

Jerry Colonna:

Welcome, Soren. Oh my goodness.

Soren Gordhamer:

Good to be here.

Jerry Colonna:

It's great to connect with you and I have to say that our lives have intersected and overlapped in different ways for probably 15 years, dude. But before I go there, why don't you just take a moment and introduce yourself however you'd like to.

Soren Gordhamer:

Good to be here. I would introduce myself as a practitioner and a seeker and someone who's super, super curious about how the ancient teachings of mindfulness, wisdom, compassion, how they can be integrated and applied into our modern life, whether that's relationships or technology or entrepreneurship. I feel like the ancient teachings that were around in Jesus' time or the Buddhist, they're still here.

Jerry Colonna:

Mm-hmm.

Soren Gordhamer:

They never went anywhere. We breathe the same air, you we're basically the same types of human beings. So how do we live ancient wisdom within modern life? And so I've been hosting an event on that called wisdom 2.0. I now also do an event on wisdom and AI. We explore how AI is going to unfold. Coming out with a new book called the essential, but it's all really about this exploration of how do we live ancient wisdom within a modern context?

Cause most of us aren't going to go off and live in the woods and go to a monastery, some of us will, but most of us aren't. Most of us want to apply them into this amazing creative world that we're living in. And so that's been my curiosity now for much of my life.

Jerry Colonna:

Well, thank you for that. I really appreciate that. And I have to share that I was a budding practitioner coming out of the first, really the sort of overlap of the venture community and the technology community when I remember, I remember the launch of WISM 2.0. And I remember really...I could feel from the very beginning what it was that you were trying to do, which was this sort of overlap space between worlds that people might have felt discordant or not really connected. And this was, we should name it because we're so old, this was before meditation was hip in Silicon Valley.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah. It was not him at the time. People made fun of us. You were still part of those years where

people would laugh at us and make fun of us. Yeah, so 2009, I think I started the conference. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

That's right. Right, right. And so here we are. We're having this conversation. And I will share that when your people reached out, I really jumped at the chance, even before I had a chance to read the book. And then just because over time, I've so enjoyed our conversations. We did some work for Sounds True's Inner MBA program together. And then I read the book, and I was like, oh, oh. And this is an important word for me right now. Kinfolk. A kindred spirit. Someone who cares about similar things.

Soren Gordhamer:

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Jerry Colonna:

So let's dive in a little bit. I'm going to start really with the title and the subtitle, *The Essential, Discovering What Really Matters in an Age of Distraction*. What are you reaching for with this?

Soren Gordhamer:

You know, I think we all come here, Jerry, with our own kind of karmic path or karmic assignment. And it's easy as we kind of make our way to kind of get lost in all the things of the world and to forget, like, what actually matters to me? Like, what is actually essential? Like, in any given day, with the limited heartbeats I have on this planet, how do I live them in a way that feels true to my own calling and true to my own kind of reason for being here, so to speak?

Jerry Colonna:

Mmm. Mmm.

Soren Gordhamer:

And I've seen people who discover that and they live from that and they remember that and their lives kind of are like super powered, you know, because there's like this passion and this alignment and this like intensity. And I've also seen a world where I and others have just lost that, right? And we get, we get to spend our time doing things that don't feel like it nurtures our heart. It doesn't feel like it really nurtures our wellbeing. And I don't know what that life is, but I know each one of us has that more aligned life and a less aligned life.

Jerry Colonna:

Mm-hmm.

Soren Gordhamer:

And I saw as technology gets more and more advanced and particularly the AI algorithms get more and more advanced such that, know, Metta was bragging that advancements in their AI increased user time on Instagram by I think it was something like 24%, you know, while back.

So the AI gets to know us so well, the ads get to be so like alluring that we spend three or four hours on a social media platform and then look up like, what in the hell was I doing? Yeah, I was just meant to be there for five minutes or 10 minutes.

And so I wanted to explore, how do we actually remember what are the real important elements in our life and how do we prioritize those within this world where everyone's trying to get our attention and it's so easy to kind of fall prey to spending our limited heartbeats that we have on the planet in ways that really don't serve us. It might serve the platforms, know, the platforms love that and their job is to kind of keep us there. But what if we just woke up and said, actually, what really matters to me?

And I think a couple things we know, we know we have a limited number of heartbeats, and we never know when those are gonna end. And I think it's really powerful to ask, I living my heartbeats in a way that feels aligned with what matters to me? And I think that was the inquiry that I wanted to explore and share.

Jerry Colonna:

So I have to tell you a quick little story. One of my dearest friends and teachers is Parker Palmer. And he just turned 86. And last May, I went to visit him in Madison. And I had the great, great good fortune of just sitting on his enclosed porch and laughing my butt off, or laughing our butts off.

And we talked about the world, and he had written a forward to my last book. So there's this deep and profound connection that goes back decades. And I felt settled. I felt I was in the company of one of those folks that you were just identifying. And as I sat in the airport on my way back to Denver, I wrote a note to myself and I kid you not, because I'm going to show you evidence of this. I wrote a note that simply says, and I'll show it in the screen, it says, "what matters is what matters."

Soren Gordhamer:

What matters?

Jerry Colonna:

Right? And I tend to be a little bit cryptic about things and I say things in a weird, little, poetic, lyrical way. But I think what we're saying is a similar thought.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah, and we've all been in that moment. know, love that Thich Nhat Hanh used to say that we're all part-time Buddhas, like we're all kind of aligned in present-day moments. And the work has to become increasingly, you know, a full-time Buddha. And I used to work with kids in juvenile hall in New York City, which was always just a really powerful experience.

Jerry Colonna:

Which I did not know until I read your book, but keep going. Yeah.

Soren Gordhamer:

Is that right? Yeah. So it was great training program. I probably learned more from those kids than I've learned from any teachers I've ever had because the moment I was disingenuous. They would know it and they would come at me and they would feel it and they were just, they would, yeah. I'm like, well, the Buddha said, who the fuck cares about the Buddha? I don't give a shit. How's the Buddha helping? And I'm like, you're right, you're right. It's like, I don't know where that came from. Just trying to impress you.

Jerry Colonna:

And it cut through your bullshit, they would just get to you.

Soren Gordhamer:

But yeah, yeah. So good, so good. But you know, when I would inquire into their lives, they've had these deep moments of playing sports or being engaged in a way that they were feeling in the flow of life. They didn't know the language for it and then they would go into drugs to try to get back that experience, like that experience of ease and trust and flow.

So, like we all know it, we've all touched it at times. Like, and it could be just in the most simplest things. So it's not like we can kind of force it and like, I'm gonna make this happen. I'm gonna be present. I'm gonna be in the flow. It's like all this energy goes in and just creates tightness, you know, in us.

And at the same time, if we're not somewhat vigilant, if we're not remembering, wow, I have limited heartbeats. How do I want to spend them? We also easily just get lost in this world of digital consumption that really doesn't serve us. And so I think this is something that we all know and tap into it. And that's why I was like, when I was writing my book, I was like, this is something we remember more than this something we create. Like, this is who we are. And how do we create conditions that help us remember that?

Jerry Colonna:

Yes.

Soren Gordhamer:

I've always liked the phrase, "enlightenment is an accident and our job is to become accident prone." So it's not to force it, but we create conditions that bring out that true presence and that true joy in us. And then how do we listen to that to create the life from that space versus creating a life that actually says nothing about who we are and what our values are. Then we succeed at that life and we realize..."Wow, this means nothing to me" because it's not genuine to kind of my inner core or inner state.

Jerry Colonna:

I'm going to build upon what you said because you keep using one of my most favorite words, which is remember.

Oftentimes the way I like to visualize the word is re-member because and again reading your book I know you've done work with Dick Schwartz here he's a friend and internal family systems that's one way to look at the dismembered parts of ourselves. In reunion I spent a lot of time thinking about the dismembered ancestors. Those that we have forgotten. And I think that...I'm going to extract a little bit of a path that I've taken from your book, which is to discover what really matters in this age of distraction one needs to re-member the parts of ourselves, the parts of our humanity, the parts of our connectedness to one another that isn't necessarily facilitated by the algorithm, but is facilitated by our shared humanity. And that's the pathway to what you would call the essential, what I might say, to finding what matters is what matters. Do I have that right?

Soren Gordhamer:

I would say so. Yeah, I would say that there's the aspect of remembering and tapping into that. And then also listening to how that wants to take shape in our life, if at all. What's the form in which that want? If we're living from that, how do we create a relationship to that part or to that essence? Dick Schwartz likes to call it the self. We all have different names. And then how does that want to guide us? And can we listen to that and trust that? I think those are really, really important aspects.

And the other piece is, Jerry, what takes us away from that? And in my book, I kind of talk a little bit about the stories that we've inherited from our families, from our society, from ourselves, these stories of who we think we should be. I'm a Buddhist meditator, I'm intelligent, or I'm smart, or I'm happy, or you know, all these different stories that we have. And can we become curious about how those stories either serve us or don't serve us? And I think often these stories kind of come up to give us some identity in the world? Like, well, here's who I think I am. Will you accept me? Or like, I'm becoming more successful. Now, do I have worth?

And so we're continually seeking this external stimuli and this external reassurance without realizing these are just stories that we've made up. And maybe these stories don't serve us so well. Maybe they do in certain moments. Like, I'm a writer, right? Okay, maybe there's a relative truth to that, but it's not really true. And my son is pissed off at me and upset at me. I can't be like, well, you know, I am a writer. was like, who gives a shit? Nobody gives a shit. And the really important thing is nobody gives a shit. And so how do these stories like shape our lives?

And a lot of the stories that I kind of brought on were kind of based on some trauma and hurt and pain that I had felt as a child. And then I had to really look at like, wow, why do I want to achieve so much? And is my trying to achieve so much actually deeply rooted in a pain of unworthiness? And can I become curious about that? Wow, what was that like and who am I really?

Jerry Colonna:

Yeah. I remember you reporting in a brief conversation with a therapist, I think it was a woman, who said something like, do you really think you're not worth or you're worthless? And, you know, I think you're highlighting the stories, and let's call it the process of remembering. I think that to your point, the stories can be very, very useful. The stories can...as I would often say with a client, propel us out of whatever situation we were in. I think of that, our Karagum quote, "I am not what has happened to me, I am what I choose to become." There's a story making that goes on there. I am choosing to move forward in a particular way. And...

Soren Gordhamer:

And an acknowledging of what happened.

Jerry Colonna:

That's right. That's right.

Soren Gordhamer:

This happened to me or this experience, right? Like, it's not just like, that didn't happen. That's just a story. No, no, no, that fucking happened. Sorry. That really happened. It needs to be named. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

That really happened and it needs to be named so that it can actually be liberated from the consciousness so it's not plaguing us or sitting as I often say like the messy closet where the door is just jammed shut and we're never going to open up that closet.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

And so what we're really talking about right now, and Frederick Beekner has this brilliant essay called *A Room Called Remember*, in which he talks about, the imagery comes from a dream that he has in which there's a guide in the dream that tells him he has now entered the room called remember. And it's really an invitation to revisit all of these stories, some of which end up being a dismembering, right? Because I only remember bits and pieces of that story or I remember what I can bear to remember in that regard.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah. Yeah. I like to, I think I can't remember my exact words, but in the introduction or one of the early chapters, I talk about how for me, the process is seeing all the things we don't want to see, feeling all the feelings we don't want to feel, seeing all the things we don't want to see, feeling all the feelings we don't want to feel, and at the same time, knowing the essential beauty that we are and that both are true, and that we want sometimes the beauty, but we don't want to see all the ways in which we're egotistical or all the ways in which we're manipulative or all of

that. That bringing that into awareness is the path through to harnessing, I think, what might be more of like an inherent or natural beauty or natural intelligence.

And so that's why I like to play like we have all this artificial intelligence and don't we don't even know our own natural inner intelligence and what kind of world are we going to create where we rely on the artificial when we don't actually understand the natural. But I'm right with you that all those pieces have to be named and at the same time they can service or they can also, and I've seen this with very, very successful people who they were like, I'm a winner, I can make this happen. And they create these billion-dollar companies from this, this like tenacity, right? Of like, I am going to do this. But then they get to the end and they're successful and they sue and they sell their company and then it's this incredible liquidity of it and then they're just like, hold it, now I'm lonely, like I'm sad and I actually never discovered who I was. I always went to the external to show my worth and then there's a potential for huge transformation if they're willing to then look inside and be like, wow, the game really is inside.

Jerry Colonna:
Right. Right.

Jerry Colonna:
The, those who listen to the podcast know very well that I can relate to that story because my 30s were really marked, my late 20s, my early 30s were really marked by this ascendancy into, you know, New York Magazine called my former partner, Fred Wilson and I, "Princes of New York," around the launch of our venture firm.

Soren Gordhamer:
Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:
And then there was this moment, and I often think of a quote from Buzz Aldrin, who experienced a depression after orbiting the moon. And he said, "When you see the Earth from the vantage point of the moon and you realize that's all there is, it's crushing."

And I think that part of the remembering process is to not only remember who you were before you crafted the story of who you are, but who you were at that essential state that what our Buddhist friends would say is our Buddha nature, our fundamental rightness, goodness, our basic goodness, regardless of whether or not we have a dollar or a billion dollars. And that is something I think that we need to remember. And the system is set up for us to forget, isn't it?

Soren Gordhamer:
Billions and billions of dollars are made by us forgetting. And again, I don't want to, it's not like I want to like complain and be like, well, this, they're doing this to us. We're making our own choices in this, but I think it's good just seeing what's true. What's true is you have a super intelligence that's smarter than anything we've ever seen before that has one goal, which is just

to keep you activated so that you stay on a platform.

And we just have to name that, that's the truth. And they're sophisticated. have the world's greatest sociologists and marketers and psychologists and algorithms to make you do a particular action. And it takes a certain level of fortitude to say, no, I'm actually going to spend time, whether it's meditation or in nature or as friends, all the things that I know are true to me.

And I think that's really part of what I wanted to call out is that this world today is getting more and more complex and the systems are getting more and more complex and they're not always here to serve us. They don't have our well-being in mind. And we have an opportunity if we wake up, we can actually use these great technologies of our age, including AI in these amazing creative ways. But it's from the consciousness with which we are that that's gonna happen. It's not going to be something that the system necessarily supports.

Soren Gordhamer:

And so I feel like AI is this incredible opportunity. Should we take it? It'll create this incredible world for us to live in. And if we don't know ourselves, if the kind of unexploited ego runs the show, we're going to kill ourselves, destroy ourselves. I think it's pretty clear. Even the AI leaders will make this pretty clear. One of those will happen, and it's the consciousness, our consciousness, our ability to wake up, which will largely determine which one of those paths we choose.

Jerry Colonna:

I turned 62 this year, which means that...I feel partially responsible for the world that it exists. And if you know my work, you know my infamous question is how have I been complicit in creating the conditions I say I don't want? And in a sense, we can expand that and say how have I been complicit in and benefited from the world that I say I don't want to see?

So, you know, without falling down a rabbit hole, too much of guilt, I'm going to tell you quick little story. In my 20s, I was a reporter. I worked at a technology magazine called Information Week. And then, towards the late 20s, I started developing...I was part of a small team that started putting content on the web. And I first started, was in the part of a small group of people figuring out what was an ad on the web.

Later, I joined an early-stage venture capital firm, just brand new. I didn't know what the hell I was doing. I was fucking neophyte. But I remember saying something to my partners. I said, imagine a world where the minute your toaster broke, you got an email with a coupon for a new toaster. Wouldn't that be amazing?

And the truth is, in my naive enthusiasm, I believe that that would be a better world.

Soren Gordhamer:

Mm hmm. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

And when I look at how the algorithm works, sometimes it feels like it's actually listening. When I look at how, whether it's news and information being misshapen, or it all, even advertising at this point feels like propaganda. When that all, starts to come into play, I can't shake that feeling that I was complicit in creating this world. I'm not saying that for relief. I'm saying that for a kind of acknowledgement of my own participation in this scene. I mean, in a sense, those of us who have tried to marry ancient wisdom even to the technology world right now, do you think we've played a part?

Soren Gordhamer:

Absolutely.

Jerry Colonna:

Tell me more.

Soren Gordhamer:

A couple things come to mind. One of my teachers, Stephen Levine, I don't know if you've ever spent much time with Stephen, but he says, he says, we learn to be loving by watching how unloving we are at times with mercy. We will learn to be loving by watching how unloving we are at times.

Jerry Colonna:

With mercy.

Soren Gordhamer:

And with mercy, with mercy is important piece, right? So because it can just be a judgmental exploration like, look, you asshole, you did this, you did that, you're so full of shit.

But there's a different energy, which is like, do I have the courage to see the parts in me? I say, oh, I want to be conscious. But what are those parts that really don't give a shit about anything? It just wants to win.

Jerry Colonna:

Yeah. And do I want to be conscious to those?

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Because if we're not aware of those, if they're exiled parts in Dick Schwartz's word, they will fucking show up, they will eventually run the show. And you see this with some spiritual teachers where they're incredibly profound, incredibly wonderful in some aspects, and then they get success. And all of a sudden, other parts come and you see these different energies that show up because those were never really explored or seen. And I think that's such a beautiful process you talk about.

And currently, we have a president a lot of people hate and despise, and some people love. But for those of us who hate and despise, can we see those aspects of ourselves that also exist in us that we see and we hate? It's like, what is that hate coming from, and can we know that in ourselves? I'm not saying don't take action. I'm not saying don't protest and don't all these things. But there's a different energy when we come from separation. And separation to me is I'm of this, you're of that. I'm better and I'm smarter. I know it.

Jerry Colonna:
That's right.

Soren Gordhamer:

This was part of the problem, not to get too into politics, of the Democratic Party, had this arrogance and righteousness, right? And we're the best people, we're the smartest people, we're the most educated people. It's like, who the hell wants to hang out with those people? Not a lot of people, because they separate and think of ourselves a certain way. And I think the real work of this time, Jerry, is this kind of inter-exploration, which sees clearly all the ways in which we are missing the mark and all the parts of ourselves that we maybe don't want to see and to see if we can discover some kind of deeper well of resonance and deeper source, which is in all of us all the time. And I like to think of it as like, you know, when we begin to explore this area, the Big Bang happened, whatever, 13.8 billion years ago or something. We are the unfolding of that expression. Like we are that energy. Like that is us. What else could we be?

Jerry Colonna:
Right, right, right. As Carl Sagan said, "We are made of stardust."

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah, and so we're in this incredible exploration and discovery, and can we just be curious and fascinated and in awe of this world in which we get to inhabit and to see the ways in which we separate.

And I have a chapter in the book called Separation and Non-Separation. And I think when somebody comes from separation, we're caught in identity. I am this and you're that. And we go from non-separation, we see, wow, I have those same qualities. We both share in the same capacities and the same qualities and I'm going to talk to you Jerry from a place of understanding that and our conversations be so much deeper because I understand I'm talking basically to myself or to a part of myself versus taking this higher ground.

Jerry Colonna:

Well, our into beingness, I'm going to reference one of my favorite quotes from the mystical preacher and teacher Howard Thurman who says, "Outside the walls of separateness, death stalks." And I can't think of a more profound description for what we're talking about and what we're experiencing right now in the world where those who have, let's say, an unresolved

relationship with their own exiled parts, to use Dick Schwartz's term, or the Jungian term, the shadow parts, those who have those unresolved relationships with their own parts where they have not remembered and yet they have power, and what ends up happening is they mimic the dismemberment that exists in their own psyche and their own experience and thus create these or trigger our own separateness, our own impulses to separate to the term I use in Reunion is to systemically other the other in this profound way such that death stalks, death walks in.

Soren Gordhamer:

Wow. Yeah. Yeah. And isn't it amazing that this gets to show up in our time? Like we have such an example of how this plays out in our current world. We get to see all these qualities that I tell people like I voted for Kamala. I would love for her to be president. And I think we'll learn more in the current situation. We'll learn more about ourselves. We'll learn more about why we're here. We'll learn more about what we suppress and repress.

And I think that there is this time in which, you know, there's this great quote that I like, never quite get it right, but that the most seaworthy vessels are not supposed to spend their lives in the shore, by the shore. Like the most seaworthy vessels are actually supposed to be out on the seas in the torrential rains and storms. Like that's why they're built. I think that's why humans are built too. We're not built to just have an easy, simple life. We're built for really good challenges and rising up to meet those challenges. And so this world in some ways is going through incredible disruption and chaos can be an invitation for all of us to step up and team together and partner together in ways we never maybe would because the challenge is so great, some deeper part of us has to show up. And I feel like that's the invitation really of our times. And then can we use and harness the technologies in a way that's actually of service to that.

Ev Williams is one of the founders of Twitter was on our stage a while back ago. And he's like, you know, we really thought if we'd opened the realms of communication through Twitter, the world would be a better place. Like some not so good things would happen, but generally it would be a better place. And he's like, now I don't really know about that.

But there was this premise, like, right, that if we just do these things, the world will be a better place. And I think one of the things that we're really learning is that no technology can shift our state of consciousness in the deepest way. So no shift in the external world can satiate what is unresolved in our internal world that takes an inner dimension and that's what I feel like is the invitation.

Jerry Colonna:

Bell Hooks, when I was writing my last book, Bell Hooks passed away. As you know, she's a Dharma sister and an amazing writer and a dear friend of our mutual friend, Sharon Salzberg. She has this brilliant poem. It's actually just labeled number 41, but it's from a collection of poems. The first line of which is, "when angels speak of love, they tell us. All things are union and reunion. There is no end to separation. There is no end to paradise."

Soren Gordhamer:
Mm-hmm

Jerry Colonna:

And I think that there's a profound wisdom both in what you're reaching for and in these statements. I'm going to even lift up what I think was a hopeful assertion that you were making, which was, and it was not the kind of crazy-making hopefulness that says everything's just gonna be fine. It's recognizing that we are at a critical moment. We're at a critical moment with technology. We're at a critical moment with what used to be called social media, and I don't even know what to call it anymore. Anti-social media.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah. And AI is creating half the content, or lot of the content too. So it's like, it's a weird world. Yeah.

Jerry Colonna:

And so AI is talking to AI, and we've dismembered from our Buddha nature, we've dismembered from our... And it's being exploited. It's being exploited by those who would monetize our distraction. It's being exploited by those who would monetize, if you will, our hopelessness and our helplessness. And I think...What I hear you saying and I really agree with it is that this is kind of a call to action and the action is almost twofold. It's remember that which really matters within you. Reconnect that so that you can then bring that forth into the world. Am I getting that right?

Soren Gordhamer:

And yeah, yeah, and it's, love this phrase. It's not by me, it's through me, right? And one of the things I really love from Eckhart Tolle, he's like, "Don't ask what you want to do. Ask what the world wants to do through you."

And I think in the past, Jerry, we had this kind of this notion that like, I'm doing this, I'm successful, I'm making this happen. I'm manifesting this and all these different energies. And I'm not saying that that's totally wrong, but I'm saying that there is a different level of intelligence that we can harness that is about an expression that's more of like universal intelligence and less about me doing something that I think is going to reach some kind of like hopeful future that I want to create where I am the kind of like the winner in that dance. And so for me, it's like, I could have written a book, for example, The Seven Steps to X or Y or something. It was like, I did, I just want to share my story of my own learning in this and inspire other people to ask those questions and go on that journey for themselves.

So I think that to me is the shift that's asking to be made. And it's a shift initially in awareness and consciousness, which is like the world out there is supposed to make me happy and supposed to make me fill the holes inside me that I'm trying to fill, versus what inside me is

calling for my love and my attention. And can I look inward to give my own self that love and attention and that own process of healing so that the world that I now create is going to be from a different place than I would be if I did not go through that process.

And the seeds that we plant now create the world that's going to manifest and show up. And what are the seeds that we're creating right now? And I feel like that's the work of a lifetime. I Joseph Campbell called it the hero's journey, but you call it whatever you want to call it. But I feel like that world, because in the beautiful aspect of this is that because the external world is so freaking enticing.

Like I could watch TikTok all freaking day and be entertained. Like it just gives me these amazing funny this and funny that. And like movies and video games. My God, they're incredible. Like the level of sophistication and entertainment that's out there is just so remarkable. And that really how I want to live my life. And it's such a beautiful time because the enticing aspect of all that stuff is so alluring. And yet at the end of the game, it does not satiate.

I was having a dinner with different tech leaders and AI leaders. I was sitting next to somebody whose net worth was over 100 billion, not his company himself. And I was like, there was a, I don't want to judge or criticize, but nobody at that table was like, I felt like was just in Buddha's space of joy and love, like the money, the power, all the things didn't necessarily make people just be in this incredible sense of abundance and love and peace. They succeeded, they were winners, they're building the AI of the future, they work their asses off, they're really afraid of losing and who's coming up in China and who's gonna build this and build that. It's like no life conditions actually allow somebody to touch that place of love and depth and humanity.

Like you can't say like, if you can just get this, if you just get a hundred billion dollars, you just get like the most famous person and most whatever, nothing does it. No life situation inherently shifts that state of consciousness. Now I personally want money. I love money. I love being able to travel. I love being able to do things. I have a money tree behind me. Like I love it and I enjoy it. And I know it inherently at the end of the day is not what say satiates and it's not the place of creativity.

Jerry Colonna:

Okay. It wouldn't be the Reboot Podcast if I didn't ask core questions of you. So to go back to the Eckhart Tolle quote, I have three questions, and they're all linked together. So let me say all three questions.

What does the world want to do through you? What did you have to remember in order for you to write this book? And what part of the story about you that you love did you have to give up in order to be the person you are right now? So three questions. They're tough, I know.

Soren Gordhamer:

As best I can tell, what wants to come through me is this supporting of an inquiry. And that

inquiry is how do we harness our own inner intelligence in a world of increasing artificial intelligence. I want to make that front and center in society. I want everybody asking that inquiry and listening to their own inner guidance about where that directs them because I think if the question is how do I just get smarter and smarter about how to use artificial intelligence, we're missing the whole piece of the game here. And so I feel like...

Jerry Colonna:

It might be similar to how do I build a bigger and bigger pile of gold. It's about acquisition. It's not about actually experiencing.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah. And if you, and it's so funny, interesting, because I think if you actually experience, you're more likely to get that pot of gold, and you're more likely to harness it in powerful ways. So it's not about anything wrong with that part of gold. I would love that pot of gold. I think I could do incredible things with that pot of gold, but I'm not going to prioritize that over my inner, my inner calling, and my inner guidance. And what I've seen and experienced more and more is that the chances increase at that pot of gold, by us living in that core value, because people are so hungry for it.

And so I feel like that's part of what wants to come through me into the world, and why I want to be on your podcast or other places would be like, can we promote that kind of inquiry? If we don't have our own natural intelligence, if we're not connected to that, no, nothing can ever solve our problems. No artificial intelligence is crazy, and as amazing as it is, is going to create the society we want.

Jerry Colonna:

Mmm. Mmm.

Soren Gordhamer:

Then you had asked about what part of me had to be kind of tapped into and healed, and remembered. Part of how I opened up the book was talking about some pain I had as a child, and kind of went through as a child. And part of that pain, I spent some time, I don't mention her by name, but it was with Julie Gottman. I spent some time working with her after a divorce, and it was my second divorce. I was just like, I don't understand what the fuck is going on with my relationships. Like, I need help. And my friend's like, I know who can help you.

And so I spent time with her, and part of the inquiry was going back to this kid in me that was abandoned and felt like my mother had left. I was raised by my dad and I just felt enormous shame and humiliation at the time because we were one of the few families in Texas, Lubbock, Texas at the time, that did not go to church and our family was kind of falling apart and I just felt enormous shame and I thought I'm never going to feel the shame again at that moment. I'm going to succeed and I'm going to fucking succeed in major ways. I'm going to be like, I like, I'm going to be a well-known, respected person in the world.

And I feel like that part of me had to go revisit that part so that hopefully my work today isn't inspired or predicated on that younger person trying to find satisfaction by getting people to like him and by having a best-selling whatever, great conference or best-selling, whatever the thing was. I feel like that was a piece that really needed to be explored. And I'm not saying it's completely gone, but I'd like to think that it's less of a motivation than I had in the past. And I'm hopeful that I can be in the world in a more authentic way.

Jerry Colonna:

Right. So let's just pause and honor Him, that little kid. Let's just hang out with him for a second because what good work he's done.

Soren Gordhamer:

Mm-hmm.

Jerry Colonna:

And he did the best he could do, given the circumstances. And look at the man that you have become, and you are using that experience, you did it in the book and you're doing it in your life. You're using that experience to let that which the world wants to come through you, come through you. That to me is the essence of that remembering process. God bless you for doing that.

Soren Gordhamer:

Thank you. Yeah, I remember when I tap into him now, when I came, I did this environmental walk, which I also talk about in the book where I spent about a year walking through different countries. And we finished the walk in Japan, had lived in Japan for about three months, three and a half months. We slept inside one night, the last night.

Most nights we slept, we were dumpster diving our way across Japan. So we were getting our food out of dumpsters and living really simply with almost no money. And then we finished in Japan, flew back to the States, and I had like almost no money and no job. I'd been walking every day, like I didn't have any skills.

And I remember this younger part was like, holy shit, Soren. We didn't take care of ourselves, and we didn't plan. We didn't think about this. We didn't think about how we're gonna get an apartment when we come back, where we're gonna get the down payment from, who are we gonna stay with? Like all these different parts.

And I remember that younger part, it's like, all right, we're gonna get to fucking work. We're gonna get busy. Like, you know, we're gonna figure out how to get a job. We're gonna figure out how to make a living. We're gonna figure out. And so I appreciate that tenacity that that part had, which was just like hustle. Like when I started Wisdom 2.0, I didn't know anybody. I'm like doing the type of like...It's like, we're just gonna hustle, Soren. We're gonna hustle.

It's like, okay, let's keep hustling. And I hustled my ass off. And I'm sure a lot of people can relate, right? These times, they just hustle. And there's also come a time where that hustling just is not needed, right? It's like there are bars in the cage. You put bars to protect yourself because of the danger and then the danger is gone, but you keep the bars. And it's like, at some point, it's like, thank you bars for protecting me. And...

And so, yeah, but to honor that kind of tenacity and to honor that energy is, I think, really beautiful. Thank you for inviting that.

Jerry Colonna:

Well, you know, I am wired to see things, and when things show up to not recognize it and not see it feels, I use this term even before we were recording, a little psychotic, a little crazy making for me, you know. So I appreciate both the story of that and us creating a little space to honor his tenacity.

Okay, my last question. What is it about the story that you carry about yourself that you love that you might have to give up in order to come to create that which wants to flow through you.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah. You know, it's beautiful. I have the great, I don't know how I got in the position I got in, Jerry, but like I've been able to spend a lot of time with the most amazing teachers, some of the most amazing teachers of our age, you know, both like at the conference and interviewing them, but you know, also just becoming friends with these incredible human beings that I'm like, what a gift to be alive when they're alive, you know, that's kind of like the feeling, and to share and I've always looked at them with this kind of admiration.

And now a lot of them are in their 80s. I'm realizing they're stepping back. Like, they need to step back. Like they need to like take time and not travel so much and not be out doing as many things. And I'm realizing it's an invitation for all of us who do have energy and who might not be 80 to step up and to write, to talk, to be out there in the world, and to kind of find our own Dharma expression. And I think there's a part of me that needs to step more into that and there's a part of me that needs to kind of let go of the supporter, learner, host, and actually be a little bit more active in the world. I think that's one part.

The other part is when I first came to the Bay Area, I thought I'm going to be a really, really nice guy and have people like me. And that's the way I'm gonna get all the tech leaders to show up at my conference. Because I had to figure out some way to get my conference. I will all ask nice questions. know, like I'll be just very easy going. And I realized that's not what's needed now. That's not helpful at all. Like maybe it was helpful then, but like to be a little bit more forthcoming, to be a little bit more almost aggressive at times, not a personal aggressive, but aggressive for the stage of the...

Jerry Colonna:
On behalf of.

Soren Gordhamer:

... on behalf of where humanity is going. And that's not always nice. It's not always nice at all. It asks really, really hard questions and it demands people to do things. And that's the energy I feel like is inviting. And the energy that needs to kind of be a little bit on the side right now is more just like, the sweet, nice, you know, know, nice Soren who will make sure he never hurts your feelings because you might kick him out of the club. And so he's very careful to make sure he stays in the club and you like him because that's his survival mechanism is to be liked. So thank you again to that part for doing what it needs to do. And if I live from that part more, Jerry, I'm being a disservice to everything that I've learned and really feel is important.

Jerry Colonna:

So I feel it would only be fair if I give partially my answers to the very same questions. I've said this phrase before, and now I understand it a little bit better based on the conversation with you. I feel like God, the divine, gave me a capacity to put words together in a way that people pay attention.

I didn't really understand it. I spent most of my adulthood not really understanding it. I feel that there is a reason behind that and I feel like there's a fruition happening where I am supposed to put those words together and speak in a way that can be heard. Even if like you, it kind of pisses people off a little bit. And you know what I think we're both entering, my friend? I think we're entering our elderhood.

I think that, you know, in Reunion, I play with Bill Hook's poem, and I think that there is a reframe there, which is when elders speak of love, all things are union and reunion. And the love they're talking about, it ain't sweetness and light all the time. It's like, hey dudes, in the tech world. What have you wrought? What have you wrought? And what is your responsibility for managing what you have wrought? You know, yeah, it'd be great if I got a coupon for a toaster the minute my toaster broke down. But the truth of the matter is, as convenient as that is, that world harms a 13-year-old girl on Instagram who is thinking negative self-thoughts.

Soren Gordhamer:

Yeah, and the algorithm feeds in her whatever keeps her on the platform, not what is supportive of her well-being. And that needs to be named.

Jerry Colonna:

That's right. I think to start to close it out, I think there's a moral responsibility that you are speaking to in the essential, which is find out what matters and live from that place and stand up and speak on behalf of what matters.

Soren Gordhamer:

And let everything unfold from there. Right? Like, it's none of your business how that unfolds. It really isn't. Like, it's none of my business how that unfolds. My business is to be in that space to... I love the phrase, "you can't know the truth, you can only be the truth." Because knowing is superficial. Like, I can know all kinds of things and repeat all kinds of phrases and stuff, but am I being the truth? All I can do is be that truth. And the...how that's received or I'm seen as a saint or a sinner, in some ways, like, I have to let that go and let the world see me however it wants to see me, but be connected to that. And I think that's the invitation anybody listening to this has, which I think is the most beautiful and important invitation we can have. And when we take our last breaths on our deathbed, we know that we listen to it. We might not have gotten the results that ideally we wanted, but we're like, I listen to that.

Jerry Colonna:
Yeah.

Soren Gordhamer:
And I led from that. And I think, Jerry, at those last breaths, that's probably going to matter on whatever versus whatever results we either accomplished or didn't accomplish. What's going to matter was did I listen to that inner sense of my own karmic assignment, my own karmic enfoldment.

Jerry Colonna:
I'll close by saying I think you've named three words. One is courage, the other is faith, and the last is hope. And I really appreciate both you writing this book, you having the courage to share, and you coming on the show and talking with me this morning. It's been a delight, really.

Soren Gordhamer:
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, it's nice to spend more time with you. I feel like we've crossed many, paths for many, many years and we're in the same game, we're the same dance. So I'm glad that our dance card showed up together to explore and hope people enjoyed it. Yeah, thank you.

Jerry Colonna:
That's right.

Jerry Colonna:
That's right. That's right. Thank you.