

Dan Harris: [00:04:47](#) Hey, Bubby. How's it going? He hugs me only after he gave me that three 60 review. Welcome to your party. Uh, what, uh, what we discussed before and I think that would be good to talk about, just to kind of lay a groundwork for folks is let's talk about your basic operating philosophy. Radical self inquiry.

Jerry Colonna: [00:05:20](#) All right. What is that? It's a clever marketing term

[00:05:28](#) for therapy.

[00:05:29](#) No, just kidding. Um,

[00:05:36](#) it's a term I coined a, I tell this, I promise I'll try not to keep going, "As I say in my book." Um, it's a term that came to me at one point when I was really frustrated trying to explain, um, why understanding the how of how to lead well wasn't enough. Um, it's a term that I came to literally in frustration as I was standing at a whiteboard trying, which I often do, trying to explain, uh, uh, ah, something to a group of folks. When clients come in, they're almost always in a major anxious state. You don't reach out to a coach because everything's going well. And what they want to know is how do I fire someone? How do I hire someone? How do I do this? How do I do that? And I typically will turn it around and start asking them questions, questions like, what does it mean to lead? Well, what does it mean to be successful? What does it mean to fail and what are the consequences of those things? And so for me, the term radical self inquiry is, uh, a way to quickly define a process by which you start asking these sorts of questions. And the result is that you start to strip away the personas, uh, delusionary towels that you tell yourself about who you are, but you do so with compassion for yourself and with skill, with discernment so that you're not hiding anymore.

[00:07:34](#) So that's what radical self inquiry is.

Dan Harris: [00:07:36](#) Yeah. I mean, yeah, I think I've used this phraseology before with you, but the idea, as I understand it, is that if you are in a position of power anywhere, but in your context, in particular in a, in a company, um, dawn examined vag and you have unexamined baggage, you just pass along your pathology all over the place and it's, it bleeds into the organization.

Jerry Colonna: [00:08:04](#) Yeah. I mean, in a sense, this is, this is why I think this conversation connects back to the larger theme here. Um, we're talking about CEOs. We're talking about, um, those who have role power or status power, uh, or positional power in

organizations. And when those folks who are in positions of power, uh, aren't willing to do their inner work, aren't willing to look at the complex structures, the character, logical structures that developed in childhood when they're not willing to do that, the consequence is that we create organizations unconsciously that are designed to make ourselves feel better about ourselves. And we spread perhaps toxicity throughout organizations. So if you grew up, for example, with a belief system that the world is a dog eat dog, self optimizing, you better get it yours before someone gets it, gets to you. Well then you're going to create an organization that mimics that and then you're going to wonder, you're going to call a coach and say, how come nobody in the organization trusts me?

[00:09:24](#)

Well, you're not trustworthy.

Dan Harris:

[00:09:31](#)

You, you talk a lot in, uh, in our sessions about love, safety and belonging as part of the idea of, you know, tapping into the primordial childhood version of yourself.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:09:47](#)

Uh hmm.

Dan Harris:

[00:09:48](#)

Where'd you get this love, safety and belonging thing and what does it mean

Jerry Colonna:

[00:09:51](#)

It's clever marketing again.

Dan Harris:

[00:09:53](#)

Yeah. Um, and I'm missing 10% happier, have no problems with clever marketing. Um,

[00:10:01](#)

yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:10:02](#)

What I was reaching for was what, what is it that we, that's behind everything. And you, you know, we've done this in sessions where I might say, so, so Dan, what would happen then? What would happen then? You know, kind of like, you know, what's next? What's next? When I ask about the consequence, what if I don't do this? What if I don't do that? What if I give up this job? What if I make that change? And I, I sort of usually get folks to really sort of boil down what it is that's really motivating them. I ask him that question and almost universally it's one or more or some sort of combination of what I would say the wish to love and be loved. The wish to feel safe existentially, physically, spiritually, emotionally and the wish to know where we belong and yes, sure, if I know where I belong then generally I'm going to feel safe. And if I feel safe, I'm generally going to be more capable of love. But I think early, early on in our church, in our childhood, we are constantly

reading the landscape or amygdala is constantly wired to say, am I safe?

[00:11:18](#)

Are they going to kill me? Do they love me.

[00:11:24](#)

And because of our wishes for those things, we then develop these character logical structures, these belief systems. Um, for those who might be an engineer in the room, a computer engineer, sub routines, programming sub routines that just sort of run in the background all the time. It might be, don't speak up because when you were a kid that was unsafe or it might be anger is really, really bad. So it's better to be anxious, an angry, and then we grow up and we create these lives better built on this foundation that is actually unexamined.

[00:12:19](#)

And we find ourselves repeating patterns and patterns and parents again and again and not really, I'm not really sure why. Wish always reminds me of the Carl Jung quote. "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." Want to know why you date that same person again and again regardless of the meat bag. Well, why you ended up in the same job regardless of the company. Something running in the background.

Dan Harris:

[00:12:56](#)

Oh, so did you invent this whole thing out of whole cloth? Are you borrowing from mass low or like where, where is this? I borrowed everything from Sharon [inaudible]. I think love, safety and belonging seems like it comes out of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:13:16](#)

Hey, you know, I, I'm not sure that I invented anything to be honest with you. Um, I'm a really good editor. Um, I think that, uh, a lot of this stems from, um, various explorations that I had to go through my own self in order to, begin the process of growing up myself. And so some of this comes from Buddhist teachings. Um, I had been studying with Sharon almost a decade here. Wow. Um, but, but I took my thousands of Buddhists 18 years ago. I had been in psychoanalysis in some form or another since for almost 30 years now. And, uh, I have been studying organizations and leadership first as a reporter than later as a, uh, as an investor and then much later as a board member, um, for almost 30 years. So I am not 100% sure where all this comes from, but I think the lineage goes in many different directions.

Dan Harris:

[00:14:31](#)

It's not like, you know, you slept at a holiday in less Lakita. Yeah. Um, that's a commercial joke, but sorry, marketer humor. Um, but, but so the, the sessions you have in you, there was an

article famously about you in wired magazine that said, the man who makes founders cry, right. Did these sessions get pretty intense?

- Jerry Colonna: [00:14:58](#) Do they?
- Dan Harris: [00:14:59](#) I mean not with me.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:15:04](#) I do remember what you called w Dan made reference to or three 60. Can I just note something and note anything we first met, um, uh, just about a year ago when you asked me to help and do a 360 degree performance review in his life.
- Dan Harris: [00:15:23](#) Don't do that. I refer to it as an autopsy and a person who is still alive. I also say that the subtitle for the book for my review should have been, you suck from every angle.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:15:44](#) Well I am in your bravery dude because, uh, what did we interviewed? Like 30 people?
- Dan Harris: [00:15:50](#) No, that is 16 people.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:15:52](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, Bianca said he's better, right? Just marginally better than shit. Um, but my favorite reaction that you gave me was it was like a daisy cutter bomb into the go daisy cutter bomb into the bunker of your life.
- Dan Harris: [00:16:10](#) I just said daisy cutter. You started talking about the bunker
- Jerry Colonna: [00:16:15](#) cause I asked what was the get what was in the bunker
- Dan Harris: [00:16:19](#) because that's interesting. I thought it was a, I was a very good client when you asked me that question and I said, none of your fucking business
- Jerry Colonna: [00:16:29](#) And I'm a really good coach and I let you stay with that.
- Dan Harris: [00:16:33](#) But so, uh, take us in the room. Yeah, just take us in the room.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:16:39](#) Well, I think opening up the bunkers, it's intense. It's scary. I mean, we, we lock these things away for a reason cause it's, it can be really scary. And that may in fact be one of the belief systems that we grew up with, right. Which is we don't talk about things.
- Yeah. You know, mean, you know, as I talk about openly, I grew up with a, a mentally a mom and, and an alcoholic father. And one of the things that was really difficult was that mom would

be off in the corner talking to people who weren't in the room, but we didn't talk about it. Now what's crazier than mom's parking or, or Bobby Kennedy or that the rest of us are just ignoring it. Right.

So I suppose it's intense. Um, the, the thing, can I say a word about that?.

I don't set out to ask people to cry, but I believe that we need to feel our feelings. And I believe that many of us, because we don't feel our feelings, the predominant feeling that we are not feeling is sadness. See some people in the room right now feeling their feelings and there's something glorious about feeling our feelings. Cause I often say to a client, we don't get to cherry pick which feelings we want to feel. Please all the only have the happy ones. Thank you. Please just give me joy. But in order to feel joy, you have to feel the whole Magilla the whole experience and sometimes the feeling, the whole thing is hard. But man, you get to be human.

Dan Harris:

What does that mean?

Jerry Colonna:

Ah, human beings are amazing. What we do, we get to feel alive. We get to create poetry. We get to create music. We get to create extraordinary experiences. We get to create love and safety and belonging, right? Sure we do harm. But I don't think that's the essence of who we are. So we get to, we get to become these full actualized humans. There's Maslow for you, right? This full person that we were, it's our birthright and you know, I'll reveal, you know, my, my, my Buddhist belief systems that, that the thing that released me from a lot of challenges from my childhood was, um, uh, teaching one of the sutures from the Buddha, which I interpret simply as this. I am fundamentally basically good. And I know this to be true because I was born human. What? I don't have to earn anything. I don't have to earn love, safety and belonging? That changes everything.

I am human and human beings are capable of enlightenment. I'm not, but human beings are capable of enlightenment. And so therefore, basically foundationally, fundamentally good, entirely capable of evil, but fundamentally good.

Dan Harris:

How much skepticism from your hard charging, charging type a CEO folks do you get when day? Yeah, when you start talking about, Yeah, be human and uh, you're fundamentally good. And

if changes everything and their thinking, I would imagine, well my sales team isn't functioning or you know, my CMO is shit head or whatever.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:21:53](#)

I'm from Brooklyn. So, um, I look, I, I get this kind of resistance all the time. You know, as Tim mentioned, like I, I started my career as a venture capitalist as I started my career as a journalist but eventually venture capitalists. And then I was working at JP Morgan and [inaudible]. What I often say is, well I'll tell a quick story. A guy came to one of our bootcamps, the CEO came to one of our bootcamps, which is a, a leadership retreat that we lead. And the first night I'm walking around without shoes on, which is normally what I do. And I'm reading poetry, which is normally what I do. And people are crying, which is normally what happens. We're sitting in circle and you can just see he's just like dying his in his body cigar. And finally he says, "what the fuck?"

I didn't come here to cry and read poetry. I came here because I have a greedy SOB head of sales and I don't know what to do about him."

So I said, okay, Bobby, listen, um, promise me that you'll stay by the end and by the end of the week and if you do not know what to do about your head of sales, I'll give you your money back because I know how to talk to these folks. It's about money.

I should have offered them a discount on the next one too.

Anyway, so he stays. Two days go by and we'd start talking at this point where we're in the process, we're talking about the, the Jungian notion of shadow, the disowned parts of ourselves that as Carl Jung described live in our, our shadow and these can be positive qualities, negative qualities and he's just gets really uncomfortable. And he crunches of his face. It's Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, what's the problem? I don't understand, I said, Bobby, tell me about shame.

And it just sort of looks at me and he says, I was 13 and he started crying and he tells me the story of running away from home. Uh, he had an abusive stepfather, uh, being homeless, living on an overpass in Atlanta and becoming addicted to alcohol. And he's just, he's feeling his feelings. And eventually I asked him, what was the promise you made to yourself? And he said that I would never be hungry and so I said, "Bobby, what is greed?" If I have all the toys, I'll never be hungry. If I have all the

money in the world, I'll be safe. I mean, this is a five year olds logic, isn't it?

I said, "Bobby, you outsourced your agreed. Who hired this character?" Me. Why haven't you fired him? Uh, he's doing a good job. When we have power and don't examine these things. We will often outsource to somebody else within the organization all of the negative parts of ourselves that we don't want to own. And so the work with him became taking back that word, greed and transforming it into the wish to not be hungry. Now we can relate to that and releasing that meant that he didn't have to act it out or he didn't have to hire an actor to act out the greed and we transformed the mission statement to include that everybody who works for the company has enough food to eat. Now, is that not a great mission statement for a company? Oh, by the way, sales tripled in a year. Now it doesn't always work this neatly, but how do you unlock creativity? How do you unlock the specialness of an organization that's good at the heart of what's really going on within the organization?

Dan Harris:

[00:26:29](#)

Well, we take a t an attempted, uh, articulating what you mean by the fully human thing. Yeah. Which is that we have all sort of, we're dude, the poem you wants to quote it to me, I hate poetry is I'm Walt Whitman. I contain multitudes. So we contain multitudes. We do. Uh, and if you're fan, constantly defending off parts that you don't like a lot of busy work. And then you're being owned by the stuff that's there anyway that you don't want to look at. And that's the ghost in the machine that you referenced before. This sort of the programming that we're not seeing, um, and fully human is just kind of being cool with all of it and doing your best to let the better angels dominate within that context. You on the first time you were on my podcast said something like, I love who I am and I'm a mess.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:27:31](#)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And, and one of the things I like to do, you know the phrase no mistake, the light in me honors the light. I like the mess in me, honors the mess in you. It's, it's much more real. Um, okay. I winced a little bit because I was worried that um, someone might hear what we are saying as licensed to just be a mess and to sort of flop all over and be toxic. No, no, no, no. But if we really want to take responsibility and ownership for the, uh, for our acting out, for the ways in which, which by the way I think is a condition of adulthood, taking responsibility for our own behavior, then we have to actually acknowledge that we have

that behavior. We have the capacity for meanness. We had the capacity for demeaning people, for hurting people.

I understand, That more often than not, it's rooted not in some broken, permanently broken mess of me or some evil that has taken over me. But it was probably programmed in as a child, as a defense mechanism. And the sweet move is to say, I don't need to do that anymore. I don't need to bully. I don't need to hurt other people. I'm safe. Thank you. That part of me. Thank you for taking me into adulthood, but I'm good. I don't need to do that.

That's part of that fully actualize, fully human person.

Dan Harris:

You want to talk about the loyal soldier?

Jerry Colonna:

Sure. So this, this is a concept that I first read about, um, um, by reading the book by Bill Plotkin, who's, um, depth psychologist, um in depth psychologist out in Colorado and the loyal soldier concept. It's, it's a beautiful, brilliant metaphor for free. Remember the somewhat apocryphal stories of Japanese soldiers who held out in islands in the Pacific long after the war was over.

Dan Harris:

[00:30:05](#)

By the way, I googled this and I think it actually may be true. It is true. There was one character who was found, he was in the Philippine islands in the 1970s.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:30:13](#)

Wow. Right? 1970s. And so for 30, 40, 50 years, he defended the homeland against the war that he thought was still raging. And what psychologists have done has you have used that as a metaphor to define, to, to give an image to those belief systems that we adopt as children to protect us.

I love this image because rather see, one of the dangers of actually starting to unpack ourselves is that we start to use it as yet another source of self-loathing and self criticism. Oh, look at me. Look at what an idiot I am, blah, blah, blah, blah. Right. But when we transform it and we say, oh, wait a minute, this was a loyal soldier. This was an attempt to keep me safe, or this was an attempt to make sense out of an insensible situation that I might have grown up with. And then we can learn further from the Japanese society, the way they responded to this person. Instead of finding them out and humiliating the soldier and saying to them, what do you an idiot? Don't you know the war is over. We're at peace with America. They actually welcomed them home with parades and thanked him for his loyalty and very gently took the gun out of his hands. Yeah, to reassure him



that the war was over. You're safe, you're an adult. And it was really scary, but we're okay and you did a good job. But now it's time to be an adult.

Dan Harris: [00:32:28](#) You've talked about your recipe being radical self inquiry and radical self acceptance.

Jerry Colonna: [00:32:34](#) Okay, sure. I, I don't, I've said that? Um, yeah. I think that that's the self-acceptance part is incredibly important because as I said before, it was, we start unpack these things. We can often use them as excuses for reinforcing and old loyal soldier belief, which is that you're not worthy. Right?

By accepting that we are, in fact messes, isn't that great? Were messes. By accepting that fact, we don't have to defend against it. We don't have to feel shame. We don't have to make other people feel badly because we feel badly. We can just say, we're amass and I'm going to do my best every day and tomorrow I might have to do it all over again because I might mess up today. Well, that that's where those two things, yeah.

Dan Harris: [00:33:50](#) Yeah. I mean, I found it because, yeah, post three 60 I've had, it's been a year now. A lot of shame, especially at the beginning about the stuff that was turned up and your technique is you shine a light on it, but not with the shame. It's like, let's look at this. It's interesting, but the bad boy, you know, bad dog things, newspaper on the snow is not part of the deal. And I think it's really useful.

Jerry Colonna: [00:34:19](#) I, I don't think that's how the dog learns to not pee on the carpet. I, you know, wrapping people on the nose. Yeah. I think that, that I, I think that love, love works. Compassion marks.

You know, we have this teacher here teaches us all about loving kindness, right? We don't do use discernment and insight to understand the way in which we are operating in the world only to beat ourselves up. That's not the point.

Trust me, I tried.

Dan Harris: [00:34:58](#) So how do we operationalize this? You said before that you're not, uh, um, accepting that you're a mess, honoring your own mass balance, other people's mess, et cetera, et cetera. It doesn't mean you're flopping around and I'm bleeding out all over the place and telling everybody your deepest, darkest secrets. So how do you be fully human to yours, your terminology without being like incredibly annoying?

Jerry Colonna:

[00:35:24](#)

Well, we have another year to go on that.

Um, I don't know about the not being annoying part. I think, because some people might find this annoying, but I think that if we can define annoying as like spreading toxicity, spreading, especially in organization structures in our communities, in our societies, yeah. If, if I am taking responsibility for me and I am with, you know, in my Buddhist lineage, we often talk about, talk about the warrior stance. If I am taking responsibility with a warrior stance where I am accepting the totality of myself and every day and Sharon taught me this word with remorse and regret, not guilt and vowing to learn every day to be marginally better every day. Imagine if all of us were doing that, especially those of us. I mean, here we are two white men.

I'm cisgendered, right? I mean those of us who hold this kind of power, if we took responsibility like this every day, I don't think that's particularly annoying. I think that's, that might in fact alleviate some of the suffering that's going on in the world.

Dan Harris:

Well, I don't disagree with the latter part of that.

Jerry Colonna:

Okay. So disagree with the former.

Dan Harris:

Uh, sometimes he does agree. I just have questions about how to do it. And I can imagine ways in which being, uh, you know, oversharing, your own messiness and all that stuff, it could be annoying.

Jerry Colonna:

[00:37:28](#)

Right, right, right. So, so let's talk about in the context say of an organization, right? I'm not suggesting that, uh, we turn every business meeting into a therapy session or even a coaching session. Um, what I am suggesting, and I was talking to, to some folks before I said this, what I am suggesting is what if we started each meeting just acknowledging that we're having trouble right now. Like, you know, hey, it's Monday morning. I just want to let you know that I had a fight with my life partner this weekend. I'm feeling really depleted so if I'm a little short right now with you, that's what's going on. It has nothing to do with you. That's it.

Rather than trying to defend against that feeling and sort of blocking in a way. And then we go forward with our work and then the other person's like, oh, that jerk today, I don't understand what's going on. Let me polish up my resume and move on.

And then they come home and they take it out, their life partner and then that person takes it out on the kid and it's like, oh, stop. Just take responsibility. Hey, I'm having a hard day. Okay, I'll give you a little space and then we move on. That feels very adult to me.

Dan Harris: [00:38:54](#) No, it does feel adult. I just, I, I just think about, uh, especially when I was more junior at ABC news or I'm looking at my wife who works in clinical medicine as do my parents which is a hard, driving formal in some way world to start a meeting that way it would, it would be very countercultural and maybe not super successful at the beginning unless you were the person in power setting the tone.

Jerry Colonna: [00:39:22](#) Ah, you just said something I think really important. What if those who were in power set a tone and modeled something different? What if those who held leadership positions actually said, it's not just my responsibility to produce profit, but to create humane working environments so that the best of us can thrive.

Dan Harris: [00:39:51](#) And by the way, there's research to show that as psychological safety goes up, in other words, the ability to speak freely without fear in a team, on a team, that those are the teams that perform the best,

Jerry Colonna: [00:40:02](#) especially over a period of time, right?

Leading through fear can produce extraordinary results in short births, but at what cost and the best people will leave if that's the sustained model.

But if we, if a leader, if someone who's holding positional power models using the challenges of leadership to actually complete their own process, then this magical thing happens where it becomes safe for everybody within the organization to start to do the same thing.

Dan Harris: [00:40:40](#) So for those of us who are listening, who aren't in a position of power, you know, aren't the CEO of our organization, um, maybe we're individual contributors or junior, how can we operationalize the wisdom you're dropping here tonight?

Jerry Colonna: [00:41:03](#) Well, it sort of depends on the position that the person is in, right? So if the person is a at the beginning of their adult career, um, by understanding some of these forces at work, they can start to unpack their own reaction to the conditions in which

they're working. Um, and what, what pops into my mind is something that my son, Michael, who's now 21 said to me when we were, when he was 13, and I, I, he and I had gone to the movies and, um, there was a scene in the movie that was very, very upsetting to me and it brought me back to childhood and some experiences I had as a kid. And I just broke down in tears and I was a mess. And, uh, you know, the lights go up and dad's still sitting there crying and he's 13, and he's like, what is going on? And this is uncomfortable. And finally he says something really magical and, and brilliant. Uh, he said, "Dad, you might as well tell me what's going on because if not, when gonna make shit up and it's going to be negative about me." And I think that's what we do when those who have power don't tell us what's going on, we make shit up and it's about us. And so the flip side of that is to begin to understand that when you're encountering that toxicity, we know this is true. What I'm about to say. We know it's intellectually true, but to feel it, hey wait, maybe it's not actually about me.

Hey wait, there may be something going on over there and to just pause and not do what we did as children, which is to internalize the suffering we see as our responsibility to fix or ours to have caused in the first place. And that's one thing to operationalize, to use your term that we can do early in our career. It doesn't mean you're not responsible for what you're doing, cause you could be redoing stuff that you ought not to be doing. It's time to grow up, but not every negative feeling in the workplace or your community or is in fact a reflection of how broken you are. And that little Jujitsu move can be really a lifesaver.

Dan Harris: [00:43:38](#)

It puts me in mind of something that we talk a lot about in our coaching sessions is the issue of safety. Yeah. Um, you said something to me two sessions ago about, you know, Dan, can't you just, um, realize you're safe just as you are, which is such a Jerry -ism.

And I remember that I came back to you the last time and said, Whoa, what does that mean and how do I do that? And, uh, I don't remember what you said cause it so can you say it again?

Jerry Colonna: [00:44:13](#)

In what way does it keep you safe not to remember. Not just, I hope I didn't use the phrase. Can't you just probably didn't. It does remind me of what my, a former psychoanalyst sayers may she rest in peace used to say to me. All right, Jerry, you

are crazy.

Um, what was your question? No, uh, uh, it was something about you are safe I think. I think, and by the way you, you also said to me at some point in the last few weeks because he's been reviewing, he's been recording our sessions and, and reviewing the transcriptions, which totally makes me feel unsafe.

Dan Harris: [00:45:06](#) Well, actually I've carried with me, I'm working documents over there. I'm working on a chapter of my next book and it's all about this process, this part of the process. So it's right here, you cannot see it.

Jerry Colonna: [00:45:23](#) But when you said that to me, it made me realize that what I'm probably doing is projecting my lack of safety from childhood into our conversations more often than it may be. So I'll acknowledge that that may be going on.

Dan Harris: [00:45:36](#) Yeah. Actually a bit. Can I interrupt you for a second? I apologise. Uh, when you started talking about love, safety and belonging, I was like, this is some bullshit. I'd have no idea. Like none of this means anything to me. But over time I, that the safety thing became really interesting to me because I was, we've discussed, I had a pretty healthy childhood, I would say. I mean not, there was no violence in the home and um, that I can remember. No physical violence. No, no. And I don't remember much emotional violence either and was a, just a intact middle-class upbringing in a leafy suburb, very privileged, um, and F in almost every way. Um, so I didn't yeah, really resonate with the safety thing. And yet as we, over time we talked about, you know, did my, the Jewish side of the family escaped the Cossacks. Yes. Did my great, great grandfather have financial worries and kill himself in the kitchen? Yes. Um, do, I spent a lot of time worrying about where I stand at work and how much is in our bank account and et Cetera, et cetera. Yes. And so, so safety is a big deal as I started to examine it. Okay. So I don't think you were projecting them inappropriately is my answer.

Jerry Colonna: [00:46:57](#) Okay. So can we just acknowledge that actually he said something really powerful and important right there and he said it in a Dan way, which was quick and quippy right? What he's talking about is intergenerational trauma, which leads to belief systems. And there has been plenty of evidence read "The Body Keeps Score." There's been plenty of evidence that shows multiple generations back. The fears that they experienced can actually create chromosomal changes two or three generations out. And so the norm in the family in this idea, like leafy suburb family is to worry about money.

Dan Harris: [00:47:55](#) My parents this over called it didn't use the heat in the winter. So we sat around and like they were really flinty and so like they didn't turn the heat up. Super Hot

Jerry Colonna: [00:48:26](#) They were physicians. Yeah. So they were really, really poor.

Dan Harris: [00:48:31](#) No, but interestingly, I grew up, we grew up in a wealthy town and we were not that wealthy. My parents drove like Shitty, you know, Brown, uh, that Plymouth, Valeant and a gray Chevy, Chevrolet, Chevrolet left or whatever, that sort of hatchback piece of shit. Um, uh, and so I had this running dialogue of

Jerry Colonna: Not having enough.

Dan Harris: Yes. Yes.

Jerry Colonna: [00:49:01](#) And what was one of the main issues that you came into coaching about? Bianca, you remember? How many jobs do you have?

Dan Harris: [00:49:11](#) I had three. Now I have two. And why do we need to have three jobs? You know when you're this awesome, you're in demand.

Jerry Colonna: [00:49:29](#) but this is, this is what I'm talking about. It's kind of like, you know, you know when there's a leak in the roof and you look at the ceiling spot and you go, oh, that's where the leak is but the leak is actually over here. Why do you have three jobs? Why do I have no time for my family? Why did my parents not turn the heat on in the winter? What happened to Greg? Grandpa.

Dan Harris: My grandpa lost the fortune. Yes. And killed himself. Didn't even lose a fortune. He was a poor Jewish guy. But he lost what he had. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna: [00:50:07](#) This is what we do. We take those stories and we interpret them or interpret them. I have a client who history 60 came back and said the problem with Mike as he can never celebrate, he can never relax. He can never like company went from 15 million in revenue to 50 million in revenue to 150 in revenue. I knew, still not satisfied, driven, driven, driven, driven. Driving is employee crazy, right?

Great grandparents survived the Nazi programs. And here is the message he got. If you relax the knocks gonna come on the

door. You better not relax. Now how can you celebrate if you can't relax? Leak is there. No, it's there.

- Dan Harris: [00:51:02](#) You didn't answer my question. How do I feel safe right now? Always perpetuity, et Cetera, et cetera.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:51:11](#) Forever and ever.
- Dan Harris: [00:51:13](#) You're the one who said you. Why can't you realize you're safe?
- Jerry Colonna: [00:51:15](#) Are you safe in this moment right now? Very much. Okay. What makes you safe?
- Dan Harris: [00:51:21](#) I like attention. Is that true?
- Jerry Colonna: [00:51:28](#) What? So if the, if, if they left the room and the attention wasn't on you, uh, what makes me say for right now? I was kidding. I'm, you're talking about some pretty deep personal things and yet you feel safe.
- Dan Harris: [00:51:44](#) I don't know the answer to that question.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:51:49](#) What are the conditions that you need to feel safe?
- Dan Harris: [00:51:52](#) This puts me in mind of the, you were asked this once by your shrink and you said as much money as Bill Gates. Right. I don't actually think that, I don't know the answer.
- Jerry Colonna Hang out with it. I mean, what would, by the way, this is kind of, we just slipped at the coaching. Um, you'll get a bill, which he won't pay because he's too busy not paying the heat.
- Dan Harris: No, I convinced my company to pay.
- [00:52:30](#) everything needs to be monetized in order to keep me safe.
- Jerry Colonna: [00:52:35](#) Laughing. That's an interesting joke. That's an interesting thing because one of w is there anything about that belief system that might in fact actually stand in the way? Have you having happiness or love and belonging?
- Speaker 2: [00:52:48](#) Yeah, like a million things.
- Jerry Colonna: Like what?
- Dan Harris: [00:52:57](#) I don't know.

Jerry Colonna: I just said that, um, pick one, not a million. The wish to be safe. How might that actually get in a way of say love?

Dan Harris: [00:53:15](#) Uh, well, let me think. Let me, uh, one of the things in the three 60 was that I can be very short with people.

[00:53:23](#) Right. Um, and I think one of the things that I came to and working with you is I didn't understand why I was doing that other than just like impatience, arrogance, but it was linked to I think it is linked to those things. And um, I have these ingrained ideas about standards of excellence in my work and if I feel that somebody is threatening them, I will let them have it.

Jerry Colonna: [00:53:53](#) And if that's a story of love, threatened, what happens to your, in your mind, What happens to your physical safety?

Dan Harris: [00:54:04](#) The five-year-old. Thanks. It's up for grabs.

Jerry Colonna: [00:54:12](#) So, when you're short with people, you're protecting the five-year-old in the five year old belief system that I have to have two, three jobs and be constantly busy with real in order to ward off what happened in the past.

Dan Harris: [00:54:30](#) Yes.

Jerry Colonna: [00:54:34](#) You see the complexity here. Um, perhaps the antidote, perhaps the wish for to feel safe all the time could be transformed into the ability to feel and to, to feel that you can love and be loved.

Dan Harris: [00:55:02](#) Say more about that.

Jerry Colonna: [00:55:09](#) When you're short with people, perhaps it's not loving.

Dan Harris: Yes, I would agree with that.

Jerry Colonna: And if you lean into the part of you that is capable of loving, cause he's actually kind of living, isn't he? Yeah, I've seen it. Dude. If you lean into that part of you and feed that part of you, perhaps it's not that you'll be safe forever, but perhaps the need to feel safe will dial down a little bit.

Dan Harris: That why he's such a good coach.

[00:55:49](#) I am hogging all of the airtime here. I was loved. I think, I think what would be nice is to let other folks ask some questions



because we do have time. Yes. Thank you for that, by the way. Yes, thank you.

Katherine Powell: [00:56:55](#) Thank you so much. This was remarkable. Um, my name is Katherine Powell. I'm a law professor and a former, uh, Obama White House official. Hi. I know, I tweeted you. Um, so I wanted to ask about gender and I wanted to ask about power. And, um, one of the things I research is about women's leadership. And when I worked in the Obama administration, we invested in women and girls worldwide because we found that when you invest in women and girls education and women's empowerment, it helps to grow economies. It helps to lead to better security, longer term peace in conflict situations. So there's a business case to be made for investing women women's leaderships, right? It's not only the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do is we've heard people say, so I wanted to ask you a bit about diversity in and leadership, whether it's gender or race or other forms of difference.

[00:57:49](#) And the other question was really about power and about hierarchy. Because I'm a law professor, I work in a very non hierarchical situation. We're all our own boss. But when I worked in government, it's like, it's very hierarchical. The president is the commander in chief and you just give the order and it's like, you know, just operates on down. So I wanted to ask about, um, is it good to have hierarchy in the workplace in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, creativity, unlocking all that. And it really relates back to the initial question about gender and about forms of difference when we think about power and hierarchy.

Dan Harris: [00:58:24](#) I'm so glad you get to answer that question. That's such a smart question.

Jerry Colonna: [00:58:30](#) It's great to see you, Katherine. Here's what I think about in terms of, let me, let me speak to hierarchy first and then circle back to the gender and, and uh, can we expand that even to talk about, uh, identity, however one identifies with a kind of openness around that.

[00:58:55](#) So, uh, I'm, I'm a fan of and proponent of, uh, what has often been termed servant leadership. And I believe wholeheartedly that there's a little fun little thing I do. Whereas I'll drop onto a whiteboard and I'll draw a triangle and I'll say, what is this? And you know, eventually people say, oh, that's an organization structure and say, great, who's at the top? Right? And it's almost always, um, El Hefe, right? The boss or it might be an, it's oftentimes, um, uh, identified with a masculine pronoun.

But in the end, I, I joke and I'll say, you know, well, it's God, right? Like who's at the top of that pyramid?

[00:59:40](#)

And we often talk about the limitations of that as a structured way of growing. And so this, the, here's a business case why that's a challenge. It doesn't scale. In fact, most of the time I get calls from clients who are completely freaked out and in pain because they put themselves at the top of the pyramid and think it's their responsibility to have all the answers to be perfect all the time to be, to, to, to have what Parker Palmer, one of my teachers calls functional atheism a kind of just like, "I know all the answers."

[01:00:22](#)

And so I suggest flipping the pyramid and asking those who have power, whatever the source of power, asking them to hold a question, what do those around me, what do those who are around me need to thrive? And that creates a very, very fluid and a terrific organization. And that works really well for about 80% of the time because there is a role for hierarchy and it goes like this, fire everybody out of the room. That's a hierarchical statement with someone who had a moment, has positional power to say, here's what, here's an emergency. But when that the problem is that's overused and inappropriately used and it crushes people.

[01:01:15](#)

Now, gender and identity. And again, I'm speaking from this body and this body has a very, very limited perspective. What I have observed is that those who identify as female tend to live in a double bind. Uh, you know, I can get up here and speak a good game about authenticity and being real and showing up with your feelings. But if you come from a, a marginalized social location, the risk is intense. And I don't think that there's enough language, there's enough discussion about that and that, that challenge associated with that.

Dan Harris:

How would you tailor your advice if your client was a female of color or maybe just a female?

Jerry Colonna:

Well the, the, the, to me as I'm, I feel fortunate that I'm a coach and not a theoretician so I get to say, let's talk about your specific situation in your specific experience, in your specific circumstance.

[01:02:34](#)

And so then of course all advice is tailored in that way. But it took me a long time to understand that the things that I would encourage say men to do didn't necessarily work in all circumstances, either a person of color or a person, uh, who identifies as, as a woman or as someone who identifies with,

with a, a kind of non-binary fluid experience. It's a very different experience. And so my responsibility then is to get damn curious and reflect back as best as I can. And I feel like I didn't answer your question Katherine. Okay, thank you.

Speaker:

[01:03:31](#)

Hey, how are you doing? I mean, are you doing good? Thank you. Very incredible night. Actually a, my life coach brought me here tonight, so thanks for bringing me here. So coach, I got mine. So I'm actually, I just recently became the CEO of my company, so thanks for the great insight tonight. It's been incredible. You referenced the childhood many times tonight, the leak, the story about your father, about having that belief that something was wrong with you because of him being quiet. Do you have any suggestions to the audience tonight about, you know, digging back into that childhood because there's a lot of memories that I have that I'm conscious about that. In my last three years I've been, I'm in recovery actually for the last three years and in my last recovery I've gone back to a lot of those conscious moments to understand, no, my dad was a certain way. I finally accepted him today and it made me go to the next level. But I feel like there's so many obstacles that I still have that are deep in my subconscious that I'm not able to bring to the front and address them. Is there any suggestions you have, you know, to try to go back into that childhood so that we can start to face these.

Jerry Colonna:

can I have your first name again? Amean.

[01:04:42](#)

Yeah. Thank you. This is just an intuitive response, but be gentle with yourself. Yeah, it needs to do that, doesn't it? Go slowly when you start to unpack, the impulse might be to rush and unpacking will be easy. Let go slowly. Take her time. You just said a really important thing. I'm in recovery. Well, part of the recovery is to actually let your body rest. Let your emotional body rest too. So you unpack, you made an association with your dad.

[01:05:27](#)

Whew.

[01:05:29](#)

Perhaps you can see the ways that the relationship with dad or who he was is showing up in how you believe you ought to be as a leader. Yeah. That his eyes just went bang. You know? So we start to see that. Maybe do a little journaling, maybe go for a walk in a coaching session, right? Maybe you pull up a good friend, you say, you know, hey, this is what's happening. And lastly, the one thing I, I would wish for you to remember is you're not alone with this. I don't know if you could feel it, but there are a number of people who are nodding their heads and recognizing the experience that you had.

Speaker: [01:06:15](#) Thank you.

Jerry Colonna: You're welcome.

Speaker: [01:06:39](#) First. Congratulations on the book. And uh, it was, it was actually really a great conversation. Um, so could you share insights into, um, active listening and how and how active listening, um, can make a person a better leader.

Jerry Colonna: [01:06:53](#) Can you define active listening for folks? Um, I, I used to be his college professor, so my brother also was his brother and he just crashed the course. Yeah, true story. It's true. Daniel is like, I've got a brother, he's got all listen to this

Speaker: Um, so, so a active listening, um, being, being genuine and present with the, with the people that you're, that are having a conversation with and, and, and, and actually lending an open ear. Well, well, as you had as a person, um, improve on those skills and then also, um, um, you know, what about that makes them, um, a better leader also, how could that actually impact the people around them as well?

Jerry Colonna: [01:07:46](#) What did you notice about what I did with Amir? What do you notice that what I did, Joel, I'm asking you. Yehuda, what did you notice about what I and what was the first thing I did?

[01:08:12](#) We often don't even pay attention to people's names. Start there. You know, the secret to the question that, that behind my, Oh, there's, right. The secret to one, when I get people to cry, it's a true story. I asked him a very, very complex question. I say, how are you? only, I actually mean it and I don't put up with bullshit. I'm fine. How are you? Yeah. Stop. Like, how was your breakfast this morning? If you have kids, what was it like getting them ready? Did you sleep well last night? If you woke up, what were you thinking about? Now you don't have to answer any of these questions, but to just bring your attention in now I, for me, I kind of what I do, right? By the way, my, my daughter, hey Emma, she's probably on Facebook right now. Um, hates it. She once wrote on Facebook. Can you imagine what it's like growing up with a dad who asks you these questions? I'm rolling my eyes, dad.

[01:09:51](#) But imagine taking the time to actually care. I remember before I said about human beings being cool. Every one of you are interesting. I can't hear all of you, but every one of you is

interesting. There's another human being in the room. You could actually talk to them and just be human together. Hey, what's your name? That's all. So I think I answered your question if I didn't too bad.

Arianne: [01:10:25](#) Hi.

[01:10:26](#) Hello. My name is Arianne. Dan, I want to thank you so much for your podcast. Okay.

Arianne: [01:10:33](#) You have no idea. [inaudible]

[01:10:39](#) So I came to find your podcast through the minimalists podcast. Like you mentioned in one of your episodes like you put, cause became very well known through after they released their Netflix documentary, which I haven't watched, but I have listened to every single podcast by them and by you from zero. So I actually came to know about these events by accident because by accident I played, um, I Spotify and either jump into your episode with Jerry, this latest one. Um, and then that's how I came to know about it. So it was like random coincidence. It's like my life is full of like magical realism. Um, so I actually wrote down everything that I wanted to tell you so that I wouldn't forget. Um, I know I'm so sorry. Only one. Yes. So I have a very deep question and that's why I wanted to just give you a little bit of, um, insight or what I have that question.

[01:11:39](#) I live a very normal life. Um, as normal as you can get. A quiet family. I spent a lot of time on my own because my mom and my were working all the time. So I spent a lot of time on my own. So I grew up interested in the things that I didn't know best, but they were the ones that stuff that I were interested on. So I feel my emotions, I felt my feelings all the time. So that actually made me feel the black sheep of my family that I was doing was not normal. Um, one. So, um, so my, in terms of my feeling, my biggest deceptions on everyone is that I thought I had to expect things out of people and it was due to my character.

Speaker 7: [01:12:29](#) I have a very strong a plus plus Alpha, extra, extra female, um, to the point that people find me intimidating sometimes. And, and so my emotions dragged me to a very dark place where I thought that I had to control my demons. And what happens when you shut down your demons? And they come after you. So what I did is I opened my door and I let them from free. So right now I, instead of shutting them down, I actually listened to them and they co-exist with me every day, the good and the bad ones. And I'm totally fine with that. One time someone told

me, you have to tone it down. You are too showful you are too bubbly, you are too nice. And I was like, why? So instead I turned it up and I work in a very hierarchical, very formal place.

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[01:13:26](#)

So to me today I was, I went to a different office and one of the ladies told me, it's like, oh, here comes Arianne. He, she's loud. And we love that. And because the first thing that I do when I go to the office, I walk up on down the aisle saying hi to everybody. And I feel too, I feel the need to express myself in such that hierarchical place. And I build my space and even thought I'm young, I always encourage my team, the love and kindness to express themselves. And I go and ask them, so what's your idea? Where are we going to be doing now? Tell me. And I go one by one because I want them to speak up even if they have nothing to say. But I wanted to do something because I want to inspire other people to live, to live life, to do, to feel inspired, to feel motivated. Every time when I go, when I walk into work, I see like a bunch of meat going into the factory to get shoved off. And I was like, oh my goodness, I'm walking in the same direction. Am I right? Am I supposed to be running the other direction? Like what am I doing? So, and this is my question to use, like how do you live life? How, what's out there?

[01:14:40](#)

There is something I know, I don't know what's out there is this is our life, is this, that we were born to live, struggle and study and work and travel? And then that's it? Um, you know, and I get about the love and kindness and I try, Oh God, we all drop on so much baggage and all the people that we don't even know about because we just had an awful day and we woke up on the wrong side of the bed. And sometimes I talk to my boyfriend's like, I cannot stop myself today. Just don't talk to me. It doesn't work. Um, so what's there? I mean, I am very skeptical alignment to me, forget it. But I, when I was still young, I run into a Buddha book, so that mess up very bad. Um, and then I did a lot of yoga, which is also didn't help but, and my questions like is he said, you know, it's like, is that, is that something live? Do we grab it? How do we go about it? Good luck.

Jerry Colonna:

[01:15:58](#)

I have 60 seconds? The first thing that occurs to me, tell me again your first name. Arianne. Thank you. You're not too much. Yeah, there is a beautiful posting on Facebook, um, which you'll have to Google to find. We just invented two new words, right? Facebook anyway called, "The Too Much Woman." You are not too much and the short answer to your question is no, that's not all there is. We're not all just meet on a factory going into the office. Your instinct is right. I think the question for you, the answer to you is actually a question back to you, which is what is your life to be? I can tell you what I would do. He can tell you

what he or she can tell you what she would do. Question is what are you going to do? Then you have your answer to your question.

Jerry Colonna: [01:17:55](#) You will be too much for some and you will be just right for others.

Tim McHenry: [01:23:52](#) Jerry, thank you so much for being here and choosing the Reuben to have this conversation that is meaningful to us. I hope it's been meaningful to you.