Jerry:
Well, hello there.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Hi, Jerry.

Jerry:
Annahid, it's delightful to see you again. I've really been looking forward to this. I will confess that you're the first author that I've had on the show for whom I've read two books of yours.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Oh, I feel so honored.

Jerry:
And I do want to plug the first book as well. I found *Breaking the Ocean* to be deeply moving and beautiful imagery and super helpful. As you know, as I was in the throws, as we shared as good friends of my own process, and it was very moving for me. And then I had the delight of getting an early copy of *Bones of Belonging*, *Finding Wholeness In a White World*. And I think I very enthusiastically emailed you. But I'll say this out loud, a hearty deep felt thank you for writing this book. It is wonderful. So I'm super excited to jump in and have our conversation. But, you know, before we get started, I like to ask our guests to identify themselves and you know, however feels right for you.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Thanks, Jerry. Thank you. I was smiling as you were offering the appreciation for the writing and appreciate your appreciation. So thank you.

Jerry:
Oh, there we go.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, it's lovely to be here. I would, you know, I think any of us might identify differently depending on the moment and the day, but I guess the umbrella identity markers would be that I am an immigrant. I identify as a racialized immigrant. which means non-white. Iranian-born but mixed race. So my father's Iranian, my mother is British, but I grew up without the benefit of being able to fully pass as white. So certainly identify as a person, a woman of color. I'm also CEO and co-founder of a leading inclusion and equity company based in Toronto, Canada, and we do work with organizations, communities around predominantly North America, but also beyond borders.

Annahid Dashtgard:

So I'm very deeply entrenched and mired in this conversation that we're having as a species at every single level, I would say, as a society around how we create more inclusion and belonging for ourselves and what's at stake if we don't hence the book is parallel to my day-to-day work. But it's very much parallel to the work I do as a human.

Jerry:
Well, thank you for that and I'll plug a little bit. The company is Anima Leadership. And having experienced some of the materials and you as a new but deep friend, I am grateful for the work you all do in the world. really important.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Thanks, Jerry.

Jerry:
Hmm. So, *Bones of Belonging*. What an intriguing title. I really would like to talk about that. And I'm, forgive me for not remembering which of your children, but one of your children talked about the image on the cover. So, tell us about how did this book come to be?

Annahid Dashtgard:
Well, we work, as I mentioned, a lot with organizations, trying to wake up leaders and individuals within those kinds of systems to what equity and inclusion really means. What's at stake? That this isn't just a theoretical debate about what words to use or the right things to do or say, but it's about creating environments where people can really be themselves and take for granted that it's OK and even safe to be themselves. And I think about when I'm in an environment where I feel comfortable, I am more funny, I laugh louder, I express my opinions more easily. I think I'm just generally a lot more joyous and thought-provoking and insightful than I am when I'm in environments where I don't feel that.

Annahid Dashtgard:
And in fact, it's a very different person that shows up then. I tend to be quieter. I second-guess everything that comes out of my mouth. So I would I would guess more rigid perhaps even more intimidating. It's a very different self And so what's at stake in this in this? in this you know conversation is really If I go really deep, I think about if we want to really cultivate solutions to the problems we're living with, we have to create these environments where people can be themselves, because it's only then that we really pull out the deep intelligence and wisdom that comes from diverse wisdom that doesn't just come out of the same thinking patterns that have held up our society for centuries.

Jerry:
…and maintain systemic oppression for centuries.

Annahid Dashtgard:
I maintained built and maintained systemic oppression for centuries, that's right.

Jerry:
Yeah.

Annahid Dashtgard:
And so I do this work in institutions and I see the value, but also the limits of data points and the theoretical arguments and learning processes, those are all really deeply important and valuable. But I think that we don't have enough accessible entry points for people to really understand what equity and inclusion means, in a personal, in a relatable way. And so I wrote the *Eat, Pray, Love,* the racial version, the brown version of *Eat, Pray, Love*. What does the world look as a non-white person, as a non-white woman?

Jerry:
Yeah.

Annahid Dashtgard:
And, you know, writing about my family, writing about, you referenced one of the stories earlier, going to the swimming pool and having my young son, who was four years old at the time, correct the attendant of my name. Those micro-moments that I think anyone can relate to but paint a picture of what it means to just be working creating space for oneself to be that is against the current that's always against the current and the effort but also the beauty that that process entails.

Jerry:
Well, I really want to applaud you because there is this balance that is both in your work, but in your book as well, in both books, but particularly in *Bones of Belonging*. And now hearing you what I can imagine, and you'll correct me if this is wrong, that the phrase Bones of Belonging refers to a felt sense, that sense that belonging felt in our bones and not as you put it, this sort of theoretical construct, which I think we see the limitations of, especially in those of us who care about equity within organizations, we feel the limitations of doing the work that stops at the heart, stops at the felt sense of it.

Jerry:
And the thing that I think you do so well in *Bones of the Belonging* is you marry and combine an intellectual exploration with your own felt sense. And I think I wrote to you and if I didn't, I'll tell you again, one of the frustrations I have with most leadership books is that the author tends to disappear behind an intellectual fog.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry: (9:26)
And the thing I felt so vividly in this book is your presence. You know, there are stories you tell of

life in the pandemic and the struggle of, you know, you and your husband having two little kids and having to navigate the space. you know, and it makes it viscerally real while simultaneously making these larger observations about what life is like in your body, in your experience. And as a result, I think you advance the dialogue. in a way it needs to be advanced. Does that resonate at all?

Annahid Dashtgard
Mm-hmm. It does resonate. I think that we have a very erroneous idea of what it takes to create equity. And that is that people have to understand the theory, believe in the theory, and then act on the theory. And that's actually not accurate.

Jerry:
Hmm.

Annahid Dashtgard:
I think it's, it's, we can circumvent a lot of that. If people can relate, they will shift behavior. We don't need all the, we don't need the perfect words and the academic understanding and all that stuff. In fact, that can often get in the way. What we need are more relatable access points. The second thing I would say is that I consciously wrote from the vantage point of personal story because one of the center points of white cultural norms is the separation of mind from body. You know, dating back to, you know, the Renaissance and Descartes…Yes…

Jerry:
Yeah.

Annahid Dashtgard:
…exactly. “I think therefore I am,” that, you know, the splitting off of parts of ourselves, especially mind from body. And I think part of what we need to create more equitable spaces, but also again, to solve the problems facing us is to recognize interdependence. And we have to start marrying these divisive parts of ourselves and divided parts of our community and our humankind of species. And so I personally don't read any books anymore, where somebody's just spouting theory without themselves in the picture because I think well How have you lived this? I don't trust you if you can't show me you've lived this and profoundly wrestled with this down to your bones

Annahid Dashtgard:
It's easy to spout theory. I could you know click through a PowerPoint presentation I could have written a very different book that would have been infinitely easy easier for me to write,but that's not what I think is needed.

Jerry:
I could not agree with you more. I think writ large within the broad context of leadership generally. I think what you've just said is a very, very important concept within leadership. I'll

work with a client and they'll say, well, we're having trouble trusting us. Like, well, are you showing up?

Annahid Dashtgard:
Hmm.

Jerry:
Cause if you're not showing up, who is it that they're gonna trust?

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Jerry:
And showing up means showing up with your foibles, showing up with your challenges, showing up with the reality of your experience.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm

Jerry:
And, you know, in my forthcoming book, *Reunion*, I play with these words of remembering versus dismembering.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Oh, beautiful.

Jerry:
And I think that we have not, that there is this relationship that exists between the dismembered parts of ourselves and the need to remember those parts as a ground upon which we can remember and connect with, reconnect with others.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm

Jerry:
And I think that one of the profound aspects of art and leading from the heart and the truth of the experience, which you do so well in this book, is that you get this possibility of deep, empathetic connection.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm.

Jerry:

I'll tell you a quick story. I'm working with a team of individuals, and we're collecting what we're referring to as stories of belonging and video and audio experiences. And just last week, I was in Washington, DC, with a group of folks who identify completely differently than I do.

I am white, cis-gendered, straight, male, old, and losing my hair. slightly fat, right? That's me. That's who I am. With power and privilege that comes from that experience, right? And one of the members of the group is a 14-year-old young man who identifies as black, and we were talking about his life and growing up in a housing project in DC and he had just buried his second best friend, killed in gun violence, drug-related gun violence in the community, and he said something which was enormous. He said, “I just need people to listen.”

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm

Jerry:
And what I think he's asking for is, to know the bones of my belonging.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm, that's right.

Jerry:
You know, and we looked at each other. There was a group of six of us and we looked around and I just asked the question, why don't we look each other in the eye? And I don't think we do that. And I think you're right in identifying it as a, I'll use the structure. I think it's an outgrowth of white supremacist structure that values outcome over the experience.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah

Jerry:
And the clearest expression of that I see in business is valuing profit over people.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

Jerry:
And so, you know, when we go to only the theoretical or only the intellectual experience and lose the bones, we've lost the souls.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, that's right. That's right. That's right. I think I was using bone as a metaphor for soul. That's right.

Jerry:
Yeah.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm.

Jerry:
And I, you know, and I appreciate you putting yourself out there in that way. Because, you know, you tell the stories of being a mother, being a wife, being a CEO, trying to balance all of those things in the same space in during the pandemic and after the pandemic, and experiencing all of that. I think that you've hit upon some really beautiful stories that illustrate some of that.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Thanks, Jerry. I want to just add that I also feel privileged to be in the position I'm in, which is we have our own company. I work for myself. That gives me more freedom to be able to voice things that I hear regularly from other racialized individuals and leaders. People will frequently come up to me at break, at lunch, after the session's over, in an email afterwards, voicing their experience within, similar to what I've written about…

Jerry:
Yeah.

Annahid Dashtgard:
…shades of what I've written about. And yet, I think, for many reasons, just don't have the same access to be able to share their stories. And so that was part of it for me. I mean, I don't think we rationally decide to write books like these. That's one thing. But I do... It was a choice to publish because I knew that I could give voice to experiences that people have all the time, that just do not get surfaced often enough.

Jerry:
Thank you for noting that because I think I lost touch with the privilege that I, that aspect of the privilege that I carry, which is as a co-founder, as a CEO of my own company, I too have the capacity, you know, sure, there may be a loss of clients that we would both might experience. But there's a piece of us that are sort of like, okay, to deal with that, you know, but when we are working within the confines of other people's structures, we don't have the privilege of speaking with that same vehemence and veracity, you know. And it's important that we both recognize it. recognized that that happens.

Jerry:
You know, I had a conversation with the marketing team for the new book and one of the publicists said, you know, Jerry, this new book is not necessarily safe. Are you okay with, you know, getting into public relations dialogues that won't necessarily be safe? And I kind of just smiled and the Brooklyn and me got really activated and my publisher cut me off and said, she

said, you don't know Jerry,

Annahid Dashtgard:
Well, thank you. Thank you for doing that. Thank you for doing that because quite frankly, you know, the risk for someone like myself is I recognize is also greater than it would be for a white man or a white woman in my position. I mean, for example, the book deals a lot with issues of race, immigration, and exile. So I'm talking about belonging through this very particular landscape. We have a lot of books written about experiences through the lens of gender. I think about Glennon Doyle, Elizabeth Gilbert, Cheryl Strait, these white women that have written about their life experiences through the lens of feminism and gender. There's a big appetite for that, but we still have difficulty talking about race. I know that there's a risk of being a racialized person, being a brown person, being a brown woman, talking openly about these issues. I know there's going to be some blowback. Like you said, the Brooklyn, I didn't grow up in a Brooklyn, but I'm going to use it as a shred. The Brooklyn in me also came out and just kind of went like, I'm gonna, but I'm gonna willingly take this risk because I know we need to surface this discomfort. I know people relate to it. I know people will see myself as speaking for some of their experiences. I know a lot of people will welcome it and I know it'll make some people uncomfortable and I'm gonna stand for all of it. But I say this because going back to my thanking you because we also need a lot more white people to

Jerry:
Yes.

Annahid Dashtgard:
write about experiences of what gets diminished you as a white person in this white-dominant culture. Well, a lot of white people use their individual ethnicity, they lose their own connection to answer. There's a white brushing of everybody's experience under the same ubiquitous cultural umbrella. There's a loss in that, right?

Jerry:
Hmm.

Annahid Dashtgard:
There's a lack of people being able to talk about privilege that comes with white identity in honest, open ways, and how hard it can be to build relationship across the racial divide. But the fact that you stepped into this and investigated your own vulnerability and culpability, I think is so inspiring and I just, it's why you and I have developed a friendship because I see also the courage it's taken for you to do that.

Jerry:
Well, I appreciate your saying that. And it's a lot more courageous for someone who's coming from a position outside of that normative dominant culture. It is unfortunate that those of us who have the safety and power are not willing to take risks. But God's honest truth is, I don't see how

the world changes, if those of us who have power are willing to risk losing that power, whatever that would look like, to see the world that we say we want to have exist.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah.

Jerry:
I think it's a moral responsibility. And from where I sit, I appreciate your widening the lens to also talk about the experience, I think you called it, of exile. This experience of immigration, which is also part of what's lacking in the dialogue. There's identity and racialized identity, discussion, there's gender identity that is not nearly as discussed as it should, and then there's that immigrant experience which is equally not discussed. And they all mix. And the thing is, It's actually wonderful when we have this dialogue.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah.

Jerry:
You know? It's

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah. It’s spicy.

Annahid Dashtgard:
I'm waking up. I’m even like finding my energy levels going up even when we're hitting this point in our conversation.

Jerry:
Right. I'm thinking just a few weeks ago, I read this incredible book by Kathy Park Hong called *Minor Feelings,* is her experience as an Asian woman in the United States as a poet. And it's fierce. I mean, I'll say it from the Brooklyn. It's fierce as fuck. that is exactly the kind of thing that we need to be looking at.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm.

Jerry:
And it's not monolithic.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Beautiful.

Jerry:

Just like your book is not monolithic. You don't pretend to speak for all, right?

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah.

Jerry:
And none of us need anyone to speak for all.

Annahid Dashtgard:
No. We would just recreate the same system.

Jerry:
That's right. That's right. You know, and, you know, it's such a rich, vibrant experience. It's spicy to imagine. I mean, you know, and I see that even in the vignettes that you share in this book, the little stories, like I have here skates which is this, well, you tell. It says, you taking the family out skating.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm.

Jerry:
"It's the family holiday, so that afternoon we bundle ourselves into snowshoes to go on a nature walk nearby in the ravine. After half an hour of wandering over train tracks, feeding breadcrumbs to a group of wild ducks, and stopping for snacks under snow-leading branches, we emerge to the trees, blinking in amazement. I look over at Shaquille, is your husband's name? Odd at this magic we've I think how that little boy is not alone anymore." You tell the story of his belonging, of his experience. And with your writing, you make it visceral. You make it a felt sense of experience.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm. I love that story. I think that if we live consciously, there's a grace. We're offered opportunities for healing that are often arrived unexpectedly, randomly. And that morning, we were somehow, we were talking about, I don't even know how it came up, but somehow this, my husband embarked on telling his story of immigration, immigrating from Pakistan and being beaten up and very isolated when he first moved and he didn't speak the language. And there was a moment in time where he went skating by himself because his parents didn't skate and no one knew the times and I don't know where he found the skates. And the rink closed and he was by himself, I think six years old at this moment, huddled over trying to get his skates off and he couldn't get one of them off his foot. So he hobbled home through the blizzard. And I liken that to the experience of immigrating, how one is so deeply isolated, left out in the cold, facing the elements, trying to sort of learn how to walk normally, gain the same leverage that others have.

Jerry:
Mmm.

Annahid Dashtgard: (27:00)
And he told the story and my daughter started to sob. She was eight at the time, just sobbing, inconsolably. And finally, he had the brilliant idea of reenacting. this moment with her. And so she got to walk over to him and offer to help walk him home. And so there's this little reparation moment. And fast forward that afternoon we happened to go through a walk, we walked through the ravine and totally unexpectedly Jerry, it's winter we're walking through walking through and finally we come out to the crest of the hill that moment you just read. And I kid you not we come across this volunteer-made skating rink, and people are in their families and skating and helping each other. There's this vibrant community. And I thought, I just was so deeply, deeply moved because it felt like this moment of full circle. Like, what are the odds that we've just had this moment talking about? Yeah, just, it was so powerful. And my daughter, and I looked over and my daughter reached out for my husband's hand. And I thought, it just, I thought, wow. This is grace. This…

Jerry:
This is grace.

Annahid Dashtgard:
…is what's possible for all of us.

Jerry: (28:28)
This is life, this is love, this is, you know, your daughter's reaction to her father as a little boy.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah.

Jerry:
You know, I was weeping as I read that story. And, you know, the reparation, the micro-reparation as you've termed it, was not only for Shaquille but for your daughter. Because there was a powerless, you know, there's an empowerment that comes to her to realize that she could do something for the little boy who was her father.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Hmm. You know, I hadn't thought about until now her experience coming from watching the skating happen, but I bet that that kind of solidified something for her watching it beside him.

Jerry:
I mean, it's moments like that, it's stories like that, that I think too often are lost in the dialogue that we have about equity and inclusivity.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry:
It's as if, and I'll expand it again, it's too often moments like that, that a loss in our dialogues about leadership.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, 100%.

Jerry:
It's as if, you know, we assume the responsibility, both of us are CEOs, we assume the responsibility of CEO, and when somehow we've internalized this notion that we're to leave our hearts to the side.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm. Yeah

Jerry:
And yet, a story like that shows that the heart connection is the source of some of our greatest insights.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm. That's right. That's right.

Jerry
And connection and the creation of even if we get it wrong because we will get it wrong, we can still repair. It's like it's pushing up against that notion of perfection and the deep, deep connection between the drive for perfection and the maintenance of dominant structures.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right. And I, you know, I know that you follow quantum physics a bit, but the moments become fractals of the larger pattern. I mean, to change a system, we don't always have to go broad. We can sometimes have micro-moments that ripple out and invisibly shift something in the culture. I'm a real believer in the power of that. So I think that that's another reason why leaders need to go to the heart because when leaders have those heartfelt moments, it does ripple out more broadly because leaders set the tone and, you know, model the culture. And in fact, yeah, the higher up people go in organizations, the more the further they get from their own heart, but also the further removed they get from their own identity experiences, and the heart in those experiences. So a lot of racialized leaders at the CEO level have completely, especially divorced themselves from experiences of immigration or what it means to be racialized or not fit in or the moments that I've described in the book because it's even more of a liability for me to touch those experiences of vulnerability as a non-white leader and yet again, I think even more

reason why they are needed and can ripple out.

Jerry:
I wonder then, therefore, because this is another passage that I found so deeply moving. If there's a connection here, and with your permission, I'll read again. This is from this section called Rebel Body.

Jerry:
“Over the next decade, I dealt with the fear of not meeting white people's standards by stuffing endlessly white substances, bread, cake, ice cream, rice, down my throat, maybe hopes of eventually becoming white enough from the inside out to pass.”

Is there…you know, we were just talking about that experience as a racialized identity. Trying to fit in and then, you know, this image of consuming white substances really to the detriment of your own body.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right. That's right. And insert whatever other substance you want to use instead of food for me. It was very viscerally an eating disorder was food as well as but it can be, you know, gobbling up white cultural mannerisms or white-based European knowledge or or culture. And not to say that I just want to make it clear. It's not that dominant white European culture is It's the fact that it becomes, that it's dominant, that it replaces and substitutes and erases other cultural ways of being and knowing and acting that are equally valuable.

Jerry:
The norm. Yes. right.

Annahid Dashtgard:
But do not get their place, do not get honored or visualized in the system we're part of. I had a woman in one of my sessions, a South Asian woman from India who talked about consciously going to her workplace when she first immigrated here, wearing a Chalard Camus, which is the robe and then the, you know, the color, the robe and then the pants and to her place of work. And after a couple of years, just stopped and doesn't do it at all anymore because not again, not because it was overt racism or overt things that were said to her, but she just got exhausted by either people ignoring or overtly visualizing why she was wearing such an outfit. And it just was never, she could never just be in the experience. It was just never sort of on par. That's the pressure.

Jerry:
Yeah. You know, I think that the connection that occurs for me goes back to a brilliant essay James Baldwin wrote called *The Price of the Ticket* in which he talks about the price of the ticket of whiteness is the loss of ethnic identity.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right.

Jerry:
And that he talks about the need to know, this is his quote, “to know from whence one came,” to know from whence one came. And in the experience I've had over these last few years as I leaned heavily into this question… what the connection, I read that passage and I thought of my grandparents from Italy and my grandfather, Dominic Guido, in Italian society in Brooklyn, the American Italian society. Purposeful choice of words.

Annahid Dashtgard:
What year was this?

Jerry:
1920. So when the immigration laws in the United States were still up for debate and the Supreme Court still had not ruled yet on who was white, right? I mean, that's how recent this whole, and that under the 1790 law, white people and the children of enslaved black folks could be termed citizens. But that was it.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Jerry:
And so who is white was a very relevant question. And his choice and my grandmother's choice that their seven children would not know how to speak Italian.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, yep, that's right. That's it, that's exactly, that's...

Jerry:
And it's that movement towards safety, and there was a privilege that came to them by being able to be accepted, such that two generations later, there is no question of my whiteness., right? And what was lost in that movement and the ability to then read your passage, what gets lost is the empathetic reading of it, not a sympathetic reading of it.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right. You know, you're hitting the nail on the head. My hope is I think the solution to undoing oppression is not the pity move, is not just about I have to sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice to help people of color. I mean, that altruism is useful, it has its place, but the deeper change mechanism is to go, what have I lost in this system? And let me excavate my own experience and know from whence I came, know what my bones hold. And then I can relate. It's not that the loss of what I have lost as a white person is equal to necessarily what immigrants and communities of color have lost. But there is a loss and I can relate through empathy. And I think

that is a much more profound and stable relational place to come from one doesn't get thrown off at the first mistake.

Jerry:
Right.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Feeling bad at making the first mistake or, you know, because I know that I need to undo this for, for my own reasons too. I'm losing on this system too.

Jerry:
The danger, of course, is false equivalency.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's exactly, yeah, we can't do that.

Jerry:
And we can't diminish the other's experience with white tears, which is an appropriate term. But it's a nuanced stance, I think, that's required, which is to understand not the myths of our ancestor's experience, but the reality of that experience so that I can then from that vantage point look to say the southern border of the United States and say, what is that immigrant experience like and what does it feel like when we put people through hurdles to enter a countr that did not exist prior to 1923?

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right. I mean, we just need a lot more education on these issues. One of the steps in the process towards having broader collective conversations, I think, is having space for racialized folks to, we are having our own conversations, quite frankly, it's happening all over the place. And within the Black community, within subsections, within my community, within, you know, there's a lot of, but we also need spaces for white people to have conversations around race and what it means as well. And I think, yeah, which is why your book, again, is so important.

Jerry:
And yeah, I think, well, I appreciate your saying that. It all comes from a place of saying, “This is not working.”

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right.

Jerry:
And I have a moral obligation to acknowledge that it's not working.

Annahid Dashtgard:

Yeah.

Jerry:
And that, you know, if we dedicate ourselves to trying to create better leadership, whatever the hell that means, that leaves aside the notion of creating systemic belonging, then we are perpetuating the same problems.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right, 100%. Yeah.

Jerry:
So, you know, I think that books such as yours really should be read widely and broadly. And, you know, I would offer that sometimes reading *Bones of Belonging* felt like I was reading a journal. And there's a privilege in looking into your heart and I appreciate that. But that's, I think, part of that experience of looking in each other's eyes and just imagining what it's like to be in your body, in your experience.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Mm-hmm.

Jerry:
And then reaching across and saying, okay, so here's how I take away from that experience.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah, that's right.

Jerry:
Here's what gets stirred up inside of me.

Annahid Dashtgard:
That's right.

Jerry:
Right? From there, we do the intellectualized work of policy-making and decision-making. And so we've not lost the connection. And we make a decision that's a policy-based decision and then it needs to be changed, okay? So it's not perfect.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Yeah. Yeah. Stories are the oldest recipe for inclusion, I like to say. You know, they change,they change us indelibly, often in ways that we don't know. Yeah. Yeah. Much more than facts and stats.

Jerry:

Well, I want to thank you for this conversation. And I want to thank you for doing the work that you do. And I want to thank you for your friendship. You know, it, I learn each time we have a conversation and, and I'm really appreciative of that. And I hope that a thousand, that thousands of people buy the book.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Thank you, Jerry. And I want to say, you know, I know Parker connected us, Parker Palmer, and that this connection for me has been reparative because I still find, even though I'm, you know, you and I started this conversation saying we're both hitting milestones. I won't share yours, but we're both feeling old. I don't mind sharing, you know, I'm hitting…

Jerry:
We're both feeling old.

Annahid Dashtgard: (43:42)
my 50 mark this year. And, and...

Jerry:
And I'll be 60, dammit. Ha ha ha…There you go. We've come out of the age closet. But it's still my experience. Unfortunately, that when I meet white men in leadership, I am just so conscious of still having to be so perfect and on the ball and articulate. And, you know, I maybe that's some of my own patterning. And I also know there's still this this this bar that I have to meet to to themselves and meeting you has been reparative for me just in you know… Yes, there's your identity as a white cis-gendered male, but your depth of heart and presence has just allowed me to really recognize how possible that is. I don't see that very often.

Jerry:
You are gonna make me cry. Which is not uncommon. Well, thank you for that. Well, thank you so much for coming on the show. It's, it's, it's really been a delight and we'll have all the requisite pointers in the material where people can buy the book and things like that.

Annahid Dashtgard:
Thanks for having me.