

Jerry: How are you? It's good to meet you.

Chris Remus: Yeah. It's good to meet you too.

Jerry: Thanks for coming on the show, and I appreciate. You know, um, we're just gonna dive right in. I'll start off by asking you, just do a little introduction. Who are you, and, you know, what brings you to this conversation?

Chris Remus: Sure. Yeah. My name is Chris Remus. And through what feels like somewhat of a long path, I've started a company a number of years ago in the crypto space. And the company has evolved into a project and company that is now called Chainflow. And with Chainflow, we've build out the infrastructure. Essentially, we help operate the underlying networks that support, um, a lot of the cryptocurrencies that back when I started, weren't really in the news so much, but today are, you know, a lot more in the news.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: And it's something I started myself, I bootstrapped it. Um, started because it was something I was interested in. And then about four years later, it's become something that is bigger than I really ever expected it to become. And, you know, I now find myself in the fortunate position of wanting to do more with what this is becoming and building out a team to what I hope will help manifest what I believe, you know, is the true potential of Chainflow. Um, and I would say in addition to that, um, consider myself a husband and a dad, and I also call myself an aspiring bodhisattva and, and aspiring cyclist as well too, round things out.

Jerry: Right. I, I, I'm, I'm with you on the last two in particular. Um, uh, uh, aspiring bodhisattva is about the best I think we can be. Um, and to be clear, you know, bodhisattva is, I love this definition, it's, it's, uh, someone who could, uh, attain Buddhahood, could, uh, free themselves from the pain of rebirth, continuous rebirth, but chooses not to take, chooses to take rebirth until all beings are free from suffering. So it's, it's, you know, having been raised a Catholic, it's a little bit different than a saint, um, but it comes close to a saint. And, and I love the activist component of that.

Jerry: It's a delight to meet you and, and, and, you know, sort of dive into the conversation. What would be helpful to talk through for you?

Chris Remus: Yeah. I think, you know, I've been thinking about that, and, and a few things. Um, about a year ago, I would say at the beginning of 2021, I experienced a pretty big shift in what Chainflow was in my mind and what it was starting to become. And I would say probably toward the end of the first, somewhere between the, somewhere within the second quarter of the year, I started to realize that it almost felt like I had gone through my first round of funding, and

also simultaneously went through an exit as well, like, uh, like an exit up, like a VC funded or, you know, high growth startup funded exit.

Chris Remus: So wi- within, within that time, you know, I started to think about these things, and through some of the work that I've been doing with my coach, you know, I had always been thinking about someday I might get somewhere, someday I might get there, someday I might get here. And what I've realized is, you know, maybe that someday was now, and maybe I was here. You know, not the end, but where I thought maybe I was trying to get to in some way, shape, or form.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: So the second half of the year, I think I spent a lot of time working through that, which brought me to this somewhat of a contrast in my mind, which was, well, I think on one hand, if I wanted to, I could probably put this thing on autopilot to some extent, um, I mean, not completely, but, you know, put this on autopilot and maybe sail off into the sunset, if you will.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: Um, I'll say that I'm turning 49 in about a week, so I'm almost 50. Um, so you know, that thought did cross my mind, but then I started thinking, you know, I also now I'm in a fortunate position of having access to some capital that can help this become more. And while I think that idea of, you know, just putting things on autopilot and walking away was there, I don't think I ever seriously thought it's really what I wanted to do because I feel like even at my age, which, you know, personally, I consider a little bit older to be experiencing this than a lot of people do, that, you know, do experience it, I felt like I'm just not done yet. And that has been the overarching theme, I would say, over the past six months. You know, I, I, I don't feel like I'm done yet personally and professionally. Um, and when I started thinking about that, I started thinking about the things that Chainflow could become and building a team to help that happen. Um, so now I find myself in a position where, you know, I, I'm not done. The things I think I want to do are going to be difficult and challenging. So, you know, every once in a while, I think to myself, you know, why do it, you know, why do it, you know. Why continue to challenge myself? Why go through some of the criticism that I'm inevitably going to face, you know, doing what we do with, with the company and, um, you know, why put myself through that, you know.

Chris Remus: So I think it's a bit of a contrast that I still wrestle with, even though I feel like doing it, you know, is the path I should be taking.

Jerry: Well, really appreciate the question. I, I think it's a, it's a really powerful question implicitly. And let, let me see if I can sort of characterize it back to you and reflect it back to you. Um, in a sense, and we're gonna end up focusing a little bit on what does done mean, um, in a sense, there was the opportunity to think of yourself as done. And I think the phrase you used both here and in email, uh,

was I could just semi-retire, whatever that means, right? But then I realized that there's a lot that I continue to, to... Well, I'm, I'm, I'm extrapolating meaning from it. What you said was, um, that you're not done with Chainflow, and that Chainflow hasn't, and hasn't come into its fullest fruition, to use a good Buddhist term. Um, and that there's possibility that's still there. And, uh, and while you feel more clearly associated with staying, the question sort of comes back and forth. Am I getting that right?

Chris Remus: You are. You are. I think it's the question never really goes away. It sometimes gets a little louder. However, I don't know that it's ever become loud enough to really, uh, overwhelm the feeling that, you know, I'm not done and Chainflow is not done. So yes, I would say you've characterized that well.

Jerry: So let's go to a couple of things. A couple of questions occur to me. Chris, what does done mean?

Chris Remus: I don't know that I've ever really thought it through, but now that I'm, now that I am, I think done has usually related to some degree of financial freedom.

Jerry: In the past, it did.

Chris Remus: In the past, it did. Yeah. Yeah. Some type of financial outcome that would then lead to more freedom than I felt like I had in most of my career. I would say to add to that, for most of my career, I was doing work either for others or for myself that I did not feel was really aligned with who I am.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: And so I think done in a lot of ways meant making enough money so I could be done with that and really start to do what I wanted to do.

Jerry: So a version of the life deferment plan. (laughs)

Chris Remus: Yeah.

Jerry: Right. In my book, I talk about, uh, acquiring lemon drops, which was an image I got from watching my grandfather. And if I have enough lemon drops, then I can then live and be true to myself. So that's an older definition. And, uh, if you don't mind, I'll, I'll, I'll put it within the context of you turning 49, which is just a whisper away from 50.

Chris Remus: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: And as someone who turned 58 in December, um, I... Don't worry, the 50 decade is a good decade. Uh, (laughs) but I think that there's a, there's a, there's a relationship between milestone ages, if you will, and our perception of what does it mean to be done, our perception of, for example, okay, do I buy into the

life deferment plan? So in the past, you may have bought into that old plan, a plan, by the way, that is really a dominant plan in our society. It, you know, it shows up in, in notions of delaying gratification and delaying things, and there is something to be said in the development of discipline and learning a craft, learning the craft of being an adult, learning the craft of being an employee, learning the craft of leadership. There is something to be said in the value for doing that.

Jerry: The conundrum, the philosophical conundrum that I think we face as a society is, and to what degree should I sacrifice happiness, to what degree should I sacrifice inner and outer alignment while I'm building that, while I'm moving towards that. Does that resonate?

Chris Remus: Yeah. I'll take a deep breath, but yeah, it does. It resonates really strongly. Um, for the first, most, I would say for the first, most of my career, which is probably 20 some years, yeah, I think, I was of the mindset that deferring happiness, if I was even deserving of happiness was what needed to be done. Um, I think, you know, right around 38, 39, I hit what I've been calling my own reboot, which was realizing that the life I was living and how I was living it, which was essentially doing work that I felt was really... I don't, I, I felt like I was supposed to be doing, but super orthogonal to who I was as a person. Um, and then, you know, numbing myself to the pain of that in ways that weren't really healthy.

Chris Remus: Um, and then 38 or 39 came around and I started realizing that the ways I was numbing myself weren't working anymore either. And I thought to myself, well, you know, something's gotta shift, and I could either keep trying to numb myself, but I, you know, I knew I didn't wanna go down that path. So, you know, I started to, to relook at a lot of things. Um, and fortunately, I did that a couple of years before our son was born. But yeah, so it was, it was at that time too that I started to figure out what that realignment was supposed to look like.

Chris Remus: And I think it was Sharon Salzberg, one of her books that I read or a podcast I listened to was really interesting about happiness, which was, she said in her early research, it didn't surprise her so much that people weren't, were unhappy. It surprised her more that people didn't feel deserving of happiness.

Jerry: Mm.

Chris Remus: And I remember that that, that really stuck with me. Um, so yeah, so, so at that time, I guess almost 10 years ago, I started down that path of figuring out, you know, what happiness is, am I deserving of it? And ultimately, you know, how does this fit into what I do with most of my days?

Jerry: Because you mentioned him, what is your son's name, first name?

Chris Remus: His first name is Theo.

Jerry: And how old is he?

Chris Remus: He is six.

Jerry: Oh, God bless.

Chris Remus: Yeah.

Jerry: And that's your only child?

Chris Remus: It is. Yep.

Jerry: Okay. So we're gonna keep Theo in mind, and I don't think it's a coincidence that Theo showed up here. And we'll go back to the question of the old definition of done, leading to financial freedom that could support finally being happy, yet, realizing that the undercurrent, the subroutine, right, that I often refer to it as, the subroutine was around, do I even deserve to be happy? So let's hang out with that for a moment, uh, because I think if we use this as guideposts, as a guiding system into the future, what I'm holding, starting to hold onto as a, as an objective in this conversation might be to help, uh, create more resilient tools for you to work with the question that comes back and f- that comes up occasionally. So how old is that subroutine of, do I deserve to be happy?

Chris Remus: It's old. I would say probably about somewhere hover around 40 years, I would say if I had to guess. I mean, I think probably like, yeah, yeah, early grade school, maybe mid-grade school timeframe.

Jerry: And where did you learn it?

Chris Remus: Well, I, yeah, I think I learned it at home in a lot of ways.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: Yeah. I think, yeah, I think I learned it at home. Um, yeah. I think it's pretty much what I saw in terms of... So I was one of three children. Um, my mom ended up staying home to raise us and my dad was working. Um, so it was him and my mom staying at home. And I could see my dad, you know, just not really seeming like he enjoyed his work, and coming home at the end of the day and we'd have dinner, and there was not a whole lot of happiness around the table. And then after that, he would more or less, you know, move over to the couch and slump down and fall asleep in front of the TV until he could get himself upstairs to bed.

Jerry: And do it all over again.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Um, I would say, especially because you just said, do it all over again, I do remember my first job out of college, um, I was working at a large telecom company doing system administration work. And I remember waking up

two or three weeks into it and going into my closet to get dressed. And I just remember thinking myself with these dusty gray cubicle walls, like to go to, I just remember thinking to myself, you know, there's no way I can get up and do this every day for 10, you know, 30 more years, but then I did it for a while.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And that's the conundrum. Um, and, and what did dad do for a living?

Chris Remus: He did purchasing work for Bell Labs, and then ultimately, AT&T, and then Lucent once that whole thing kind of happened and then went down.

Jerry: And is he still with us, still alive?

Chris Remus: Yeah, he is. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: Did he ever achieve happiness?

Chris Remus: Yeah. I would say of the past few years, he seems to be trying. But I think, the honest answer to myself is probably not, probably not.

Jerry: Do you have any sense of what his father did?

Chris Remus: Yeah. His father was first generation in the US. Um, he worked in a mining town, and he basically worked himself out of the mines into the front office of the mine, and then eventually to the, I think vice president or president of a small bank in their small mining town.

Jerry: You said first-generation, so grandfather's parents immigrated?

Chris Remus: Correct. Yep.

Jerry: From where?

Chris Remus: From Lithuania. Lithuania and Slovakia. Yeah.

Jerry: And life in Lithuania and Slovakia, any sense of what that was like?

Chris Remus: I don't. I don't. I just started looking into that recently. Um, but you know, I'm guessing it wasn't great because they chose to come here.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: Yeah.

Jerry: If they were kings of the town, if they were the mayors sitting on piles of money, they probably would not have left.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah. That's my, that's my sense.

Jerry: And so we might just for this conversation presume for a moment that they too questioned whether or not they deserved happiness.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah. I might think though that if they were willing to make the jump they might have thought, you know, happiness could be possible, or at least something better than what they were experiencing.

Jerry: There's always bravery in that movement, isn't there? There's always a movement forward, uh, for something else there. The, the reason I ask those questions is that, um, I have found that, uh, oftentimes that subroutine that we speak about, uh, ha- uh, was originally programmed, if you will, multiple generations back. And it, it, like any good programming, it becomes, uh, uh, uh, altered slightly, um, especially with each movement. So grandfather goes, works his way out of the mine into a relatively, uh, strong position. Where, where was that, for exa- uh, by the way?

Chris Remus: This was in northwestern New Jersey.

Jerry: So mining in northwestern New Jersey. Okay.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: And so, um, and so then dad inherits a sense of the responsibility and duty, those are my words, so reject them if they don't feel right, that results in him slumping into the couch every night to get lost into TV.

Chris Remus: Could you say those two words again. I've heard obviously duty, responsibility.

Jerry: Responsibility and duty. Right. And you know, this is, this is a, a common challenge for, uh, many men. It, it can show up as, uh... and it's a unique take on the life deferment plan. It's, uh... and there's something quite moving about it, and it might show up as, uh, I will be the last to eat at the table. And my job is to do this. My responsibility is to do this, and, uh, in a, in a way that can create a sense of toxicity for the individual. Um, uh, I need to earn whatever happiness in life that I have. Do these themes feel connected?

Chris Remus: They do. The one place I get hung up is earning happiness. Meaning if one doesn't know that they're entitled to be happy, do they ever feel like they can actually earn, earn that?

Jerry: Ah, well, that's the conundrum, right?

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: Right. If I don't deserve happiness, no amount of hard work will ever make me, to use an earlier phrase, be done.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Or I might expand on that by saying there's also this strong sense of what I guess there are many from, from his generation, with my father's generation, which was, I'll be done when I hit retirement age, and that's when I'm allowed to be done, and that's when I'm allowed to enjoy myself a little bit, because I can't enjoy myself too much then because, you know, the income might run out, or, you know, whatever I put aside might run out. So the way I've looked at it was this progression of, you know, try and build enough of a financial pile so that when retirement comes, it doesn't run out too, too fast.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: But what I've seen is this, yeah, it's basically, I can't really enjoy myself because I need to save for retirement.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: Okay. I can enjoy myself a little bit, but now I have to start reigning it in again because this has gotta last until, you know, I'm gone.

Jerry: So what we're talking about is sort of some of the older patterns here. And now I wanna bring Theo in. What would you like Theo to believe about his own happiness?

Chris Remus: I think first and foremost, I want him to believe that he deserves to be happy, and that he can be happy, and also that his happiness doesn't necessarily have to... well, his happiness is not necessarily dependent on others and external factors as well.

Jerry: What about money?

Chris Remus: Money, I mean, my first answer that I was resisting was I want him to believe that he doesn't really have to worry that much about money in terms of being happy. I think what I wanted to say was, you know, I don't want him to have to tie money, happiness to money at all, but, you know, I don't think in today's society that's realistic.

Jerry: So tell me more about that resistance. Tell me more about that may not be realistic, Chris, that voice.

Chris Remus: I mean, today, it seems like there is some level of financial access that needs to happen in order to exist comfortably in our society today. Um, one of the things that, you know... To bring the cryptocurrency back into this, you know, one of the things that keeps me going and motivated is I truly hope that we can build a



more equitable, inclusive, and accessible financial alternative to what we have today.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: But until then, you know, I do believe income inequality is a huge problem in society, and, you know, in order to be comfortable and I guess happy, there has to be some level of financial access or freedom coming back to what we were talking about earlier.

Jerry: So let me reflect back what I think is a conflict for you. Um, and you tell me if I'm reading this right. Um, on the one hand, I want Theo to not tie his own sense of happiness and more specifically his deserving of happiness to say, that pile of cash. And yet there's a conscious awareness of the unhappiness that comes from income inequality. And, uh, while there's an aspirational wish for a more equitable financial system, where, to use a phrase, the child of an immigrant doesn't have to spend his days in a mine to pay for the bills. There is a real, there, there is, and there is work to be done to realize that world. There's our 'reality,' and I always think of a finger.

Jerry: “But Chris, there's reality, and reality is that doesn't pay the bills, and somebody's gotta pay the light bill.” And I wanna just highlight these multiple voices that I, I certainly relate to those voices, right? I want my three children to not feel encumbered by the things that encumbered me. My lack of money growing up, my inability to pay my college tuition, my inability to do certain things. And I want them to never experience that at all. But the reality is they need to know how to earn a living, da, da, da, right? There are all these conflicts.

Chris Remus: Yeah. This point about the reality, I think resonates strongly, particularly because back like at that 38, 39 point, I was doing some consulting work, doing some patent consulting work. And I got to a point where I was making more money than I ever thought I would or deserved, again, coming back to that deserving part. But I also realized I was not happy doing it. I was billing in six-minute increments, which through my own work with my therapist realizes that is suffocating to me for a lot of reasons because I had a lot of really bad jobs growing up where I was on the clock, somebody else's clock. And I had this, you know, watch the clock and wait for the minute hand to tick to get out of there. But, um, yeah, 38, 39, I s- I was doing that. And then that income stream dried up within about 45 days. And I wasn't sure what I was going to do next then. And then about two or three weeks later, we found out that my wife was pregnant with our son.

Jerry: With Theo.

Chris Remus: Yeah. So at that point, I had to ask myself, okay, do I have to get back to reality and go back to a job that I really didn't wanna go back to, or would I continue down this path and, you know, not do that? And I had done the former once

before back when I was like 29, 30 during the first telecom and internet boom. I started a consulting company and gained some freedom that way, but then 9/11 hit, and some funding dried up for some of our clients. And I had to go into management consulting for a while. Um, so I'd done that once before and I knew that I didn't wanna do that again, or I couldn't do that again, fortunately from that experience. So I decided to stick it out. Um, but I remember very clearly confronting that question in my own mind was, you know, all right, is this, is the playtime over? Do I have to get back to reality now, or, you know, or do I not have to do that?

Jerry: I'm really appreciating where our conversation has evolved. You know, we're hanging out with this question of what does it mean to be done. We dove into this question of deserving of happiness, and w- and happiness in that regard. And now w- what we're confronting is another facet of the question, which is, uh, that, that finger that says, okay, you gotta, you gotta deal with reality, your kiddo. Okay. You're gonna be a father. You got bills you have to pay. No more playtime here. I dunno about you, but I can hear my father's voice in all of that.

Chris Remus: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Jerry: Oh yeah.

Chris Remus: Yeah. I mean up until probably the past year, no, six months, I mean, my father would say things like, um, "Are you sure you don't wanna stay with that consulting company? Because if you did, you know, you might be a partner by now and you'd probably have a pens- you know, pension and retirement plan and healthcare benefits and all these things." So there's definitely that c- pattern cadence of, of that coming into a lot of the conversations along the way within those years.

Jerry: So let's acknowledge that, uh, that, that feeling for dad. You ha- I asked you, we, we, we took a turn when I asked you about what feelings you want for Theo. What feeling does your dad want for Chris, for his son? When he asked that question, what does he want for you?

Chris Remus: Yeah. It took a lot... It took me... It took a lot of work to come around to the answer I'm about to give, but, you know, I think ultimately, he wants me to be, um, safe, I think.

Jerry: Yeah. Yeah.

Chris Remus: Safe. Yeah.

Jerry: Because a father's task in some ways is to keep their children safe.

Chris Remus: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jerry: The irony is that in pushing you to do that, how did it make you feel or how does it make you feel?

Chris Remus: Yeah, I think there's a good deal of anger in there for a while.

Jerry: Angry at what?

Chris Remus: Angry at, I mean, everything from just not being able to go my own way, essentially, you know, feeling misunderstood.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: I think misunderstood, not being able to go my own way, feeling, um, a lot of suppression as well, just like not-

Jerry: Suppression.

Chris Remus: ... being able to, yeah, just like not being able to really explore and really manifest who, you know, to my fullest potential as a person. Uh-

Jerry: When, when, when you were sharing your father's description of being a partner at the consulting firm, the image of the gilded cage came up in my mind. Yeah. Yeah. That resonates with you.

Chris Remus: Oh yeah. I mean, especially after Theo was born, I mean, fortunately, the work that I do and the work that even I was doing back then enabled me, allowed me to be at home. Um, so I've been working from home for a long time. Um, and you know, I, in some of those early years of his life, I was thinking to myself, you know, thinking about some of the partners who worked on the different projects that I worked on, and one, in particular, would, you know, take the train home from DC to Philadelphia almost every night. Um, yeah. And you know, I just remember my last project I think, I was on the east coast and the project was on the west coast. So, you know, waking up early Monday, flying home Thursday, that kind of thing. And just remember thinking to myself, you know, no matter how this turns out, I feel super grateful that, you know, I'm not doing that right now.

Chris Remus: But had I been in that gilded cage, I would have been in the gilded cage and the gilded car to the airport and the gilded plane, I think, you know, and back again.

Jerry: And you would have been safe, but you may not have been happy.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: And I know when I've been in that gilded cage, 'cause I was there, the irony for me was the lack of inner and outer alignment. The lack of happiness that came from that actually made me more unsafe. Even though the physical container of

who I was may have been safe, the existential expression of who I was, was in so much pain that you cannot describe it as safe.

Chris Remus: Yeah. Now I can, I can feel that viscerally, um, because yeah, I think the things I was doing to numb myself at the time, I mean, particularly drinking pretty heavily, um, were just, I mean, it was not safe for me, you know, it wasn't safe for my body, it wasn't safe for my mind, and yeah, it really wasn't safe for, I think what I ultimately wanted, which was to be able to manifest more of my potential. It was actually, you know, in lots of ways, holding myself back from that potential. And I was doing okay with the work that I was doing, but, you know, yeah, inside I was feeling, yeah, completely torn apart. I don't, I didn't realize it as much 'cause I was numbing. I, I didn't realize it as much 'cause I was numbing myself, and you know, I was on the adrenaline rush of getting on a plane, getting on a train, you know, staying in hotel, I was always being on the move, so that was very seductive because you know, it was easy to hide for myself too, I think, when I was doing all that.

Jerry: So with the benefit of age and the benefit of being whispery close to 50-years-old, what does done mean now?

Chris Remus: I think one thing that comes to mind is I don't know that there is a done anymore. I don't know that there is a done, and I'm particularly not sure that there's retirement.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: I would say that you know, I feel pretty grateful to be experiencing what I'm experiencing now. Um, I'm able to do the work that I enjoy, that I feel like is aligned with who I am as a human being for the first time and probably ever. Um, I'm able to do the work I want to do when I want to do it more or less for as long as I want to do it more or less. I'm able to do it with the people that I want to do it with too. And I'm able to do that while at the same time, being able to, uh, take my son to school in the morning on our cargo bike over the Williamsburg bridge and not feel rushed that I have to be back for a 9:30 call on somebody else's schedule. So in a lot of ways, I almost feel like this is, you know, some form of done without like the finality of it.

Jerry: You know, listening to us, and, and I, and I know that you've studied Buddhism. I can feel it. We've talked a little bit about it. The old Buddhist teaching, uh, comes to mind, an old Buddhist teaching comes to mind, and that is before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water, right? You're still chopping wood. You're still carrying water. And, you know, speaking about my own life, I'm gonna chop wood and carry water until the last breath leaves my body. The wood I chop, the water I carry will always involve being connected to other human beings, 'cause that defines me. But I no longer am living the di- the life deferment plan. I am no longer trying to, uh, make sure I have enough lemon drops to be financially safe. I am weary of the gilded cage, but I take pleasure and joy out of the craft of chopping wood and

carrying water. Even when I torture myself because I didn't get enough writing done this past weekend, and I didn't because I have another book due in June and I'm driving myself crazy, right?

Chris Remus: Yeah.

Jerry: But it's, it's maybe what we're getting to Chris is that there's a liberation even from the word done, and that, um, I appreciate that you have work to do, and that work is to manifest Chainflow into the kind of organization. I'm giving you an assignment here, 'cause I'm your older brother and I'm allowed to do that. Um, is to, is to not only support the mechanisms for a more equitable financial system, but to create a playground for great people to do the best work of their lives, and that practice never ends. There is no done there just like there's no done in the practice of sitting meditation. There's no done in the practice of yoga. It is a life practice. And that's your opportunity in this phase as you look at the next decade of your life.

Chris Remus: I really appreciate that. I'm sitting with it for a minute.

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: I would say there are two things, two things that come out of it for me immediately. One is the concept of connection. Before that 38, 39 point, I was very isolating. I isolated myself. I didn't trust people. Um, I shut myself off from connection as much as possible. And I realized, you know, ultimately over time that that was tearing me apart too. So I've also really, really learned to appreciate the value of connection. Um, so I did want to say that. And then one of the other Reboot podcasts that I listened to, um, I don't remember his name, but he had the jeans company in the UK.

Jerry: Oh, David Hieatt

Chris Remus: Yes. In Wales. Okay. Yeah. I remember listening to that episode and I think, and he started talking about the other people as well, you know, looking around the factory floor. And when he was being asked to maybe get the factory started, if I'm remembering correctly-

Jerry: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Chris Remus: ... he was debating whether I should do this or whether I should not do this, but then he looked out on the factory floor and somebody said to him, you know, it's as much about you as it is about everybody here too. And so what you said really resonated strongly with me because I realized that I feel like I'm in a fortunate position to, you know, do the work I like with the people who I like, you know, when I want to do it, and I really do want to create those circumstances for other people as well. So I appreciate you saying that.

Jerry: I'll tell you a little story. There, there, there are times, uh, uh, uh, as I've often mentioned, Sharon Salzberg is my teacher, and I have a great, great, good fortune of speaking with her on a regular basis, and we'll speak and we'll sit. And the other night, we were talking, excuse me, and we were both feeling the state of the world right now. Um, that, that sense of exasperation that many of us feel right now, where are you fucking kidding me? We are still dealing two years later with the pandemic, or, uh, should I look to the left or to the right, because democracy seems to be under assault and it's profoundly fragile? And the economic inequality that you spoke to before is actually worsening. And climate change is so glaringly obvious that the klaxons are going off everywhere we look. And it feels really overwhelming. And we were both talking about how the people that we encounter, the people we support just feel so exhausted by that.

Jerry: And I looked at her through the video and I said, I have work to do. I'm not sticking my head in the sand. I see the world as it is right now, but I have work to do. And my work is to alleviate suffering. That's my bodhisattva vow. And until that dying breath leaves my body, that's what I will dedicate myself to. And when I recognize that and I internalize that, it's no longer a life deferment plan, it's no longer a, let me justify my worth to the world. It's clearly seeing what my place is in the world, which is to create the means for others to live their lives. And that creates sustenance for me. That gets me up in the morning and it makes me feel more energy in the end of the day than there was at the, at the beginning. And I offer that to you because I sense resonance in that. That's the way you get out of the conundrum of, do I deserve happiness?

Chris Remus: Thank you for sharing that. It does resonate deeply, very deeply. Um, I think for most of my life, I've also felt very powerless and... I think for the first time, I see a path into maybe not being so powerless and maybe being able to do something small to help, you know, set up the future in a more equitable and inclusive way maybe. But I think there's at least enough of it there to, to motivate me in a lot of the ways that you just described.

Jerry: Our task is to put our shoulder to the boulder and push it up to the hill. Our task is not to do that by ourselves. Our task is to join each other and push those boulders up the hill.

Chris Remus: Yeah.

Jerry: Knowing that the boulder may roll right back down, but that's our task, and that gives us purpose and it gives us meaning. It gives us that relational connection. I don't know any other way we're gonna solve some of those problems that we were talking about before, except if our shoulder is not at that boulder, shoulder at that wheel.

Chris Remus: Yeah. I mean, I feel like, I feel like we have to try, because I'm not sure where I am on my bodhisattva path specifically. Maybe I'm not supposed to know, but I do know that I see a lot of pain when I look around, I see a lot of pain also.

Jerry: You know, uh, we're, we're, I'm, I'm gonna make an assumption about your identity, that you identify as white and that you identify as, as gender-

Chris Remus: Yes. Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's correct.

Jerry: ... and male. We have a lot of power. We have a lot of privilege. You and me and folks who live in bodies like ours. I think part of our task is to make sure our eyes stay open to all of that suffering that we see. And we put our shoulder to that wheel. We put our, our body behind that boulder, and we work, not because it, it, it, it, it generates the earning of our happiness, but because it is our work to do in the world. It's in my belief system, it's why I, this body, this, this being took incarnation in this body. It's why I'm here. And I, and so, you know, in some, I, I, I think I really admire your recognition that that work that we just defined, that's never done

Jerry: Yeah. Um, I wanna thank you, Chris, for coming on the show and having this conversation. I learned a lot listening to you.

Chris Remus: Thank you.