it
You're like, sorry. Sorry, you can actually
Get the energy in the right place back really quickly something you can't do over text
Yeah, well just I had to put that public service announcement in there
Um
You know, they're very easily correctable. That's the nice thing like you can start
I mean we both had the experience where you're having a really bad. It's going sideways fast
And it is going towards bad
And one of you or both of you is really making it worse and pouring
You know, uh fuel on that fire
And then all it takes is one of you to back off and say listen, I'm
This let's can we just take it back and you and you'll end the phone call hugging and you know
Hugging each other. It's all the time
It does
We sit here in a couple of years time simon and we we have a conversation and
Some of the challenges you're facing in your personal life
Some of the ones you've talked about personal and professional transition moment in your
professional life
um, they are
They're in a better place. Mm-hmm things are idyllic dare I say because I think that's a bit of an
impossibility in the human condition

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But things are idyllic. What does your life look like?

um

You know

for me scale matters

and

I I am looking

So the one of the things that I I I measure success by momentum

Not by achievement. I think I've shared this with you before how I've always viewed my career as an iceberg

Which is when I first started when I had a vision of the world

You know, I imagine a world in which the vast majority of people wake up every single morning inspired

Feel safe wherever they are and in the day fulfilled by the work that they do that is a vision that no one else can see

It exists in my imagination. It's like an iceberg under the ocean. I know it's there

I can see it but no one else can see it because there's nothing sticking above the ocean

And so I talk about my vision and people be like, you're an idiot. You're an idealist. You're crazy

That's impossible and I do some work whatever it is and a little bit of iceberg pops up

I've done something that is a a tangible demonstration of what I'm talking about, you know gave a talk, you know

Gave some examples found a company

And somebody goes, oh

Oh, I see yes

I can see what you're talking about now and they start working with me and now those are the early adopters

And I keep doing work and I keep doing work and the more and more of the iceberg starts to stick up above the ocean

And no matter how much no matter what point of my career. I've been in

No matter how much success I've had however you want to define it when somebody says to me. Oh my god

It's amazing what you've achieved. My answer is always the same tip of the iceberg

Because though they may be more iceberg sticking above the ocean now than there used to be all I can see

Is what remains to be done beneath the ocean and that is vast

And so I'm never really satisfied with what I've achieved. I'm trying to find ways to get more of the iceberg out of the ocean, right? And so

The question is is what I've been doing up until now

We'll have some effect to get more iceberg up but not not as much as I need so

If if you ask me sort of like what does my life look like in in in the future

I always think in terms of momentum

And the thing that drives me is all of the founders of the women's suffrage movement in the united states

All died of natural causes before the first women ever voted

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In other words, I have to put in place

um

As many systems and and and elements as I can

So that when my time comes I will die confident that others will continue

The work that I've been working on my whole life without me just as I have continued the work of those who came before me

Why does that work matter to you?

I believe we all have a responsibility to leave this world in better shape than we found it

The accomplishment of that work, how would it make you feel? How does it make you feel on an ongoing basis?

I'm proud of the momentum that I'm contributing to

And momentum is more important to me than any specific thing that I may or may not have accomplished

You know because I think why not just go get a yacht and go to a beach and just like live it up

I mean, I would probably enjoy it for a few weeks and then I'd get bored

You know, I like I it's a probably some sort of neurodivergence. I like

I like difficult and uncomfortable

And overwhelmingly huge problems are my favorite kind

um, I you know

and

You know undoing everything jack welch did and getting capitalism rebalanced. I mean, I can't do that alone for sure

I'm not the only person who has that vision

Um, I'm doing my part and it is so vast with so many moving parts

That is so complicated that the easier thing would be to give up and just go live on a yacht

It gives you a sense of meaning

Oh, don't get me wrong. There are days that that that abandoning it and just like it's very appealing, you know

But it gives you a sense of meaning, right?

It gives you a sense of like life becomes worthwhile when there's something scary

I want to know I I want to know that I lived a life worth living

And for and I and by the way for different people it that is defined differently

You know for some living a life worth living means looking at a child that you've raised and saying that kid will be okay without me

In other words, they will continue the work that I've done without me. It's the same

It's the same it's all the same mentality

um, and and

and

I I don't care where somebody finds that meaning. I want them to have it

The reason I ask this is because I'm always trying to separate like the virtue from the from reality

And when I speak to young kids, they all want to change the world

And I'm always compelled by like why and even with this podcast

But if someone asks me Steve, why did you do the podcast?

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Of course, I can say, you know, I want to help people with this information and whatever else
And I'm always like trying to make sure that I'm fully in tune with the exact why the most it like
innate human
Reason why I'm doing this like why am I doing this?
Am I doing it because lots of people watch and that's great for my ego and my self-esteem or
whatever because loads of people are clapping
I'm doing it because I see these messages and people come up to me and say it's really helped them
To be honest, it's probably all of these things
If I'm being like truly honest with myself, it's probably all of these things. They're they're they're
they're they're metrics. They're indicators, right?
Yeah, like you and I you you and I
I have one of our metrics
That's it's a hard one to track
Is there is tremendous?
um
I don't know words to use
I think there is gratitude when somebody comes up to us on the street
and says
Thank you so much. I read your book. Let's do podcasts whatever it is and it changed my life
Right and this is a total stranger who just by chance that we happen to walk past them in that
moment
So we can safely assume that there are other people that we haven't walked past
but through and and not only did they see us they muster the courage to know but and talk to us,
you know
and um
Uh
And that is that is a metric. Why does it feel so good? Um
It's not about feeling good. It's not about feeling good for me
It's it's proof that the work that I'm doing is going places. I never imagined it would go
And does that feel good?
That feels like yeah, I mean it feels like the work that I should continue working
That's what it it what it makes me feel. It's not doesn't make me feel like it's not like I like it doesn't
like
Do anything to my ego or anything? It just reminds me
You got to keep doing this like you don't have a choice
You know, um, I I don't know. I've shared the story
With you before but I went to afghanistan
Uh with the air force during the war in afghanistan. I went for 24 hours and
Nothing went according to plan
And we ended up
Thinking we were going to get stuck there and I never told my parents that I was going to
afghanistan
We landed at 10 o'clock at night in bagram air base and uh, uh, and the door had opened on the side

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of the plane

We hadn't got off the plane yet and about 10 minutes after we landed the base came in a rocket attack

And three rockets hit a hundred yards off our nose

I could you could hear the booms, obviously the air raid sirens are going the over the speakers

It's telling everybody to go to their shelters and we're just on a plane filled with gas

And weirdly I was calm because everybody else was calm and we never bothered putting on our vests or helmets

Because what's that going to do and everybody would just sort of hung out and I was weirdly relaxed

And for anybody who's ever been in a war zone, they'll know this

Um, you have all the feelings you're supposed to have you don't necessarily have them at the right times

My panic came later

Um, we finally were given the all clear we went to our quarters the next day

I had the most amazed after about three hours of sleep. That's all we got had the most amazing experience

I got to experience an airdrop mission where we flew a c17 at 2 000 feet. I watched the back of the door open and

And flew out the back fuel ammunition and water

Supplied a forward operating base, you know about an hour and a half two hours from bagram and then we flew back

Most amazing experience, right now the goal was to leave the country

I was just there to experience an airdrop meet some people. I had no particular responsibility other than to witness

um, and uh, now the goal was to leave the country great

There's nothing regularly scheduled

And so we found another plane that was going back to bagram. We asked the pilot. Can we join your flight?

He said yes

We waited for many hours because that there's a lot of waiting and we finally got on the plane

We're literally five minutes from leaving. We're all strapped into the back of this kc 46 again

And it's a outbound aeromedical. So we're taking out wounded

wounded servicemen and women and um

And five minutes before we leave

The pilot comes up to us and says I need to bump you off this flight because I need some extra room for stretchers

And we went sounds good. There's ever a good reason to get bumped off a flight. This is it

So we took our stuff off and we thought okay, let's go find another flight

And that's when we learned that there are no other flights leaving until tuesday and it's only saturday

and um

And now all of a sudden every every fiber of my body sank

All of a sudden I realized I'm stuck in this country and there's no guarantee

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I'm going to get on a flight on tuesday. I don't have any way to contact my parents
I'm just going to be completely out of touch after the date that they think I'm coming home
And even if I did call them, what am I going to say?
I'm not going to be home. I'm in afghanistan like in the middle of a war, you know
every I remember I had I was I had
tremendous self-awareness of the
Of how I felt and who I was becoming and there was a public affairs officer who said I can get you to
Uh
Kyrgyzstan, but you don't have the right visa and I literally put my finger in his face. I don't do that
I've never held my finger in someone's face in my life
And I put my finger in his face and said you get me on that plane like I don't talk to people that way
And I could see myself becoming this person that I am not and didn't want to be
We went back to our quarters
We're all exhausted
And so I lay down on the bed and closed my eyes just because I was tired, but there's no way I was
sleeping
My mind was racing
One of the officers said well, I'm going to see if I can find us another flight. So he left
And the other officer said well, I'm going to go to the gym then and he left and he thought I was
sleeping
So as he left he turned the lights out and I was left by myself in the dark my mind going crazy and
now
I'm panicked
That feeling that I should have had when the rockets hit. I'm now having it right now. I'm convinced
I'm going to die
I'm convinced there's going to be another rocket attack. I'm convinced it's going to land on me
I'm convinced my parents are going to find out I was here when the military knocks on the door and
tells them
And no logic can dissuade me
I know the one of the reasons I feel this way is because I have no sense of purpose, right?
I didn't come here for any reason. I just came here to witness and so I look I'm in the purpose
business
I'm like, all right, Simon, you need purpose you need purpose come up with a sense of purpose
Oh, like you're here to learn and come back and tell their story
Okay, there you go and it made me feel good for like five minutes and then it disappeared in the
panic
And the paranoia came back in and I went through this cycle multiple times trying to invent a
purpose for myself
And then I finally realized I couldn't come up with anything and I gave up
And I lie in that bed resigned to the fact that I was stuck there without a sense of purpose
And I decided that if I was going to get stuck here
I might as well make myself useful that I would volunteer that I would speak to the troops that they
wanted me to

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I would carry boxes. I would sweep floors. I didn't care how menial the work
I just wanted to serve those who were serving others
And in that moment I found unbelievable calm
Even excitement to be there to serve those who serve others
As if it were a movie the timing was extraordinary having just come to this remarkable insight
The door flies open. It's Major Throck Morton. He says there's a flight that's been redirected
It's going to Ramstein. We can get on the plane if we leave now. They're not going to wait for us
We have to go. We have to go now. We have to go now. Where's Matt?
I'm like he's at the gym. We run to the gym. We get Matt off the treadmill
There's no time for him to shower. He puts his uniform back on
We grab all of our stuff and we run to the flight line to get on this plane
We get to the flight line. We can see the C-17 we're supposed to get on. It's right over there. We can see it
But the security stops us and won't let us onto the flight line
There's a fallen soldier ceremony happening somewhere on the base
And out of respect, everything stops
And so we sat on the curb and waited
And while we were sitting there, I told the guys what I had gone through lying in that bed
Mind you, I have no idea how long I was in that bed for
I could have been in there for ten minutes. I could have been there for an hour
I don't want anybody to tell me either. I had lost all concept of time
I sat there and told them what I had gone through
And I had come to this remarkable insight that true purpose in life is to serve those who serve others
And I wept and I wept while I was sitting on that curb
And one of the things that a lot of people don't know about the military is crying is just fine
Finally, the security came up and we were able to walk to the aircraft
We boarded the plane. We would be the only three passengers aboard this aircraft
What I didn't know at the time is the reason this flight had been redirected
Is that we would be carrying the soldier for whom they just had the fallen soldier ceremony
We stood there and waited and the army brought on the flag draped casket
The soldiers put the casket right in the middle of the aircraft
They stood there and did a very slow eight count salute
They turned, marched off the plane
And we could watch them hugging and crying as they walked out of sight
Our Air Force crew got to work and they strapped the casket down in the middle of the aircraft and we got going
I've never had such an honor in my life having just gone through this experience that I had on the ground
Learning that true purpose is the opportunity to serve those who serve others
That I get to bring home somebody who knows a lot more about purpose than I ever will
We land at Ramstein and we have one night at Ramstein before we come home
The final flight home is another C-17 back to Andrews Air Force Base
And this is an aeromedical evacuation so it's what they call an AE mission

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So wounded, the wounded
Some ambulatory, some not
And we get into the flight, this flight was a little more relaxed and lots of nurses tending to the wounded
And in the back of the aircraft was a single gurney, a single marine who was in what they call CCAT
Which is an artificial coma
Very, very badly wounded and he had four doctors tending to him personally
And I sort of avoided going to the back of the plane because it was uncomfortable
And I finally said, no, I gotta go
So I walked to the back of the plane to talk to the docs and they walked me through his wounds
His buddy stepped on an IED and was killed and he took the shrapnel
He had shrapnel in the chest, shrapnel in the eye and he was in very bad shape
And the docs were telling me that the amount of new techniques that they were learning
How to treat trauma just because of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan
Was slowly making its way into civilian hospitals
So even when they're wounded, they're still serving us, you know
And the lead doc was a reservist who works in an ER in Austin
And had I not gone through what I had just gone through 24 hours before, I would never have asked him this question
But I did. I asked him, hey doc, you're a good guy, you work in an ER, you save lives for a living, that's your job
Do you have a different kind of feeling on these missions than you do back home?
And he looked at me and he said, 90 to 95% of the people who come through an ER are either drunks or idiots
He says there's not a single drunk or idiot on this aircraft
He said the feeling that I get when I get to work these missions during my reserve hours
Is more powerful than any feeling I ever get when I'm working back home
Again, the greatest sense of purpose and meaning we can have in our lives is to serve those who serve others
Part of the deal that they made with me when I went, the general said, I want you to go and I want you to come back and tell us your insights
What you saw that we did well, what you saw, we could just tell us your insights
So about two weeks after I got home, I went back to Scott Air Force Base
And was standing in a room full of all the brass, all the generals, the colonels, all the command from the mobility forces
And they just wanted me to report on what I saw and I went through everything
And I wasn't sure if I was going to tell them about bringing home this flag-dripe casket
The emotions were very raw still and I'm not sure I wanted to do it or could do it
And I remember I was reporting on everything else that I saw and the people I met and the things that I thought were amazing
And I took a pause and I decided to tell the story and now, again, the emotions are right on the surface
And I tell the whole story in even more detail than I'm telling you now

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And I got to the point where I choked up and I couldn't continue, I couldn't tell the story anymore
Now, if this was the private sector and I was standing on a stage telling this exact story, somebody in private sector would say to me
Take your time, they would say, it's okay, that's what they would say to me, right? It's happened, take your time, right?
That's not what happened
I stood there completely choked up, I couldn't speak and there was one voice from the back of the room, the general
And he said, go on, meaning go on and we're with you
And that's the difference between private sector and these wonderful people
In private sector, they say to you, take your time, as if you're alone
Take all the time you need by yourself
And here, these people who understand what service truly means, they say, go forwards, go on, move forwards, you have no choice and we will be with you
And that's what I learned from them, when my friends are struggling, I don't say take your time
When my friends are struggling, I say go on, when my friends are crying, I say go on
The underlying message is, and I am here sitting in the mud with you
It is the greatest honor of my life and because of that experience, that's where the book Leaders Eat Last came from
That experience was the impetus for that book
So when we talk about what the future looks like, I just want to live a life of service, I want to continue to serve those who serve others
And to meet people who live a life of service, I will do anything for them
I think there's an unwritten rule that when you meet someone who's devoted their life to serving those who serve others, that it is our responsibility to serve them
There's an unwritten rule, the reason I do so much pro bono stuff is because when I meet people who are on the side of good, on the side of service
I obey that unwritten agreement, that I will be there for you and I will serve you and expect nothing in return
And if you want to bring it full circle back to relationships, when one person shows up in the relationship to serve you
You have the moral responsibility to serve them, because to serve someone who serves others, they are serving you, which means we have to serve them
I live my life by that code
The key second line in True Purpose is serving those that serve others, the line that you've added and that you learned from your experience going to Afghanistan was that we'll be there with you along the way
How important is that for you and your mission, that you have someone there with you and do you feel like you have someone there with you on the mission you're on, you talked about the iceberg, pulling it out of the ocean
At the start of this conversation, you reflected on feeling lonely, not understood
I feel lonely for personal, it's my personal life, right?
Do you feel like you have people that are there with you?

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Absolutely, and when somebody comes up to me on the street and says thank you, you changed my life, I always say the same thing to them

Thank you for being a part of the movement

I always thank them for being a part of the movement

When they say your life changed me, my word back to them is continue your work, right?

Thank you for being a part of the movement is what I always say

Because when you say I do not feel alone, I feel that I'm a part of an army with thousands to the left and thousands to the right, dare I say millions to the left and millions to the right

Some who I know and most I will never know, but we were all marching towards the same direction to build this world that we all believe in

In our capacity, whether we're doing it for our little company, whether we're doing it for our family, whether we're doing it for our friends

or whether we're doing it at massive scale because we have that opportunity, because we have a bully pulpit or we lead a large organization

That's the professional side

Yes, personally do I feel I have people to my left and right to work with?

Yes, 100%

Absolutely

My team is incredible, my closest confidant is my sister, you know, my sister and I are business partners and the best of friends

This question started with me asking you about looking forward a couple of years and everything's idyllic

You've given me the professional answer, the personal side of that coin is kind of what I'm trying to understand

Yeah, I mean, I think the answer is I want somebody, I love companionship

and I want to be able to more than talk about and share my magical, surreal life with someone because I have a wonderful life and I do want to share it with somebody

I think sharing is more fun than just telling people about something

You know, I want to come back and remember that thing that we did as opposed to can I tell you about this thing that I did, you know?

Like, I want to share somebody else's life

I want to hear about their bad day, I want to hear about their good day, I want to be their cheerleader

You know, I want the opportunity, I've been a shitty servant in my relationships in the past

I've been a really shitty servant and I've built the skill set, you know, I'm a slow learner, give me a break

Better to learn it now than learn it never

But I want the opportunity to like take all these skills that I've been talking about really effectively and really good at doing professionally and I want the opportunity to do it just for one person

I mean, you spent your life being a fantastic servant to me from before we even met

to many more people like me and you know that you said millions to your left, millions to your right, it's millions

You've been a fantastic service to millions and sometimes even in my own life I reflect and think

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the service that I did, whether it was building the service to my employees or the service to the outside world

it came at a cost and that was often the service to one individual who was right there who I sometimes took for granted

over and over again to the point that I lost them and then had to live with the regret

But I mean, it just seems so obvious to me that because you have the awareness of all of that, you're perfectly placed to serve

I'm having a thought and insight right now which I hadn't had before

which is we've talked about, you know, everything that we gain in this life comes at a cost and the only question is was the cost worth it?

And so now if you say I put all of this focused on this movement and it came at such personal cost, right?

Like I took my eye off the ball, I wasn't investing the time to be a better boyfriend

to learn how to have relationship, to learn how to manage, you know, some of the symptoms of the ADHD

just to forget about the ADHD just to learn not to be an idiot, you know, was it worth it?

And the sad thing is it was like if you're asking me in the state that I'm sitting in now

would I sit in the state right now again and do it all exactly the same way?

I'm not sure I'd do it exactly the same way, but I believe the movement that we're building and what you and I are both a part of, it was worth it.

Now it wouldn't have been worth it if I didn't learn this lesson now and be given the opportunity now.

You know, would I have preferred it five years ago? Ten years ago? Yes.

But I believe the cost was worth it because I think the work that we're doing has an ability to it and it matters

and that weirdly makes it sort of, huh, that's really nice, yeah, the cost was worth it.

Simon, thank you.

Do I have to pay for this?

I think everybody's probably thinking the same to be fair.

No, I really mean that.

No, I really mean that.

I really mean that because it's so unbelievably powerful to have a conversation like this.

These are the most important conversations we have.

It's not like information sharing and this trick about this business and how to have this team member.

It's like a team level stuff, which is the foundation of all the things we do, our success, our businesses, whatever,

that we struggle with the most, but people like me and you just don't talk about because that's not what we're, you know, we're recruited to talk about.

And people don't ask us those questions and sometimes if they do, we're, you know, we got good at avoiding them.

And I think that the tragedy is that, you know, people are modeling their making choices based on what we're saying

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and leaving out a huge part of the human story.

And, you know, for us not to talk about this stuff, does the people who are on their own journey and using our information as part of their education, the disservice.

So yeah, I think this is a great lesson all around.

You know, people often ask me why on the Diary of a Sea, I spend so long talking about health, mental health, mental fitness, mental fitness,

struggles and all of those things because I think that's the subject matter that is underserved.

So that's pretty much the whole space that I play in.

I spend very little time talking about how to scale a company and I focus on what I believe is the underserved foundations of being a great successful quote unquote individual, which is all the stuff we've talked about today.

Hey, thanks so much. I really love when we do this.

So do I.

And the thing is, I think what people don't realize is, you know, you and I know each other, respect each other and like each other, but we don't go out for dinner.

We've never actually gone out for a meal, you know.

And I think what's so interesting is I think if we did, this is what we would talk about.

And so, you know, it's better to do it with others than just by ourselves at dinner.

We skipped the first date. We weren't.

It went straight to the relationship.

We both hate the first day.

So that's okay.

Hey, thank you so much. I really do appreciate it.

Thank you, Simon.

Quick one. As you guys know, we're lucky enough to have Bluejeans as a sponsor and supporter of this podcast.

For anyone that doesn't know, Bluejeans is an online video conferencing tool that allows you to have slick, fast, good quality online meetings without any of those glitches that you'd normally find with other meeting online providers.

You know the ones I'm talking about. And they have a new feature called Bluejeans Basic, which I wanted to tell you about.

Bluejeans Basic is essentially a free version of their top quality video conferencing.

And that means that you get immersive video experiences.

You get that super high quality, super easy and zero fuss experience.

And apart from zero time limits on meetings and calls, it also comes with high fidelity audio and video, including Dolby Voice.

They also have expertise grade security so you can collaborate with confidence.

It's so smooth that it's quite literally changed the game for myself and my team without compromising quality at all.

So if you'd like to check them out, search Bluejeans.com and let me know how you get on.

I have to say I've been on a bit of a journey with this brand because when I started my business in new territories,

when we first moved social chain to New York City, the first place we went to was WeWork.

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We moved four of our team members out to New York City and we built the business from there. I have to say there's something magical about WeWorks.

I've spent the last two or three weeks in LA in a WeWork and as you walk in the front door every day,

it's almost like that sense of community, that sense of magic, excitement, camaraderie is tangible. And you don't get that when you're working at home.

You don't get that often when you're sat in your bed on your laptop.

There's something about getting out and getting into a WeWork that makes me feel a sense of entrepreneurship and creativity and building.

And the way that WeWorks are designed both in the way that they offer subscriptions so that you can work on demand,

but also the flexibility of the contracts means that it's just the perfect place for businesses to scale their companies.

And if you haven't checked out WeWork and you want to, you can go to we.co.co.co and there you can get 50% off a trial day at WeWork close to you.