

Jerry: Hi, Philip.

Philip Deng: Hello, Jerry.

Jerry: Before we get started, why don't you just take a moment and introduce yourself?

Philip Deng: My name is Phillip Deng. Um, I am the founder and CEO of Grantable, which is a little software startup, trying to help people write grants more effectively. And that's coming after, uh, I think 13 or 14 years now working mostly with nonprofits all over the world. So, uh, I'm uh, I think I'm a pretty regular guy that's trying to build helpful things.

Jerry: Right. Right. You're a big-hearted guy too, 'cause we've spent a little time together, so I know you a little bit too, so yeah. It's good to see you. Um, what would be helpful to talk through today?

Philip Deng: Yeah. So it's funny we schedule these conversations and, you know, uh, you never really know exactly what'll be popping up at the right time, but, um, just this week, um, the person that I thought was going to be a co-founder and had asked for, um, that role and that, that part of this company, um, just got really, really busy with, uh, with another job. And we both went through quite a few weeks where there really wasn't... Um, we- weren't in sync. And so I was really nervous. I was losing sleep. It was a bunch of, um, sort of old, old habits that I'm starting to recognize a bit, but it was, it was difficult and we talked about it. I asked for some help, um, from, from some other folks and we talked about it and it, and it was a really good conversation. We've come to an agreement where this person is going to be an advisor, so taking a step back, but, uh, and that's right, but it, it leaves me in this position where I've been asking myself, um, I think I'm pretty good at getting people inspired and then translating that into people that are really committed alongside, uh, especially in the early going, has been really tough for me. So, um, that's kinda what I'm coming into this conversation with.

Jerry: I appreciate that. And, and I can feel the disappointment in thinking that you'd had that co-founder resolved o- only to realize that it wasn't true. Um, I'm gonna go with something, uh, and it's just instinctive, um, or intuitive, um, so I could be wrong, yeah, but I'm curious if there's a story you're telling yourself, that's kind of the internal story around, I'm good at inspiring people, but I can't get them to commit. What's the story you tell yourself?

Philip Deng: Well, there's a couple stories maybe, um, I've been criticized for this pretty directly. Um, you and I have actually mentioned that somebody in my past, uh, who is in the trusted inner circle and I thought we were kind of in it together, um, very suddenly, and to this day, I still don't understand exactly what happened, um, just kind of accused me of, you know, not, not delivering on, on the dream, on the vision. And on my side, I thought I was doing everything I could. Um, I would even say too much, now, looking back to try to make that

happen. Um, but I, this person was very critical of me being all talk, no walk. And that's one of the stories that's the really scary one that, um, I can give a good, give a good pitch on stage and get people fired up, um, but then when it comes to moving it forward, moving whatever the vision is forward, that, I'm, I'm lacking in that area.

Philip Deng: And then I think the other story, um, is that, uh, you know, I identify as an Asian American, um, and I think the other side of that story is that people of color are often very, very sought after to do that, get onstage and inspire everybody with this vision for the future. And then as I'm learning, um, more and more, finding support to drive that vision forward can then actually be an extra hurdle for, uh, non-white folks to, to overcome. So you're almost pushed or pulled into the position of putting out a huge vision 'cause everybody wants you to do that, but then you find yourself in a bit of a hole when it comes to funding it or getting people to commit and sacrifice partly is because of the same identity that puts you on stage. So I think a little bit of that also maybe played a role. So I think those are sort of the two stories that happen in my mind. And they're, I think they're related to, because I know that I bring some sort of, you know, insecurities into this work as well because of my experience.

Jerry: So I wanna pause and acknowledge a couple of things. First, um, I'm gonna hold space with you and what may be obvious to some is that I am a white cis-gendered male, straight white cis-gendered male. And so I am going to do my best and may fail, but I'm going to do my best to not speak for your experience, but really be curious about your experience because it's a different experience than mine.

Philip Deng: Sure.

Jerry: And I might make connections to, um, the experiences that I am more intimately familiar with, those coming from my body in that, in that way. So I'll do the, I'll try to do the two things. Um, so I hear two internal stories that you tell yourself that are triggered by the decision by, um, the, the potential co-founder and let's acknowledge too, yay, you settled a good working relationship. They're going to be, uh, an advisor to, to the company and, and that's great. Um, but I, I also wanna acknowledge and admire your, uh, willingness to use this as a jumping off point for more self-exploration. That time period between you first finding out that this person wasn't going to go forward with your original plan and be the co-founder and, and the time at which it got resolved, it sounds like that there were a lot of feelings for you and maybe even negative feelings. Is that right?

Philip Deng: Yeah. Um, I think so. I mean, we tried for, for a couple months basically, um, to make it work. We tried all kinds of different ways to work asynchronously and, you know, try a bunch of tools to help us get there, but it, it just, it was just a matter of hours and energy that he didn't have. Um, and we talked about it. I mean, we had weekly check-ins and I think I'm, like you said, trying to grow and learn from my experiences. So I was, and I was using, you know, stuff that I've learned from, from this podcast as well, just to try to, uh, know what, what,

what wasn't I saying that needed to be said, you know, that kind of stuff. And also, um, my, my, my collaborator is, is younger, he's just earlier in his career, so I was trying to also kind of name that space and say, let's just say it, and, and to his credit too, he's a, he's a wonderful guy. So it was, it wasn't as difficult as it could have been to just be able to talk about this stuff.

Philip Deng: So we tried a few times to just kind of name those difficult feelings and that actually set up the final definitive conversation to be a lot better because I think everything was already out and then we brought in some folks that just kind of helped us say, okay, well, given all that's happened, you know, what, what makes sense? And I think we came to a pretty natural place, so.

Jerry: Well, well, good. I'm glad you brought that up because, um, I'm curious to hear about how it felt during that whole process, but let's acknowledge here, again, something really important, which was you and the collaborator put in a lot of work. And the result is even though you ended up in a place different than what you had wanted, perhaps even disappointingly so, you still ended up in a good place.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: And that's an important thing to lift up and remember, is that, especially as you're on this startup journey, you're gonna end up in unexpected places. And, and the process is very, very important, just as the process here was very important. You maintained a friendship even while they disappointed you.

Philip Deng: I'm really grateful for that. Um, I, I realized that I probably kind of glanced off of the difficult feelings that you're asking about, and I was just thinking about that as well, a little bit more. And I think I'm under, I'm, I'm understating how painful the time was because I was feeling definitely let down, but it was like triggering, I guess, loneliness is sort of the, the, the word that captures it most broadly, um, which is been a difficult feeling for me for a long time, but it, so it got back to that. And then, I mean, anger's the tough one for me to express. I know there's actually a lot of it that I hold, but just, um, feeling like I was doing so much, and this person had asked for, you know, a big share of, of everything. And then I felt like I was taking all the risk and, um, you know, by, by going into this full-time and dedicating myself to it.

Philip Deng: And so I was feeling, um, anger, but then also, um, some recrimination for thinking, I was feeling greedy. Was I just not trusting? Was I not being flexible enough? And is that what has, you know, made it so hard for me to find a collaborator? So really just this cycle of like, um, working really hard, trying to communicate, and then not seeing the response and then struggling to know exactly how to, hmm, try new things or, or see if, see if there was something that I was doing to block their participation.

Jerry: When we have an over-the-top reaction, when we have reactions that are filled with energy, emotional energy, they can be really useful inquiry points.

Philip Deng: Hmm.

Jerry: They can be those points where we, um, really speak to something. I'm reminded of a teaching from Pema Chodron, a Buddhist nun, who said, "Be grateful to everyone, including people who press your buttons, because they show you where you're stuck." And, um, in a sense, and, and, and we'll, we'll acknowledge that we had a previous conversation around the theme of belonging, so I know that that's powerful for you. You use the word loneliness as one of the first feelings that got triggered. Um, I'm gonna put some words to it that perhaps make sense. "I feel alone because this person isn't going to join me." Um, and I'm going to go a little further. "I feel alone and I'm always going to be alone."

Philip Deng: Yeah. And I would take it up and say, I'm alone because I'm not worthy or-

Jerry: Yeah.

Philip Deng: ... my company, or my idea's not worthy and it's gonna fail and confirm that.
Yeah.

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah. So just stay in that spot. In that spot. The outside's reaction says that this really has deep roots that go beyond even your potential co-founder's decision and actually have to do with an underlying question of whether or not you're worthy, you are worthy to close the loop to not be alone.

Philip Deng: For sure.

Jerry: And, you know, this is not an entirely honest question and that I have an understanding of an answer, but, um, how important, or how familiar is that feeling of potentially being alone because you're not worthy?

Philip Deng: I mean, how familiar is water to a fish, like-

Jerry: Right.

Philip Deng: ...just been swimming in it, you know, for as long as I, as long as, as long as clear memories go back, from, I think, you know, when my, when my parents split up, uh, and I think I was about 11 and I think the safety or the, the little microculture of our family, you know, came apart I'll just say this, nothing reformed around me, um, ever again. So going back and forth, I still felt sort of like I had to be self-contained, but I didn't want to be. And then there were many years of, um, going around the world in my, you know, early career. Um, definitely trying to I was, yeah, earn belonging, earn worthiness, or, um, so it's, it's, it's old for sure. You're right about that.

Jerry: And I'm curious as, uh, how it expresses itself in, when, in the experience of how you identify as a person of color?

Philip Deng: It was most difficult, uh, when I spent about three years in China, um, also doing nonprofit work with a couple of different organizations. Um, and I think I found myself very much between cultures there because of the way, um, I am culturally American, you know, born and raised. Um, and my parents are born and raised in the U.S. too. So, um, really feeling that identity, but looking like a Chinese person over there. Um, I was not treated as a regular Chinese person, and I was also not treated like, um, white Americans would be treated. So it changed my friend groups. Um, you know, I was, uh, in my 20s, definitely interested in dating, and that was just, uh, a complete maze (laughs) because of all the different, uh, dynamics that I had to, to navigate. So that just became kind of another source of pain. Um, and then, yeah, it just, even, even more deeply, just the way that my, my family came apart, I think there are even, I would say race is a, is a theme in that as well. I, yeah.

Jerry: In what way?

Philip Deng: So my mother remarried, a man from Ireland, so he's, he's white, and that is a really different dynamic, um, in this country. It comes with all kinds of different identities and interactions. Um, and so I think going back to what I was saying before when sort of my world came apart, the one I knew as a child around me and nothing reformed around me. Um, you know, one of the, the sides that formed was this new multi-racial household.

Philip Deng: I won't speak for all Asians, but I think that there are... I think that people of color definitely recognize mo-... the effects of white supremacy, that that's, that's a hierarchy, and it, it's a way that people are sorted. And so, you know, that at a young age, for me seeing how that was changing, um, my family, family members, but not even, you know, at this stage now, I think I can take responsibility for a little more of how I was feeling, but just how I was interpreting myself and my worthiness, now on sort of a, a hierarchy where I think I felt more able to either more insulated from that because I was younger and because my, my family was a unit, but then when I was sort of felt more on my own encountering racism in our society and white supremacy, um, I think I started to look at myself in the mirror and it was, it was hard. I mean, like wanting to, to be a different way, um, for a long time. I mean, that's-

Jerry: What did you want to be?

Philip Deng: Well, I mean, I guess there were times when I, I mean, I wished I wasn't an, you know, an Asian guy, um, you know? Um, there, aren't a lot of role models for us to look at. There are more these days and, you know, it's definitely progress, but, uh, at least when I was in those sort of formative teen years, um, and at the time I was in Minnesota, which is, that doesn't have a huge or didn't have a huge Asian population at the time. So there, there weren't a lot of, uh, places for me to look and sort of have something to grow toward. And then I think, you know, the next experience of that, which was maybe it was extra difficult because I didn't expect it 'cause when I went to China, I thought everybody's going to be

Chinese. This'll be way easier. But instead it was actually kind of just as hard in another way. Um, and I found myself still feeling less worthy, less, um, you know, of, of basic value. Um, so that was a real struggle.

Jerry: So I'm gonna speak from that space and a little bit like an older brother, and I wanna to identify, and I wanna, I wanna know that young boys struggle when they don't have a male figure to identify with. Richard Rohr, who is a Catholic theologian, and philosopher writes often about the notion of father hunger, and it may or may not have anything to do with our actual biological or adoptive fathers, as much as it has to do for a yearning to understand what does it mean to be a male adult of the species and, um, to not be able to see oneself in an adult male can prevent what he would identify as the initiation into manhood. And so much of what we identify as troubling or toxic behavior can find its root in that lack of initiation. And I think in your case, um, the adaptations you probably developed as a child, which was to question your own worthiness and to figure out what you did wrong in order for you to fit in was exacerbated by not being able to look up to an older male and say, "Oh, that's the way."

Philip Deng: Well, I, I think in a, in a macro sense, yes. I would say again, not to speak from your perspective as, as, as a white cisgender male, but I imagine that you've always been able to find a movie with a white guy as the lead or a, you know?

Jerry: Right.

Philip Deng: So from that sense, absolutely. But I, I think I will say that, you know, I, my father and my stepfather are two, I think, you know, very, very wonderful father figures, uh, in my life. I think at this time though, the same pressure that I think you're talking about now, um, that is on men in our society, I think my dad who had just gone through the divorce and was single, uh, in mid-life and moving across the country and he, he and I moved to Seattle and my brother stayed with my mom in Minnesota. So that was also a really, um, difficult period for, for me. I'd had a, uh, little brother for the last 11 years that I mean we're in the same bedroom and spent all our time together, you know, playing and a lot of fighting. And then that's where that relationship has, is still almost frozen in time, in a way.

Philip Deng: I think my father was also doing his best to have a second act and start, start over, um, and was, was dealing with a lot of pain there, probably, um, uh, was, was feeling lost as far as how to, to continue on and knowing that he had an adolescent son that was, you know, it was all on him to, to be that role model.

Philip Deng: You know, I think a lot of, uh, Asian-American guys can probably relate with some of what I'm saying as far as in, when you look outside and you look on, on TV or in, in, in our popular culture, I think I just saw a poll come out the other day, they were talking about this rise in anti-Asian violence, and they just conducted a poll who is the most influential Asian-American or Asian that you can think of? The top answer was no one. And the second one was Jackie Chan, in third place, Bruce Lee. So it's still a big issue.

Philip Deng: So I think that, that was tough to, to not have as many places to get your cues, to be moving, um, to have a father who was very much trying to catch himself, uh, after, after a big stumble. Um, so that led to sort of the middle ground where I found myself. And I think a lot of these questions that I was asking myself, which the question of worthiness is not even like in and of itself a terrible thing, but without somebody there with me, for whatever reason, I followed the question down really difficult paths that then, you know, are still affecting me today. So that's that story that you, you started out asking about. Yeah. It's still there.

Jerry: So thank... First, thank you for helping me see even more clearly your experience.

Philip Deng: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Jerry: I think that that's really powerful. Let's go back to the stories that got triggered by this episode. One story was that you, you relate to you being, the word performative came into mind, you as an object, if you will. Does that feel right?

Philip Deng: Well, yeah. I mean, you talk about it in, in your writing, these coping, these super powers, almost that we develop. And I think one of the things that I've had to do since a very young age is to, I'm constantly moving between families, between places, cultures, and so learning how to read a room instantly, and then communicate in a way that gets a response, particularly too if it's like to move a conversation away from something tricky. So I, I think I, tend to avoid conflict or, um, confrontation, which is part of what's been happening recently, um, with, with my former co-founder. But, um, so I got good at grabbing the attention in the room and telling a joke or a story, or making everything make sense in that moment. Grabbing all the pieces, putting the puzzle together literally like a freestyle, and everybody's like, "Yeah." And then that, yeah, signifies, we're getting along and everything's good and we're laughing. And so that translates very well into le-... you know, what I would say is like almost the leadership industry, where there are all these programs that if, if you are, are articulate and you've got some stage presence, people are like, "You're going to be a leader." And so I've been in really wonderful programs like that, but you're showcased.

Philip Deng: And then I started a nonprofit, which I absolutely poured my heart into, and a lot of that job was trying to get the community to come together and work on this project. And so I was out there all the time, and then as I mentioned, people want people of color to be on stage, to inspire them, you know? And so that was kind of happening. And what I think I was just unaware of is how difficult it can then be once the show's over, and it's like, all right, how are we going to pay for this? How are we going to get this dream to become a reality? Um, not only was I unaware of how difficult that would end up being, but then the punishment for not achieving what I was on stage talking about, even though I tried as hard as I could. Um, that was, that was really painful.

Philip Deng: So the fear of story one is just, just being a mouth, (laughs) just being all talk, no walk. And no matter what combination of tools or accountability measures, whatever, like the only thing that's ever gonna be, that it's ever gonna work is the pitch. And then the, the thing after is, is just like, I almost feel superstitious, like it's faded to fail. And so that's one of the very scary stories. And then I think the other story was just, you know, the one about how people of color will always want us to inspire them, and then when it comes to, you know, backing us, it can be an uphill battle.

Jerry: So, there's two sides to this. Um-

Philip Deng: Yeah. At least. (laughs)

Jerry: ... both (laughs) So in both cases you recognize that part of your adaptation that resulted into a superpower is your ability to make sense of everything that's going on and to articulate it in a way that inspires and brings people together. What's fascinating to me is the internalized negative view starts to show up, in that, you're, because you can struggle with the other half of that job, which is the execution. I'm gonna say that again, because you can struggle with the execution, which by the way, everybody struggles with, everybody struggles with, but because you struggle with it, you're somehow doing something wrong. And then the corollary to that is because if you are sure a person of color, you're not gonna get the support systems that you need to be able to execute and get out of the struggles that everybody struggles with. It's like this terrible double bind that's a no win situation for you. And I'm just talking about perception. I'm not even talking about reality for a moment. I'm just talking about the perception.

Jerry: And it's almost like, it's like, there's this interesting little arc of an experience. The first step is light bulb goes off, inspirational idea comes out, you know, you're on the stage either literally or figuratively, you inspire people to act, then you struggle. The rubber meets the road and it's tough. And then that first persistent, you're broken, you don't belong, you are not worthy. That whole routine comes right back. Am I seeing it?

Philip Deng: Yeah. And two things, like a lot of people do come forward to help.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Philip Deng: You know, I'm being too simplistic there. It's like, I guess it's, it was the, the, enough money in, in the first startup to really launch. We had enough support in a way to always kind of keep us just barely getting by, but never had enough to actually plan and hire and, and, um, execute on what, what we were trying to do. So I felt like we were always treading water and buying time, but we were only able to even do that because there were a lot of people in, in individual ways that were helping me.

Philip Deng: The other thing I was gonna say related to what you just laid out is what I've realized that I was doing when I was running my nonprofit years ago. Um, because to the, maybe the, the follow-on to what you just said is when the struggle was painful, I felt like I deserved that pain.

Jerry: Right.

Philip Deng: Which I think kept me from maybe asking for what I needed. So I think I don't, I don't wanna leave this story feeling like in one way I gave it my best shot, in another way, I could've given a better shot if I had really cared for myself a little bit more. Um, because I don't think I could ask for what we need, needed to succeed in a way, because I thought me being in pain and suffering through it all was deserved and was okay. So like, you know, I rather than ask for, for more money to launch that project so that I could pay myself, I thought, no, like I'll, I can pay myself once everything else is taken care of. And for now, I'll just pick up another job. You know? And, and that in hindsight, I would say that a better option would be, if you can't raise the money you need for this project in a certain amount of time, then you can put it down and that's okay. And you can go and try to move on to another thing. Help somebody else. Help, help in a different way, but at that time, I clung to it really tightly because it really was about trying to, to earn that belonging and that worthiness. So I think maybe that completes the loop a little bit more.

Jerry: Right.

Philip Deng: And I think-

Jerry: So, so, so what you're seeing Philip is the ways in which superpowers and the negative side of those superpowers start to interact with each other. And, and, uh, one of the consequences of a white supremacist society can be, and I don't know that this is true for you, but can be a deep struggle for people who identify on the margins of that society, can be, that person can struggle to feel worthy and deserving of any success. Now, I wanna also note that that lack of, that sense of a lack of deserving isn't merely, uh, it isn't only, doesn't only land with people of color, it, uh, it can land with white women, for example, in a male-dominated structure. And it can, I, I know this will, will, will surprise some, but it can even land with those who look and act like me. In all the power and privilege that come from that, it can land in, in a less systemic way, but still have an effect.

Jerry: And the result is, and this is the most important point, 'cause I'm gonna talk to you like a CEO now. The most important thing that goes on is what you're seeing is the ways in which you unconsciously get in your own way.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: And what's important to understand is that the ways that we're going to sort of unpack right now have actually nothing to do with the story making that you were just saying, all talk, no walk. See, the all talk, no walk self-criticism implies that you're doing a purposefully, implies that you're knowingly sitting there convincing and manipulating people-

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: ... to do your bidding as if you're a narcissist. And I want to acknowledge that all great inspiring leaders are a little manipulative.

Philip Deng: (laughs)

Jerry: The problem is not, whether it's not manipulative, the problem is what is the intent?

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: If the intent is self-aggrandizement, then we got a problem. If the intent is to manipulate the world so that my narcissistic wound can be healed, then that's a bad thing. But is it manipulative to get people to be fired up? Sure. Is it manipulative to get people to change their lives for the better? Sure. What's the intent?

Philip Deng: Yeah. That's I thank you for pulling that apart. And I don't know, maybe this is becoming one of my patterns, but I'm gonna go right in the middle of it and say, you know, I, I was not doing it for self-aggrandizement for sure. That I'm confident of, but-

Jerry: But you took pleasure in people believing in you?

Philip Deng: Well, yes, no, well, not, actually, not so much, to be honest. I didn't, I don't love that part either.

Jerry: Okay.

Philip Deng: The part that I wanna own is that there was a wound, this, this wound that we've talked about in, in my life. I, I was doing this absolutely to build a better community, and I thought in my private, in my mind, in my heart, if I succeed, then I, you know, will be worthy of, of love and belonging.

Jerry: So sue you.

Philip Deng: Yeah. But people, people-

Jerry: So, you wanna feel better about yourself?

Philip Deng: Yeah. So that, that I wasn't aware of, uh, when I started the organization. What I've only now seen, and it was thanks to that really, really mean critic of mine. Um, that I, I had to look at it and say, that person was saying, you know, you're do-... I was doing it all for self-aggrandizing. That was the whole thesis. But I was like, well, that's not it, but like, you're not all, you're also not all wrong. I, I was doing it for me too, but it was in this way because I felt, I felt-

Jerry: So, so, so let's talk about that. The part of you that was wounded led to a part of you that sought, sought to heal that wound through external affirmation.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: Welcome to being human. Okay.

Philip Deng: Thank you. (laughs)

Jerry: The, the, but, but, and, and, and external criticism can sometimes help us see clearly when we are doing things as Carl Jung would say, when we're operating from our shadow.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: Right? And so there's a possibility that just like every other human being, how many other human beings? Everyone. You operated marginally from your shadow. And so part of your motivation was altruistic and part of your motivation was neurotic.

Philip Deng: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Jerry: Okay. You've already progressed as a leader for being able to make the distinction between those two and more importantly, Philip, hold the potential and the possibility of those two states, the altruistic motivation and the neurotic motivation simultaneously. I can't tell you the number of billionaires I know who make big philanthropic gifts so that they can feel better about themselves. Have they done a bad thing? Have they done a good thing? It's not so black and white.

Philip Deng: Mm-hmm (affirmative) Yeah.

Jerry: Okay. So what we note is that you have the power to inspire. What we note, you have the power to get people to do things they might not otherwise do. What we note is that you have the ability to attract talented people around you. What we note is that you have an ability to craft and communicate and promulgate a vision. So I'm gonna take you through so basic, basic, uh, structure. I often speak about the three jobs of a CEO or of the three jobs of a leader. The first is to hold and promulgate a vision. The second is to build and maintain a great team. That means a lot of inspiration and a lot of recruiting.

Philip Deng: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And the third is to give that team what they need to exceed, to, to succeed and do fantastic work. Of those three, the one I think you lack the most experience with is the third.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: As a still relatively young entrepreneur, social and otherwise, you're still learning what it means to build an organization that gives the resources to really powerful and exceptional people to do the best work of their lives.

Philip Deng: Yeah. I mean, I've ne-... I've never overlaid those, those three responsibilities over my, my experience, but that's absolutely on. And I, and it ties back to, I mean, I'm just gonna, you, you name it in, in, in your writing and in many episodes money, like that is a, that is a tricky one for me. Both sides of my family have done very well. Um, and I mean, most of the folks in my generation are also kind of, they're on trajectories very different from mine. Um, I have just kind of just subsisted every single year of my career. Um, and I don't, I think it's partly because of the work that I've chosen, um, but also related to, if I just took those three inspiring, um, great people and then giving them what they need. If I applied it to myself, I mean, I think I can get so fired up by life and the places I've been in this world, the people I've met, the food I've eaten, you know, like I, I, I can really, really get fired up about living. And then, you know, I guess I just, I have myself. I think I'm very capable and I've tried to learn and, and grow and make myself into a great tool for change. But the resourcing part for myself, uh, let alone like the team, that pattern repeats as well.

Jerry: Okay.

Philip Deng: I've really, really struggled there.

Jerry: So, so, so I think you made a really important and insightful closing loop here. Okay. Because of your complicated relationship with whether or not you personally have the resources, it stands to reason that the teams that you lead may also suffer from a lack of resources.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: Because if Philip is undeserving, then the team, which is an expression of Philip's energy and vitality and vision can internalize the same belief system, even more sophisticated, just like you magnetize people who believe in the vi- vision, you probably unconsciously magnetize people who themselves struggle with giving themselves the resources they need to succeed because like attracts like.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: Hey, we don't really need to get paid. We got the vision.

Philip Deng: (laughs) Yeah.

Jerry: Right?

Philip Deng: There's been a little bit of that, um, and I, I, I'm aware of it. I won't, and I, and I'm actively trying to grow beyond it. Um-

Jerry: Okay. So, so, so what if we took that... So let's use that framework.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: Okay. And instead of seeing it as a failure that has to be overcome, you see what I'm trying to do here? Because your mind is so rapid and so quick that you're already starting to think about the ways in which you're undeserving.

Philip Deng: (laughs)

Jerry: I see you.

Philip Deng: I mean, yeah.

Jerry: Okay. It's a fact. It's not a flaw.

Philip Deng: I like that. Yeah.

Jerry: Okay. You and I both wear glasses, that doesn't mean we're flawed. It just means we wear glasses. That's all. And so when you build organizations, you, just like you have to wear glasses when you're driving, you have to make sure that you, when you're building a team, you have to make sure you have that kick-ass chief operating officer who's all walk and no talk.

Philip Deng: (laughs)

Jerry: Yeah. You like that. Right? So that the team is balanced.

Philip Deng: Yeah.

Jerry: You will do well when you surround yourself with the person who's like... I actually had a good friend, David Brown, who wrote a book, *No Vision, All Execution*. (laughs) There are people who are like that.

Jerry: No single leader has everything that the team provides. None.

Philip Deng: I will take many things from this conversation, but especially just that third responsibility, that third role of resourcing, and then looking at it as an individual, living my life.

Jerry: You know, we, this has been a far-ranging conversation. One of the root wounds is what, is, is your internal questioning of whether or not you're worthy enough to belong or can feel that belonging. And what we've discussed in so many ways is the various ways that that manifests itself, right? I shouldn't have what I have unless I'm suffering. It should be a struggle. And so I make sure it's a struggle, right? Um, I'm gonna have a complex relationship with money, so I'm gonna be in a realm that has complex relationships with money. PS, right? Grantable is a business designed to help organizations get money. Okay. So your unconsciousness is having a field day with you.

Philip Deng: (laughs)

Jerry: Right? You're putting all these pieces together. And the only problem that's really going on, Philip, is that so much of it has been in the dark to you. It's been [foreign language 01:05:25] It's been under the table, right? It's been quietly voiced. So what we do with this stuff is we lift it up. It's not a flaw, it's a fact. You're not broken. You have suffered from racial oppression, from racism. I have no doubt about that, but it's not because you're not worthy, it's because the system is broken. I wish to God the system wasn't broken and someday from my lips to God's ears, we'll fix it. But don't internalize that.

Philip Deng: That's a good headline because I'm trying to do my part to fix a piece of that system that has affected me. And as you said, um, (laughs) there's a field day going on in my, in my head and in my heart, so yeah. I mean, These are, these are wonderful conversations, um, to be having right now and yeah, it's facts, not flaws.

Jerry: Phillip, Phillip, I wanna thank you for being so real and authentic

Jerry: It's an honor and a privilege to hang with you.

Jerry: Thank you for coming on the show.

Philip Deng: Thank you, Jerry.