

Jerry: Hey Jeff, thank you so much for coming on this show, and, uh-

Jeff Orlowski: Absolutely, thank you Jerry.

Jerry: Let's take a minute, and if you could just introduce yourself, that, that would be really helpful.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah. Um, my name is Jeff Orlowski. Uh, I'm a filmmaker. I live here in Boulder, and I've been here for about the last 10 years or so. I, I grew up doing a lot of photography, and in college, I started sh- shifting over into cinematography and then filmmaking, and, um, have ended up on this path of doing films for impact. Um, and it was not a path that I ever could've anticipated, but it's one that I am beyond thrilled by (laughs).

[00:00:30]

Jerry: Well, I, I'm beyond thrilled having you on the, uh, on the show, um, and I'll explain that, uh, you're not the typical entrepreneur.

Jeff Orlowski: (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: Is there a typical entrepreneur?

Jerry: Oh, that's a great question.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: Let's circle back to that question, 'cause that's a great question, um, in the sense that, uh, uh, uh, typically one would have like a venture backed startup-

[00:01:00]

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: or something like that.

Jeff Orlowski: Yep.

Jerry: But to your point-

Jeff Orlowski: Filmmaking is still basically a venture backed startup.

Jerry: (laughs) Exactly.

Jeff Orlowski: Um, it's just that it's through a different model. It's not ... it doesn't ... And especially documentary filmmaking doesn't typically have the potential for return that a tech startup might.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:01:30] You have a lot of hard physical costs, and a lot of travel, and unknowns in the artistic product that you're making, and you have no real sense of ... um, you try, but you don't really know what the market and sales opportunity of a film might be when you're developing it. But film, filmmaking is ... um, it very much is serial entrepreneurship. Every new film you make is a new startup, new research, new project, new vision, new team, new funders-

Jerry: Mm.

Jeff Orlowski: new sales, new distribution, all of it.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And figuring out how to do that over, and over, and over successfully, it's, it is a challenge.

Jeff Orlowski: (laughs).

Jerry: Uh, you know, uh, we've had, uh, uh, a variety of folks on this show. Um, one that pops into mind is Ben Saunders who is a polar explorer. Um, he's a long time client of mine. Uh, and he spoke about his experience of he and his partner Tarka traveling unsupported-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, yeah.

Jerry: from the edge of Antarctica to the South Pole and back.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:02:30]

Jerry: He's actually out on the ice again right now-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: solo this time-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: traveling and trying to complete a journey that a friend of his tried a few years ago, and died on it.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And, uh, the, the correlation with the experience of being an entrepreneur was there again.

Jeff Orlowski: Right, right.

Jerry: He had the exact same response.

Jeff Orlowski: Right, right.

Jerry: I have to go funding. I have to have a vision.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And every single expedition was a startup.

Jeff Orlowski: Absolutely.

Jerry: So I am totally in sync there, and I'm excited because-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

[00:03:00]

Jerry: to, to sort of, uh, give a little context and background on this, um, uh, my co-founder and partner and I were watching Chasing Coral, which is one of your films.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And it's an extraordinary film.

Jeff Orlowski: Thank you, yeah.

Jerry: And ... Jeez, I'm gonna start to cry already. Um, it's the kind of film that, uh, helps you viscerally experience what climate change is actually doing to the world.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah, that's the who- Yeah.

[00:04:00]

Jerry: And, and, and, uh, I'm struck at immediately by not only your description of you as a, um, a, a, as an entrepreneur, but I wanna take you back a little bit to some of the language you used. If I'm remembering correctly, you said, "I am a filmmaker." I just want you to land on that one.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: How does that feel, when you say that?

Jeff Orlowski: I actually think of myself as a problem solver more first and foremost. Um, filmmaker's an easier way to describe what I've been doing more of recently.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:04:30]

Jeff Orlowski: But, um, uh, filmmaking ... We live in a society that's based, and formed, and shaped by ideas.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And the way we think about the world-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: is a construct of people putting their ideas out into the world, whether that is ... um, whether that is the science behind climate change, or the concept of "Make America Great Again," or what have you. This is all just a means of communication.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:05:00]

Jeff Orlowski: And, and for me, while, w- when trying to look at these problems that we're facing-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: um, I've fallen on film as a tool, both artistic and creative, but also practical and economical. Um, and it's a way to get stories out into the world that, that I have found, or our team has found, or things that are interesting, or, or truths that, that we've discovered in other parts of the world that we can use film as a medium to capture that, and to share that with the world. That's really what ...with our two biggest films, Chasing Ice and Chasing Coral, that has been the, the consistent theme-

[00:05:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: of finding hidden stories that are true, that are visceral, that are visual, that we can then capture and share back with the world. We, it is sort of that Golden Fleece that you're going out in pursuit of and being able to capture. Um, so filmmaking, for me, more so than writing, or photography, or other arts, filmmaking is an art that allows you to combine all of those skills. It's, it's writing, and imagery, and music, and emotions, and time, and, and it's that's something that's scalable more so than theater, um, and you can, you can use film as a medium to get ideas out there in a really, really wide way.

[00:06:00]

So, I've fallen in love with film as a medium because of that, um, but it is ... that's just a subsection of being a storyteller, and a subsection of trying to

[00:06:30] solve problems. Um, but that ... I don't know, that ... I, I have felt very comfortable with the, the notion of being a filmmaker lately. That does, um, feel right to me, but ultimately, I think it's in pursuit of a greater objective.

Jerry: Well, and I think we often talk about common denominators, you know, as a means of, of finding, bridging, and connection, and the common denominator that I'm hearing-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: [00:07:00] um, a, a, you know, through, through the lens of my experience, right? I am a, I'm, I'm a coach primarily to entrepreneurs, um, and we primarily support them in their, um, existential challenges between what they would define as work and life.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But the ... but the real issue is how do we support them in effect in seeing the world's problems-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: and leaning into trying to solve those?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, absolutely.

Jerry: [00:07:30] Because I think that, that, that the thing that the listeners in this podcast will rally relate to, and the thing that I relate to as ano- as a fellow human to what you're saying is the world consists of a set of problems in effect, that the world ha- is marked by those things.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Which challenges are you willing to lean your shoulder into?

Jeff Orlowski: Right

Jerry: And specifically, what medium are you choosing to do that? Is it a startup? Is it a one on one coaching session?

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Is it a film-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: that causes a 54 year old man to break into tears?

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:08:00]

Jerry: Right, as, as you did for me.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah (laughs).

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Uh, not only did you inform, but you moved my heart-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: which is arguably the greatest of all our tools, right?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: A means to shift the world.

Jeff Orlowski: Um, so, so many thoughts just in response to that, but, um, uh, there, there's this notion of yes, there are problems out there, and that can sometimes overwhelm people with the scale of all of these problems that we're facing. Um, I think another way to think of it is these are all opportunities to make things better-

[00:08:30]

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: at the same time, and to not be overwhelmed by the scale and scope of the problems, but what can I do that makes a difference?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And we, we do countless screenings where people say, "What can I do?" right, and we screen, uh, either of these films, and, and the immediate response is, "Oh, I didn't realize it was this bad. What can I do to make a difference?" And it's like, I don't know who you are.

Jerry: (laughs).

[00:09:00]

Jeff Orlowski: I don't know what your skills are. How am I supposed to tell you what you can do to make a difference? Are you a lawyer? Are you a writer? Are you an artist? Are you an engineer?

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: Like, how can you use your skills to do something? What, what feels right and makes the most sense to you?

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: And this isn't something that, oh, there's one action. Go change your light bulbs and problem solved.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:09:30] This is a massive societal level challenge that we're dealing with right now that requires a societal level change to solve. And we can, and we will, but it's not ... This notion of what can I do implies that one person can solve this. That's not the case either. Like this-

Jerry: What I, what I also hear, because I'm a coach, right? I hear, I listen for certain things.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: What I hear is them giving up their agency-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, yeah.

Jerry: and asking you to tell them what to do.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, tell us what to do, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Right, and I'll, I'll often hear that from a coaching client who'll saying, "Well, what should I do?" Right, and, and-

Jeff Orlowski: [crosstalk 00:09:55], yeah.

[00:10:00]

Jerry: you know, the truth of the matter is you, you lean your shoulder in.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: You face the fear of being overwhelmed.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: You face the reality that the thing that you do may not work.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But that doesn't mean you don't do it anyway.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: Right, um, uh, there's a, there's a writer, a Quaker writer that, uh, folks who listen to the show know that I, I adore. His name is Parker Palmer, um, and Parker has this notion he calls the tragic gap.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

[00:10:30]

Jerry: And the tragic gap is the place between the world we know is possible-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

Jerry: and the world as it is.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: And we are actually called to stand in the gap between those two places-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, yeah.

Jerry: even though the world we know is possible may be probable.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It may not change in the way we believe it should be changed.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But if we do not stand in that space-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:11:00]

Jerry: we tip over either into what he calls corrosive cynicism, who the fuck cares.

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: Nothing that I gonna do-

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: or irrelevant optimism.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

Jerry: Irrelevant idealism, I think he calls it.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And so, in either case, we're actually out of the action.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And so, you may not save coral. You may not save ice. I mean, another chunk of Antarctica broke off today.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah, yeah.

Jerry: Like, what the fuck?

Jeff Orlowski: (laughs)

Jerry: What the fuck? Okay, it's only the size of Delaware, right?

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

[00:11:30]

Jerry: We may not save, but I'll be damned if I go down without a fight.

Jeff Orlowski: Exactly. It is that, um ... Uh, so, as something you were saying earlier. I was thinking about Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And the ... I remember reading it in high school, or something, but the thing that stuck out the most to me was, um, was the section about quality with a capital Q.

Jerry: Hmm.

[00:12:00]

Jeff Orlowski: And this pursuit for quality, and if for no other reason, just for your own values and your own, like, knowledge that you are pursuing, doing things well.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: That was, that was pretty profound on me, and, and along the same lines, it's like, how do we, how do we work in pursuit of making things better, and feeling authentic and genuine with the work that we're doing-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: and striving for quality.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, yeah, that's just an interesting, interesting tie there.

Jerry: [00:12:30] I, you know, I, um, I'm thinking back to something you said before where you said ... and, and forgive me 'cause I'm not gonna remember precisely the phrasing, so correct me, but, "I make films of impact."

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Did I say that right?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, um-

Jerry: What is the phrase that you used?

Jeff Orlowski: So, uh, uh, my company is called Exposure Labs, and our mission is to, um, to have impact through filmmaking-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:13:00] through story telling. Um, you know, I think we've gone through countless iterations of what exactly is our, like, core mission and, and, you know, phrase that we wanna be using. But at its essence, at its spirit, it's, um, film is such a powerful medium for communication, and it's a tool that can be used to show people what's happening in the world. Um, and our team just believes very firmly that we can use film and storytelling as a means for positive change, and for positive impact. Um, and so, the projects we are taking, we, we look at ourselves as both an impact ... um, a, as a film production company, but also as an impact production company.

Jerry: [00:13:30] Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: And we are handling ... we're trying to do both making of films, but then also following through, and using those films for impact as well.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, this can take us down a rabbit hole of a conversation around the film industry, and, and, and challenges within the film industry itself, but in short, film distribution is another means of preaching to the same choir.

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: This is my, my personal take on it in terms of, um, you now, what kind of film do you wanna go see, and what kind of films are being advertised and marketed to you, and what kinda films, um, are, are the things that are most readily ... You know, what's the low hanging fruit for people? If there's a film that might be political in nature that you might disagree with, you're probably not gonna spend \$15 to go see it in a movie theater.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: And that advertising for that film might not be marketed towards you as well. The, the marketing mindset is who's our target audience? Who's gonna come into the theater? And let's market to them.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:14:30]

Jeff Orlowski: And that has contributed in some way to this continuing bifurcation we have in our country that we're seeing really most explicitly online and via social media-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: where there are filter bubbles that are created, and people exist within their own bubbles.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, and we're trying to use the films to break beyond the bubbles. How do we bring ... How do we create tools, um, through film, and how do we share stories that engage people in conversation, and, and, and serve as the bridge to bring people together, particularly with our focus on climate right now?

[00:15:00]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, so that's been what we've been trying to think through. Um, I have all respect and admiration for friends who work on narrative films, or comedies, or you know ... The, the, there are so many films that I personally just enjoy sitting back and watching on a Friday night, that can be a mental break, or, or a relief, or things like that. Um, but in terms of where I wanna put my time, in terms of what I wanna make if I'm gonna spend three years or five years on a project, which that's how long some of these projects take. And then, and then what we've been doing lately with the impact campaigns continuing beyond that, I wanna know that it's, it's something that's really fulfilling and meaningful to me, that's gonna sustain me for multiple years on end. Um, and that's fortunately been the case with this work.

[00:15:30]

Jerry: You know, I'm, I'm, I'm really resonating with, with, uh, what you're saying now, because I'm hearing a means and a methodology to purpose-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, yeah.

[00:16:00]

Jerry: which is such an elusive concept, and, you know, uh, people talk about trying to have work that has a sense of purpose. And I'm hearing this, and, you know, just before we went live with the recording, we were talking about this sort of marrying of the right brain and the left brain.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jerry: And I hear that too-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: even in your description because not to say that there's ... You know, storytelling that is narrative storytelling is equally moving.

Jeff Orlowski: I know.

Jerry: I challenge anybody to read Gabriel Garcia Marquez and not have their worldview changed,

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, right, right.

[00:16:30]

Jerry: Right? Pure narrative-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: magic we live in still, yet what I'm hearing is this, um, focus on quality with an uppercase Q-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: right? Or in my parlance, in my Buddhist lineage, we talk about a warrior stance.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm.

Jerry: And a warrior stance is a strong back-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: and an open heart-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: soft, open heart.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, I love it, yeah.

Jerry: Right? And so, their strong back is-

Jeff Orlowski: I think I wanna fix my posture right now.

[00:17:00]

Jerry: Right (laughs). We're gonna have a really successful film. We're gonna distribute it well. We're gonna have an impact campaign that goes beyond just inspiring people for a few minutes in a movie theater.

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: And we're gonna pick things on a subject matter-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: wh- the content of which-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: match to that soft that.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yep.

Jerry: Because, for example, what I'm hearing is your wish to bridge those conversations, to support those conversations.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:17:30]

Jerry: Because we- how do we survive? How do we survive and later the course of climate change if we're not actually talking to each other?

Jeff Orlowski: Right, absolutely [crosstalk 00:17:38].

Jerry: Am I hearing you right?

Jeff Orlowski: I, I loved your recap right there. Yeah, that's perfect, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: So, I... So, I wanna get a little more personal here-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, sure.

Jeff Orlowski: So, I've got like two or three different trains of thought based on that, um, a, and we could take this wherever you'd like to go, but-

[00:18:00]

Jeff Orlowski: um, the left brain, right brain stuff, and then also the soft heart, and, and-

Jerry: Strong back, yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: coming to both of those, both, both of those places. Um, when I was in college, I, I majored in anthropology, but it was in part a function of what I really wanted to study, which was a lot of different subjects. And I remember after my freshman year, I took the course bulletin, and I had, I'd asked all my friends who were upper class men what classes should I take?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:18:30]

Jeff Orlowski: And found, like, this list of the most interesting, insightful classes, and everything that sounded interesting to me, I put on this huge spreadsheet.

Jerry: Mm.

Jeff Orlowski: And, and I wanted to maximize for that list, and I reverse engineered the major that would fit the maximization of that list.

Jerry: Brilliant.

Jeff Orlowski: And, and that's what ended up ... And, and anthropology, the major was something I was still very interested in and had curiosity of all the core requirements, but it had great flexibility for me to take classes in photography, and film, and art, and design, but then also engineering, computer science, and management sciences, and engineering, and business classes. I took a class on negotiation, took classes on, like, all sorts of stuff.

[00:19:00]

Jerry: So, you were just feeding.

Jeff Orlowski: It was, it was ... I loved it. Like, it was so much fun.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: It was really like it was this playground of opportunity to learn.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And what, what else is college if not ... if it ... like, that's what it should be in my mind, right?

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: So often, it becomes oh, I have to study this major so that I can get a job in this field.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:19:30] And that didn't resonate with me. It was really like I, I went to Stanford and had this op- this massive opportunity from all these experts to just learn really awesome stuff, and it was such a stimulating environment, um, so-

Jerry: So you did, you did not give in the fear of "Yeah, but I gotta get a job."

Jeff Orlowski: I, I didn't, not at all. My-

Jerry: Did you have it?

Jeff Orlowski: No, I don't think I did.

Jerry: Interesting, your parents did a good job (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: So, yes and no. My mom really wanted me to be an engineer.

Jerry: (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: And well, to this day, like, she kept pushing me.

Jerry: [crosstalk 00:19:54] why you went to Stanford.

Jeff Orlowski: My mom's Chinese. I went to Stanford.

Jerry: Your mom's Chinese.

[00:20:00]

Jeff Orlowski: She wanted me to be, be an engineer, and truth be told, I really enjoy engineering. I really love building stuff. I think I would've been a fine engineer.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: I was interested in becoming an architect for a long time, um, and that would have been a fun pursuit. Um, my dad was a high school teacher.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And my dad was very proactive in encouraging both for my sister and I, to follow ... We, we could do whatever we wanted to do, follow your passion. You could do whatever you wanted to do, and he kept opening the windows and pulling back the curtains around, like, you can pursue whatever you want. And, um, and through that, and through other life shaping opportunities that I had when I was young, I, I really did feel privileged and open to pursue whatever I wanted. And I had enough success in those things that I dabbled in to have that reinforcement around, oh well, I, you know, I went down this path, and this is working, and somebody paid me to do that.

[00:20:30]

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: That's an option, and I go down this path, and somebody paid me to do that. That's an option.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:21:00]

Jeff Orlowski: Um, I, for a while, I was building we, websites, like actual, um, photo galleries for photographers at the birth of ... This was when I was in college, 2005, or 6, or so.

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: And I knew a bunch of photographers that wanted websites, and I built a little side business doing that. I just built a bunch of small startups, and started a clothing company with some friends for a while, started all ... like, starting with some friends, a new web search engine around news.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: That totally flopped, um, but there are lots of thing that we were ... we just sort of tested, and for me, it was, um, what am I motivated by? What, what am I curious about?

[00:21:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: What is fulfilling to study and learn?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Where is there an opportunity? Can we make some money off of it? Can ... And I don't know. For me, I think there were lots of passion- There were lots of curiosities that always came up.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And there was always something that I ended up spending my most time thinking about.

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:22:00] There was something that always became the driving curiosity, and just, just lean into that. Like, if you're ... if it keeps you up at night, and if you're thinking about it, figure out what is the next step? What, what do I need to learn? Is there a gap in my knowledge? Is there a gap in our team? Do I need to find somebody who can help move this to the next stage?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, do I just need funding so I can dedicate more time to this, or hire somebody to put more time into this?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:22:30] And that, that's been how I've approached projects, which has led ... um, unintentionally has led down a path of filmmaking. Um, so for me, I, um, as I said, uh, I studied photog- my dad was a photographer. I grew up with a darkroom in my house. I learned photography at a young age. Um, I remember there was one day in high school where, where I was debating career paths, and literally the three options at the time were professional photographer, professional cyclist, or professional pianist.

Jerry: Ah.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:23:00] And I remembered, like, in high school thinking through these options and I was thinking, like, could I spend five or six hours a day playing the piano? Like, it sounds more than I can tolerate. I, I enjoy it, and I love it, but that's more than I want. Could I spend, you know, several hours a day riding a bike? That sounds like, at a certain point, physical torture-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: going that far. That was like in the, in the cusp and birth of Lance Armstrong as a cyclist-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: and getting out there in a big way. Um, and then could I spend five or six hours a day taking photographs, and traveling the world, and going around? And-

Jerry: Sign me up (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:23:30] like, that sounded so amazing, and, and National Geographic was the, the dream goal. That was what I wanted to do, and um, and then from that pursuit, um, of wanting to do photography and continue that, I ended up meeting photographers, ended up having mentors as photographers, finding ways to get close to them and work with them. And I was ... Excuse me. In some cases, I was helping them set up their computers as they transitioned into digital photography.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: In some cases building websites for them just to, like, help them, and-

Jerry: Just to be close to them.

Jeff Orlowski: be close them. How can I be close to these awesome experts that I was admiring?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:24:00]

Jeff Orlowski: And that ended up leading towards James Balog having a project where wanted to go and document glaciers. Um, this was 2007. It was my senior year in college, and I had enough of the skills from growing up, spending a lot of time outdoors, doing boy scouts, and feeling comfortable outdoors, um, knowing ropes, and safety, and rock climbing, which is another personal passion, knowing how to shoot video. And so, I, I offered a skillset to him of I could go out in the field. I can shoot video for you. Don't pay me anything, and I'll do anything you need, and, and won't complain. And I'll be an asset to your team. And that was my spring break from college in 2007, was going with James Balog to Iceland for two weeks, where I froze my butt off, and, and learned how to be in the field for my first real big expedition.

[00:24:30]

[00:25:00] And right before graduation, he invited me to go to Greenland, and I ended up spending two weeks in Greenland, like the weeks right before my college graduation. We went to Alaska soon after. We went back to ... we went back to Greenland. We kept traveling and shooting, and it was, it was ... honestly, it was like a year and a half of that. Two years of that type of work, editing for him, doing post production based on what [crosstalk 00:25:14].

Jerry: Basically doing anything he needed.

Jeff Orlowski: Whatever he needed, anything he needed.

Jerry: Strong back, [crosstalk 00:25:18].

Jeff Orlowski: I've got a strong back, open heart.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: Whatever you need, and I'll help you make your better-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:25:30] and I have something that I can add, or figure out, or learn, that entire time, I was ... I knew how to edit and final cut, but I didn't know how to do some of the editing that he required, but at the same time, I didn't really know many people that knew that type of editing.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:26:00] So I learned. I just subscribed to lynda.com, learned how to do after effects, learned how to do the more advanced editing for post-production in terms of how do we create really smooth, seamless time lapses that allow me to control a whole bunch of parameters and factors, and, and learning, um, a different level of, of editing techniques that made the time lapses really, really smooth and seamless?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And kept editing for him, kept making stuff, creating value for him. And then it was, it was a year and a half into that process-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: where we finally agreed that we can go ahead and make a feature film out of it.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: It was never the plan at the beginning. The plan was-

Jerry: You were just documenting.

Jeff Orlowski: We knew he was doing something that was interesting. We knew this team was doing something that hadn't been done before, and we needed to document it.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:26:30] And my role out in the field was as a field assistant helping to install the cameras, but at the same time, as a videographer shooting all of it. And it was a split role of documenting what he and our team were doing, as well as helping out and being part of the team. Um, it was, it was well into that process before we said, "You know what? We've got enough footage to

actually make a feature film.” And I hadn’t done that before. I’d done a bunch of shorts, but never a feature. I didn’t know w- what I didn’t know, and-

Jerry: Were you scared at that moment?

[00:27:00]

Jeff Orlowski: I was so excited at the notion of doing a feature that there was no fear in it for me.

Jerry: Beautiful.

Jeff Orlowski: There were unknown, but there were people who had done that, and we, we brought on more producers. We brought on more people who had done it before. Um, two producers based here in Boulder, Paula DuPre Presmen and Jerry Aronson, both incredibly, exceptionally talented, having done many, many films, narrative documentary, all across the board. I learned so, so much from both of them over years of working on that film.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, they were mentors. They were family. They were friends. They were ...
[00:27:30] Um, it was beyond an advisor ... They were teachers in a way that it wasn’t ... That wasn’t the explicit relationship that we had set up.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: And they were on board with the project because of the vision of the project, but they taught me in countless ways, both professionally and personally, both how to be a better person and filmmaker, and how to make your films better. Um, we brought on a great editor who had far more editing experience. We,
[00:28:00] we just kept building a team out that believed in this vision. It goes back to the same entrepreneurial mindset of hire better than you, find people who have the skillsets you don’t have, and that wasn’t the explicit notion at the time. It was like, oh, we need somebody to edit and I don’t know how to do this that well, so who do we know that can edit really, really well? And our network kept introducing us to more and more people.

[00:28:30] And we, we screened ... I was leading the edit for a while, doing it all myself, and spent two years editing by myself, um, before we brought more talented editors on. And during that process, we kept screening it for other filmmakers to give us feedback.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: “Here’s where it’s at right now. What do you think?” It was multiple years of artistic ... just like a knife to the chest of artistic criticism, heavy, open, honest artistic criticism of wanting to lean into where the problems are, and how can

[00:29:00] we make it better? And, and I know there a lot of filmmakers ... It's hard for filmmakers who put their vision into something and think this is the perfect thing. It's really hard to receive genuine criticism from people, but I'm not making the film for myself. I'm making the film for other people.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: I want to know what other people think, and other filmmakers are the most capable of articulating where they see the gaps or the flaws. And it is that tragic gap, right?

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:29:30] Those other filmmakers can give insights into how do you leap across that gap and go from the state of where you are now to where you want to be. Um, you become too disillusioned by the project when you spend a lot of time in it.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: You get the, the curse of knowledge. You get desensitized to what the thing is. You think you're trying to say something, but you're not actually saying it. Um, so-

Jerry: I, I'm gonna jump in.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah, please. I'm just going on this ramble that I ... Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: I, I, I'm loving it. I'm so loving it, and, and I'm, I'm relating to an experience I think you were having before where I said, said a few things, and then it, it just-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative) [crosstalk 00:29:57].

Jerry: Couple quick things.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

[00:30:00]

Jerry: I totally relate to what you're saying right now 'cause I am in the midst of writing a book. It's due April first.

Jeff Orlowski: Cool.

Jerry: I've already handed in 35,000 words.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: I've got another 35,000 words, oh my god-

Jeff Orlowski: That's awesome.

Jerry: But that experience of exposing myself-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: I don't know how I would do this without exposing myself to the editor.

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: And every time I hand in a chapter, it's painful.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: That's thing one.

Jeff Orlowski: Can, can, can I throw [crosstalk 00:30:24]?

Jerry: Yeah, please, please.

Jeff Orlowski: Uh, for me, that process is no longer painful, and it's really, really fun-

Jerry: Yes.

[00:30:30]

Jeff Orlowski: because now, I've recalibrated such that this is part of the pro- this is part of my process. And there's no ego attached, and this is where the film stands today.

Jerry: That's right.

Jeff Orlowski: And can you ...Whether you're, you're a filmmaker, an editor, a friend, a stranger, how can you provide some insights to help make this a better thing? And I-

Jerry: Yeah, well, I-

Jeff Orlowski: enjoy it so much now.

Jerry: I, I think you'll relate to this. When the writing is flowing for me-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:31:00]

Jerry: it feels like I'm tapping into something that's actually larger than me.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: And so, having an additional perspective on whether or not it's succeeding is-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It's like, it's like I put something out there. I may be the genesis or the catalyst for that, but then we all stand back and we look at it, my editor, my agent. Um, uh, I was reading a chapter to my ... to one of my sons last week, and you know, just getting his feedback. And his feedback was amazing. He was spot on.

Jeff Orlowski: Cool.

Jerry: [00:31:30] And, and we all look at the material and go, "Yeah, you know what? You know, change this here. Oh, that's right." And that worked.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: Right?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: So, there that. Then, uh, I wanna go ... I wanna step back-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: and reflect back again, 'cause what I'm hearing is something really powerful. In my experience working with clients, whether they're in their 20s, or 30s, or 40s, or 50s, 60s ... I don't have a client in their 70s yet.

Jeff Orlowski: (laughs).

Jerry: [00:32:00] I think that there's a fundamental belief that we all carry, and I often refer to it as up into the right. We all believe that our life is supposed to progress up into the right. So back there you are in high school. I'm gonna be a professional pianist, professional cyclist, professional photographer. There's an implicit, and if I follow these steps, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, it's good. But what I actually heard in your recounting of your story was something much more powerful, and such ... something much more organic and therefore, unpredictable, right?

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

[00:32:30]

Jerry:

When you were graduating high school, when you went to Stanford, it wasn't with the intention of becoming a filmmaker working on documentary films, speaking about impactful issues. I heard you opening yourself.

Jeff Orlowski:

Yeah.

Jerry:

I heard you ha- having, uh, the capacity to withstand, not knowing-

Jeff Orlowski:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:33:00]

Jerry:

what step, maybe even the capacity to withstand your mother's fears, 'cause all she wanted was for you to be happy.

Jeff Orlowski:

Right, right, right.

Jerry:

Be an engineer, therefore you'll be happy.

Jeff Orlowski:

Right, exactly.

Jerry:

Right?

Jeff Orlowski:

Yeah.

Jerry:

Being able to withstand all of that.

Jeff Orlowski:

Yeah.

Jerry:

To be able to say, "I'm gonna find the mentors," which is really an important thing.

Jeff Orlowski:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry:

The people who are gonna help me navigate this twisty, windy path, to landing in a place where I get to live out my purpose.

Jeff Orlowski:

Yeah, yeah.

Jerry:

Am I saying that right?

Jeff Orlowski:

Yes, absolutely. And I, and I've had ... I've been very blessed to have really, really great mentors, and we can spend more-

[00:33:30]

Jerry:

You have been blessed. I'm gonna interrupt you on that. You have been blessed with the capacity to open yourself up to mentors.

Jeff Orlowski: Yes, yes.

Jerry: Okay, because mentors are there all the time.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, um-

Jerry: When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.

Jeff Orlowski: Yes, yes.

Jerry: I'm sorry. Go ahead, Jeff.

Jeff Orlowski: Um, I went to a camp when I was in high school, uh, called Camp Rising Sun. It's this youth leadership program in upstate New York.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:34:00]

Jeff Orlowski: Um, had a profound impact on me for, for countless reasons, but there's ... Um, part of the camp program is that every Saturday night, the campers sit around the campfire.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And the elders in the community share some insights, some wisdom, and there was one, um, s- one talk that a friend of mine gave, a mentor gave, that has stuck with me for a really, really long time. And, um, he was a, an incredibly skilled chess player.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:34:30]

Jeff Orlowski: And he was drawing some analogies to playing chess and life, and this concept that he was sharing was a concept of a strategic retreat.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And there are times, in chess and in life, where you're going down a certain path, and you sort of hit a roadblock where you realize, oh, these moves that I was trying make to do this thing aren't working out. I have to abandon that game plan and re-strategize, and make a strategic retreat, and take a different plan of attack.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:35:00]

Jeff Orlowski:

No, I think sometimes ... and certainly some entrepreneurs think of those strategic retreats as failures.

Jerry: Absolutely.

Jeff Orlowski: They think of it as, oh we were trying to do- No, you have to stay the course. We had a mission. Put your head down. Keep fighting on this path.

Jerry: Man up.

Jeff Orlowski: Man up.

Jerry: Suck it up.

Jeff Orlowski: Right, and, and just keep pushing through, and one day, you'll break through.

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: And it's the wrong ... It's just it never has resonated with me in terms of, like,

[00:35:30]

if you're constantly banging your head against the same wall, maybe you should just switch walls. Like, that doesn't make sense, right? And so, that, that notion of a strategic retreat, um, has been very applicable. I, I don't actively think of it that way, because I actually feel like if one course of action doesn't feel like the right course of action, just find the other thing that feels better. And for me, I find it very, very easy to pivot. Like, making pivots has been so simple across many things. Sometimes it's more challenging to have the whole team stay on board with the pivot when you're showing a new idea that the team might not necessarily have been on board with, or, or like slowly warming up to.

[00:36:00]

Um, so I don't think of it as a step sideways. I don't think of it as a step backwards. I actually think of it as of a retreat, as a step forward, as-

Jerry: But it's strategic.

Jeff Orlowski: It's strategic, but it's all adding towards this goal of how do we ...? Ha- and, and part of it, I don't, I don't personally think of it as up into the right. Um, I, the, the, I think there are pro- like, nothing infinitely grows up into the right.

Jerry: Amen, brother.

Jeff Orlowski: Nature doesn't provide that, right?

Jerry: Absolutely.

Jeff Orlowski: So there's ... That, that doesn't resonate with me.

Jerry: It doesn't exist.

[00:36:30]

Jeff Orlowski: Doesn't exist, right? And we've, we've created this economic model and this capitalist system around this that ... Anyway, that's another [crosstalk 00:36:36].

Jerry: It's false.

Jeff Orlowski: It's so ... ugh, frustrating.

Jerry: And so constraining.

Jeff Orlowski: Yes, and so, um, for me, it's like, uh, I would bring it back to that notion of quality with a capital Q. Like, what gets us, individually or as a team, back to something that is in pursuit of something we really believe in, and that we're proud of, and that we think is making a difference and meaningful, and it's contributing to society, and, and resonates with your, your inner heart? And, if, if those boxes are checked, then I feel great with all of it. Like, then, then you're fulfilled.

[00:37:00]

Jerry: Hmm.

Jeff Orlowski: And you're, you're, you're fulfilled, and you're creating meaning. And I ho- I, I hope ... I d- I anticipate that I won't have that mid-life crisis. I really hope that doesn't happen for me, because I feel very content with all the things that we've been doing. I don't have regrets about what we're doing. Um, yeah we can set up targets, and goals, and correlate sprints on what are we trying to accomplish on what timeline? And maybe we were late for a deadline.

[00:37:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And maybe, right? But, but in the scheme of things, if we're constantly moving towards making things better, that's all I can ask for.

Jerry: Well, uh, well, I'll, I'll speak as, as an elder in your life-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: and maybe even a new mentor.

Jeff Orlowski: Please, please, absolutely, please, yeah.

Jerry: Um what you have, Jeff is resiliency.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: What you have implicit in that capacity to pivot-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:38:00]

Jerry: is the capacity to resiliently recover-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: and to shift.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: To organically, amoeba like, respond to the world as it is.

Jeff Orlowski: As it is, right, be in the present.

Jerry: Be in the present.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And that capacity is the capacity one needs with every existential crisis, right?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: I often start ... We do these, um, multi-day boot camps, which one day you're coming on.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative), I accept. I would love it.

Jerry: [crosstalk 00:38:24] what you do with your schedule, you're coming on one of the boot camps.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah, love it.

[00:38:30]

Jerry: And, and, you know, ostensibly, they're about teaching leadership skills and all this stuff, but what it's really about, it's about your quote about being a better person.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And one of the first talks we do is this being so, so what, which is-

Jeff Orlowski: Can you say that again? This-

Jerry: I'll say it again. This being so, so what?

Jeff Orlowski: Oh yeah.

Jerry: It's kind of a bastardization of a Zen teaching-

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: which is this is the world as it is. What will you do?

Jeff Orlowski: Right, right.

Jerry: Right?

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Can we pause?

Jeff Orlowski: Yes, please.

[00:39:00]

Jerry: What was the name ... at least the first name of the chess playing mentor?

Jeff Orlowski: Uh, Chris. Chris [Faraone 00:39:02].

Jerry: Can we just pause and honor him?

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, absolutely.

Jerry: Dear Chris, thank you.

Jeff Orlowski: He's, he's been a consistent mentor and friend throughout my life. And as I've gotten older, we've become more compatriots, and, you know, thinking about how can we collaborate? Can we work on stuff? Um, and he's been an incredible teacher. Um, and that, that, that counsel speech that he gave, like, it, it has stuck with me, and I know many of my other friends as well.

[00:39:30]

Jerry: What's it been, 12 years, 14 years?

Jeff Orlowski: That, that he ... 1999 was when he gave that.

Jerry: (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: Uh, um, 1999 or 2000 is when I heard that speech, and, and it has stuck with me for quite a long time.

Jerry: Okay.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: Wow.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: There are these moments in our lives-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: where, like, an asteroid hits us.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It sets us on a different trajectory.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: And Chris's little talk by the camp fire was one of those things that just went, whoa.

Jeff Orlowski: Absolutely.

Jerry: Right?

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:40:00]

Jerry: Would that all us were able to be an asteroid for somebody, or as one of my teachers [inaudible 00:40:06] used to say, coconut of wakefulness.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, coconut of wakefulness.

Jerry: Wakefulness. May you be bombarded with coconuts of wakefulness.

Jeff Orlowski: I love it.

Jerry: Right. If we could touch each other's lives with our stories, with our work in such a way where we're setting each other on those courses that are directionally correct, even if it's incrementally progressive-

[00:40:30]

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: where we're helping each other. You know, before we started recording, I was describing a little bit about [inaudible 00:40:43], and I said that, you know, part

of our pursuit, part of our purpose, yeah, yeah, uh, we coach. That's our medium.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But part of it is to, to overcome this belief system that work is in opposition to our actualization as human beings.

Jeff Orlowski: Yes.

[00:41:00]

Jerry: Right, work actually is a gorgeous medium by which we get to grow into that better person.

Jeff Orlowski: It's I don't look at it as work. I look at it as how are you spending your time, and what do you wanna do? And if there's a way you can make money off of it so that that pays your bills, that's great.

Jerry: Fucking A.

Jeff Orlowski: That's the goal, right? If you can get paid to do the thing that you love to do, that's the goal.

Jerry: That's right.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:41:30] And, and I have plenty of friends. Uh, it's, it's always been this interesting struggle for me when I have friends who look at work as so separate. That's ... They do this thing just for a job, just to make money to pay the bills, and then their non-work life is so completely different. And oftentimes, like, they just drink heavily at night. They party, and it's like it's break, or it's a huge shift or huge swing to counterbalance, um, in some cases dissatisfaction with the nine to five routine. Like, and plenty of people live that way. This is not a disparaging statement around that. That just doesn't work for me.

Jerry: Yeah.

[00:42:00]

Jeff Orlowski: And, and if that's ... And, uh, unfortunately, I would say that a lot of people live that way, and that might be a function of a society that's been structured, and, like, you have to ... Like, just to fit in society and be "successful," you need to make enough money to cover certain bases, and, and it's, it's challenging. It's not an easy thing to be able to pursue those life pursuits. It's not an easy thing for a musician to go out and, like, make a living doing the music that they love. There are more and more tools that allow for that. The internet has totally shifted that as well

[00:42:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Like, you can be a professional musician through the internet, and find happiness there while you're, while you're doing your passion, but it's still hard. It's still hard. None of it's easy, but, but people have done it, and you can do it. You, you don't ... You might not know how just yet, but ask those questions, and figure out the answers to those questions, and figure out how do you make those slow changes? Make that navigation that ... navigational shift to get you to the place where you can make a living doing that full time.

[00:43:00] Um, as an aside ... So one of my closest friends from Stanford is a friend of mine named Jack Conte um, who is a very talented filmmaker and musician. And Jack, um, when we were at Stanford ... Um, when, when we were at Stanford, um, he had many opportunities available to him, whether they were film or music. And he wanted to pursue being a musician and to make music, and, um, he was going down that path. And he had a very successful channel on YouTube, and it wasn't making ... it wasn't paying his bills.

[00:43:30]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And he actually had this idea, um, for how can I open up the internet to allow people to support me as an artist.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And that idea of how he can personally be sustained through his artwork led to him starting a company called Patreon.

Jerry: Wow, yes (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: And the entire company, the entire platform of Patreon is letting people do the thing that they love to do.

Jerry: Sure.

[00:44:00]

Jeff Orlowski: And, and I remember so firmly, like, Jack's mindset in college was all he wanted to do was make music, and make a living doing it.

Jerry: Yeah, yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: And that would be bliss. Like, if he can just keep making music, and get the bills paid, that would be ... that's heaven. Like, that's the dream scenario.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: And now, like, in following that pursuit for himself, he's actually now gone a level beyond that and created a platform that's allowing that same structure to exist for tens-

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: hundreds of thousands of people that are able to do that for themselves.

Jerry: Yeah.

[00:44:30]

Jeff Orlowski: And I don't know. It's just he has found this calling for himself that, that works for him and for so many other people.

Jerry: Well, uh, I, I love that story, and I appreciate your sharing it, and I, and I smile deeply at the notion that, that, that's the connecting point because I'm a fan of Patreon.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: What, what occurs to me is that what your friend Jack did was found a way to use a strong back-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: of creating Patreon.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:45:00]

Jerry: Of creating a container that made sense, so that the content of his life can be lived in a way that was consistent with his values and his soul.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, absolutely.

Jerry: Amen.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, absolutely.

Jerry: I mean that is it. And, and, you know, least we be accused of a kind of Pollyanna, uh, view here, I wanna acknowledge that what we're both talking to is fucking hard.

Jeff Orlowski: It is (laughs). Yes, sir, yeah.

Jerry: Okay, in Buddhism, we call it the pathless path.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:45:30]

Jerry: This is the path that is your path to pursue.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And, and, and again, for, for, for a whole bunch of reasons, you remind me of my, my client Ben, so I'm gonna speak the polar explorer again.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: I remember doing coaching sessions with him while he was on the ice do- finishing Captain Scott's-

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm, yeah.

Jerry: failed attempt.

Jeff Orlowski: [inaudible 00:45:52] yeah.

Jerry: Right, and as I would say to him, and he would complain.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It was fucking cold.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:46:00]

Jerry: It was 50 below zero centigrade.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Okay, he was starving. He had to have a food rescue.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

Jerry: Okay, disrupting the plan, uh, of being completely unsupported. They almost died.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: He had every right to complain.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And I would say to him you're trying to do something that no human being has ever done in history before, and you thought it was gonna be easy?

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: Of course, it's hard.

[00:46:30]

Jeff Orlowski: For me, the things that are most intriguing are the things that haven't been done before.

Jerry: Oh, yes.

Jeff Orlowski: And, and there's innovation, and there's creativity, and the difficulty just comes along with the package. Of course, this is hard. Nobody's done it before right? If this was easy, if we knew how to solve these problems, this wouldn't be a problem. Right now, we're-

Jerry: And it wouldn't be interesting.

Jeff Orlowski: And it wouldn't be interesting, and it wouldn't be as, as fascinating. And, um, I know for me, it is, uh, it is ... Uh, to some degree, it's like an intellectual pursuit and curiosity, but more than anything, it's like what, what makes me tick? What makes our team tick? Like, the, the new things that haven't been done are the most interesting, and fascinating, and compelling.

Jerry: Yeah. It's, it's, it's ... What occurs to me is that, you know, we were talking again. Before we started the recording, we were talking about this sort of merger of right and left brain, and I related to it in saying ... You know, I said, you know, I'm a former, you know, uh, employee of J.P. Morgan. I was a venture capitalist. I mean, and now I read poetry and I cry on camera, you know, kinda on cue.

[00:47:30]

Jeff Orlowski: (laughs).

Jerry: Um, and by the way, I usually make people cry. I think you're gonna get away without crying on this episode.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm, yeah, close actually for a brief moment.

Jerry: Yeah, well, I nearly did. All I have to say is mum and dad, and phew, you know. But that is where the most interesting juice of life is.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

[00:48:00]

Jerry: Is in these intersections that are truest to us.

Jeff Orlovski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: You now, uh, uh, in relating to you, I, I feel the similarity. I feel [kindredness 00:48:09] of-

Jeff Orlovski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: um, the sense of my inner and my outer being in sync.

Jeff Orlovski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: It's not to say I'm always proud of every step I've taken in my life, but I'll tell you a funny story. I was, I was ... Uh, once during a talk, we were talking before about, uh, Brad Feld whom we both know here in town, in Boulder. It was during a talk with Brad, uh, in Denver, uh, on depression and entrepreneurship. And of course, he's much better known than I am, and, um, uh, I enjoy that aspect of our relationship. And I was on line for a cup of iced tea at one point, and, and, um, we all had these name tags on, and clearly, everybody there was there to hear Brad, right?

[00:48:30]

Jeff Orlovski: (laughs).

Jerry: And so the guy in front of me is getting his tea, and I lean over to him, and I said, "I hear this guy Jerry [inaudible 00:49:00] is a real pain in the ass. He's kind of this blowhard." And he turns around and he's, like, looks at me quizzically. Then he looks at my name tag and he cracks up laughing. And he says, "You're just like the guy on the podcast."

[00:49:00]

Jeff Orlovski: (laughs).

Jerry: And I said, "Well, what did you expect?" (laughter) Of course, I'm just like the ... But I didn't realize at the time, but I realized later that that actually was a high compliment to me.

Jeff Orlovski: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: I always wanted to be just like that guy.

Jeff Orlovski: Right, yeah.

[00:49:30]

Jerry: I don't want somebody ... to meet somebody at ... inline for iced tea and for them to say, "You're different."

Jeff Orlovski: Mm, mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah.

Jerry: Does that make sense?

Jeff Orlowski: Uh, it to- it totally does, and it's, it's interesting. Um, um, in, in doing this work now for the last few years, I've had many opportunities to do a lot of public speaking.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: [00:50:00] And, and we do countless Q and As. We screen the movie, and then we come back for Q and A, or we do a panel, or a conversation, and, um, they ... I've got more and more comfortable with them over time, for sure. And, uh, I would like to think that I'm very much myself on those panels and in those conversations.

Jerry: Mm.

Jeff Orlowski: Like, that there's no different version of me. Um, I sometimes have to be politically sensitive-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:50:30] in different audiences, but, but aside from that, like, I'm just wanting to voice what's in my heart, and the thoughts that are going through my head. And I think, um, you know, I, I, mm, I personally have spent a lot of time thinking about the state of the planet-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: and about what we're doing to the planet, and what climate ... what climate change means to us as a civilization. These are big, lofty, and scary thoughts at times.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: [00:51:00] Um, but figuring out ways to articulate and that, share ... and share that, um, it, it's not in service to myself. It's in service to this greater cause and objective to be sharing these thoughts and insights that my, myself or our team has been thinking through, so I, I'm completely with you. If you're that same person in the ... here on the podcast, or in li- I feel like this is a genuine (laughs) conversation with you.

Jerry: Yes.

Jeff Orlowski: I feel like I'm meeting you.

Jerry: Right.

Jeff Orlowski: There's no, there's no other-

Jerry: There's no ... Even though there's mikes in front of us, there's actually no filter.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Jerry: And, and, you know, to, to go ... to, to, to round it back to, you know, a core question, then maybe we'll wrap at this.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: A lot of people will come and say, "I'm seeking purpose."

[00:51:30]
Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

Jerry: And what's interesting to me is I think that they're looking the wrong spot.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, I love it.

Jerry: Joseph Campbell once said that, that, that people looking for purpose are really looking ... I'm, I'm mangling his quote ... are really looking for a feeling of aliveness. I would say that ... I would add to that, that the aliveness comes from congruity. It comes from, uh, from, from moving towards alignment where the inner and the outer express themselves. And you spoke before about friends who treat work as this separate thing-

[00:52:00]

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: and treat their life as this separate thing. And I think that when we live in the compartmentalized way, that way, we're, we're able to rape and pillage the planet.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Because it's not actually part of us.

Jeff Orlowski: Right.

Jerry: Or we're able to, uh, demonize other people because they're not actually us, right? When we live in this compartmentalized way, there's all this pain and suffering that we create.

[00:52:30]

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: But when we open ourselves up to the danger and risk of actually living in a way that is congruent-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: what ends up happening is we, we naturally live into purpose. It's like what I often say is, uh, uh, it's not the pursuit of happiness that, that, that should be the goal. It's the pursuit of equanimity.

Jeff Orlowski: Hmm.

Jerry: It's the pursuit of resiliency-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:53:00]
Jerry: that then leads to a sense of directedness.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: A sense of clarity. Right, you are probably already working on your next film, but you don't know what film you're gonna be working on 10 years from now.

Jeff Orlowski: No [crosstalk 00:53:14].

Jerry: And you don't even know if you're gonna be doing that film.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry: And that's okay.

Jeff Orlowski: Totally okay. Um, Joseph Campbell also wrote quite a bit about bliss.

Jerry: Yes.

Jeff Orlowski: And I think that's where ... Like, happiness and bliss are similar but such completely different concepts in my mind.

[00:53:30]
Jerry: Well, what does bliss mean to you?

Jeff Orlowski: Um, uh, I think bliss types ... ties into that, like, inner heart contentment and happiness. It ... For me, it ties into meditation in some ways, but it also ties into, like, if you can carry your bliss with you on a daily basis, like, that is living your purpose. It's different from pursuing happiness.

Jerry: Yes.

Jeff Orlowski: Happiness, um ... happiness is an emotion that also has a counter swing on the other side, of sadness.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And we, we have this false illusion that oh, you should always be happy-

[00:54:00]

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: which ignores the fact that you might feel sad at times. And you should feel sad at times, but you can feel bliss in both happiness and in sadness. You can feel bliss in pain and suffering, and, and that's ... Like, that is a, a greater pursuit in some ways in my mind. The bliss notion for me, has been something that it's, it's a lower bar than happiness. It's an easier thing to attain in some ways, I, I find, I feel.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:54:30]

Jeff Orlowski: Um, I have ... So, I grew up in New York, and, uh, I have a bunch of friends who, who grew up-

Jerry: Shout out to Staten Island.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, I grew up ... I was raised in Staten Island, um, and, and I have friends in the city who I think are struggling to find "their purpose," as you said. And I think New York is a particularly difficult place to find "purpose."

Jerry: Amen, brother.

Jeff Orlowski: It is, it is a place where, like, if you know what you wanna do, there a bunch of people that are doing that really well at a high level.

Jerry: (laughs).

Jeff Orlowski: But it's a hard as hell place to find what you wanna do. Um, for me, traveling the world has introduced me to more people, and cultures, and ideas, and ways of living. Just to see different ways that people live-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: like, that ... you, you are so easily reminded, like, you can choose the life path that you want.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And you can find bliss and happiness in countless different ways, and different means in different parts of the planet.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: That's one of the things I enjoy about being in Boulder. Like, there's such an eclectic group of people living different lifestyles.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: I don't feel like, you know, you go to the ... go to the cup, go to ... try to go to any coffee shop-

Jerry: (laughs)

[00:55:30]

Jeff Orlowski: you're gonna meet dozens of people living completely different life trajectories, and many of them having bliss and contentment with the path that they're on.

Jerry: Yeah.

Jeff Orlowski: Maybe momentary bliss, not, you know, all in pursuit of that, that consistent, um, happiness there, but, um, that, that's something where it's ... I don't know. It's an interesting notion to try to find purpose.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And I, I think ... I don't know, maybe some ... maybe to some degree, purpose finds you when you're open and you're ready for it.

Jerry: Yes.

[00:56:00]

Jeff Orlowski: Um, and it is being open and listening, and being tuned to that where people can find that more easily.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: Um, I don't know, so just that's-

Jerry: Thank you thoughts.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah.

Jerry: I, I, I, you know, uh, so beautifully said.

Jeff Orlowski: Oh, thank you.

Jerry: And, um, I think we, we need to wrap, but I, I just want ... From the bottom of my heart-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: I'm gonna say thank you.

Jeff Orlowski: Oh, thank you. Thanks for [crosstalk 00:56:20].

Jerry: Not only for this conversation, but for the work you do.

Jeff Orlowski: Well, thank you. I, I-

Jerry: That it matters.

[00:56:30]

Jeff Orlowski: I, I appreciate that. I, I do believe that it matters as well. That's why I want to do, and why our team is doing it. And, um, we're doing it 'cause we feel there's a need for it.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jeff Orlowski: And we're not doing it for accolades, but it's appreciated when, when there's gratitude, so thank you.

Jerry: And, and your willingness to come on the show and share from your heart-

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: uh, also matters.

Jeff Orlowski: Yeah, thank you.

Jerry: And, and so thank you for that.

Jeff Orlowski: Mm-hmm (affirmative).