

Jerry: Hey, Jason. It's great to see you. Thanks for coming on the show.

Jason: Well, thank you so much for having me, Jerry.

Jerry: Take a minute, uh, and just introduce yourself to us.

Jason: My name's Jason Jacobs, and, uh, I have been dreaming about being an entrepreneur for a long time. And then in 2008, I finally started a company called Runkeeper, uh, built it up over about nine years and then, uh, raised several rounds of executive financing. We were acquired in early 2016, uh, stayed on for about 15 months, uh, post acquisition. Left a couple months ago and n- and, now, I'm free and reflecting on the grueling ride that we had. Uh, and excited to, um, you know, really take this time, not only for rest and recharge, but also to be introspective about the journey and about, um, about looking forward as well.

[00:01:00]

Jason: We grew from there.

Jerry: So, you, uh, you know, hit for the cycle as they say in baseball; right? You wanted to become an entrepreneur. You became an entrepreneur. You found a way to get the business launched. You found some cofounders and that core team. And then you exited and worked for the acquirer for a while. And, so, what brings you to the podcast?

[00:02:30]

Jason: Ah, well I got introduced to the- to the podcast through ... I think it was through my friend, Ben Rubin-

Jerry: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Jason: Uh, who had been on the podcast, gosh, probably a couple years ago now. Um, and, uh, I've been a- a listener of the podcast for quite a while and, um, and also, uh, an observer of, um, how transformational your programs have been from a distance. Uh, and when I was first introduced, uh, we were actually in a period of great turbulence, uh, and so, I- I wasn't sure from a timing standpoint, when the right time would be to come on the podcast. Um, but now that, ah, I landed the plane, and, uh, stuck around on the other side to make sure that it- that it went through maintenance, and, uh, and that it's (laughs)-

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Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason: That it checked out, and it's ready to keep flying. Um, and, uh, and then I- I stepped away as a pilot, um, and to stick with the analogy, ah, think this is actually a great time to, um, you know, kind of bring you in to my introspection journey and- and get some- some seasoned counsel as I'm working through, um, both, you know, kind of the- the physical journey that I- I- I went through, but also just the- the emotional journey and start to sort through, um, what that means as I look to the future.

Jerry: Okay. So, I'm gonna ask an infamous question that I often ask. You ready?

Jason: I'm ready. Let me have it.

Jerry: How are you?

Jason: I'm well. Uh-

Jerry: Go slow. Go slow. Check in.

Jason: Yeah. I mean, I think it's- it's been an evolution where, um, uh, the, uh ... I mean, it was a nine-year ride. Uh-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason: And- and during that time, uh, there were some really exciting and kind of frothy times. Uh, and there were some really turbulent, uh, and dark times as well, um, both for the company but also personally. Um, and, uh, and then to get to come out of that and get the company on more stable footing and then, um, you know, have a viable path forward and rebuild the leadership team and- and find a- a, you know, a great home, um, and a ... and just a solid outcome all around, um, was- was kind of a- a mind trick, um-

Jerry: Hmm.

Jason: Given, uh, you know, how, um, how turbulent some of the turbulent days were. Um, and so just stepping away from there, um, a- a- and digesting, uh, everything that, um, that I've been through and that the company's been through and that my family's been through, uh, is a lot. And- and so I'm definitely taking my time as I'm kind of piecing- piecing those pieces together and- and making sense of it all.

Jerry: So, what would be helpful for you to explore at this point?

Jason: Uh, well, wh- once- it's- it's- it's interesting because ... So, along the way I- I talked to some executive coaches here and there, and I think there was a spectrum. There were some that, um, that were very focused on you, and there were others that were very ... And kind of the psychology of entrepreneurship, um, and of being human, uh. And then there were others that were very focused on the mechanics

[00:06:30] of, um, operating a company and, uh, you know, managing a board, and building a leadership team and- and going through strategic planning and- and things like that. And- and my bias was always towards company, company, company. And I thought, like, you know, someone can look inside my head some other time once, um, once I've landed the plane. Um, and, um, I love entrepreneurship, and I'd like to keep doing it for a long time. But I didn't necessarily do it in a sustainable way during the- the nine-year journey that I came from.

[00:07:00] Um, and I'm also in a very different place personally where, uh, I had a girlfriend when I started Runkeeper, and now I have a wife and, uh ... and two kids. Uh, and- and so as I kind of venture to start another company, which I'll very likely do, um, I'd like to make sure that I can do it in a way that not only will give the company every probability of success, but also, um, keep myself and my family together and kind of give everything in my life what it needs and- and not just the company.

Jerry: Okay. So, um, you've listened to the podcast, so you know Jerry a little bit.

Jerry: So, I'm gonna ask you to slow down even more.

Jason: Okay.

[00:07:30]

Jerry: Here's what's going on. I can bar- barely breathe. I can barely ... 'Cause this is like there's this intense thing that's starting to build. Yeah, now you just took a breath. Thank you.

Jason: (Laughs).

Jerry: Now I can breathe. Yeah.

[00:08:00] So there were some dark times. There were some turbulent times. You started Runkeeper, and you had a girlfriend who's now your wife and the mother of your children. I'm looking at you, and you've got a touch of gray, maybe even more than a touch of gray. I'm gonna venture that you're in your late 30s, early 40s.

Jason: 41.

Jerry: Yeah, see? And so there is that. And so you were just in your 30s when you started this other business. Just-

Jason: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: Turned the corner.

Jason: Yeah, just turned the corner, and- and that ... I've been thinking about being an entrepreneur for so long, and it was so hard to get the stars to align to finally pull the trigger for-
[00:08:30]

Jerry: Yeah.

Jason: A multitude of reasons. Um, that it-

Jerry: So what-

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: Is it that you're afraid of?

I'm- I'm gonna interrupt you, Jason, 'cause what happens is you start to speed up.

Jason: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Right. So what we're going to do is we're going to slow you down. And you started to tell me that these other coaches that you had worked with, and some were focused on sort of the performance and the leadership aspect of it, and some were-
[00:09:00] were like trying to get into your head. And, um, what is it that Jason wants in this moment? What do you want?

Jason: Well, uh, well, something I- I wrestle with is, um, is the- the difference between, uh, fulfillment and happiness, uh, because I- I associate fulfillment with creation and impact. Uh, and the journey of creation and impact is quite a grueling journey that doesn't necessarily bring, uh, in the moment, happiness along the way. Uh, and reconciling those things on a ... And there's- there's different ways that- that manifest itself.
[00:10:00]

Jerry: So what I want to reflect back is what I'm hearing is that there's a wish to reconcile the pursuit of fulfillment and the pursuit of happiness.

Jason: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: Because there's a construct that you're holding based on your experience at Runkeeper that to the pursuit of fulfillment is growing and maybe that's another word for unhappy-provoking.
[00:10:30]

Jason: Yeah, I think- I think it was definitely started from a place of passion and- and love, both for what we were building and for the game. Uh, but along the way, uh, it got to a place where it- it really became a burden, uh, and for c- c ... Not- not the whole time. I'm when ... and we ... And I eventually pulled out of that, and it got back to,
[00:11:00]

um, starting to feel more like it did in the early days. But that middle period was a dark period, and it lasted quite a while.

Jerry: So what is it you want to have happen in this next go-around? 'Cause now we're entering your second act.

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: You know?

Jason: Yeah. And there's a whole psychology, psychological implications of- of that in- in multiple dimensions.

Jerry: All right. Tell me about that.

Jason: Uh, yeah, so-

Jerry: [00:11:30] This is one of those moments where I wish the audience could actually see the video, 'cause what happens as soon as I said this phrase, you were like, "Oh." You reacted. So, Jason, you're on your second act. Yeah?

Jason: Uh, I am? Well, not yet. I'm in intermission, but- but the second act, hopefully, will be starting at some point, uh, in- in the coming months, I'll say. I've given no timelines, but- but there will be a second act.

Jerry: All right.

Jason: There- there will be. I can say that.

[00:12:00]

Jerry: So- so- so slow down. There will be a second act. What is it you want in that second act?

Jason: Ha, uh, I would like to, uh, have the stamina and emotional intensity to dream big and work incredibly hard in the pursuit of that dream without getting myself to a bad place physically or mentally that negatively impacts my well-being or that of my family.

Jerry: Yeah. That's why you're on the call.

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: That's-

Jason: Yes.

Jerry: What's really ... There's a deeper, deeper wish here. And notice what's- what's happening inside of your body right now. What's happening inside your heart as we're naming this?

Jason: Uh, it's ... There's like, a tension being- being released a little bit. It still needs to be released more, as you can see, but I'm at least loosening up a little bit.
[00:13:00]

Jerry: Yeah, there's a softening that's happening from the outside. I can feel it. I can see it. So the wish is to be able to have the same kind of intense, passionate ride of fulfillment without putting yourself and your family through the grueling pain that you experienced the first time, the dark turbulent times.

[00:13:30]

Jason: Yeah. Back to that tension of fulfillment and happiness, I would like to be able to experience the fulfillment without being so unhappy.

Jerry: Yes. Yeah. So, the- the second-act challenge isn't merely figuring out what large entrepreneurial problem to solve in the world. And thereby, hopefully, create some sort of beautiful exit, some landing place down the line, even if it means the company continues to operate at infinitum and just makes money, never going public if necessary, whatever is. Whatever that definition of success would be in this next iteration. But the real wish in this second act is to live your life somewhat differently where you could reconcile both the wish for that passionate pursuit without the unhappiness. Am I naming this right?
[00:14:00]

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Jason: I think so. I think that because, you know, I have, I guess, what- what would be considered a win under- under my belt, and I have some financial flexibility and- and freedom, which means that I don't ... It- it needs ... Not that it didn't need to be about the right reasons before, but it really needs to be about the right reasons now. So it's not a footrace to make lots of compromises and sacrifices and then grind myself knowing that there's an out. It's- it's more of setting out on a long journey with no timeline where the journey is the- is the destination, and the only way to do that is if things are in harmony in all aspects of my life and well-being, mental and physical, not just, uh, the company. And the ... It was the company at all costs over the last nine years, which- which is not healthy.
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Jerry: Right. So, I'm gonna get intellectualized and conceptualized a little bit, and then I'm gonna take us right back. Uh, in Buddhism we often talk about the fact that the pursuit of happiness ... that buried within the pursuit of happiness, is our own undoing, because the pursuit of happiness, um, leads us to create a sense of attachment. It leads us to create a sense of- of, um, a kind of mindlessness in pursuit of that thing, that goal that becomes our undoing. And so what we strive for, what the teachings strive for, is that pursuit of equanimity and balance and that happiness becomes a byproduct of.
[00:16:00]

Jason: Hmm.

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Jerry: So that's just a concept. We're going to put that to the side for a moment.

Take me back to Runkeeper. Are you a runner?

Jason: Uh, I am a runner. I'm an injured runner now. Uh, but, I ... It's one of those things where, um, I ... Running- running picked up the slack when I stopped playing team-
[00:17:00] team sports competitively as a way to stay in shape, but it grew into a love over time.

Jerry: What did you love about running?

Jason: Uh, for me it ... ah, as you can probably tell, I used to own a motorcycle when I- when I was younger and it was- it was a Ducati and - and it- it only seemed ... The engine only seemed to be happy when it was accelerating. Uh, I'm kind of wired that way. Um-

Jerry: Okay.

Jason: Where ... yeah.

Jerry: Does the Ducati care where it's going?

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Jason: No.

Jerry: Ducati just wants to go.

Jason: Yeah, just wants to go. The engine purrs when it's moving quickly, but it's up to you to make sure that you don't drive it into a ditch.

Jerry: Got it. So-

Jason: Yeah (laughs).

Jerry: Um, what's the difference between running by yourself in the back roads ... I know you're in Massachusetts. In the back roads or even on ... You know, on the side of the Charles. What's the difference between running on the side of the Charles and playing a team, competitive sport?
[00:18:00]

Jason: I think for me, the team competitive sport was gripping. It was thrilling. It was comradery.

Jerry: It must have been fulfilling.

Jason: Yeah. It was really fulfilling, but running is totally different than that. For me there are aspects you can get in that mode if you're training for a race.

Jerry: But what is it for you?

Jason: It's spiritual.

Jerry: It's happiness.

[00:18:30]

Jason: Yeah. It's where ... It's what ... It's ... When I'm- when I'm in the groove and I have the endorphins flowing, that's when I feel the most alive, I would say, the healthiest, the happiest, the most alive.

Jerry: Right. So you see what I'm drawing out here? There's something super competitive, some- something super fulfilling about a team, competitive sport that, um, is- is fulfilling this ... that meets some powerful needs within you. And there's something really joyous in being by yourself, maybe with just a headset. It's sunset. It's early fall. It ... You're on the Charles. The wind is coming. It's a beautiful temperature, and you've gotten that pace. And your heart rate is where it needs to be, and you are happy.

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And I want to bring your attention to this wish to actually bring both of those together. We bring both of those together, not by forcing those pieces together. We bring both of those together by honoring both sides of it. There is something powerful that competing to win when you were building Runkeeper. And, okay, so maybe you didn't have a unicorn exit, but you had a good enough exit that you landed the- the airplane safely with a good company and you- and you sort of ... You did it. You ran it. You- you did that game. In fact, you even ... At one point, you used the phrase, "I played that game." And I have a feeling that there's this awareness that there is perhaps something even more powerful that's available to you, which is to look at this next act of your life, not just your entrepreneurial life, but your next life where the joy is integrated with the competition.

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Jason: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Am I naming this right?

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Jason: Yeah, I- I think I- I was ... I almost actively stamped out joy, uh, during- during, uh, points of time building the company, um, because I viewed joy as a- as a distraction. Um, and was just really militant about, uh, and maniacal about focus. My wish is that there's a way to be maniacal about focus and filled with joy, um, and that those blend together in a happy place. And- and that's- that's not just speaking professionally, but- but really in ... It ... I'm not looking at it strictly through a professional lens. It's- it's- it's my life. It's- It's not- it's not- my comfort-

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Jerry: Your life. Do you-

Jason: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: Because at ... You know, what I just wrote down here is, "He must have been a pain in the ass."

Jason: (Laughs).

Jerry: (Laughs).

[00:22:00]

Jason: Oh, um, but I wasn't an active participant at many ... At some points I was, but at some points I became almost removed from the joy. You know, when the joy was happening around me, I would be in a corner with my headphones on, uh, focused. And, um, and actually I didn't view joy as productivity inducing, and I think that that's a ... utilized the right way, it can be productivity inducing, and it just makes for more happiness than ... And then happiness leads to more productivity as well.

[00:22:30]

Jerry: Right. Right. So, intellectually-

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: All that's true. I want to hang out a little bit with more of the emotional side of this. So, I'm gonna- I'm gonna use a couple of words and you ... and you tell me how you react to these words.

Jason: Okay.

[00:23:00]

Jerry: Um, this is me describing Jason. He's focused. He's productive. He is like a military leader. He just ... He sees the goal, and he goes for it, and he doesn't let things stand in his way. How's that feel when I-

Jason: The first-

Jerry: Yeah.

Jason: The first two, definitely, focused and productive. The last one, um, although I didn't let myself experience joy, I tried to be quite a mission-driven leader and so ... The ... I forget that phrase, but the one about, um, if you wanna get a boat built, don't- don't teach a man how to build a boat, but teach him to yearn for the magic of the sea. It was something like-

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Jerry: So you're trying to be inspiring-

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: Other people to be driven, and give them the joy of following your inspiration.

Jason: Yeah, the military is the only ... The aspect of military, I envision iron fist, and there's definitely no iron fist in my leadership style. But maniacal focus, for sure.

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Jerry: Um, what did your dad do for a living?

Jason: Uh, he worked in sales and sales management in ... And general management of small businesses in the printed circuit board industry.

Jerry: And, did Mom work?

Jason: Mom worked in health insurance. Yeah, broker and- and also on the- on the insurer side.

Jerry: Were either of them focused and productive?

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Jason: Yeah, uh, both in different ways. I think, um, my mom was the more balanced of the two where she put in her hours at work, and she did a lot of client service and making sure people were happy, kind of a nurturer and a caretaker, um, both at home and professionally. And then was very active with carpools and pick ... School pickups and things like that.

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Um, my father, um, uh, worked himself to the bone, and traveled to several different states in any given week and lived on airplanes and came home exhausted at the end of the week, and really just, um, kind of ran himself into the ground, uh, consistently over long- long periods of time.

Jerry: What word did you just use?

Jason: Uh, ran.

Jerry: Uh-huh (affirmative). Uh-huh (affirmative). Was ... How much joy did Dad have?

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Jason: Uh, Dad had joy. Uh, yeah, he definitely had joy. He, um, I think ... It didn't ... Because, uh, he was working for others and not, uh, on his own, I don't know that he felt the same stress that comes with entrepreneurship. And I think that that was probably ... The stress was probably the single biggest joy killer for me.

[00:26:00]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason: Um, so he did, I think, feel joy, but physically, he, uh, I mean-

Jerry: He ran-

Jason: He put his stamina to the test.

Jerry: Well, you said he drove himself to the bone or something?

Jason: Yeah, I mean, I would remember he would come home after long trips, and he would just kind of stagger into the office and stagger up the steps and go to bed. And he was carrying this big ... He had the ... Remember the- the, um-

Jerry: Yeah.

Jason: The suit carriers that hang to one side?

Jerry: Yeah.

[00:26:30]

Jason: And he probably had the- the suitcase cellphone with him.

Jerry: Yep. Yep. Yep.

Jason: (Laughs).

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah. So I ... The reason I- I- I often go there is that some of our first models of "what does it mean to work" get formed in childhood as we're watching Mom and Dad go off, as we're watching our caregivers, however they identify. And we start to internalize, "What does it mean?" And I think that, you know, we- we won't have time to completely work through the pieces here, but my- my quote, unquote ... I think you asked for sage counsel at some point. My counsel here is to really spend some time with these internalized archetypes of focus and productive, driven, and, uh, the ... How mom represented, in some ways, a more balanced and integrated approach.

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All right. I just had this vision of- of you staggering home to your children.

Jason: Hmm.

Jerry: And do you really want to convey to them the thing that your father conveyed to you? My sense is, no. You want to be- you want to experience the joy of running without necessarily the focus, or you want to experience the joy of the Ducati engine humming without caring so much about the destination, yet knowing where you're going and what you're striving for produces a kind of inspiring drive. In this second act of your life, which is not merely your entrepreneurial life, there is an

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[00:28:30] opportunity, Jason, to really look back at these deeper questions and saying, you know, ... I don't know what your wife's first name is, but to ask her-

Jason: Allie.

Jerry: "Allie, how do we craft the next iteration of our family together?"

What are your children's names?

Jason: Tyler and [Shana 00:28:50].

Jerry: A boy and a girl?

Jason: A boy and a girl. Older boy, younger girl.

Jerry: How old?

Jason: Five-and-a-half and two-and-a-half.

Jerry: Yes.

Jerry: And what is it that you want to teach them about work; right? It feels to me that the grueling experience that you went through with Runkeeper taught you that that way isn't enough; that there's another way. And what's opp- ... The opportunity ...

[00:29:30] At midlife, the opportunity into this second act, is to pull up the archetypes, to pull up the parts of you that are defining you and examine them; you know?

[00:30:00] I think it's great that you see yourself as needing to inspire joy into people around you at your work, but if you really want to be effective in inspiring that joy around other people, you have to allow yourself to inspire the joy within yourself, because we learn more, just like our children learn more, from watching than being told. Does this make sense for you?

Jason: It does.

Jerry: All right. And so this second go around for you ... You know, the first go around was, -- these were the internalized mission statements. "I really want to be an entrepreneur, 'cause I don't want to be like Dad and work for somebody else." "I really want to compete." "I really want to have this kind of exit, and I really want to establish myself," because that is what our 30s are about.

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[00:31:00] And, now, we're expanding the list, 'cause you want those things. Now, we're going to expand that list. "I want to live my life in such a way that at the end of my 40s, I'm a man that is proud of myself." Does that resonate?

Jason: Yeah, that ... My nightmare is having great professional success and- and- and looking in the mirror and not being proud of- of who I see. Um, it- it ... And that- that goes both for, uh, the way I do things professionally, but I- I don't ... I feel proud of- of the way I've done things professionally and feel confident that I'll continue to operate with integrity and fairness - and generosity. Um, it's more of making sure that ... I mean, I think it was Fred Wilson a while ago, a long time ago, about the potter not getting consumed by the kiln. Uh-

Jerry: Uh, excuse me. That was-

Jason: Oh, was that you?

Jerry: (Laughs).

Jason: Oh, (laughs). You fa- you know what, he probably blogged about it quoting you.

Jerry: He did (laughs).

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Jason: (Laughs). That's funny. Um, but that- that really resonates with me, because I almost got consumed by the- by the kiln. I mean, I- I really did. The line between the company and my identity were ... Was- was very blurred. And, granted, we ended up ... We had a great outcome, and it changed my life and- and was great for the team. And it was great for our city and- and things like that but it ... We threaded a needle, and it didn't need to be that way. And I- and I wonder what if it hadn't been that way, and what would my psy- psychology be now? And that- that's troubling.

[00:32:30]

Jerry: Yeah. So- so, um, you referenced the- the- the story of the potter, which I talk about in a blog post called Disappearing into the Fire. And it's about being lost and consumed in the work. When I originally started writing about, that, uh, people responded by saying, "Oh, one way or the other is bad." That is, giving yourself entirely over to the fire and creating the exquisite glaze, and you have to read the blog post to know what that means. That's bad. Well, not working really hard and not really driving for fulfillment, well, that's bad. And the problem of the potter, the conundrum here is that you actually need both.

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And I think you instinctively feel this. You know that it's actually what Mom was teaching you, which is, that it's actually balance; that the answer to the conundrum of fulfillment or happiness, is actually integration. It's, "How do I integrate joy in a truly meaningful way so that I can ... I don't walk into the fire, consumed by my unconscious motivations?" But if I'm going to say to myself the way I can in a- in a team sport competition, "Okay, we're gonna go in there, and we're gonna win."

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[00:34:00] Well, at least I'm internalizing that as a motivation. I'm not pretending on the one hand that we're going in there just for the joy of the game when really,

[00:34:30] unconsciously, I'm driven by my desire to win, 'cause that turns me into a maniacal leader. So sometimes you inspire the team by invoking the competitive spirit, and sometimes you inspire the team by invoking joy, just like you do for yourself.

Jason: Do you think some of the ... Uh, one worry I have is that the ... Some of the most accomplished people, the role models, the luminaries that everybody talks about over the generations of tech, maybe didn't integrate those two things and were tortured souls.

Jerry: Yes. That is true.

Jason: And maybe it's that torture that led-

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Jerry: And not just torture ... not just tortured souls, but torturing souls.

Jason: Yeah.

Jerry: Okay? But your concern is that they've l- ... That if they're not tortured, then they've lost their edge.

Jason: Yes. Yes. Yes (laughs).

Jerry: Okay. All right. So let's talk about "edge" for a moment; okay? What's the goal?

Jason: The goal professionally or overall?

Jerry: What's the goal? For you. For me. For everybody. What's our goal?

Jason: To be happy without losing my edge.

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Jerry: Why do you need your edge to be happy?

Jason: If ... That- that's an interesting one.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jason: I don't know. I don't know necessarily where the ambition comes from. Uh-

Jerry: So the goal is to be happy. The fear is that if I lose my edge, I won't be happy.

Jason: Or maybe it's I won't be fulfilled.

Jerry: I won't be fulfilled.

Jason: Because, remember, fulfillment, in my definition, right or wrong, comes from achievement and impact.

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Jerry: Who's the most successful business executive in the United States?

Jason: Well, I mean, there's several of them, but- but certainly people like- like Mark Zuckerberg or- or Elon Musk come to mind.

Jerry: Who would you rather be? Warren Buffett or Mark Zuckerberg?

Jason: Well, they're so different. Uh-

Jerry: Yeah. Who would you rather be? Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg? Yeah.

Jason: The key ... I mean, it ... I feel like Warren and Bill ... I mean, Mark knows better than I do, but I feel like they're mentors of his and role models.

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Jerry: Uh, what is it about Warren and Bill that you admire? Is it their bank accounts?

Jason: Uh, no. I- I mean, so, well, yes. Uh, but- but it isn't just that. I mean, I think- I think there's a lot of people, especially these days, that- that's coming to light that have significant wealth and whose focus seems to be on, um, protecting and amplifying that wealth for themselves at the expense of- of- of everybody else, uh, who- who doesn't have that kind of wealth. And if both Bill and Warren and Mark, for that matter, seem to be of a different spirit where, um, because they've had the privilege of- of significant wealth creation and the good fortune of significant wealth creation, they have a duty to, um, to harness it f- for good for others. Um, and I- I really-

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Jerry: We don't know their internal motivations. We can only surmise from the outside. But I will tell that, uh, what I see Bill Gates and Warren Buffett doing, doesn't seem to be motivated by a guilty sense of duty or obligation. It seems to be motivated by the joy of having purpose; by the joy of having a focused approach to philanthropy, which wasn't always the case earlier in their careers. It was a more focused approach to competitiveness. But as they have matured and as I've matured, I'm now in my 50s, I will tell you that there's a tremendous amount of joy in internalizing a sense of "enough" by turning my attention to purpose and focus.

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[00:38:30] Figuring out the integration point, that's for each of us to figure out, 'cause yours is different than mine. But I would call your attention to some of the mythology that's associated with success. My question of success was actually a trick question, because it was designed to trip you up into thinking about the most financially wealthy people in the world or in the United States. But you imm- ... Didn't fall for

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it, 'cause you immediately went into, "Well, wait a minute. There's more than that."
And the question for you-

Jason: But- but- but you- you brought up Bill Gates and Warren Buffett and Mark Zuckerberg. You didn't bring up the Koch brothers or- or-

Jerry: Yeah.

Jason: Others that have wealth that have very different philosophies.

Jerry: Bec- ... Purposefully. The reason I brought them up ... Well, first of all because they're icons in the tech industry, but also I- I didn't bring up Larry Ellison or Steve Jobs.

Jason: Right.

[00:39:30]

Jerry: Right? The- the- the ... What I would encourage you to do, what's required to solve the problem of the potter and the conundrum implicit, is to actually go inward and decide for yourself what that integration point is. What is that core purpose? See, the people who are most trapped regardless of how much money that they have, the people who are most trapped are the people who are disconnected from their internal motivations, are using external yardsticks to judge their self-worth. And then they're trapped.

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I look at those three and Zuckerberg may be getting to this point, I don't really know. I hope he does, because it's quite liberating. I don't think Warren Buffett or Bill Gates cares anymore what people think. They stay true to their own internal integrity, their own internal barometers. They care to the point that people are responsive to their efforts to do well. Bill probably cares what Melinda and his children think but not this sort of nameless, faceless masses anymore.

[00:40:30]

Jason: Uh, may I ask a question?

Jerry: Sure.

Jason: So, have, uh ... Given how ... As the internet makes the world smaller and surfaces what's going on in the world more globally all the time, uh, big and small, uh, it- it's becoming ... I feel guilty feeling joy knowing how many people are suffering. Um, and- and there's a constant news stream of suffering of all different kinds constantly being, um, uh, paraded across our screens and in our ears and, uh, et cetera. Uh, I feel like I can't sleep if I'm not working towards helping others to suffer less, and I feel guilty for not suffering. So- so I get ... And that's-

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Jerry: Your internal hap-

Jason: Not coming from a place of joy.

Jerry: Your internal happiness has no bearing on whether or not those suffering people suffer more or less.

Jason: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: [00:42:00] So your guilt actually doesn't help them. Your commitment to living a life of purpose and meaning might lead you to take actions that'll alleviate some of their suffering.

Jason: Hmm.

Jerry: And you have to find a way through that challenge. So, I'm gonna leave you with a suggested book to read.

Jason: I've got my pen ready.

Jerry: [00:42:30] Good. Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. I think you'll find it, uh, incredibly fascinating.

[00:43:00] Jerry: Well, I know we didn't resolve all of the issues here, but I think we raised some important issues here. And maybe, hopefully, made clearer what some of the issues are, so ...

Jason: Yeah, this- this definitely some- some great food for- food for thought, uh, and things to- to continue to- to wrestle with. But- but getting them surfaced, I think, is a- is a big first step.

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah. You're at an interesting inflection point in your life, and this is the time to be asking those questions, so ...

[00:43:30] Thank you so much for- for, uh, coming on the show and- and, uh, you know, taking the time to make this happen.

Jason: (Laughs) I did. Thanks so much, Jerry. Thanks for having me.