

Margaret: 00:12 we're here to uh, just talk about Reboot-

Jerry: 00:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Margaret: 00:18 Leadership And The Art Of Growing Up. When did you first feel the desire to write this book?

Jerry: 00:28 Well I think the um, I think the way to think about that question is um, when, can I answer thi-, it this way. When did if first think about writing a book?

Margaret: 00:42 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 00:43 When I was about four.

Margaret: 00:44 (Laughs)

Jerry: 00:45 Um, and uh, you know, I joke but not really. Um, in so many ways I feel like I've been collecting stories all of my life. Um, you know, in the book I talk about the fact that I began journaling at around age 13, and pretty much every day of my life. I'm now 55, every day of my life since then I've journaled. Um, but to be more specific and be a little bit less facetious, um, I began thinking about trying to put a book together, when actually I was first putting my um, my second blog ... which uh, is an old blog called, The Monster In Your Head. And this predates Reboot, the company, by a couple years. And uh, I toyed with that as a theme for a long time. And I remember even talking about doing something on the notion of standing still.

Jerry: 01:55 But it really wasn't until Hollis Heinbaugh from Harper Collins emailed me, and I, I had been in conversation with a couple of different publishers, that uh, all of a sudden it went from this, "Wouldn't it be nice? It's kind of interesting, oh my god it's terrifying to consider," to "Holy mackerel, I'm actually going to get a contract!" And then I panicked, right because then I actually had a deliverable I had to go to.

Margaret: 02:40 You spoke briefly about journaling and the impact it's had on your life.

Jerry: 02:45 yeah.

Margaret: 02:45 For readers of the book, what do you hope they would take from the journaling experiences that you prompt them in the book, if their new to journaling? Or

what do you feel could be valuable from writing down their thoughts as they read the novel?

Jerry: 03:02 Oh, that's a great question. So um, it feels like it's a multi-part question, so I'll take it in, in multiple parts. Um, journaling isn't the only way to do what I'm about to describe. But I have found it to be an incredibly helpful uh, way. And what I do in my journaling, it, it feels more akin to processing than it does to uh, kind of maintaining a diary.

Margaret: 03:32 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 03:33 You know, "Dear Diary, yesterday I went for a walk in the park."

Uh, that's not the experience. More often than not, if I'm reviewing the past day or so uh, it's through the lens of what am I'm experiencing? And uh, and so for me, it's, it's a tool, I've come to see my mourning journal time, and my morning meditation time as one big, two-hour window of mindfulness. One big time period of real quiet, where it's an opportunity for me to just really answer that question, those core questions in your, in our lives. How am I feeling right now? What's going on? Now back to the book for a moment, the journaling prompt, the journaling invitations, uh, every chapter ends with a series of questions.

Jerry: 04:29 And the reason I, I put that together, was that I'm quite aware that when I was putting the book together there was a kind of memoir piece. And there was uh, stories, composite stories from the lives of my clients. And each of those is really positioned as a source of information, a source of uh, exploration. Um, and the idea of adding the questions, which actually came to me at the very end of the manuscript um, came about when I asked myself a very simple question. Which was, "Okay, now that I've told this story for example, my relationship to money, and how important my grandfather's sense of well-being was for me as it relates to money." What is it that I want the reader to think about in that moment? Um, and so I, I then wrote a series of questions really as prompts for people to think about.

Jerry: 05:28 Um, and I guess what was going on there was that um, I've always had a, uh, deep and profound relationship with text, with the, with the words in a book. If you follow the path of books that I have read, it'll be quite annoying. Because many of them are just like, I actually ge-, engage. You know, and I'll write in the margins-

Margaret: 05:53 (Laughs)

Jerry: 05:53 You know, "No, this is wrong." Or, "Oh, I never thought of that." Um, um, and because I think that, that kind of puzzling and working with the text, is another form of that kind of radical self-inquiry.

Margaret: 06:07 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 06:07 It's another form of dialogue that is going on. And so that was really the, the

impetuous behind um, those journaling questions.

Margaret: 06:21 On the note of radical self-inquiry, what makes it radical?

Jerry: 06:27 I think it's radical because we actually th-, don't do it often. (Laughs) And more, I think we're socialized to somehow associate inquiring within with a kind of narcissism.

Margaret: 06:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 06:41 Um, a self-indulgent navel-gazing. In fact, I've heard that term time and time again, uh, either from clients or even folks who might criticize the works that I, that I've done. Um, I laugh because uh, in response to that, because I think that what happens is, um, I think we're always, we've always got an eye turned inward, we just pretend that, that's not going on. And when that eye turned inward is working in the background, it actually disconnects us from the other person.

Margaret: 07:20 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 07:21 Whereas if we allow ourselves the radical act of attending to ourselves for periods of the day, it enables us to then turn around and be much more present for the other person because we've paid attention to ourselves. Now we get to give that attention to something else.

Margaret: 07:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 07:42 Um, and I think it's radical lastly, because um, it can be scary to look inward.

Margaret: 07:51 How can leaders or readers of the book, um, stay open in the face of uncertainty, looking at themselves radically?

Jerry: 08:04 You mean because when they look in they might be afraid?

Margaret: 08:07 Sure. How do they stand still?

Jerry: 08:10 Um, that's a powerful question. Um, well what comes is a teaching uh, which I don't reference in the book, but from one of my teachers whom I do reference in the book, Ani Pema Chodron. And in a book uh, called Comfortable With Uncertainty, she teaches about desire to sit like a mountain in the midst of the hurricane. And that image came to mind when you were describing that.

Margaret: 08:42 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 08:42 You're right, um, I am so used to being able to just pause and let's say answer fully the question, "How are you?"

Margaret: 08:52 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 08:53 Um, that I can forget that, that can be terrifying for people.

Margaret: 08:58 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 09:01 Um, and what I would say is uh, if you can pause and sit still and stand still in that moment, and say to yourself that whatever arises is acceptable because it's part of you-

Margaret: 09:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 09:18 That whatever you're feeling, whatever you're hearing in that self talk, is uh, okay, then it will sort of de-fang the monster in your head, (laughs) that comes up if you pause and sit still.

Margaret: 10:25 This question that you offer a lot to readers is, "How are you?"

Jerry: 10:35 Yeah.

Margaret: 10:35 Another question that is kind of a Jerry-ism is, "How am I'm complicit in creating conditions, I say that I don't want?" Can you uh, just briefly speak to the power of that question and what you try to get folks to consider when you prompt that question?"

Jerry: 10:56 Yeah, it's another great question, thank you for that. Um, first of all, to break down the question for a moment, I think it's really impo-, important. The word complicit is a little tongue-in-cheek, when I use it in that way. Um, in the sense that we often think of complicitness in something really terrible.

Margaret: 11:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 11:20 Um, but it has this other meaning which is, it's not me alone who's doing this. And that's important, because when we ask ourselves to radically inquire within, to how have I helped create these conditions, it's important to understand that we alone are not

responsible for those conditions. Um, and the reason that, that's important, is often times ... One of the reasons why it's so scary to look inward, one of the reasons why it's so scary to um, examine this qu-, this question is that um, there's this whole other voice that will arise, that says, "See, you are this terrible person, look what you've done with your life."

Jerry: 12:09 And so I want to make a really important point here, that the complicit, means that you have been working with the forces, whether they be other people, or whether they, o-, other external forces. So you're not wholly responsible for that. The second thing I would say about that is it's, it's equally important to recognize that the second ha-, the last half of that, the conditions I say I don't want. Not the conditions I don't want. And the reason I make that distinction is because we often want things but we say we don't want it. Meaning that there's this notion of a benefit, a secondary benefit that is derived uh, from the conditions or the, the, the situations that we're working with, which we shield our consciousness from.

Jerry: 13:11 So for example, um, if I, like I was working with a new client last night, and um, it was a first-time conversation, where it's sort of exploring the possibility of working together. And at one point I kind of asked a radically inquiring within question. And I said uh, "How long have you not felt safe?"

Margaret: 13:34 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 13:36 And she's in her 40s and she just, there was this gasp, and she had to consider all of her life.

Margaret: 13:46 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 13:47 And then I said, "What would you have to give up that you actually value ..." Remember that old question, "That if, we're you to feel safe?" And where we got to was that there was a power that she had internalized, that drove her to, to be ambitious. Because if she was safe then that would mean she'd be relaxed.

Margaret: 14:16 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 14:16 And if she was relaxed, that would mean she wasn't driven. If she wasn't driven then it would mean-

Margaret: 14:20 Yeah.

Jerry: 14:20 That she was not achieving. And so by looking at those questions, not, "Why have I been complicit?" Which can lead to negative self-criticism, but, "How, or rather in what ways might I have-

Margaret: 14:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 14:40 “Been complicit?” That’s a softer, gentler framing of the question. And, “What benefits might have been derived from the co-, helping to be complicit and creating the conditions I say I don’t want?” That’s the exploration, that’s the invitation there.

Margaret: 14:57 Can you speak a little bit to um, in the introduction you speak about the why of our lives-

Jerry: 15:04 Yeah.

Margaret: 15:04 Versus the how.

Jerry: 15:05 Yeah.

Margaret: 15:06 What’s the importance of changing the framing from why to how?

Jerry: 15:10 Well, there’s a very pragmatic answer to that which is, as much as it might be helpful in our business model to have a coach standing next to you every five minutes of the day, (laughs) um, it’s impossible.

Margaret: 15:23 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 15:23 And so what we really want to do for all of us, is to inculcate in ourselves our capacity to navigate difficult situations on our own. In order to do that, I can tell you how to navigate a difficult fierce conversation with someone, or I can get you back in touch with your core values and your core belief systems. And perhaps even the core belief system that you have the capacity to answer that question yourself. And if I can get you in touch with that-

Margaret: 15:55 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 15:56 Then you don’t need to know the how, because you get to create that how-

Margaret: 16:00 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 16:01 Moment-to-moment-to-moment. What is easily lost is an understanding of the instructions of step-by-step. What is not easily lost once found-

Margaret: 16:14 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 16:15 Is the way to your heart. If you know your heart, then you'll know your way to the how.

Margaret: 16:21 Mm-hmm (affirmative). And what does it mean to lead from the place of your true self?

Jerry: 16:30 Well, I often will say things like um, "If you're frightened, then say you're frightened."

Margaret: 16:40 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 16:41 "If you're confident, say your confident. If you're frightened but confident, say you're frightened but confident." Um, so uh, the truest self is the self that contains all of the self.

Margaret: 16:58 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 16:58 All the way down to your bones. Um, you know, as, Rumi says in that wonderful poem, The Guest House, "Welcome it all in, the meanness as well as the joy, the sadness as well as the happiness." Um, the totality of it, the truest self is the whole self.

Margaret: 17:18 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 17:19 Um, and when you lead from that whole self, uh, you may not have the answers to the how, but you can always pull together people to, in, in a joint capacity to answer the why's.

Margaret: 17:34 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 17:35 The collective why's.

Margaret: 17:36 In what way does work provide us the opportunity to consistently realign our inner and outer selves?

Jerry: 17:54 Um, I think that uh, the thing that's marvelous about work, is that it um, it's so dynamic. It's ever-changing. Um, if it was static, we could align ourselves once and be done, but because the conditions in which we work change ... The people we work with uh, uh, go through their own changes. Um, they grow or they leave or they uh, go through their own

challenges, or the customers change or the market conditions change, or, or a business size change, or a capital structure. Everything is constantly in this dynamic motion, very lively. And because of that, we're presented with this opportunity to realign and realign and realign and realign, again and again and again and again. And I think that, that is the uh, that's the opportunity.

Margaret: 19:02 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 19:02 And every single one of those alignments pres-, presents us with an opportunity to check ourselves. And so we can ask, some of the questions I ask uh, are things like, "What do I believe to be true about the world? Um, what kind of company do I want to work for?"

Margaret: 19:19 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 19:20 Well imagine asking that question I don't know every three or four months, because the company I thought I wanted to work for six months ago, has now changed. And so it's this opportunity to come back-

Margaret: 19:32 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 19:33 To it. Um, if I can uh, go a little further on that, I love the notion of the word practice. We don't say, "I'm going to have my yoga practice." And then get it right ... I got all the Assuan's done-

Margaret: 19:50 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 19:51 "I don't have to do them again." Or, I'm not going to sit in meditation because I sat-

Margaret: 19:55 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 19:55 "In meditation yesterday, and I got it right, I'm done."

Margaret: 19:58 Right. (Laughs)

Jerry: 19:58 Right? It's this practice. Um, and, and along with the notion implicating your question, I would suggest that there is a c-, there is an opportunity to think of leadership as practice.

Margaret: 20:12 Mm-hmm (affirmative).



Jerry: 20:14 And the, "To what end," becomes the full actualization of the adult. Right, not necessarily the successful exit from your company. Right, um, it's, it's this constant alignment of growth. It's the co-, the alignment towards growth, the alignment towards growth, that's the practice.

Margaret: 20:38 It's uh, the work of our lives, right? It's the practice.

Jerry: 20:41 It's the work of our lives.

Margaret: 20:42 Yeah.

Jerry: 20:43 That's right. That's right.

Jerry: 20:50 Well the one thing that I think might be helpful is...and I can't help it, I'll, I'll make a reference to my friend Crystal. Um, Crystal I, I met um, about a year ago and um, ended up coming to one of our bootcamps. And I remember um, meeting with her, and just having these long into the night conversations. We were at a retreat together. And, and we ended up talking about our mothers and our pasts and all of this stuff. And uh, our worlds could not be more different. Right, she works in Law Enforcement and it's just a very different world. And a few months ago, um, I sent her a copy of The Galley. And one day she sent me uh, a text message of her copy of The Galley with all these little sticky notes and post-it notes in it, with every page marked up.

Jerry: 22:06 And you know, as I said before, I was talking about you know, how I have this relationship with the text.

Margaret: 22:12 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 22:12 And what I saw was Crystal engaging with the text, engaging with the mar-, i-, in the margins. And so I have this vision, um, of, of the books being out in the wild. And three or four years from now when it's no longer on the best seller list ... My lips to God's ears, it would be on the best seller list. But m-, m, but being realistic. And what's happening is somebody's in trouble-

Margaret: 22:42 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 22:44 And they're talking to a friend, and that friend reaches onto their bookshelf and hands them a dog-eared, marked-up, marginale, n-, notes written in it, and says, "Here read this."

Margaret: 22:56 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 22:57 Now my publisher would want them to say, "Buy a new copy."

Margaret: 23:00 (Laughs)

Jerry: 23:01 But, (laughs) but you know, that notion of, of uh, the, the connection being passed, almost like a totem. "Here, this helped me, maybe this will help you." That's my wish.

Margaret: 23:15 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 23:16 But this is uh, you know, a long time ago, I, I thought of the books that I've read in my life as pebbles on the path in the forest when I was lost. And I feel like I just put a pebble down on the path.

Margaret: 23:32 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 23:32 So that's my wish.

Margaret: 23:35 It's uh, it makes me think that this book spans it's ... Whether you're a CEO of a company, or you work at the Post Office, or you work in Law Enforcement, these themes are human themes. And they connect to the root of what we're all going through in our day-to-day experiences.

Jerry: 23:56 I hope that's true. Um, so far, the folks who have read the book, and have come back to me, uh, they've kind of blown me away with, with that.

Margaret: 24:06 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 24:06 Um, many people have said that. And people that I did not expect, 20-year-olds, 70-year-olds, um, folks from all walks of life um, just coming back and saying, "There are universal truths in here." Um, what I will say about that is just this, I am really good at condensing and editing great leaders thoughts. (Laughs) Um, and I think I, I think that was my mission.

Margaret: 24:39 Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: 24:41 Was to, was to pass along what I've learned in that way. So, thank you.

Margaret: 24:50 Thank you.